



Consideration for South Africa remains stable

YouGov research shows consumers still consider South Africa as a destination for travel despite turbulent year

London, 31 March 2021. As the UK follows a roadmap out of lockdown and hopes that international borders will re-open in the coming months, travellers are looking towards the summer and late 2021 for long-haul trips. Whilst South Africa currently sits on the “red list” of countries requiring hotel quarantine on return, there is a positive outlook from consumers considering South Africa as a travel destination according to a new consumer study by South African Tourism and YouGov*. The tourism board has investigated the impact of the coverage around the South African variant linked to the destination, and the British public’s intent to travel, and found that over half of respondents (53%) would consider travelling to South Africa on holiday, which increases to almost three quarters (72%) for the 18–34-year-old age bracket. Only 14% of those who wouldn’t consider South Africa identify the ‘South African Variant’ as a reason. Other reasons include prioritising another destination over South Africa.

From a UK trade perspective, operators continue to see a strong appetite for travel to South Africa. Ben Davis, Product Director, *Titan Travel* commented: “South Africa has secured fourth place in Titan’s top 20 destinations for future travel as found in our latest Travel Trends Report. Based on passenger volume, this shows that our customers are longing to return to the country as soon as international travel resumes. South Africa was our fifth bestselling destination for 2020 when we launched last year’s report, so it’s great to see it’s on the up.” Meanwhile, *Abercrombie & Kent* has reported that South Africa has consistently been a popular enquiry over the past few months, on the back of several years as one of their top sellers.

South Africa’s COVID-19 cases have significantly and consistently dropped since the peak on 12 January, and now stand at 20,869 active cases across the country (a 90% decrease in cases)**. The country has deployed a mass vaccination programme to curb the spread of the virus with 54 vaccine sites escalated across the country. Last year, South Africa received the *WTTC Safe Travels stamp*, and over the last six-months local tourism businesses, hotels and attractions have been reshaping and adjusting their product offerings in line with new protocols to be ready to safely welcome international tourists once again.

Other findings from the YouGov research reveal that “scenic beauty” is the main reason for considering South Africa according to 73% of respondents, followed by “wildlife and safari” (66%) and “history and culture” (53%). Interestingly the motivation of culture was significantly higher in the 18-24 age group at 59%, compared to 37% for the 55+ age group, showing that culture is a significant pull for younger travellers.

With an abundance of beautiful natural landscapes, vast national parks full of wildlife and secluded rugged coastline South Africa offers an ideal post-pandemic destination, tapping into the growing demand for space and seclusion. The country's welcoming locals and diverse cultural heritage makes the destination a perfect choice for those seeking human connection, culture and meaningful travel on their post-pandemic holiday.

Kgomotso Ramothea, Acting Hub Head at South African Tourism for the UK & Ireland:

"We are delighted to see from our YouGov research that there continues to be a strong consumer appetite for travel to South Africa in the not too distant future. South Africa has implemented robust social distancing and hygiene protocols to ensure we are ready to welcome tourists later this year. The destination had already instigated stringent testing requirements where visitors had to present to border officials a paper copy of a negative COVID-19 test taken in the 72 hours before departure. This will continue to be a requirement when travel re-opens.

We hope that the UK ban on international travel is lifted from 17 May. If so, and following a successful vaccine rollout in South Africa which began earlier this month and a continued decline in new COVID-19 cases, we are hopeful that we'll be able to welcome visitors in time for the South African summer season and look forward to working with the UK travel trade to ensure the success of South Africa's tourism recovery".

Tour operators and travel industry partners who would like to access images, request training and learn more about the South African Tourism UK & Ireland team, can find out more at the below channels:

- Website: <http://bit.ly/TravelTradeUK>
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/southafrica.uk
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/southafrica.uk/
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/southafricauk>

For more details about South Africa visit:
<http://bit.ly/SATCOVIDUPDATES>

-Ends-

Note to editors

***Survey Results:** All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,094 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 12th - 15th March 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

****COVID-19 cases:** As of 28 March 2021, reported by the Ministry Health Republic of South Africa

South African Tourism is the national tourism agency responsible for the marketing of South Africa as a preferred tourist and business events destination.

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