

Cape Town proves its mettle as Africa's events capital

Blessed with natural beauty, cultural attractions and sophisticated facilities, Cape Town has proven itself as a host of world-class events that draw in audiences and participants from across the world - winning the International Congress and Convention Association's number one city in Africa for business tourism events in 2017 and second-best overseas city in the world in the Condé Nast Readers Travel Awards in 2016.



Cape Town Carnival (Image Supplied)

Key events

Cape Town Carnival

One example is the annual show-stopping Cape Town Carnival, one of eight key events that will have contributed an estimated R3bn to the city's coffers last year. Every year the Cape Town Carnival sees an increase in overseas visitors coming to Cape Town to be a part of this spectacle with its incredible floats and magnificent performers that bring the city to life.

"We're constantly looking for innovative ways to maintain an exciting and invigorating experience at the Cape Town Carnival, and have had the privilege of visiting the Rio Carnival to get first-hand experience from that nearly-300-year-old iconic event," says Jay Douwes, CEO of the Cape Town Carnival, who has had seven years' experience in developing an internationally recognised carnival.



2018 Cape Town Carnival catalyst for creative economy growth, community building projects

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Cape Town Marathon

Other significant events on the Cape Town events calendar include the Cape Town Marathon, which secured IAAF gold-label status – the highest standard awarded by the international governing body of running – in just three years. "We worked incredibly hard to achieve this goal and we're exceptionally proud that this accolade has been bestowed on our Cape Town marathon," says Janet Welham, race director. The race had to secure an international elite running team, as

well as comply with stringent regulations to become the only IAAF Gold Label marathon in Africa.

The Cape Epic

Then there's the Cape Epic, a gruelling eight-day mountain-bike stage race classed as *hors catégorie* ("beyond categorisation") by the Union Cycliste Internationale which is a highlight on the professional racer's calendar. The Cape Epic takes more than 1,300 local and international mountain-bikers through various towns in the Western Cape in March every year. "The Cape Epic is the most-televised mountain-bike race in the world and has really put the Western Cape in the spotlight," says Sarah Harrop, marketing and communications manager for the Cape Epic.

Impact on local economy

Events such as these play a crucial role in attracting visitors to Cape Town. These visitors spend their money locally and have a positive impact on the local economy. For example, the Cape Town Carnival spectator accommodation is normally the largest visitor spending category and last year contributed 48% to spending by non-local visitors, amounting to over R6m.

Job creation is another benefit of hosting these top-class events. "Most of the jobs available might not be permanent, but the skills learnt can lead to a permanent job in the future," says JP Smith, Cape Town's mayoral committee member for safety, security and social services. One of the Cape Town Carnival's key priorities is to create employment and have a direct impact on job creation, particularly for the majority of semi-skilled and unskilled workers. "It also demonstrates that we can host major events safely and without incident", he added.

"Cape Town has showcased to the world that it can host world-class events and also provide facilities on a par with the standards expected from international visitors," says Anroux Marais, Western Cape Minister of Arts and Culture.

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