

# Ticking all the boxes with newly launched Travelcheck

 By [Robin Fredericks](#)

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Travelcheck.co.za, South Africa's newest online travel booking website has been launched. The launch took place on 6 May 2019 at the Primedia Headquarters in Cape Town. CEO Odette Faling, who has worked in e-commerce in both Europe and Africa for the past 12 years, shared how the new company, a privately funded venture, offers flight and hotel bundles - and online booking across all major airlines and more than 300,000 hotels.



**The Travelcheck Team from left to right:** Claire Athias, Head of Operations, Danica Helfrich, Head of Marketing, Cary Parker, Travel Expert and Odette Faling, CEO.

The search engine features 'Quick Share' to facilitate itineraries and price sharing to third-party messaging apps like WhatsApp directly from the search results page. The Mix & Match feature allows travellers to book more than one airline in the same ticket – for example, travellers can choose to fly from Cape Town to London on British Airways and return on Turkish Airlines without booking separate segments.

We caught up with Faling to find out more about Travelcheck.co.za, why it was started, the challenges it's faced and what makes it different:

## ■ ***When, how and why was Travelcheck started?***

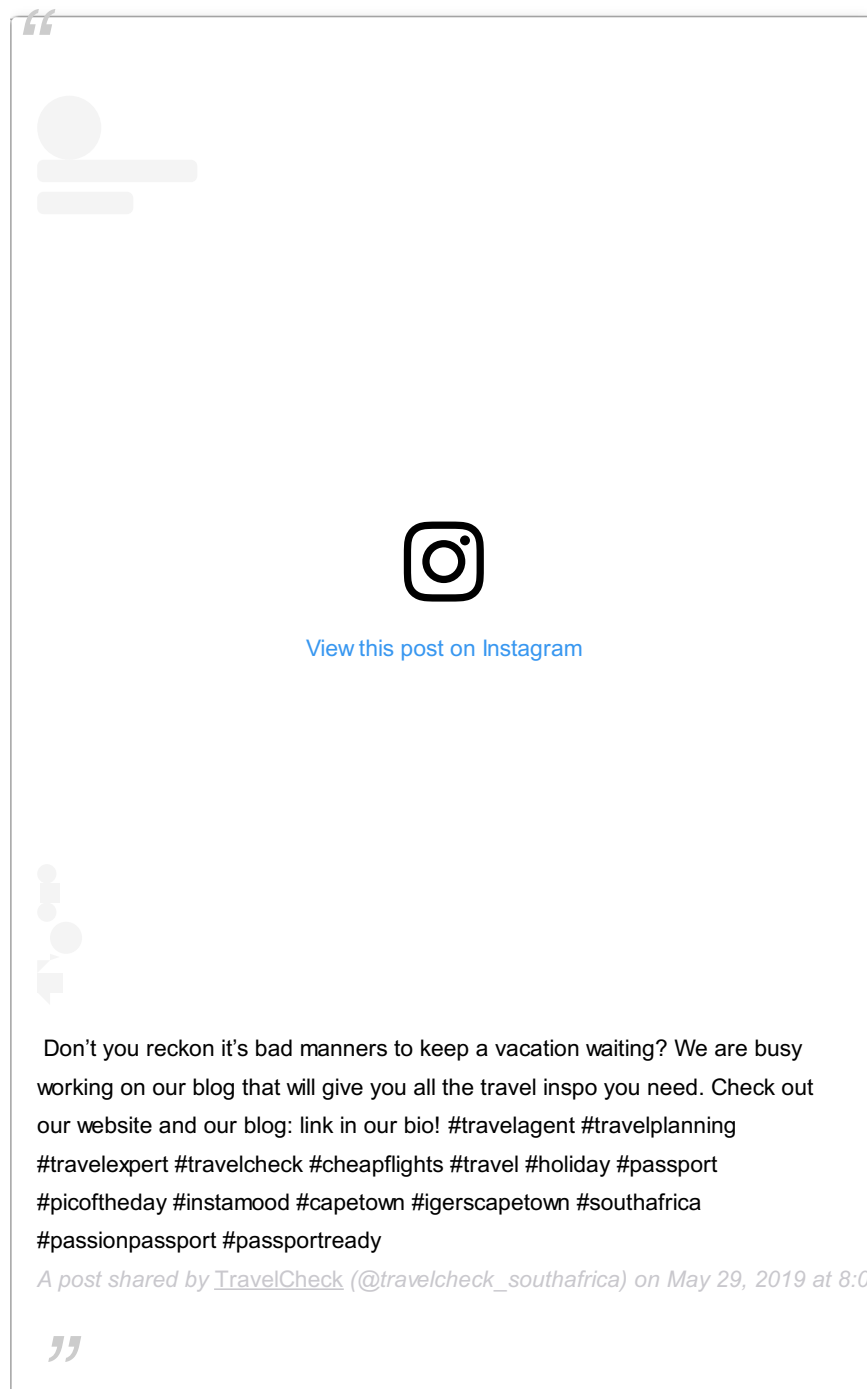
Travelcheck started about a month ago when we noticed a need in the market for bundled flights and hotels to be bookable online. We found that South Africans are paying more than what they should when booking holidays as no online travel agency offers the ability to package flights and hotels and custom-create trips. Booking travel in a bundle opens savings for travellers.

## ■ ***How does it work? What is its unique function?***

Travelcheck.co.za is an online travel agency. We build technology to help travellers save time and money when planning and booking trips. What sets us apart is our dynamic packages feature which lets people custom-create their trips, saving them up to 25% in the process. In addition, we offer a bunch of useful add-on services (such as travel insurance), we have a dedicated team available 24/7 for urgent queries, and our mix and match feature for domestic and international flights allow travellers to book multiple airlines in the same ticket; another money-saver!

📊 **You recently went live – what are some of the challenges you have overcome?**

Every day has been a challenge but that is the nature of startups. Getting our dynamic package capabilities ready one hour before launching was probably the most challenging from a technical standpoint.



📊 **What are some of your major highlights?**

We have only just launched so not too much to shout about yet. However, we have had over 50,000 visits to our website in the last 2 weeks as a result of digital campaigns we have run through social media and Google Ads. We hope this is an early indication of South Africans' need for a product like Travelcheck. Working with new and energised minds have also been a big highlight.

■ ***What is the importance of a start-up like Travelcheck?***

We offer South Africans variety and choice which is essential for finding fairly priced travel deals in the local market.

■ ***What is your competitive advantage or core differentiator?***

Travelcheck differentiates from other OTAs (online travel agencies) by offering the ability to book packages dynamically. What this means is that travellers can effectively use our website to bundle flights and hotels, and custom-create their own holidays which saves them money. Our algorithms are unique in that they learn from your previous searches and behaviour on the website. The advantages of this will become clearer as we scale.

■ ***What are you most looking forward to in the coming months, and what is the long-term vision for the company?***

We are looking forward to adding activities to Travelcheck as well as a sister brand that will focus on experience-driven searches.

■ ***Who do you admire most and/ or has been influential in your career?***

I admire disruptive but humble leaders like Richard Branson who have made their mark on the business world by challenging the status quo and backing it up with products and services that genuinely help people, at the same time having fun while doing it.

■ ***How do you define the word "success"?***

Success means different things to different people but in the context of Travelcheck, we define it as adding real value in the lives of people who travel.



■ ***What's next for Travelcheck? Where would you like to see the company go in the next 5 years?***

Right now, our focus is on ensuring a smooth customer experience, and building and growing a volume of users. We want to get to know our customers so that we can focus on real personalisation and AI-driven solutions for travellers. Like Google does in search, Travelcheck wants to tell people where they want to go rather than them having to think about it. This understanding of one's customers takes a while to build.

In Travelcheck, we aim to build a reputable brand that helps people with great prices and takes the pain out of travel planning.

*The OTA has partnered with third parties to offer useful ancillaries which can be added during the online booking, including: lost luggage insurance, a cancellation and refund policy and flight ticket amendments.*

You can connect with Travelcheck.co.za via [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

## ABOUT ROBIN FREDERICKS

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