

Weak rand and affordable luxury beckon global travellers

By [Marc Wachsberger](#)

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In the face of unprecedented challenges, the tourism industry in South Africa has emerged as a beacon of hope and resilience. Earlier this year, Tourism Minister Patricia De Lille announced that [5.7 million](#) people visited our shores last year, an increase of 150% from the previous year. Additionally, The World Travel and Tourism Council predicts that the tourism sector will grow by [7.6%](#) annually over the next decade adding thousands of jobs and billions of Rands to the economy in the process.



Source: Supplied | Marc Wachsberger, CEO of The Capital Hotels, Apartments & Resorts

With each passing day, the country's allure is being rediscovered by international visitors seeking unforgettable experiences. The post-pandemic era has ushered in a remarkable recovery, and the future is bright for those with the ingenuity to seize their opportunities.

Thanks to our currency, cost of living and beautiful scenery, international visitors are incredibly keen on coming here. It also helps that we are a business hub on the continent. The upshot of it is that there are growth opportunities everywhere.

Currency advantage and affordable luxury

The weakness of the South African Rand presents a golden opportunity for international travellers to experience the country. The favourable exchange rates for visitors travelling to South Africa and our cost of living when compared to Europe and North America are translating into exceptional value for money.

Data from US travel experts shows the average room rate sitting at [\\$212](#) (+/- R3,800) as of the beginning of the year. In Europe, rates for many major cities have risen by anything from [6.2% to 10%](#). When you compare these to what you can get in South Africa at similar price points, it makes the country an attractive and affordable destination.

Demand is outstripping supply globally. This has the two-fold benefit of encouraging the growth of local room rates while also creating an environment where international travellers can save a lot more money here than they would be travelling

abroad.

Revitalised business travel

As home to the largest and [busiest](#) airport on the continent, South Africa has emerged as a thriving business travel hub. Hotels have become the new meeting places, providing sophisticated, reliable venues where people can meet without being concerned about power supply issues. South Africa's appeal extends beyond Europe and North America and its attraction as both a business and leisure destination has created a surge in visitors from India, China, and other emerging economies. The growth of bleisure (business leisure) travel has also resulted in travel approaching pre-pandemic levels.

For many international travellers, load shedding is not a train smash. We forget that intermittent power cuts are not unique to us so, many travellers are ok with experiencing them so long as their places of business are not too badly affected. This is especially true for business people coming from developing economies.

With South Africa recovering steadily from the devastating impact of the pandemic, our tourism industry, and the hoteliers that populate it, are in a strong position to capitalise on the coming growth. An unobstructed regulatory framework and forward-thinking industry players could well see South Africa surpass pre-pandemic tourism numbers much sooner than anyone envisioned.

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