

## **It's Tourism Month, so what?**

### *How you can benefit*

South Africa is a country listed on many international traveller's bucket lists. With world famous heritage sites like the Cradle of Humankind, or tourist attractions like Kruger National Park and one of the world's seven wonders of nature, Table Mountain, it's not difficult to imagine why? It makes sense then to encourage South Africans to first explore their own country before going anywhere else.

FlightSiteAgent, Managing Director Rian Bornman encourages all agents to focus on local travel during Tourism Month and design dream vacations that highlight brand South Africa. He says: "South Africa is an exciting space right now with a booming middle class that (for the most part) have yet to be properly introduced to all that South Africa has to offer in terms of tourism. With experiences ranging from hikes on Table Mountain that don't cost anything to sublime luxury holidays, it's essential that you connect your clients with an experience that suits them."

### **Tourism for all**

Keeping in line with World Tourism Day's theme - universal accessibility, South Africa's theme of - #tourismforall, hopes to demystify the perception that going on holiday is a luxury, reserved only for the minority who can afford it. While there are certainly world-class five star experiences on offer, there is also a multitude of more affordable (or free) experiences that all South Africans can enjoy.

Bornman continues: "As FlightSiteAgents, we need to change these misperceptions by promoting the accessibility of local destinations. For example right now, the flowers along the West Coast are in full bloom and is a wonderful destination to explore that is more accessible than say travelling to Singapore."

Universal Access or Tourism for all - is the design of products, environments, and services that can be used by all people. It includes the removal of cultural, social and other barriers that prevent people with disabilities from benefiting from tourism facilities.

### **Do your bit for South Africa's economy**

As a FlightSiteAgent you are integral in contributing to our country's GDP (gross domestic profit). With domestic tourism creating much-needed jobs, building the domestic tourism market is a priority. To understand just how valuable you are it's essential that you know why growing our domestic tourism sector is important. Not only will we avoid global economic instability but it will boost investment in smaller communities, which means more job creation and better living conditions for all.

According to Statistics South Africa, tourism's direct GDP contribution was R103, 6 billion in 2013, rising from R93, 5 billion in 2012. Domestic visitors contributed 57 per cent (R124, 7 billion) of total tourism spend in 2013, while international visitors contributed 43 per cent (R94, 2 billion). That's proof that our local tourism market is booming and now is the time to take advantage of it.

### **Know your hood**

As a FlightSiteAgent you are naturally a community-based entrepreneur that sells travel to family, friends and colleagues. This means that you are more likely to understand your market segment better than any traditional bricks and mortar travel agent because you understand your community. The best way you can benefit from Tourism Month is to find out as much about South Africa and

more specifically your own community as possible. After all, no-one knows their own town or city quite like you do.

SA Tourism Domestic Country Manager, Debbie Damant says: "It's important that travel agents keep up with what's available in every province and that they are able to share this with their clients and with each other as fellow ambassadors. A substantial contribution to our GDP is made through tourism and each and every agent plays a role in growing it year on year."

"The best way to sell a package holiday to a client is to empower yourself with knowledge and a good place to do so is to complete our SA Specialist online course available at [www.shotleft.co.za](http://www.shotleft.co.za). Here you can learn all there is to know about amazing places to visit and things to do around the country. Agents can also get involved by promoting specific establishments and activities that provide access to ALL South Africans. Encourage local clients to tell you what they enjoy and look for in their travel experience. They can complete our online survey on the shotleft website."

### **Ideas for destinations and activities to promote during Tourism Month**

This dedicated month normally takes place in lesser visited provinces to give them an opportunity to showcase their tourism facilities and attractions. This year the focus will be on the Free State with activities planned at Gariep Dam, Bloemfontein and Parys. Parys is a particularly beautiful town situated on the banks of the Vaal River. It was named after the city of Paris in France, by a German surveyor who thought the picturesque town reminded him of being back in Paris standing on the banks of the River Seine. Activities to highlight are kayaking, hiking and mountain biking. Gariep Dam is South Africa's biggest dam offering fishing and boat enthusiast's endless opportunities to explore its 165km span of water. And lastly Bloemfontein, is a city steeped in history with numerous museums and monuments dedicated mostly to the Afrikaans heritage.

With so many world-class destinations on our doorstep, it's exciting to be at the forefront of tourism. So as a FlightSiteAgent, we hope you take advantage of Tourism Month and let it guide you to finding out more about your wonderful country and to share your knowledge and new found excitement with your clients.

ENDS

<http://bit.ly/2c0giZT>