

KZN South Coast anticipates successful Easter season following record festive boost

The Ugu District has drawn a sizable number of visitors throughout the holiday season in recent years, and local businesses claim that the 2023 statistics show a similar trend. With the Easter holidays just around the corner, this is encouraging news for the KZN South Coast. "The occupancy rates are a very positive indicator of our growing tourism economy, and the fact that the KZN South Coast is offering visitors what they want – a nature-based experience which is affordable for the whole family," comments Deborah Ludick, Acting CEO of South Coast Tourism & Investment Enterprise (SCTIE).



Source: Supplied

"Reports from our bigger tourism establishments between Christmas and New Year indicated 100% occupancy rates. This is particularly significant considering the high rainfall experienced over December, something we believe is a testament to our diverse tourism assets and welcoming environment."

Ludick says KZN South Coast's subtropical climate meant visitors did still get to enjoy the region's Blue Flag Beaches and tidal pools – the highest number in KZN – as well as its world-class dive sites and riverside water sports.

"While many come for our beaches, visitors soon realise they are spoilt for choice with everything from hiking excursions and extreme adventures in the hinterland, to township tours and cultural experiences. The Golf Coast, as it's known, is a golfer's dream with 11 courses on offer. There is also the latest Wellness Way route and the Mission Tourism Route catering to all tastes in the Paradise of the Zulu Kingdom."

Tourism establishments note positive performance

Corné Alberts, group marketing manager for ANEW Hotels & Resorts says ANEW Resort Ingeli Forest near Harding, for example, experienced a 'positive performance' with the majority of guests visiting from inland provinces.



Source: Supplied

"Despite the lingering effects of the pandemic, we observed a steady year-on-year increase, indicating a strong post-Covid recovery with an increased occupancy rate in 2023 compared to previous years. However, it's essential to acknowledge that the growth has been somewhat tempered by factors such as increased fuel and living expenses."

She notes the natural beauty of the KZN South Coast, as well as its beaches, diverse wildlife, and scenic landscapes, as 'major drawcards': "Additionally, the region's cultural heritage, vibrant local communities, and a range of recreational activities such as water sports and nature trails contribute to its appeal. Feedback from guests has been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing satisfaction with our services, facilities, and the overall experience. The positive sentiment bodes well for future visits, indicating a likelihood of return visits."



Source: Supplied

Leonard Gomo, general manager of Margate Sands also notes an increase on previous years' occupancy rates: "We enjoyed a 6.5% increase from last year's occupancy of 89.18%. The majority was retained business with visitors happy with the assurance that load-shedding and water shedding would not ruin their holidays, plus the abundance of Blue Flag beaches found here."

Michael Bester of One Way Productions, tasked with running the free-to-attend Let's Go Summer 2023/24 programme at KZN South Coast beaches, said the weather was challenging on days, but visitors still came out in their numbers to participate. "Our beaches were clean and open over the summer season, and even with challenging weather conditions, people could still have an amazing holiday on the KZN South Coast," says Bester.

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