

Summer holiday planning tips

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It's still quite cold all around the country, so to be thinking of summer holidays might seem a tad daft. But we all know what South Africa is like in summer, and that places and spaces are booked out quickly. Here's your guide on what to do now to ensure that you have the best summer vacation possible.



Decide on what type of holiday you want

Some people enjoy lazing by the pool or on the beach. Others prefer to walk the city streets and take in the neighbourhoods of the city that they are staying in. Many just want a busy family holiday that will keep the whole family entertained. And, some people have no choice but to opt for a working holiday as they perhaps don't have any more leave days left. Figure out what type of trip you intend on doing ahead of time. This will dictate where you stay, the accommodation you book, how far from the business hubs you need to be, and more. This should be the first thing on your list.

Book accommodation ahead of time

If you're looking for a getaway in popular coastal towns this summer, be warned - you might already have left it too late.

"We started getting enquiries about December bookings earlier this year already," says Clinton Thom, General Manager of Radisson Blu Hotel Waterfront. "And while we're not at 100% capacity as yet, we would advise anyone wanting a spot to book early. Seaside spots such as ours fill up quickly over this period," he warns.

Change things up if needed

Sometimes you don't get the beach holiday you planned because spaces are full. This might be a good time to opt for something completely different. South Africans tend to visit the Kruger Park more during the winter months as it's easier to spot wildlife then. However, the summer season has its perks too.

Anton Gillis, CEO of Kruger Gate Hotel, notes that this is the season for newborns in the park. “November and December is baby season for many of the animals in the Kruger Park,” notes Gillis. “And it promises to be a truly special sighting if you’re lucky enough to witness a newborn wildlife when out on safari”.

Not only that, but this time of year is also perfect for ornithologists - professional and aspiring - and there are many migrant birds that call Kruger their home during these months. It’s not just the beach destinations that have something to offer during summer.

Make those dinner reservations

Popular restaurants fill up quickly and often ahead of time. If you’re looking to grab a special dinner at the latest Luke Dale Roberts restaurant, it’s best to make that reservation now. You will be disappointed if you were to try it only a few weeks from now.

Even if you think your restaurant of choice won’t be full because perhaps it’s not run by one of SA’s top chefs, book ahead of time anyway. At least then you know it’s all locked in and there will be no worries on the day.

Track changes in the cost of flights

If you plan on flying to your summer holiday and you haven’t yet booked air tickets, you can monitor the prices if you are not yet ready to commit. Websites such as Cheapflights.co.za allow you to track specific sets of flights over time. Every time there is a price change, you will receive a notification.

This will help you keep track of how much airfare is either decreasing or increasing, but it will also alert you to lower-than-usual prices.

Take advantage of reward systems

Hotels, accommodation and holiday companies have rewards systems that bolster their offerings to give more to those who join these rewards and loyalty programmes. Radisson Rewards, for example, offers room discounts, member-only offers, and more. But there are other travel rewards initiatives, too. If you are planning to travel anytime soon, now is the time to join these programmes. There are discounts to be had across the board that the whole family can take advantage of.

Book activities that everyone enjoys

Get the whole group involved in choosing activities - and compromise if there’s an activity you’re not keen on, but the rest are. Once you have all decided which ones you are keen on doing, lock these in with a booking. Doing so will not only secure your spot, but knowing what’s to come will get everyone excited for the trip.

Following this advice will ensure that there is little to stress or worry about closer to the time. The only thing left to do is to have fun!

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