



# TOURISM TUESDAYS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

#TourismTuesdays

JULY 2025 EDITION



*Inspiring new ways*

# NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

**W**elcome to another exciting edition of **Tourism Tuesdays**! As Mandela Month ends and we look forward to August, focusing on Women's Month, we round off the month by honouring the enduring legacy of Nelson Mandela – a man whose spirit continues to inspire our industry's commitment to progress, inclusivity, and resilience.

In this edition, we showcase the vibrant and growing South African tourism sector – from the opening of the Park Hyatt Johannesburg in Rosebank, and Thonga Beach Lodge winning top honours again for eco-luxury and community upliftment; to Cape Town clinching the coveted title of the Best City as voted by readers of *The Telegraph* newspaper.

We also go from catching waves in our Surf Expo Africa feature, to announcing a landmark step for conscious travel in Africa, with South African Tourism's North America Hub and US-based non-



profit organisation Tourism Cares launching the first-ever 'Meaningful Travel Map' of South Africa, setting a new benchmark for responsible, impactful tourism.

As we look forward to the 2025 Tourism Business Council of South Africa's (TBCSA) Leadership Conference in September, the focus remains on collaboration, policy reform, and innovation to tackle the industry's biggest challenges and seize its brightest opportunities.

Each of the stories highlighted in this edition are a testament to South Africa's rich tourism offering, world-class hospitality, and cultural authenticity.

We hope this edition leaves you informed, inspired, and even more in love with South Africa.

**Warm regards,  
The Tourism Tuesdays Team**

**Be more  
inspired!**

[Click here](#) to read about the man who once cooked for Nelson Mandela and now runs one of the best restaurants in the world.

Walk in Madiba's footsteps with this [guide to iconic Nelson Mandela heritage sites](#) across South Africa.



# Africa's Surf Culture Finally Gets its Day in the Sun

Surf's up on Africa's first-ever surf expo.



**W**ith its wild coastlines and world-class waves, South Africa has always had a unique story to tell. Now, the world is invited to experience it firsthand, to come find your wave at Surf Expo Africa.

In a move that promises to redefine ocean lifestyle tourism on the continent, South African Tourism has partnered with the inaugural Surf Expo Africa, taking place in Cape Town from 28 to 30 November 2025.

This event will showcase the best of Africa's surf industry, ocean-based lifestyle brands, travel destinations, and coastal community culture. From local surfboards and apparel to expert-led talks and live demos, it's going to be part-trade show, part-cultural celebration and 100% proudly African.

"We've been dreaming about a platform like this for years," says Jason Cumming, co-founder of Surf Expo Africa. "There's nothing like it on the continent. With SA Tourism behind us, we're not just launching an event we're creating a movement."

Darryl Erasmus, Chief Operations Officer and Acting Chief Convention Bureau Officer at SANCB, a business unit of South African Tourism, says: "Surf Expo Africa gives us a powerful new platform to tell South Africa's ocean story. From our waves to our people, our surf culture is bold, beautiful, and bursting with global appeal. We're proud to support an event that not only celebrates our coastal lifestyle but also drives real value for tourism and local businesses."

For more information, visit: [www.surfexpoafrica.com](http://www.surfexpoafrica.com)



## US Travellers Access New Link to Purpose-led Adventures in South Africa

**T**he 'Meaningful Travel Map of South Africa' is a dynamic new platform that connects the travel trade and mindful travellers to tourism experiences that are rooted in sustainability, cultural preservation, and community empowerment.

"South Africa's landscapes, wildlife, and cultures are among the richest and most diverse in the world, and we recognise the importance of safeguarding them for generations to come," says Darryl Erasmus, Chief Operations Officer at South African Tourism.

"The launch of the 'Meaningful Travel Map of South Africa' allows us to spotlight the remarkable efforts of local tourism changemakers and invite the world to experience South Africa in a more conscious way."

Curated and evaluated by Tourism Cares, the map highlights several community-based tourism initiatives, social enterprises, conservation programmes, cultural heritage projects, and sustainable accommodations. Each experience selected for its positive social, environmental, and cultural impact.

Travellers can discover everything from indigenous-led cultural tours to eco-lodges that reinvest in community development, to wildlife rehabilitation centres and organisations working to protect South Africa's pristine coastlines.

The map also encourages travellers to move beyond traditional itineraries and form deeper, impactful





connections with the people and places of South Africa, while helping small businesses gain access to international markets.

This is the first 'Meaningful Travel Map' created for an African destination and represents a major milestone in South Africa's commitment to inclusive and sustainable tourism.

## Expanding market access for SMMEs

"Tourism Cares is proud to welcome South Africa to our global family of destination partners," said Greg Takehara, CEO of Tourism Cares.

"South Africa's leadership in responsible tourism from its early conservation initiatives to its continued focus on cultural preservation and community upliftment aligns perfectly with the vision of our Meaningful Travel Programme. We are thrilled to welcome the first 'Meaningful Travel Map' in Africa

### MAP HIGHLIGHTS (Click venues below to view)

#### Community-based tourism

- Awelani Lodge
- CURIOCITY
- Monkeybiz South Africa
- Township and Village (Pty) Ltd
- Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge
- !Xaus Lodge

#### Cultural preservation tourism

- Indlondlo Cultural Village
- Juma Art Tours
- !Khwatla
- Maboneng Township Arts Experience

#### Environmental responsibility tourism

- Klein Goederust Boutique Winery
- Panthera Africa NPC
- Shamwari Private Game Reserve

and are committed to working with South African Tourism to build a future where travel has a positive, lasting impact."

This launch is the result of the North America Hub team's multi-year effort to diversify trade-ready product offerings, promote conscious travel, and support small businesses looking to grow their reach.

It also supports our "Come Find Your Joy!" campaign by showing how joy can be discovered through authentic, purpose-led travel across the country.



To explore the 'Meaningful Travel Map of South Africa'

[CLICK HERE](#)

# Are You Ready to Take On North Europe With Us?

South African Tourism invites industry stakeholders to apply for Vakantiebeurs 2026 and the 'Come Find Your Joy' North Europe Roadshow 2026.



Calling all tourism stakeholders and trade partners that work alongside South African Tourism's North Europe Hub – this is your invitation to apply for participation in two flagship tourism promotion platforms: be part of the South African Pavilion at Vakantiebeurs 2026 (from 07 to 11 January 2026) in Utrecht, Netherlands; and the 'Come Find Your Joy' North Europe roadshow (from 13 to 22 January 2026).

Vakantiebeurs is the largest travel and tourism consumer show in the Netherlands, attracting more than 70 000 visitors on consumer days, and more than 6 000 travel trade on trade-focused days.



South Africa's presence at the show provides a vital and collaborative platform to showcase the country's diverse tourism offerings in this influential source market. It's where we build strategic partnerships and reinforce South Africa's appeal as a must-visit destination for Dutch and Belgian travellers, while directly engaging with consumers and the trade.

The 'Come Find Your Joy' North Europe roadshow is geared towards providing market access for South Africa's travel trade value chain to Dutch and Belgian buyers. Trade in these countries are key partners that the hub works with as a way of bringing arrivals and assisting in the acquisition of new customers for the destination.



Get more info about  
Vakantiebeurs and  
the roadshow.

[CLICK HERE](#)

The Netherlands remains South Africa's third largest international source market out of Europe, and fourth largest source market internationally, based on full-year arrivals for 2024. Facilitating market access and strategic engagements of this nature is pivotal to sustaining and growing tourism from both these countries.

Some additional trade-facing opportunities underway include a Megafam being planned for November 2025, in collaboration with provinces, and Business 2 Business (B2B) virtual training to fully equip the value chain on the various experience pillars that South Africa has to offer across all provinces.



Applications for both platforms close on  
Friday, 01 August 2025 at 17:00.

Get more info about Megafam and the training  
by emailing: [NEtrade@southafrica.net](mailto:NEtrade@southafrica.net).

[CONTACT US](#)

SOUTH AFRICA AWAITS

COME FIND

YOUR JOY

# Time for BIG Talks: Are You Ready?

Industry collaborations, and a spotlight on new opportunities for tourism investment are key at the upcoming 2025 Tourism Leadership Conference.



**T**he 2025 Tourism Leadership Conference, hosted by the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA), returns to Sun City from 17 to 19 September 2025 and brings together leaders from across the public and private sectors to confront the major issues shaping the future of tourism.

Held at a time of rising global uncertainty, shifting travel patterns, and evolving policy demands, the conference is expected to tackle the structural, financial, and operational challenges facing the sector. It will also spotlight new opportunities for growth, investment, and transformation.

This year's programme has been refreshed to promote deeper engagement and sharper focus.

The TBCSA will also provide a progress update on the commitments made at the 2024 conference. This will help the industry take stock of what's working, what's stalled, and where the sector must focus in the months ahead.

**The 2025 Tourism Leadership Conference is set to be one of the most important platforms for sector leadership, collaboration and problem-solving. It is a space where tourism's toughest questions are met with bold thinking and clear intent.**





## DAY 1: 17 SEPTEMBER 2025, MIDDAY

The day kicks off with a dedicated workshop on tourism marketing, hosted in partnership with South African Tourism. The session, which outlines strategic marketing priorities and equips delegates with tools to position South Africa more effectively in a competitive global market, will be followed by the official welcome function, a key networking moment in the TBCSA calendar.



## DAY TWO: 18 SEPTEMBER, FULL-DAY

A jam-packed timetable awaits delegates, featuring a full line-up of keynote addresses, panel discussions, and sector dialogues dealing with issues affecting the sector. Delegates will hear from international and local speakers on topics including digital transformation, air access, infrastructure development, safety and security, and tourism policy.



Secure your spot,  
pay your registration  
fees and book your  
accommodation at  
preferred rates today!

[REGISTER NOW](#)



# Thonga Beach Lodge Wins Award for Eco-Luxury and Conservation

Thonga Beach Lodge has once again been crowned South Africa's Leading Beach Hotel at the 2025 World Travel Awards, marking its second consecutive win.



Guests enjoy immersive experiences like snorkelling pristine coral reefs, turtle tracking, and guided forest walks. Most of the lodge's staff are from the local Mabibi community, and conservation efforts are supported through ongoing education and environmental programmes.

**S**ustainability is an important aspect for our tourism sector featuring our country's natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage. As global travellers become more conscious of their environmental impact, there's growing demand for responsible tourism that preserves ecosystems and benefits local communities. Embracing this is essential to ensure tourism drives inclusive economic growth while protecting the resources that make South Africa a unique and sought-after destination.



Thonga Beach Lodge is that and more... Nestled in the remote Mabibi area of KwaZulu-Natal's iSimangaliso Wetland Park, this eco-luxury destination is known for its commitment to marine conservation, community empowerment, and low-impact tourism.

With its blend of natural beauty, authentic experiences, and purpose-driven hospitality, Thonga Beach Lodge continues to set the benchmark for sustainable coastal escapes in South Africa.

"Winning South Africa's Leading Beach Hotel for a second-year running is incredibly rewarding. It reflects not only the unmatched beauty of our coastline, but the dedication of our team, and the power of sustainable tourism to uplift community and environment in equal measure," says Lucy Cooke, the lodge's Marketing Manager.

## About The World Travel Awards

Often referred to as the 'Oscars of travel', the World Travel Awards were founded in 1993 to celebrate excellence in tourism, hospitality, and travel globally.

"We're incredibly proud of what we've built at Thonga Beach Lodge – a true remote paradise – and we're grateful to our guests for joining us in conserving this extraordinary piece of paradise."



## About Thonga Beach Lodge

Operated by **Isibindi Africa Lodges**, Thonga Beach Lodge comprises 12 luxurious oceanfront eco suites, nestled within a coastal dune forest. Guests enjoy personalised service, sustainably sourced seafood and produce, and daily experiences – including snorkelling, diving, turtle watching, forest walks, and cultural engagement with the local Thonga community. A purpose-driven property, Thonga is deeply committed to conservation and community upliftment through the Isibindi **Foundation**. Come Find your Joy at Thonga Lodge and get to experience how luxury and purpose can live side by side. **To learn more**, visit [www.thongabeachlodge.co.za](http://www.thongabeachlodge.co.za)





# Cape Town Named 2025's Best City on Earth

Earlier this month, [Cape Town](#) was named 'Best City on Earth' by readers of [The Telegraph](#) newspaper in *The Telegraph Travel Awards*.



**M**ore than 20 000 UK travellers cast their votes, placing Cape Town ahead of global destinations like Seville and Sydney.

It's the seventh time the city has claimed this coveted title, and the second time it has been crowned the world's best city in 2025, after claiming the same title from [Time Out magazine](#) readers earlier in the year.

*The Telegraph* Travel Awards are a set of annual awards that recognise excellence in the travel industry, and cover various categories that include airlines, cruise operators, hotels, ski companies, and destinations, with a focus on reader-nominated favourites.

Journalists at *The Telegraph* said that "Cape Town's consistency makes it an easy pick", adding that "very few places on earth can match the city's photogenic

qualities". This includes the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, the beaches of Camps Bay and the Cape of Good Hope.

The British publication also highlighted the winelands to the east of the city, with fine vintages in Stellenbosch and Franschhoek.

In the [Time Out rankings](#), Cape Town rose from second place in 2024 to claiming the number one spot for 2025. The Time Out rankings are based on the opinions of 18 500 people worldwide, with survey questions based on food, culture, affordability, happiness and overall city vibe.

The folks at *Time Out* said that Cape Town's rank was no surprise as locals and visitors enjoy the city's African penguins, world-class wines and the cool neighbourhood of East City.

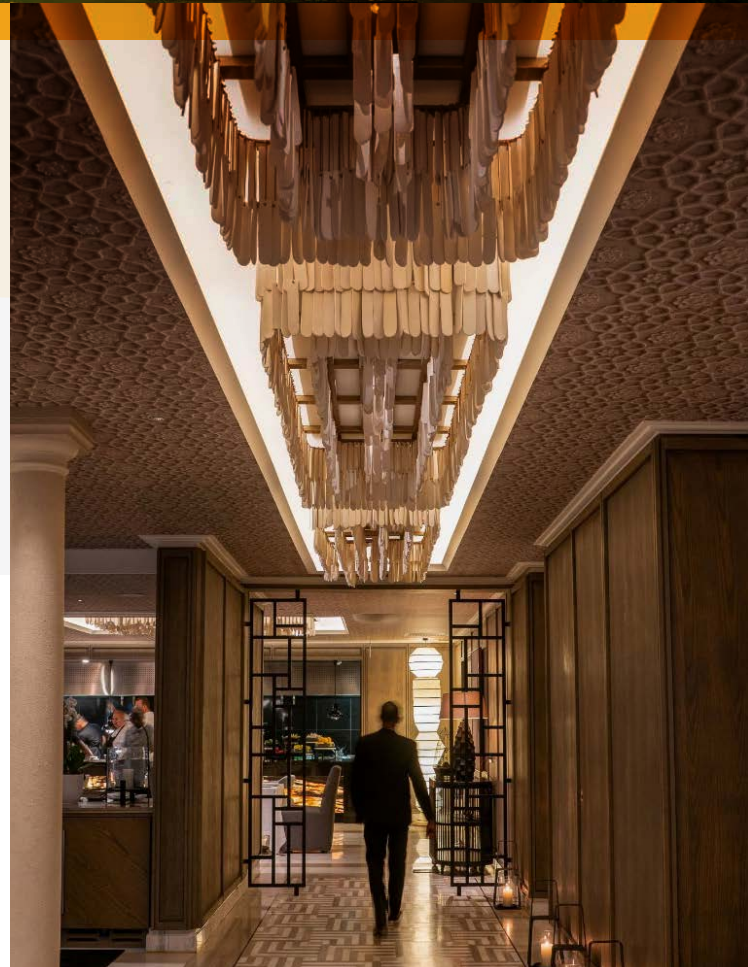




## Park Hyatt Johannesburg officially open!

The new hotel is a showcase  
of South African heritage and  
modern luxury.

**H**yatt Hotels Corporation has officially opened the Park Hyatt Johannesburg, marking the luxury brand's third destination in the African region. Set within the vibrant Rosebank district, celebrated for its cultural richness and urban vitality – Park Hyatt Johannesburg offers a refined, residential-style experience where thoughtful design, immersive art, and warm hospitality come together in perfect balance.







## Local heritage and architecture

The hotel elegantly preserves its architectural heritage, blending classical and contemporary elements inspired by colonial residences. The hotel is structured around a central open-air courtyard, anchored by a magnificent jacaranda tree, sculpted gardens, and a heated outdoor pool, creating a serene focal point for relaxation and reflection.



## Culinary mastery

Culinary excellence forms the heart of Park Hyatt Johannesburg. The hotel's 'Room 32' restaurant – named to play on the property's 31 rooms – presents guests with an immersive gastronomic journey, showcasing innovative cuisine prepared over live-fire grills, emphasising seasonal, locally sourced ingredients.

## Culturally inspired wellness

With the spa set to open soon, wellness experiences at Park Hyatt Johannesburg will invite guests to rejuvenate through exclusive treatments inspired by international and South African traditions.

## Guestrooms and suites

The hotel features 31 elegantly appointed guestrooms and suites, each offering king-size beds and floor-to-ceiling windows designed to maximise natural light and provide serene garden views.

Select rooms and suites feature private patios, further enhancing the sense of tranquility. The interiors feature plush cotton linens, marble bathrooms with deep soaking tubs, bespoke Ndebele-patterned throws, and curated South African artwork.





## FlySafair Launches New Cape Town-Hoedspruit Route

Earlier this month, FlySafair announced that it is expanding access to South Africa's top safari regions with the introduction of a new central Kruger route.

Officially taking flight on 02 October 2025 – with flights three-times a week that link Cape Town to [Hoedspruit](#), near the central Kruger region on the Limpopo/Mpumalanga border – the service will enhance connectivity to one of the country's key wildlife tourism hubs.

And with Cape Town serving as a major entry point for international visitors, this new route is expected to ensure seamless access and travel to private game reserves, and the [Kruger National Park](#).

Located at the foot of the Klein Drakensberg, Hoedspruit is an ecotourism hotspot, which is the last stop and springboard into the Kruger National Park from the Orpen or Phalaborwa gates.

The small town, which is home to about 3 200 permanent residents and located in [Maruleng Municipality](#) in the central Lowveld, is also surrounded by rich farmlands, which primarily produce mango and citrus fruits.

With fares starting from R1 570 one way, this new link supports tourism to one of the



country's premier wildlife regions. The enhanced route connectivity comes as South Africa sees renewed recovery in both domestic and international air travel.

Hoedspruit and Mbombela serve as key entry points to the central and southern Kruger National Park respectively, and so are invaluable for the safari tourism sector.

You can read more on this here



FlySafair's newly  
introduced route

[CLICK HERE](#)



# TGCSA CORNER

TOURISM GRADING COUNCIL  
OF SOUTH AFRICA





## Eksê, Mzansi! Thought Dinos Only Lived in Storybooks? Think Again!

**Come experience Kgodumodumo's  
dinosaurs for free till end-  
September.**



**S**outh African National Parks has reported an impressive turnout of more than 8 800 visitors to the newly launched Kgodumodumo Dinosaur Interpretive Centre in the first two weeks since its official opening on 23 June 2025.

SANParks says most of the visitors were local travellers, with the highest numbers coming from the Free State (4 963), Gauteng (2 566), and KwaZulu-Natal (426). The centre's growing popularity has been largely driven by the winter school holidays and SANParks' free entry offer, which will remain valid until 30 September 2025.

The Kgodumodumo Dinosaur Interpretive Centre invites travellers, families, learners, and science enthusiasts to step back in time and explore South Africa's prehistoric past through engaging exhibitions and fascinating fossil displays. Take advantage of the free entry period and discover this exciting new addition to SANParks' tourism and educational offerings. And for those seeking a more in-depth experience, guided tours are available.



## COME VISIT US!

The centre is open to locals and visitors from all over – just bring your ID or passport to get in.

**Open 7 days a week,  
08:00 to 17:00.**

Want a guided tour?  
Call 079 336 9290



# Sho't Left Travel Week Toolkit

## Now Available on the Partner Platform

Show South Africans you're a proud Sho't Left partner by registering your profile today!



The recent #TravelWeek2025 webinar that took place on 09 July 2025 marked a turning point for stakeholders looking to adopt the latest tools of online marketing.

Through this [2-hour webinar](#), travel and tourism entities gained hands-on expertise about harnessing the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and social media to boost bookings and widen their online reach, all while preparing for the next [Sho't Left Travel Week](#), which will take place between 08 and 14 September 2025.

The Sho't Left Travel Week marketing elements are now available on the [Partner Platform](#), and local travel and tourism business, are invited to participate.

Businesses that haven't registered yet, are encouraged to do so and take advantage of our ongoing, year-round marketing campaigns. Once registered and your profile is set up, businesses can begin uploading travel deals and packages.

To help make the most of the upcoming Sho't Left Travel Week, we have added a comprehensive Toolkit to the Library section of the Partner Platform.

Please log in to download the elements and start marketing your offerings, and show South Africans that you're a proud Sho't Left partner.

**Thank you for your continued partnership.**