

# Lower hotel prices propelling tourism

Hotel pricing searches on Cheapflights show that travellers are finding deals for hotels for almost half the price for the upcoming months than in the equivalent period in 2019. The global travel search engine's data reveals that this makes it an easy "yes" for South African holidaymakers to take a trip closer to home, as searches for SA's hotels jumped by about seven-fold (661%) in the last two weeks of June compared to pre-pandemic levels.



Source: Supplied

"We see hotels being hungry for accelerating the tourism and hotel occupancy recovery process after the commercial accommodation sector was one of the hardest hit by the travel restrictions and lockdowns," says Laure Bornet, GM, Kayak EMEA, that manages Cheapflights.co.za. "In what is clearly an industry-wide effort to ease the traveller market back into taking inter-provincial holidays and business trips, we have noted significant hotel price decreases over the South African winter travel period, in which the school holidays fall."

## Durban takes the lead

According to the data, the top ten most-searched-for South African destinations, in order, were Durban, Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg, Sun City, East London, Umhlanga, Pietermaritzburg, Bloemfontein and Kimberley.

Travellers are scouting for hotel deals in Durban for about 35% lower in price than three years ago, with the average hotel price landing at about R1,120 per night. "Durban has long been a favoured South African tourism destination, with its year-round warm climate making it very attractive in these winter months. With flight searches to Durban from other SA cities being about 126% up in June compared to the pre-pandemic period, the difficult flooding period that affected much of the city a few months ago doesn't seem to have dampened travellers' love for this warm ocean destination," says Bornet.

## Cape Town price drop

In Cape Town, the average hotel price paid by Cheapflight travellers is 43% less compared to the same period in 2019 and hovers at R1,540 per night. This makes Cape Town even more attractive as a travel destination, with its cosmopolitan

culture and the full spectrum of sun, sea, business, meetings, gastronomy, and mountains all on the traveller's doorstep.

This winter holidaymakers find hotel deals in Johannesburg that are 38% down compared to pre-pandemic levels and land at an average rate of about R1,230 per night. But, interestingly, the City Of Gold's close neighbour, Pretoria, reached the lowest average per-night hotel rate across the top five SA travel destinations. "Average hotel prices found in Pretoria are as low as R670 per overnight stay," says Bornet.

"Being a 45-minute drive from Johannesburg, the business hub of the country and tourist hotspot, travellers could save a lot of money by booking accommodation in Pretoria, then hiring a rental car or taking the Gautrain into the city for business meetings or to see some of the city's sights and buzzing culture."

Number five on the top most-searched-for-destinations, Sun City, is great to find deals too as travellers from all over the world are searching for hotels where they pay 31% less than three years ago. A popular destination within easy driving distance from Johannesburg, Sun City is highly favoured as a quick family getaway, or as a meeting and events destination.

## **Travellers opt for luxury travel**

Cheapflights has also spotted a transition between star-rated hotel searches since the pandemic - travellers have been searching less for four-star hotels while searches for five-star hotels have increased.

For the period under review in 2022, one-third of SA's travellers (about 33%) are looking at five-star hotels for travelling in winter, with the beachfront, pool and wifi being the top three accommodation amenities most often filtered. "Now is a great time for travellers looking to experience more luxury accommodation to take advantage of the lower rates," adds Bornet.

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