

Support local and explore responsibly: Why neighbourhood travel is on the rise

 By [Chelsey Hale](#)

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While travel has its restrictions this year, it's still essential. It keeps us grounded, refreshes the soul and feeds the natural curiosity ingrained in our collective DNA.

Not yet a buzzword or an official trend for the year, 'neighbourhood travel' might just be the one thing that keeps us sane as it eases our inner travel bug and maintains our well-being when Covid-19 fatigue gets us down in the coming months.



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In a similar vein to staycations, the concept alludes to hometown travel where we can reap the reward of seeing something new and gain a fresh perspective without having to venture too far from the safety of our *stoep*. And in the spirit of being more responsible citizens, the idea of neighbourhood travel is especially pertinent during the first quarter, as we opt to avoid crowded places while still supporting local.

It's about community spirit

From Woodstock to De Waterkant, Bo-Kaap to Sea Point, Cape Town boasts some of the best neighbourhoods in the country.

“As a result of the fluctuating travel restrictions abroad, many South Africans are exploring areas close to home,” says Natasha Palterman, GM, The Cape Milner. ”

She explains that there has been a surge in specials within the hospitality industry catering to locals that live nearby – and it's working. “From resident-centred accommodation deals to happy hours, lunch and dinner discounts, neighbours are supporting neighbours and, in turn, we're seeing a greater sense of community pride and connection.”



Not just for tourists

“Everywhere you go (or stay), this year, presents an opportunity to explore, to discover, to re-discover, even if it’s just venturing into a new area you already assume you’re familiar with,” says Sharmila Ragunanan, marketing manager, Dream Hotels & Resorts.

“Through my travels to our various lodges and resorts across the country, I have come to the realisation that there are few things more exciting than discovering a delightful, previously unexplored hidden gem tucked away in a remote corner of your own suburb.”

For example, Ragunanan loves the 70-year-old Blue Marlin Hotel, nestled in the seaside town Scottburgh in KZN. “While many locals know about it, many overlook it, considering it a place for holiday-makers and townies like myself coming in from Jozi on business.”



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Explore on foot

“I love taking a stroll through new neighbourhoods,” says Jeanneret Momberg, CEO, Visit Stellenbosch. “From single-lane

main roads filled with local retailers, parks, and restaurants, smaller neighbourhoods in South African cities and towns are bursting with potential.”

“One of my favourite neighbourhood travel activities is the Stellenbosch on Foot walking tour where you can learn more about our ‘town of oaks’ from some of our local experts and historians,” she explains. “You’d be surprised how much you can discover and learn by simply walking down a road you know of, but have never gone down yourself,” she adds.



While the potential of travel for South Africans this year may depend on lockdown levels and international airlift, ultimately, it’s limited only by our willingness to leave the house. Despite circumstances, one thing to remember, in 2021, is that meaningful travel experiences can be enjoyed by just about anyone with the right attitude.

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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