

Trends set to shape local travel in 2020

By [Chelsey Hale](#)

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It can be challenging keeping up to speed with what's happening locally in travel without spending hours combing through Google and downloading the latest reports.



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Below are highlights of a few key trends set to impact South Africa's tourism industry in 2020.

More multi-gen travel

Multi-generational travel is set to continue through 2020 and tourism marketers will constantly need to reframe what the traditional travel family unit looks like, says Sharmila Ragunanan, Marketing Manager of Dream Hotels & Resorts.

'Ed-venture' and family gap years will continue to gain popularity, driven by the increase in location-independent working parents who have more freedom to embark on family travel. (Condé Nast Traveller, 2019)

She explains that these days, it's not just two parents and their children going away together. Cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents are embarking on multi-generational family holidays, too. "At times it can even be a single parent, one child and a grandparent."



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14 May 2019



Milestone birthdays and anniversaries are an opportunity for local families to reunite their whole brood. Marketers take note. Ragunanan highlights that grandparents, in particular, yearn to maintain family traditions and share childhood destinations that are special to them.

An increase in cruising

Cruiseabout cruising specialists report that cruises will remain one of the most popular holidays booked for South Africans. Local and regional cruises are always immensely popular and they predict more interest in alternative destinations.

The cruise industry had over 28.5 million passengers in 2018, with a year-on-year growth of 9% (World Maritime News, 2019)

Nick Wilkinson, Norwegian Cruise Line regional vice president for the Middle East & Africa explains that internationally, the Mediterranean remains the most popular international destination for South African passengers because “they can visit several different places over a relatively short period of time.

"Families on a European cruise need only unpack once. This ease of travel from place to place is one of the greatest benefits for harried parents who might not otherwise consider foreign travel with their kids," he adds.

The (ongoing) return of the travel expert

A lot has been written about how artificial intelligence and technology has enhanced travel over the past few years. There's no question that this will continue to evolve in 2020, but what we are seeing is a return to the travel expert, especially with local travellers," says Otto de Vries, CEO of ASATA, South Africa.

90% of travellers worldwide are not satisfied with the standard travelling process and want a more personalised, unique approach. (Medium, 2019)

He explains that certain 'real skills' belong only to human beings and cannot be replicated by machines, such as being able to make exceptions and thinking critically and creatively to solve problems.

"We believe at Asata, that the 21st-century travel agent will use technology for simple transactions to free them up to enhance their human touch in all travel interactions."



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Sustainable travel still on the rise

"The concept of overtourism continues to gain momentum this year, especially with outbound travel," says Teresa Richardson, managing director of the Travel Corporation in South Africa.

It's estimated that 57% of international tourists in 2030 will be travelling to emerging economies. (Responsible travel, 2017)

"Travellers are increasingly considering their impact on fragile ecosystems and many popular tourist meccas abroad, such as Venice, Barcelona, Peru's Machu Pichu and even the Seychelles, have implemented or are considering capping visitor numbers."

She further explains that South African travellers will increasingly opt for off-season travel, which not only appeals to the environmentally and socially responsible, but also to those who are hoping to save on their holiday. In addition, more South African travellers are “seeking out authentic experiences in off-the-radar destinations, such as Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Georgia and Armenia and Sicily in 2020.”

Package deal holidays and local travel

According to Sue Garrett, general manager of marketing and product at the Flight Centre Travel Group, the appeal of the package holiday, yet tailored to a customer's needs and interests, is going to shine in the South African travel market in 2020.

Bookings made through agents, affiliates and local tourist offices also increased in 2019 from 17.5% to 24.3%. (TrekSoft 2019-2020 report)

"Given unpredictable exchange rates, South African travellers continue to seek out value for money destinations and pre-packaged holidays where the meaty costs are included upfront. Touring holidays and cruising will continue to be popular," she says.

She also predicts that more South Africans will opt to travel within the country. "Given the huge diversity of tourism attractions in our country, a local holiday ticks all the boxes with no rand worries or visa costs."

Innovation in MICE

Overall, there is an optimistic outlook concerning the meetings and events industry as we look to 2020. In addition to well cared for and top-class conference facilities, there is a movement in MICE towards choosing a destination that inspires innovation.

The global MICE industry size was \$805bn in 2017, and is projected to reach \$1,439.3bn in 2025. (ResearchAndMarkets.com)

While Cape Town typically leads the charge on this front in the Western Cape, the destination to watch this year is Stellenbosch – often referred to as one half of the 'Silicon Cape', playing on world-renowned Silicon Valley. The town has become a catalyst for high-tech innovation and development and this is seen as an additional draw for meeting planners and hosts.

"You have to create the right conditions for the best ideas and Stellenbosch caters to this," says Jeanneret Momberg, general manager for Visit Stellenbosch.

ABOUT CHELSEY HALE

Having lived in Thailand, South Korea, and the U.K, Chelsey finally returned home to South Africa in 2016 where she now sails the adventurous tides of travel content writing. While she has a special focus on the travel industry, she also creates written content across multiple industries. She enjoys all things related to travel, spending much of her time looking for a great news hook and working alongside the team at Big Ambitions. Email: chelsey@chelseyhale.com

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