

Sun City direct flights proving popular

In the two months since SA Express began flights between Cape Town, Joburg and Sun City, the airline reports that passenger volumes are increasing steadily as travellers take advantage of the opportunity to fly direct to the resort.

Flights to Pilanesberg from Joburg, as well as Cape Town, each have the capacity to accommodate 50 travellers. The South African community is taking full advantage of the flights to the Pilanesberg, accounting for 60% of sales while international travellers make up the remaining 40%. The route opens up a convenient direct channel for these visitors and bodes well for tourism in the province.

Sun City Managing Executive Mike van Vuuren said the availability of commercial flights to and from Pilanesberg has opened up the gateway for easier and faster access to Sun City and the numerous attractions available in the Pilanesberg area.



North West Tourism's head Charles Ndabeni (left), SA Express's CEO Inati Ntshanga (centre), and Sun City's Managing Executive Mike van Vuuren

"As a resort we help create experiences that make lasting memories, investing in ways to make access to Sun City easier for our guests is an integral part of our ethos. The direct commercial flights in and out of both Pilanesberg Airport, and soon Mafikeng Airport, have tremendous potential to bolster leisure and business tourism in the North West Province and we are excited to form part of this promising opportunity.

Volumes to continue growing

"During the first few months of operation, SA Express' direct flights to Pilanesberg carried close to 600 passengers into the North West Province. We expect volumes to continue growing as awareness of the service grows. Sun City is committed to the success of the SA Express routes to the Pilanesberg and has value-added packages for people travelling to the resort to help encourage passenger volumes. We would like to see direct flights opened between the Pilanesberg and Durban as well."

In an agreement announced in March this year, the North West Provincial Government gave SA Express the contract to operate commercial flights from Cape Town and Joburg to the Pilanesberg Airport and Mafikeng Airport.

SA Express's first commercial flights to the Pilanesberg commenced on Wednesday, 1 April, 2015. SA Express currently offers return flights into the Pilanesberg from OR Tambo International Airport and from Cape Town International twice a week on Monday and Friday, with growth on the horizon.

Inati Ntshanga, SA Express' CEO, said: "The two months since the direct commercial flights to and from Pilanesberg commenced has marked an evolutionary period in our 21-year history and our coming of age. This is the first time in 21 years that we are flying in the North West province, which makes us a truly regional South African airline that connects practically all of our major cities with small and outlying ones in the country. These flights are also a game changer for the North West, catapulting the province to the premier league of economic players."

Bookings for flights are available through booking agencies and SA Express at www.flyexpress.aero. Follow SA Express on [Facebook](#) and Twitter [@flySAExpress](#)

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