

Two footed tourism an economic boon for CT

By  Cari Van Wyk

29 Mar 2016

On 26 March 2016 locals and visitors descended on Cape Town for the world's most beautiful marathon, the [Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon](#) (OMTOM). The annual economic impact of the OMTOM is significant and adds value to Cape Town's tourism economy while also doing its part in combatting tourism seasonality. Events like these present massive opportunities for promoting tourism in South Africa. We spoke to Enver Duminy, CEO at Cape Town Tourism about how important such events are.



Enver Duminy

■ ***How many local and international visitors did the OMTOM bring in? Has the number grown, declined or stayed the same over the past years?***

On 26 March 26,000 runners did some two-footed tourism in Cape Town. 11,000 intrepid locals and visitors tackled the world's most picturesque marathon, running the 56km ultra marathon event and 16,000 covered the half marathon. An additional 1,000 runners competed in the trail run event.

According to the race organisers of the 16,000 Half Marathon participants, 38% come from outside of Cape Town. (From a stats perspective, we look at running regions, so Boland would be the next region although technically still part of the Western Cape). Of the 11,000 Ultra Marathon participants, 61% of runners come from outside of Cape Town. We welcomed over 2,000 international runners to Cape Town, many of them accompanied by family.

This is the 46th annual marathon, which started in 1970 with just 26 runners, so the growth speaks for itself. The current demand for entries is so high that it takes a matter of hours to be booked out.

■ ***How do these events help in breaking into the international market? How do you grow the reputation of the event to make it a desirable event and Cape Town a desirable event destination for international tourists and participants?***

We anticipated a boost to an already-busy holiday weekend, remembering, of course, that it's a long weekend and the schools are on holiday, so it's traditionally an opportunity for domestic visitors to enjoy a mini-break or for locals to enjoy a staycation. According to race organisers, many international participants travelled with family and enjoyed a holiday based around the marathon.

The race has a positive reputation on the world running calendar, but we could certainly do more to provide tailored tours for those international visitors, with packages that focus on all of the healthy, active experiences Cape Town has to offer.

■ ***In what way do cultural and sports events like this contribute to the city's tourism economy?***

The short answer is “billions”. To illustrate, Alan Winde, provincial MEC for economic opportunities, has said the province's top cycling events, which include the Cape Town Cycle Tour, the Cape Rouleur and the Absa Cape Epic, contribute in excess of R760 million to the economy.

The direct economic impact of the Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon and its participants/spectators is in the order of R101.3 million, and can result in an additional R122.5 million of indirect impact, for a total annual impact in excess of R223.9 million (Marketing Analysis and Economic Impact of the Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon 2010, Institute for Tourism and Leisure Studies, North-West University).

Add to this the biggest event on the city's calendar, the International Jazz Festival with 37,000 visitors which brought in R700 million in 2014 and you can see how it all builds up. Sports tournaments, music and cultural events, food festivals – all of these aid in providing a year-round contribution to the economy that aids in sustaining the economy and keeping people in jobs.

The buzz caused by supporters travelling to sports events is impressive - look at the “barmy army” who followed the England cricket team in November, all spending in local businesses. The vibe they create is special, so is their impact on the economy.

■ ***The days are getting shorter and colder again. How do events like the OMTOM and the experiences it offers help combat seasonality?***

With our world-class conferencing centres, sports stadiums and other venues, we're well-placed to host all sorts of events. The more successful events that are held such as the Mining Indaba, the more we can attract events. If you add to this the attractive exchange rate for international visitors, Cape Town is ideal for business event organisers, sports tournament organisers and cultural event organisers as a host city all year round. During quieter periods many hotels and restaurants offer special deals that can also make winter events attractive.

■ ***Is Cape Town a 360-days-a-year destination? Why?***

Some countries have one holiday season and then close those businesses during the low season, while Cape Town is open for business all year round. The climate is mild, so it appeals to those from hot climates and it's not too cold for those from cooler climates.

Our world-class attractions and experiences offer incredible value for money for international visitors and even for domestic tourists. There are seasonal specials to be enjoyed and something for every taste, whether it's simple appreciation of the natural environment or luxury to the extreme.

ABOUT CARI VAN WYK

Cari Coetzee is a contributor to Bizcommunity Tourism, Agriculture and Lifestyle.

■ #WTMA18: Bringing Africa to New York and New York to Africa - 15 Jun 2018

■ Authentic African experiences with Tented Adventures - 1 Jun 2018

■ Sanlam Top Destination Awards: Four years of celebrating SA's top accommodation establishments - 15 May 2018

■ #WTMA18: Six trends driving growth and change in African tourism - 3 May 2018

■ #WTMA18: Experiences, the Reunion Island X-factor - 26 Apr 2018

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>