

Explore the undiscovered local gems that SA has to offer

"You don't have to head halfway around the world to travel", says Emma Lavelle of [The Wise Traveller](#). "So many people completely ignore the country that they live in when planning their travels, but there is so much to see closer to home."

Travel trends across the world are seeing travellers shy away from overcrowded sights, rather than looking for unique experiences in their own destinations; but avoiding the crush of tourists doesn't mean you should skip visiting some of South Africa's most well-loved cities.

"Many of our guests are looking to engage with their destination in a new way, with the focus on experiences rather than sites," explains Danny Bryer, area director, sales and marketing, Protea Hotels by Marriott, Marriott International, Middle East and Africa.



Schrid-Reportagen via [Pxabay](#)

"Our visitors are looking for activities that help them to connect with their destination in an authentic way and experience the destination as locals do. We've noticed a trend of moving away from merely spending a few hours sightseeing as a passenger, and towards seeking out unusual experiences and sites that tell a different South African story."

Here are four cities you can as a new experience instead of following the well-worn path of other sightseers:

Johannesburg

One of the City of Gold's attractions is the sense of nostalgia that coats the city, hinting at an old-world charm and the glamour which followed the gold rush.



Ossewa via [Wikimedia Commons](#) - Entrance to the James Hall Transport Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa

- Revisit the time of great riches and devastating losses through a trip to the one of the oldest gold mines in the province, the Kromdraai Gold Mine.

- Embrace the vintage era with a glimpse into the past at the James Hall Museum of Transport in Johannesburg – not only will you be left feeling just a little bit “Gatsby”, you’ll also have a view of the most comprehensive museum of transport in South Africa.

- To another mode of transport, indulge in a sense of nostalgia by tying on your roller-skates and taking a few laps at a 1970s-styled disco roller-skating rink at RollEgoli in Bryanston.

Pretoria

Older than its sister city of Johannesburg, the capital has retained the feeling of an edgy, urban setting.



Stearhunter via [Wikimedia Commons](#) - Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria

- Tap into this culture through experiencing urban outdoor art installations, such as the Urban Being Sculpture by Marco Cianfanelli and The Spirit of Tshwane by Anton Smit.
- While away the afternoon with up-and-coming talent at one of the many outdoor music events in Pretoria, such as Park Acoustics, which is held at the Voortrekker Monument.
- Cool off from the Highveld heat at a hip and happening pool party, such the rooftop infinity pool parties at the Protea Hotel by Marriott Fire & Ice! Pretoria Menlyn.

Cape Town

The Mother City forms the intersection of where much of South African culture, history and art meet – bringing the sea and the mountain together in spectacular scenery.



Kierano via [Wikimedia Commons](#) - South of Woodstock, Cape Town

- Take on some of Cape Town's oldest scenic roads, with the wind in your hair and the roar of a Harley Davidson engine, or the V8 burble of a classic Cobra sports car, as your soundtrack; either through a self-driven tour or with a tour guide.
- Explore the history of one of Cape Town's most established suburbs through the lens of young artists. Guided walking tours through Woodstock will allow you to view over 40 street art works by both local and international graffiti artists.
- Immerse yourself in local culture through a visit to the Guga S'Thebe Arts & Cultural Centre, where you can shop for handmade pottery or view a musical performance by local musicians.

Durban

With an abundance of sea, sun and sand, Durban is the perfect destination to get away from the rat race and reconnect with nature.



JMK via [Wikimedia Commons](#) - Ohlanga lagoon in the Umhlanga Lagoon Nature Reserve near Umhlanga, KwaZulu-Natal

- Take a walk on the wild side with a hike in the Umhlanga Lagoon Nature Reserve. This hidden wilderness is home to a wetland, and coastal and dune forest, along with a number of indigenous birds and animals, such as bushbuck and duiker.
- Beyond the breakers lies an underwater world for you to explore. Snorkelling allows you to view marine creatures in calmer waters, without the necessity of diving gear and training. You may even have an encounter with larger mammals, such as dolphins.
- For a relaxing change of pace, take in the countryside through the classic mode of transport from yesteryear. A steam train will take you on a leisurely puff through the Valley of a Thousand Hills, giving you an immersive experience of the beautifully verdant province.

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