
Tourism KwaZulu-Natal



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To: All media

Attention: News Editors and Journalists

**TKZN TAKES KWAZULU-NATAL TO THE 2023 WORLD TRAVEL
MARKET LONDON**

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN) is heading to London for the 2023 World Travel Market where it will engage with top tour operators to ensure that KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is included in their itineraries and travel packages for international travellers and booking agents.

Newly appointed Acting Chief Executive Officer of TKZN, Mr Sibusiso Gumbi, says that this world leading international travel event, from 6-8 November 2023, provides a strategic opportunity to strengthen valuable relationships with leading tour operators and showcase KZN as a unique destination that not only offers world class game reserves, great weather, culture and warm hospitality, but also provides far more value for money than many competing destinations.

“Just as many of our domestic tourists are having to tighten their purse strings for this summer, so too are international tourists looking to reign in their spend as they navigate rising living and energy costs in turbulent global waters in the run up to the 2024 European Summer Season. They are seeking destinations that offer value for money with exceptional

experiences and KZN positions itself as a destination that offers that and more.” Mr. Gumbi points out that over the past two years TKZN, together with the region’s tourism trade, has worked hard to rebuild the province’s international tourism market after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now that a strong foundation has been put in place for international tourism to flourish, it is time for growth as the sector embraces new trends. WTM gives TKZN access to the world’s largest tour operators, leading travel agents and global travel media who are essential in positioning places as must visit destinations to world travellers thus driving growth of these destinations.

During WTM, TKZN will engage with top operators from various European countries to lock deals that will drive international tourists to the province ahead of the Europe summer season. The UK is the second biggest key international source market for KZN, having recently been overtaken by the USA. In 2019, the UK accounted for a large portion of the 32,667 foreign arrivals in KZN (including visitors from Africa).

“In line with our Tourism Recovery Strategy, we are focused on rebuilding our international markets through various in-country initiatives and activations that we are undertaking with South African Tourism. Our aim is to provide tourism operators with information which they can use to confidently promote and sell KZN,” says Mr Gumbi.

According to insights received from South African Tourism, during the second quarter of 2023, UK arrivals in KZN amounted to 147 800 people, accounting for 1.5-million bed nights and contributing R1.4-billion to the provincial economy. Although not yet at the same level as Q2 in 2019, Mr Gumbi says there are signs of recovery and encouraging opportunities for sustained growth going forward.

“While we are working around the clock to get our top key international source markets back, we are aware that the needs of travellers have also changed and we are working closely with our local tourism trade partners to continually bring exciting new products to the market, upgrade their offerings and keep their service at world class levels.

He noted that the province’s Routes Development Committee had attended the World Routes 2023 in Turkey to lobby for more airlines to fly directly to King Shaka International Airport, Durban. Already international airlines such as Emirates, Qatar Airlines and Turkish Airlines fly directly to Durban, indicating that international travellers are keen to return to KZN.

(576 words)

ABOUT TOURISM KWAZULU-NATAL

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal is responsible for the development, promotion, and marketing of tourism into and within the province, both domestically and internationally. The organisation is an entity that reports to the provincial Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

Website: <https://www.zulu.org.za>

Facebook: Tourism KwaZulu-Natal

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