

Travellers looking for more bang for their travel buck

 By [Andrew Stark](#)

18 Jan 2018

Value and service continue to remain high up on the agenda for South Africans when it comes to both corporate and leisure travel trends. Expert opinion and ongoing booking support when planning holidays abroad are also important factors that South African travellers count on.



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Looking closer to home

In the current challenging economic environment, many South Africans are looking a lot closer to home when considering travel destinations. We've seen a definite increase in interest to locales such as Zanzibar, Botswana and Mozambique, all of which, remain relatively affordable. Destinations such as Thailand and Bali continue to be popular as the east is considered reasonable as the rand still gets you relatively far.

More bang for their buck

It has also been interesting to see that more and more South Africans are opting for all-inclusive travel packages consisting of flights, transfers, accommodation, as well as most meals and selected drinks. Likewise, cruises make up yet another travel option that has increasingly grown in popularity. Both these trends stem from the fact that majority of South Africans don't want any unexpected surprises when it comes to cost, with people looking for maximum "bang for their buck".

Regarding foreign tourists travelling to South Africa, the local tourism industry remains buoyant. South Africa as a travel destination, in particular, is naturally appealing to foreign tourists who are able to

leverage from a cost perspective.

Comparatively speaking, tourists are also able to access a number of exceptional four and five-star hotel establishments (some of the best in the world, I might add) for which you cannot easily find an equivalent in many parts of Europe, for example. One of the major draw cards for foreign tourists are South Africa's diverse natural beauty and vibrant multicultural society.

In SA, you could quite easily be enjoying an early morning game drive in a reserve, and then move on to sipping a cocktail whilst overlooking Camps Bay later that same day. Ultimately, for local and international travellers alike, South African locations and travel experiences are quickly and easily accessible. This allows tourists to comprehensively tour the country at a fairly low cost. Not to mention the fact that there is a wide array of top quality local cuisine which is also extremely affordable.

In store vs online

While globally more customers are booking and comparing online, the same is not true locally. Most SA travellers are still booking their flights in store. South Africans want the added peace of mind that their hard-earned money is being entrusted to a reputable travel organisation with expert knowledge and experience, not to mention 24-hour support.

Through the last two decades, travel planning has changed somewhat from when you initially went to see a travel agent to decide your travel plans. Nowadays much international travel is planned online with consumers also taking time to read online reviews, ahead of visiting a store. Customers rely on travel experts to confirm their online research and find the best value and offerings.

While many South Africans prefer person to person contact when booking their travel, Flight Centre continues to embrace the latest technological trends in order to remain relevant. For instance, our company ensures all signing of travel documentation is paperless and seamless. Balancing technology with our physical bricks and mortar component is something I believe we have done very successfully, much like Amazon opting to maintain both a physical and online presence in the United States.

Having entered the South African market post-1994, Flight Centre Travel Group is currently one of the largest travel businesses in Africa, which continues to deliver consistently strong results. Going forward a key focus will be on increasing online play to ensure continued financial health as well as corporate growth. We anticipate another stellar financial year ensuring South Africans continue to travel, both locally and abroad.

ABOUT ANDREW STARK

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