

Africa Travel Week shares Top 10 trends for tourism to Africa

The 2022 Trends Report for African Tourism has been unveiled highlighting 10 important trends that will determine travel and tourism to Africa in a post-pandemic world. The report was unveiled this week during Africa Travel Week, which is taking place at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) in Cape Town from 11 April to 13 April 2022.



Source: Supplied

The report highlights 10 important trends that will determine travel and tourism to Africa in a post-pandemic world.

"We've been through more than two years of 'business unusual'. Now that things are starting to 'normalise', and we're finally able to meet face-to-face again at Africa Travel Week, headlined by WTM Africa and ILTM Africa, it feels only fitting to establish what to expect in our beautiful industry," says Martin Hiller, creative and content director RX Africa's travel, tourism and creative industries portfolio.

"The strong and emerging trends we are seeing for the recovery phase all have one thing in common," according to Gillian Saunders, tourism and hospitality consultant: they make travel and tourism a better industry. "The drive for sustainability, wellness and full community engagement will see a new generation tourism industry or tourism 4IR-tourism fit for a global, integrated, diverse and equitable world in which we truly conserve our environment."

Here is a snapshot of the 10 trends outlined in the report:

1. Greenwashing won't cut it anymore

Greater transparency. More accountability. Real-life examples of conservation. This is what travellers will be looking for when they travel to Africa and beyond in 2022. "Sustainability is not an ad hoc problem. Our industry needs to invest in sustainability and actively work to conserve our resources, our heritage, our wildlife and our ecology," said Saunders.

2. African cuisine will take its place at the global table

African cuisine has a real opportunity to make its mark as an important part of the travel experience, but it will not 'just' happen. There needs to be a concentrated effort by the African tourism industry to prepare potential tourists for African gastronomy and to create excitement.

3. Diversity: The same but different

The pandemic has seen an emergence of 'the diversity traveller' — people with needs beyond the nuclear couple or family, such as single women travelling alone, single-parent families, people of colour, the LGBTQ+ market and people with disabilities. "Diversity is part of the tourism eco-system. Tourism products need to create marketing material that is reflective of the diversity in this world," said Saunders.

4. Accessibility will be a game-changer for tourism

According to UNWTO, ensuring accessibility for tourists with specific access requirements could be a 'game changer' for destinations around the world, including Africa. Tourism environments and services will need to be designed with different access requirements in mind.

5. Luxury is no longer about money; it is about time and wellness

Travelling with purpose, meaningful experiences, bucket-list destinations and itineraries, and exclusive escapes (travel bubbles and remote locations away from the crowds) are the main luxury travel trends we'll see in Africa.

6. Travel bubbles: Group travel of a different kind

The pandemic may be largely behind us, but 'travel bubbles' are here to stay with a marked increase in demand for multigenerational trips. Africa is ideally positioned to tap into this exciting trend.

7. From over-tourism to impact tourism

Over-tourism was a major concern prior to the pandemic, and destinations don't want to return to the status quo. Instead, restorative safaris that make a positive impact on conservation and communities will become more popular, as will intimate and authentic experiences.

8. Slow tourism is coming of age

The trend for 2022 is that people are taking longer trips with fewer stops, the coming of age of what has been coined 'slow tourism'. African operators have seen more demand for longer stays with simpler, less multi-country itineraries.

9. Flexcation, bleisure, workcation – the workforce of tomorrow

Remote work has turned the global workforce onto its head. Employees are now insisting on a more flexible workplace with a renewed focus on work-life balance. This new trend is creating incredible opportunities for destinations in Africa.

Mayor of Cape Town Geordin Hill-Lewis says he has seen a huge interest in remote working in the Western Cape. However, for this trend to be successful, it is imperative to introduce a seamless remote working visa. "Let's not be left behind. Our city was named one of the best cities in the world for remote working," he said.

"Before people went on a work trip and added a few days' bleisure. Today, they choose their destination and decide to work from there. Some tour operators have already started tapping into this trend," added Saunders.

10. Tech and human connection go hand-in-hand

If we're very honest, most of us have forgotten how to live – and travel – without technology. The pandemic has accelerated our adoption of technology even further.

The unveiling of the trends report is just the start of what promises to be a hugely successful Africa Travel Week. Carol Weaving, managing director of RX Africa, said: "Our entire industry has been craving the face-to-face interaction Africa Travel Week offers. We are showcasing over 20 countries from across Africa, and 12 international countries. There are over 500 buyers, more than 400 exhibitors and upwards of 7,000 meetings scheduled. A platform like Africa Travel Week is critical to reignite the economy and the tourism industry."

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