

How South Africans can save the tourism industry this summer

By [Amber April](#)

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The last week has been a rollercoaster for the tourism industry, to say the least. With the discovery of the new Omicron variant causing international panic, countries around the world very quickly made the decision to close their borders to South Africans. What will this mean for our local tourism industry, which so desperately needs the relief of the upcoming peak season to recover from last year's lockdown periods? It may be up to us as South Africans to make sure that businesses stay afloat.



Source: Supplied

Here are five ways we can help boost our domestic tourism this summer.

1. Visit a local bed & breakfast

We've been saying for years that local is lekker, and more and more we have found locals embracing what their cities have to offer. Why not spend a weekend, or even just one night, at a local bed & breakfast, guest house or lodge? This time of year is perfect to take a break, and travelling around our own country can be just as thrilling, if not more, than travelling abroad. Head of marketing and communications at local travel tech company Jurni, says that this time is crucial for us to show support to local tourism operators.

"We fully support the growth of domestic travel and tourism operators," says Matlou. "While we cannot count on the international tourists to visit our shores this year, we can count on South Africans to take the time to support businesses in need."

2. Support local restaurants and businesses

Local restaurants will need South Africans to support them once again. Many have designed special summer menus and

events just for this season. If you're in the Mother City, you will be happy to know that brunch is back in session. Tobago's Restaurant Bar and Terrace is offering its lavish offering on select Saturdays throughout the season until late into March.

Depending on which option you go for (R795 per person or R595 per person), you will be able to enjoy a wide selection of bottomless drinks including cocktails, local beer and wines, tequila, prosecco or unlimited soft drinks. Food stays the same at both price points with all-you-can-eat starters and a platter choice for mains, rounded off with all-you-can-eat dessert.

3. Use your travel budget on a local splurge

If you had plans to head overseas, but you won't be able to now, consider using that money locally. You could have a staycation up the road or splurge on something more special such as a stay at Kruger Shalati: The Train on the Bridge. This luxurious South African accommodation sits in the heart of the Kruger National Park and is a must-do for any South African.

Here, guests can enjoy long, leisurely days, and hours of sunshine. Guests are able to fill their baths and sip on a glass of wine, while they read a novel and view the wide variety of animals coming for a welcome drink of water in Sabi river below their rooms. Doesn't that sound like a magnificent way to enjoy a local holiday?

4. Be a tourist in your own city

Not everyone is up for an overnight stay at a hotel right now. Some might not have the budget for it. Another option could be to enjoy a few activities as though you are a tourist. Ideas include a hike up Cape Town's famous Table Mountain or hopping on one of the City Sightseeing buses. City Sightseeing has buses in both Cape Town and Johannesburg.

This is a fun and unique way to learn more about the city through the recorded information that you listen to while onboard. You can choose from different routes and packages, depending on what you are keen to take in. It's a great way for the whole family to enjoy what your city has to offer. Main Street Walks in Johannesburg also offer fascinating ways to explore the city, from a Maboneng Precinct tour to heading out on skateboards for a city skate tour.

5. Shop with businesses that depend on tourism

Think of ways in which you can help the huge variety of small businesses who support the tourism industry, and who will have been hoping for an influx of international tourists this summer. Instead of buying Christmas presents at large chain stores, seek out gift shops that would stock the kind of curios tourists and holidaymakers would buy. Fill up Santa's stocking with items made by local artisans, like the exquisite Mambu Design jewellery crafted out of ostrich eggs, and elegant bird mobiles from Wood Wings Creations, available in gift stores and on Etsy.

These simple ways could be exciting, fun things for you to try over the coming weeks, but by doing any of them, you could be helping to lighten the burden of small business owners in the tourism industry.

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