

# Could group travel experiences be the answer to SA's domestic tourism woes?

Soul Traveller Tours, a group travel tour operator, is pioneering group travel in Africa and changing the face of domestic tourism in South Africa. The new venture is the result of a collaboration with Thebe Tourism Group which is committed to rejuvenating domestic travel.



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## The birth of a travel movement

With more than 70% of domestic travel in South Africa accounted to visiting friends and relatives, there is an opportunity to grow leisure travel for having a holiday. Given the right opportunity to travel, Soul Traveller believes reasons such as cost and the intimidation of travel can be resolved through 'immersive tourism' connecting local travellers with the beauty and intricacy of South Africa's landscapes, culture, history and people. Through these experiences, travellers will become ambassadors for the country and an unprecedented travel movement will be born.

"Through Soul Traveller Tours we have created a platform for people to feel good about their country and heritage. We want people to connect and experience the unexplored soul of our cultures and continent. The immersive experiences that we have curated will provide a platform for all South Africans and international visitors to connect, create and affirm strong bonds of community and kinship. We seek to create a unique travel movement designed to ignite deep connectivity with our history, and fellow countrymen resulting in unexpected friendships," says Penny Ndlela, CEO of Soul Traveller.

## The time is right for new domestic travel options

"Thebe Tourism Group realises the need to grow the domestic tourism market. We believe by growing this market we have an opportunity to build deeper sustainability by increasing both the number of participants (tourists) and the number of beneficiaries (product owners). This, in turn, will bolster revenue and create wider geographically spread economic opportunities. Through a strategic investment approach, focusing on untapped markets like domestic group travel, we hope to achieve this growth and sector transformation," adds Jerry Mabena, CEO of Thebe Tourism Group.

Thebe Tourism Group believes the time is right for new domestic travel options and believes Soul Traveller Tours could lead a revolution in the domestic travel space.

## Unlocking hidden gems

Soul Traveller Tours is a sensory-led venture and its packages (routes) are inspired by the colours of the South African national flag. Each route is 'curated' by a specialist who will unlock the hidden gems, the 'soul' of each route, leaving each traveller filled with awe, pride and the urge to share their experience with others.

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And that is how we celebrated our last night in Durban and the last night of our tour. We released our Soul Travel Buddies in a special ceremony with a pledge to one another. That's what making connections is all about, and one of the reasons why we love group travel. See you again soon Durbs! #SoulTravellerSA #GroupTravelSA #Durban #dbntourism

*A post shared by Soul Traveller tours (@soultravellertours) on Sep 17, 2017 at 4:20pm PDT*

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The first of these trips was offered through the Red Route during Tourism Month (September 2017). “The red route is about experiencing urban culture with a neighbourhood food crawl as we immerse ourselves in the history of the country through the culinary influences that have shaped our South African palette,” says Ndlela.

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