

Cape Town Tourism looks to Muslim travel to boost local tourism

By 2020, approximately 26% of the world's population will be Muslim, but most importantly for tourism destinations like Cape Town, Muslim tourism is already one of the fastest growing sectors - with visitor spending predicted to reach \$220bn within the next three years.

With this in mind, Cape Town Tourism has instituted a programme focused on making the Mother City attractive to the global Muslim tourism market...



Image source: Gallo/Getty

While building on existing marketing strategies is key, it is also imperative to reach out to smaller existing source markets and expand offerings appealing to those markets. Cape Town Tourism's Muslim tourism programme is put in place with a view to prepare the city's establishments and attractions in terms of capacity for appealing to the Muslim travellers' specific needs.



Cape Town learns the language of the Muslim traveller

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Enver Duminy, CEO of Cape Town Tourism says: "Every year, we monitor where our visitors come from and the growth or decline in those patterns; what we have realised is that while key source markets exist, the opportunities for growth can come from outside those markets, which is why an initiative such as encouraging Muslim-friendly tourism holds such potential to boost our tourism economy."

The initiative also celebrates the rich culture of Cape Town for the benefit of locals. In that regard, Duminy says: "The city boasts a rich Muslim history with the Cape Malay community making up around a quarter of our population. Cape Town is also where South Africa's first Muslim community was set up and is home to the oldest Mosque in the country."

"Our local heritage gives rise to a global opportunity to increase our tourism numbers by welcoming the international Muslim traveller to our city which also, in turn, supports the existing culture and businesses of Cape Town's Muslim community through tourism."



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In the global tourism sector, the Muslim travel market is extensively recognised as a prominent growing sector, projected to be well worth \$200bn by 2020, according to the MasterCard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2015, which is the most comprehensive research that has been released on the sector.

A recent study has revealed that in 2015 the estimated total Muslim visitor arrivals were 117 million representing close to 10% of the entire travel economy. This global forecast is set to grow to 168 million visitors by 2020 and 11% of the market segment.

The drive to attract the Muslim visitor is part of a larger marketing strategy that's designed to ensure that, in all aspects of tourism, Cape Town can hold its own as a competitive player on the world stage.

"The sheer size of the growing Muslim travel market makes it common sense to ensure that we're ready to welcome visitors from this market. Whether those visitors come from the Middle East, North Africa, Asia or even from our traditional source markets such as Germany or the UK, we must provide top-notch travel experiences to the Muslim market," concludes Duminy.

South Africa is one of the five most popular non-organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) destinations in the global Muslim travel market.

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