

5 trends that will shape the way South Africans travel in 2021

With travel bans and restrictions still dominating the news (and changing daily), South African holidaymakers are going to stick closer to home - satisfying their wanderlust and exploring the country on shorter, local, outdoorsy breaks.



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Below are five trends that will shape the way we travel:

1. Digital nomads

Conde Nast calls it 'always OOO' travel, or 'always out of the office', and there's no doubt that 2021's digital nomads are going to take full advantage of remote working by swapping home offices for a desk with a view!

According to Peter Dros, sales and marketing director of Fancourt, all digital nomads really need is great Wi-Fi – and the opportunity for a little life-work balance. "Fancourt, for example, can provide a safe base for remote workers to work and stay on the Garden Route," says Dros. "The estate has free Wi-Fi, which means you can work from your room, patio or balcony, on the deck of the Club Lounge (overlooking the 18th green of Montagu golf course), or even next to the pool! A change of scene doesn't get better than this."

2. Schoolcations

Working parents can also get in on the action. Online schooling around the globe has seen a rise in 'schoolcations' and South Africa is no different. Families can now enjoy a term-time break, without disrupting their children's online learning – as long as their accommodation has connectivity, quiet spaces for schoolwork sessions and plenty of snacks! Look out for mid-week specials and get exploring with your virtual learners.

3. Reunion travel

The importance of quality family time can also be seen in the planning and popularity of reunion travel. People around

South Africa (and the world), are desperate to reunite with family and friends as soon as possible.

Of course, safety remains paramount. So, people will want to book reunion travel through the experts – agents and operators who can book suitable accommodation (often booking out private lodges), add-ons and activities, and private transport or transfers to the reunion destination.



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4. Into the wild

Nature, remoteness and healthy outdoor activities are calling as holidaymakers look for fresh air, wide-open spaces and adventure in a bid to escape the realities of life for a while. Dros believes this trend is likely to continue well into the future.

"Tourism on the Garden Route rebounded as restrictions on travel were eased in August last year, and people came out of hibernation to explore the diverse landscapes, beaches, food and outdoor experiences in the region.

"Obviously, the recent beach ban was a blow to the region as a whole, and we're thrilled that visitors can now explore the region's beaches once again, along with our hiking trails, game parks and wine farms. There is so much to do and see along the Garden Route – which boasts one of the most temperate climates in the world."

South Africans are lacing up their hiking boots, heading off on road trips, discovering new campsites, and seeking out hidden gems. For Dros this is the beauty of South Africa: "We're spoilt with everything from staggeringly beautiful scenery, indigenous forests, historical caves and nature reserves to culinary gems, a vibrant coffee culture – not to mention golf!"

5. Niche travel

According to Jurni CEO Dr Nomvuselelo Songelwa, travellers are looking for destinations, operators and establishments that make it easy to maintain social distancing. "It's time for smaller tourism SMMEs to 'pivot', to coin a 2020 phrase, looking at ways to leverage niche travel this year. Think off-the-beaten-track destinations and highly-niched escapes like birding tours, glamping, slack-packing hikes, photography holidays and biking adventures – where travellers are less likely to come into contact with others," says Songelwa.

Jeanneret Momberg, CEO of Visit Stellenbosch, agrees: "Consumers are placing a greater emphasis on their health and wellbeing. They're trying to avoid crowded places but are also thinking out of the box when it comes to their much-needed holidays. Stellenbosch and its surrounds remain a most dynamic and exciting food, art and cultural destination."

"There are a countless number of experiences available in the region, from intrepid pursuits such as Scootours and mountain biking to walking tours, food tours and art tours with local historians and artists. We may be on Level 3 Lockdown, but interesting, niche and unforgettable experiences still abound. It's a wonderful way to support local and fall in love with South Africa all over again."

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