

TOURISM TUESDAYS

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#TourismTuesdays

SEPTEMBER 2026 EDITION

southafrica.net

Tourism Tuesdays is a publication of South African Tourism



Inspiring new ways



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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

As we wrap up Tourism Month, also known as Heritage Month in South Africa, we are happy to share an edition that celebrates the people, places, stories and experiences that continue to shape our tourism sector.

In this edition, we lead the transformative work being driven through the Tourism Transformation Fund, while reflecting on activities and celebrations marking World Tourism Day. We also reflect on the importance of our diverse heritage and the role tourism plays in bringing our stories, culture and identity to life.

We also spotlight SANBI's #WeAreSANBI campaign, which invites South Africans to discover the people, landscapes and experiences that make the country's national botanical and zoological gardens so distinctive. The campaign places local garden voices at the heart of Tourism Month, encouraging South Africans to explore these remarkable spaces, connect with nature and experience the biodiversity on their doorstep.

With exhibitor registration now open, we look ahead to [Meetings Africa 2027](#), taking place from 22–24 February, as South Africa prepares to welcome the continent's business events sector to Johannesburg.

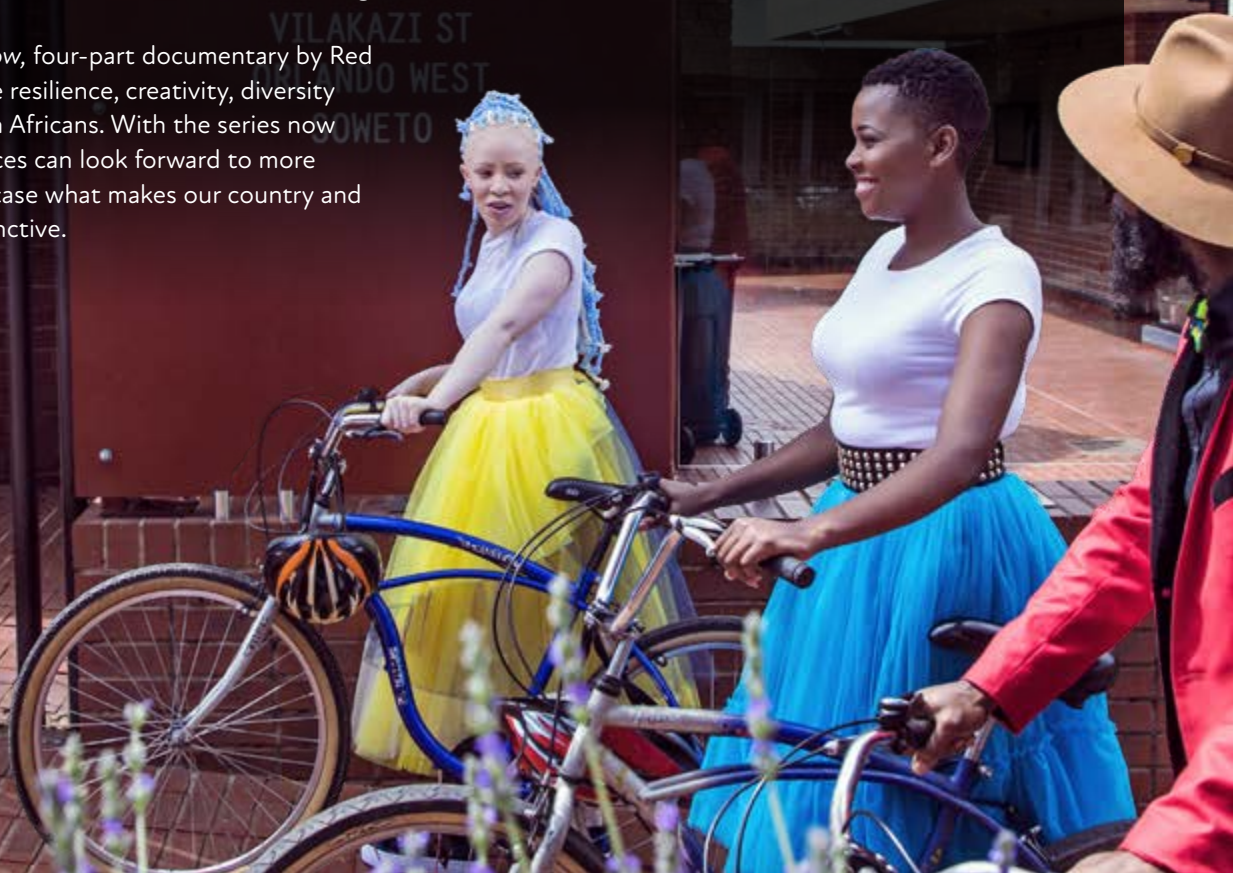
The *What We Know*, four-part documentary by Red Bull celebrates the resilience, creativity, diversity and spirit of South Africans. With the series now underway, audiences can look forward to more stories that showcase what makes our country and its people so distinctive.

Nominations for the Gastronomy Tourism Awards 2026, are now open, celebrating the people and businesses using food, wine and culinary experiences to give visitors more reasons to explore South Africa. We share updates from our international markets, including South African Tourism's engagement with the Mexican MICE market, and highlight the opening of the Club Med South Africa Beach & Safari Resort in KwaZulu-Natal, a significant investment bringing together leisure, safari, job creation and local economic opportunity.

We also highlight South African Tourism's call to private and provincial tourism stakeholders to create market access opportunities for South African tourism businesses in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, strengthening connections with key international markets and creating new opportunities for growth.

As usual, we finish off with our TGCSA Corner, where we take a closer look at benchmarking and 5-Star Premium, highlighting the standards and insights that continue to support excellence across South Africa's accommodation sector.

Regards,
Tourism Tuesdays Team





Heritage, Reimagined: 10 Ways to Experience South Africa Differently

Heritage is not only found in places that preserve the past. It is also present in the artists shaping new conversations, the chefs reinventing familiar flavours, the designers turning cultural references into contemporary fashion, and the communities whose stories continue to influence the places they call home. Across South Africa, visitors can experience heritage as something living, evolving and open to discovery.

Instead of simply viewing history from a distance, travellers can walk through creative precincts, visit museums housed in transformed buildings, taste indigenous ingredients, explore ancient landscapes and meet the people keeping cultural expression relevant today. These experiences offer a different way to connect with South

Africa: actively, locally and through the senses.

1 See Africa through contemporary art at Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town

Housed in a reimagined historic grain silo at the V&A Waterfront, Zeitz MOCAA brings together contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora. A visit offers an opportunity to explore how artists engage with identity, memory, migration, belonging and everyday life. The building itself forms part of the experience: an industrial structure has been transformed into a major cultural institution, showing how heritage can be preserved while being given a new purpose. [Explore the experience](#)

2 Walk through an ancient kingdom at Mapungubwe National Park, Limpopo

For visitors seeking heritage with a

sense of adventure, Mapungubwe combines archaeology, landscape and wildlife. The Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre and guided heritage tours introduce the story of an early southern African kingdom and its trading connections. Visitors can explore the museum, learn about the Golden Rhino and walk through landscapes associated with the Mapungubwe people. Here, heritage is not separated from nature; it is experienced through the land, the ruins and the wider cultural landscape. [Plan a Mapungubwe visit](#)

3 Journey through human origins at Maropeng, Gauteng

At the Cradle of Humankind, heritage reaches back beyond recorded history. Maropeng's interactive visitor experience takes guests through the development of the planet, human evolution and the discoveries that have helped explain our shared origins. The experience

combines science, storytelling and interactive interpretation, making ancient heritage accessible to families, curious travellers and international visitors. A visit can also be paired with the nearby Sterkfontein Caves, subject to current visitor arrangements. [Explore Maropeng](#)

4 Meet makers and creatives at Victoria Yards, Johannesburg

Victoria Yards demonstrates how an old industrial site can become a lively centre for creativity, enterprise and community. Visitors can take part in tours led by artists, designers and small-business owners, explore studios and gardens, and see how locally made products come to life. The experience is particularly relevant to modern heritage, because it connects the history of a place with the people actively shaping its next chapter. [Book or enquire about a tour](#)

5 Reflect on shared memory at Freedom Park, Pretoria

Freedom Park offers a heritage experience rooted in remembrance, spirituality and the many histories that have shaped South Africa. Its memorial spaces, museum and symbolic landscapes encourage visitors to engage with the country's past while considering ideas of reconciliation, nation-building and shared identity. Rather than presenting heritage as a single story, the site brings different experiences and historical periods into one visitor journey. [Visit Freedom Park](#)

6 Taste heritage through contemporary South African cuisine

Food offers one of the most immediate ways to experience culture. Across the country, chefs are using indigenous ingredients and familiar dishes as the starting point for contemporary menus. Sorghum, marula, amasi, pumpkin, fermented flavours and other local ingredients

are being interpreted through modern techniques and new dining formats. Visitors can make the experience personal by choosing a restaurant, food market, tasting menu or chef-led experience that connects the meal to its cultural context. [Discover food and travel experiences](#)

7 Explore heritage through contemporary African fashion

South African fashion provides another way to see heritage in motion. Designers draw on beadwork, textile traditions, regional identities, colour and pattern, while working within global fashion systems. Visitors can explore design studios, exhibitions, concept stores and curated markets to discover how cultural references are translated into clothing and objects for contemporary audiences. The experience is not simply about buying a product; it is about understanding the ideas and histories behind its design. [Discover South African fashion and design](#)

8 Hear living traditions in South African music

A live performance can be a direct encounter with heritage. From maskandi and mbaqanga to amapiano, modern folk and electronic music, South African artists continue to reinterpret older sounds and social experiences for new audiences. Visitors can seek out live venues, festivals, music events and artist-led performances, where heritage is not displayed behind glass but expressed through rhythm, language, movement and collective participation. [Explore South African travel inspiration](#)

9 Discover contemporary ceramics and craft

Ceramics and craft reveal how material traditions can be carried into the present. In studios, galleries and design markets, visitors can

encounter artists working with clay, textiles, beadwork and other forms of making. Many contemporary practitioners reference inherited techniques, symbols and stories while experimenting with scale, form and function. A studio visit or workshop offers a more active experience, allowing visitors to see the process, meet makers and take home an object with a story. [Find experiences across South Africa](#)

10 Explore the heritage of a living urban neighbourhood

Some of South Africa's most meaningful heritage experiences are found in neighbourhoods rather than formal attractions. Guided walks, local eateries, music venues, galleries, markets and community-led tours can help visitors understand how a place has changed and what remains important to the people who live there. Whether exploring Soweto, Newtown, Durban's cultural precincts or another urban community, the emphasis is on listening, engaging and experiencing everyday culture rather than simply passing through. [Start planning a South African journey](#)

Modern heritage invites us to move beyond the idea that culture belongs only to the past. It lives in the places people create, the food they prepare, the music they make, the stories they share and the landscapes they continue to care for. For local and international visitors, these experiences offer an opportunity to explore South Africa in a way that is personal, participatory and full of discovery.

Come find your connection to South Africa's living heritage – and come find your joy



Resilience, Transformation and Opportunity: The Story Behind Hotel 247 in White River

By Phathu Luvhengo

Located in White River, Mpumalanga, Hotel 247 offers a convenient base for tourists visiting Kruger National Park and the scenic Panorama Route. With a newly refurbished restaurant, a conference room, and alternative energy infrastructure, visitors can enjoy their stay in 'the place of rising sun'.

The newly refurbished Hotel 247's restaurant was officially opened on 18 September 2026, demonstrating how government-funded black entrepreneurs are finding their ground and transforming South Africa's tourism industry.

Launched by Deputy Minister of Tourism, Maggie Sotyu, during





Police Deputy Minister Cassel Mathale, Tourism Deputy Minister Maggie Sotyu, Hotel 247 owner Khosi Mthalande and NEF CEO Mziwabantu Dayimani

2026 Tourism Month, the story behind the hotel tells of a resilient entrepreneur who, when given the opportunity by the government, can positively impact the lives of local residents.

Deputy Minister Sotyu said the official launch was more than opening a restaurant; it opened doors to ownership, investment, enterprise, and opportunity. “Hotel 247 gives us a tangible example of what transformation should look like when it moves beyond policy and becomes visible in the economy. Transformation must move from policy to practice; from aspiration to ownership; from

access to finance to a functioning business; and from investment to jobs, growth, and opportunity,” she said.

Khosi Mthalande acquired the hotel in 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when tourism had effectively come to a standstill and chose to build. She rebranded and repositioned the property as Hotel 247 and committed her own capital, experience, and energy to making the business work.

Hotel 247 is a 100% black woman-owned, three-star establishment offering 52 rooms, a restaurant with a bar, and conferencing services.

The project has benefited from a R1.65 million grant through the Tourism Transformation Fund (TTF), a R1.65 million NEF senior loan and R242,600 in alternative-energy funding. The establishment currently employs 33 people, while the investment has created five additional permanent jobs and supported 15 temporary jobs during the renovation phase.

The investment has enabled the modernisation of the restaurant, including upgraded furniture and equipment, with seating capacity increasing from 140 to 200 patrons. The hotel has also introduced alternative-energy infrastructure to strengthen its operational resilience.

Mthalande said the funding has realised her vision and represents another step in her efforts to strengthen the establishment’s position in the hospitality market.



[Click here](#) to read the full media statement.



South African Tourism Opens Market Access Opportunities in North and Central Europe

South African Tourism is partnering with the private sector and provincial tourism stakeholders to create market access opportunities for South African tourism businesses in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany.

South African travel trade partners, tourism products and business owners are invited to apply for two SA Tourism platforms taking place in January 2027:

- **The Getaway by Vakantiebeurs 2027:**

A South African Pavilion at Jaarbeurs in Utrecht, Netherlands, from 7–10 January 2027, connecting businesses directly with Dutch consumers and the travel trade.

- **Market Access Trade Engagements:**

A multi-city B2B programme from 12–22 January 2027,

connecting South African businesses with tour operators and travel agents across eight cities in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany.

The initiatives are designed to help South African businesses, including SMMEs, build relationships with international buyers, showcase distinctive experiences and expand their access to key European source markets.

Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium generated 481,267 tourist arrivals to South Africa in 2025, representing 34% of all arrivals from Europe. Growth has continued in 2026, with the three markets recording 279,537 arrivals between January and July.

The 2027 programmes will also incorporate digital innovation, including the development of market-ready itineraries with

SA Tourism's hub teams and digital elevator pitches for participating businesses, with AI-enabled translations available for international buyers.

Applications close on 1 October 2026 at 17:00 SAST.

For application documents and full participation details, contact netrade@southafrica.net.

APPLY: Vakantiebeurs | B2B Multi-City Trade Engagements





Celebrating Tourism Month 2026

Tourism Month 2026 culminated in the World Tourism Day celebrations in Limpopo, with Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille as the main speaker, highlighting digital transformation as a driver of tourism growth.

Under this year's theme, "Growing South Africa's Tourism Sector in the Digital Era," the celebrations highlighted the role of technology and artificial intelligence in promoting destinations,

expanding market access and creating opportunities for tourism businesses and communities.

Limpopo took centre stage, showcasing its rich wildlife, cultural heritage, rural experiences, food, music and growing tourism opportunities. The Minister emphasised that while the tourism sector embraces the digital era, people, hospitality and authentic experiences remain at its heart.

Take a Sho't Left. Discover Limpopo. Discover South Africa.





Meetings Africa 2027: Exhibitor Registration Now Open

South African Tourism has opened exhibitor registration for Meetings Africa 2027, inviting businesses and destinations from across the continent to take part in Africa's premier business events trade show.

Taking place from 22-24 February 2027 at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg, the 2027 edition builds on 20 years of Meetings Africa and has been shaped by recent engagements and feedback from the business events sector.

The focus for 2027 will be on creating greater value, stronger

business connections and meaningful opportunities for exhibitors, buyers and partners, while continuing to strengthen Africa's position as a competitive business events destination.

The 2026 edition brought together buyers from 53 countries, including more than 300 hosted buyers, and 325 exhibiting companies, generating more than 6 440

confirmed business meetings over two days.

Meetings Africa 2027 will once again connect African destinations, convention bureaus, venues, hotels, professional conference organisers, destination management companies and other business events products with qualified international and regional buyers.

The event is delivered by South African Tourism in partnership with the Johannesburg Tourism Company, Sandton Convention Centre and Southern Sun.

[Click here to register.](#)

South African Tourism and Red Bull partner

to take South African stories to the world through **What We Know** during Tourism Month



Upcoming episodes:

- Episode 2: 1 October 2026
- Episode 3: 8 October 2026
- Episode 4: 15 October 2026



Watch Trailer Here

What is it about South Africa that produces people capable of competing and winning on the world stage?

Is it our resilience? Our diversity? Our communities? Our ability to find opportunity in adversity? Or is there something less tangible, a uniquely South African spirit that drives people to push beyond what is expected of them?

These are some of the questions at the heart of What We Know, a new four-part documentary series from Red Bull, presented in collaboration with South African Tourism.

The collaboration brings together Red Bull's global strength in sport, culture and storytelling with South African Tourism's mandate to showcase the country as a destination through authentic and compelling stories.

Hosted by comedian, actor and storyteller Eugene Khoza, the series explores what makes South Africans capable of competing and succeeding on the world stage. Through a road trip across the country, Eugene connects with athletes, gamers, musicians, influencers and everyday South Africans, while discovering the communities, cultures and places that have shaped them.

GASTRONOMY TOURISM AWARDS

Nominations Open for Gastronomy Tourism Awards 2026

Food and drink are an increasingly important part of the South African travel experience, showcasing the country's rich culinary heritage, creativity and diversity.

Nominations are now open for the third annual Gastronomy Tourism Awards 2026, presented by Gastronomy Africa. The awards celebrate the people, businesses and experiences helping position South Africa as a distinctive culinary destination.

The public and industry are invited to nominate individuals, businesses or brands in five categories:

- **Best in Gastronomy Tourism:** Fine & Casual Dining
- **Best in Gastronomy Tourism:** Cultural Dining
- **Best in Gastronomy Tourism:** Sustainability
- **Best in Gastronomy Tourism:** Immersive Experience
- **Best in Gastronomy Tourism:** Wine Brand

[Click Here](#) to nominate yourself or someone making a meaningful contribution to gastronomy tourism and helping give visitors more reasons to discover South Africa.

The awards form part of the Gastronomy Africa Conference & Expo 2026, taking place at Breakers Resort in Umhlanga, Durban, from 19-20 October 2026.

Nominations close on 30 September 2026.



IBTM America: South African Tourism Strengthens MICE Opportunities in Mexico

South African Tourism, through the South African National Convention Bureau (SANCB), strengthened its engagement with Mexico's business-events market through its participation at IBTM Americas in Mexico City from 19–20 August.

SANCB held 62 meetings and engagements with buyers, trade partners and media, with strong interest in incentive travel, corporate meetings and group travel. Mexican buyers were particularly interested in South Africa's unique combination of world-class business-events infrastructure and leisure experiences, including safari, luxury accommodation, wine,

culinary, adventure and exclusive destinations.

The engagement was further strengthened on 27 August when Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille hosted a dedicated webinar with the Mexican travel trade. Discussions focused on initiatives to facilitate travel between the two countries, including South Africa's Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA), tourism cooperation and ongoing aviation discussions.

"Mexico is an important growth market for South Africa, particularly for meetings, incentives and business travel," said Minister de Lille. "South

Africa offers Mexican delegates the best of both worlds: world-class business-events infrastructure and unforgettable safari, cultural, culinary, wine and adventure experiences."

The combined trade and government engagements reinforce South Africa's coordinated approach to growing the Mexican market and positioning the country as a destination where business and leisure come together seamlessly.





Tourism Unveils New Club Med Resort in KwaZulu-Natal

Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille has unveiled Club Med South Africa Beach & Safari, the country's first all-inclusive Club Med resort, at Tinley Manor on KwaZulu-Natal's North Coast.

The R2 billion-plus development combines a beachfront resort with a safari experience, showcasing South Africa's natural beauty while strengthening the province's tourism offering and supporting local economic development.

The project has already made a significant contribution to job creation, generating more than 2,300 direct and indirect jobs during construction, with a further 600 permanent direct jobs and an estimated 1,500 indirect jobs

created following the resort's opening.

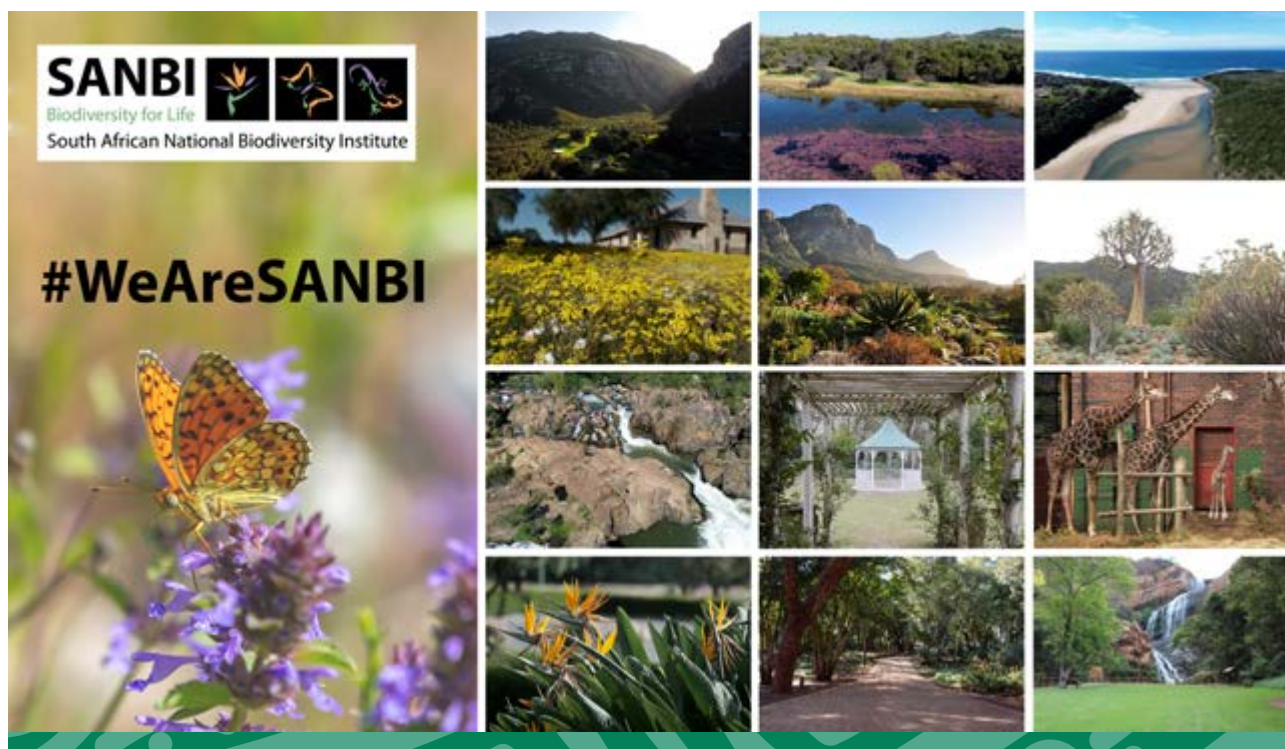
The resort is also supporting local communities through employment, procurement, supplier participation, skills development and community initiatives. About 84% of Beach Resort employees are South African, while all employees at Vikela Safari Lodge were recruited from surrounding villages.

Minister de Lille welcomed the investment as a vote of confidence in South Africa's tourism sector and highlighted the importance of partnerships that create lasting economic opportunities for communities.

The opening comes as international tourism continues to grow, with South Africa recording 6.58 million international visitor arrivals from January to July 2026, up 12.4% compared with the same period in 2025.

The Minister also called on the tourism sector to prioritise sustainability and encouraged visitors to explore the people, places and stories beyond the resort.





SANBI puts local garden voices at the heart of Tourism Month with #WeAreSANBI

During Tourism Month, the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) invites South Africans to discover its remarkable national botanical, and zoological gardens close to home through the #WeAreSANBI social media campaign.

The #WeAreSANBI introduced audiences to the people, landscapes and experiences that make the country's national gardens distinctive. A consolidated video featuring all the gardens opened the campaign, followed by individual garden videos published every weekday until 18 September. SANBI manages the 11 national botanical and two zoological gardens featured in the campaign, each offering its own tourism experiences, conservation work,

and connections to surrounding communities.

"Tourism Month is an invitation for South Africans to rediscover the extraordinary places within their own country," said Shonisani Munzhedzi, Chief Executive Officer of SANBI. "Our gardens offer welcoming and affordable ways for people to experience biodiversity, spend meaningful time together and appreciate why these natural spaces must be protected for future generations."

One campaign, many local stories

At the heart of #WeAreSANBI are the garden managers who care for these destinations and understand what makes each one special. Through a series of short videos, they shared the character

of their gardens, introduced some of their most memorable features and explained how the spaces contribute to conservation, environmental education and community engagement.

South Africans and visitors to our country are invited to follow #WeAreSANBI throughout Tourism Month and beyond, discover the garden closest to them and experience the country's biodiversity for themselves.

Information about individual gardens, entrance fees, operating hours and annual membership is available at www.sanbi.org.

For More
information
Click Here





TOURISM GRADING COUNCIL SA

TGCSA CORNER

[visit southafrica.net](http://visit.southafrica.net)

SEPTEMBER 2026

Benchmark Property

An array of outstanding properties that make every visit a pleasure.

Benchmark Properties are accommodation establishments that have been specially selected by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) Property Approvals Committee because they offer an exceptional visitor experience. Selection is based on the overall quality and uniqueness of the property, rather than its star grading or type of establishment.



Sandy Creek Safaris

Location: Thabazimbi, Limpopo

Set against the Kransberg mountain range on the edge of Marakele National Park in the Waterberg, Sandy Creek Safaris is a family-owned private game lodge offering seven en-suite rooms and newly built two-bedroom luxury chalets with private terraces and pools. Guests enjoy an infinity pool, spa, lounge and dining area, alongside guided bush walks, game drives and easy access to Marakele Predator Park and Adventures with Elephants.

Contact details

✉ info@sandycreeksafaris.com ☎ +27 65 685 3199
🌐 <https://sandycreeksafaris.com>



SEPTEMBER 2026

Premium Awards

An array of outstanding properties that make every visit a pleasure.

The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa's 5-star premium classification represents the highest level of luxury accommodation in the country. This special designation distinguishes exceptional establishments from standard 5-star venues, awarded only to places offering outstanding quality, personalised service, and memorable experiences.



Jaci's Private Lodge

Location: Madikwe Game Reserve, North West

Reopened on 1 July 2026 following an extensive rebuild after the 2025 floods, Jaci's Private Lodge unites the celebrated Madikwe retreat under one refined new identity, offering six Safari Suites, four family-friendly Safari Suite Expeditions and three private villas including Kubu, Nare and Jaci's Madikwe House. The reimagined lodge preserves the warmth and distinctive design long defining the Jaci's brand, set within one of South Africa's most treasured Big Five reserves.

Contact details

✉ reservations@jacis.co.za ☎ +27 83 700 2071

🌐 jacis.co.za



Premium Properties



Cheetah Plains Private Game Reserve

Location: Sabi Sand Nature Reserve, Mpumalanga

Positioned in the north-eastern corner of the Sabi Sand Nature Reserve on the unfenced boundary of the Kruger National Park, Cheetah Plains comprises three architectural exclusive-use villas, Mapogo, Karula and Mvula, each accommodating between four and eight guests with a dedicated guide, tracker, butler and culinary team. The lodge operates entirely off-grid on solar power with private electric Land Cruisers for twice-daily game drives, setting a benchmark for sustainable ultra-luxury safari design.

Contact details

✉ reservations@cheetahplains.com ☎ +27 79 694 8430, 🌐 cheetahplains.com



Jabulani Safari

Location: Kapama Private Game Reserve, Limpopo

A Relais & Châteaux member and holder of Two Michelin Keys, Jabulani Safari is a five-star soulful safari lodge set within the Kapama Private Game Reserve in the Greater Kruger, offering six air-conditioned Superior Suites with private decks and plunge pools alongside the three-bedroom Zindoga Villa. The lodge is renowned for its resident rescued elephant herd and its adjacent HERD orphanage, South Africa's first dedicated elephant sanctuary.

Contact details

✉ res@jabulanisafari.com ☎ +27 12 460 7348
🌐 jabulanisafari.com

Congratulations to Park Hyatt

Congratulations to Park Hyatt Johannesburg who were voted Africa's Leading New Hotel 2026 at the World Travel Awards, announced at the Africa Gala Ceremony held at Diamonds Bijoux in Zanzibar, Tanzania, on 28 August.



The recognition arrives just over a year after the hotel opened on 1 July 2025 as the Park Hyatt brand's third address in Africa.

For a house of 31 rooms, the award reads less as a milestone than as a measure of how the team has settled into its work. Park Hyatt Johannesburg has built its service standards around what happens before a guest reaches the door. Each arrival is worked through in advance: previous stays are read, preferences are logged and carried forward, dietary needs reach the kitchen days ahead, and rooms are set the night before rather than on the morning of check-in. Housekeeping, concierge, front office and the kitchen sit in the same daily briefing, so a request made to one person is known to all of them by the time it matters.

UPCOMING EVENTS



**South African
Tourism Investment
Summit**

30 September to
1 October 2026

Johannesburg, Gauteng



The Loeries Awards

4 - 9 October 2026

Cape Town City Hall,
Western Cape



**Gastronomy
Tourism Awards**

19 - 21 October 2026

Umhlanga Durban,
KwaZulu-Natal



TBCSA Conference

27 & 28 October 2026

Sun City Resort,
North West



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