

Top six destinations for South African travellers in 2017

British Airways has made its list of the top six destinations for South African travellers in 2017:

London



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Unsurprisingly London tops the list. A perennial favourite for South Africans from gap-year students to parents on S.K.I. (Spend the Kids Inheritance) holidays, the UK capital has everything to offer from the finesse of the Chelsea Flower Show to the fervor of the FA Cup Final.

Sport, culture, and history are certainly among the reasons to visit London and a British Airways 2016 survey of 4,000 travellers found that South Africans are more familiar with UK sport and history than their European counterparts.

With a choice of A380 services from Johannesburg and an extended summer schedule from Cape Town, there are plenty of flights to choose from. "With up to 30 flights a week, we're offering more seats to London from South Africa than we ever have before," says Sue Petrie, commercial manager for Southern Africa. "These include 10 weekly A380 services from Johannesburg and three weekly flights between Cape Town and Gatwick. There are up to 16 flights a week to Heathrow and Gatwick from Cape Town and double daily services from Johannesburg."

Paris



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A short hop across the channel, the romance, cuisine and sophistication of Paris remain as alluring as ever, not to mention Les Soldes – the regulated sales that start at major department stores and boutique shops on 11 January.

If it's more chic 2017 rather than discounted 2016 that you're into, then time your trip to be there between 22 and 26 January for Paris Fashion Week. And who could resist Paris in the spring and summer, particularly as the southern hemisphere starts slipping into winter? Naturally, there's plenty to see and do, a soupçon of which includes the French Open at Roland-Garros from May 22 to June 11; the Taste of Paris, which brings together top restaurants, food and wine producers from 18 to 21 May; and the Jazz Festival À Saint-Germain-Des-Prés, offering performances in the heart of the city between 11 and 22 May.

Rome



kirkandrimi via [pixabay](#)

The Eternal City remains an eternal favourite and it's not hard to understand why. Where else but Rome does a modern European city blend so seamlessly with centuries of history and culture? Add to this the irrepressible Romans – the inventors of La Dolce Vita – and you have the potential for a rock concert in a museum. It's nothing new, the ancient Romans had 150 days a year set aside for fun and festivities.

Perhaps the best way to experience this is during Natale di Roma on 21 April when citizens celebrate their city's birthday. Most of the festivities take place at the Campidoglio. As you'd expect from a city founded in 753 BC, the Romans have had plenty of practice and mark the occasion by firing off huge numbers of fireworks. May Day is a more modern holiday, but celebrated with the same gusto, when trade unions organise a free concert in front of the basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano. Yep, it's pretty much a rock concert in a museum.

In fact, there's so much that happens in Rome throughout the year, you're unlikely to be there when there isn't something on. Even so, there's so much to see and experience you'll probably want to go back again, even if you didn't throw a coin in the Trevi Fountain.

New York



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Across the Atlantic, New York remains top of the pops. As well as iconic attractions such as the Statue of Liberty, the atmosphere of a Knicks game or arguably the best retail therapy in the world during the spring sales, for a city with such a big brash reputation, there's also an urbane side to New York.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art is one of the city's largest and most visited attractions, where it's easy to spend a day and not even scratch the surface of the extensive collection. Other must-sees for art lovers are the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

For the more musically inclined, Carnegie Hall is going off-site this season with a new production of West Side Story set in a restored factory in Queens. The show runs from 4 – 6 March. The Lincoln Center's Columbus Circle base is headlining jazz at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola and is hosting late-night sessions with up-and-coming artists.

Los Angeles



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On the West Coast, Los Angeles is still the critic's favourite, no doubt due to the burgeoning film business on the red-carpet route between Cape Town and LA. For anyone wanting to combine a bit of real-world Big Bang science with a large dollop of entertainment, the Science Behind Pixar Exhibition at the California Science Centre runs until 16 April.

If West Coast pop culture is more your thing, then you can catch "Hey! Ho! Let's Go: The Ramones and the Birth of Punk" at the Grammy Museum every Saturday and Sunday until 28 February. Alternatively, "Pop Art for the People: Roy Lichtenstein in LA" is on at the Skirball Cultural Center every Saturday and Sunday until 12 March.

New Orleans



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This year for the first time New Orleans has made the list and visiting early in the year it's easy to see why. The Mardi Gras parades start in January but run until Fat Tuesday or 28 February. The brightly festooned Mardi Gras floats carry krewe royalty and celebrities, while masked participants lead marching bands and riders on horseback through the streets.

Of course, even if you miss Mardi Gras there's still plenty to see and do in New Orleans, particularly in the historic French Quarter which offers visitors an abundance of restaurants, music clubs and shopping, all contained in an intimate neighbourhood.

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