

Fastest growing business destinations for SA travellers revealed

According to data by Flight Centre Business Travel (FCBT), the fastest growing international business destinations for South African travellers in 2018 were London, Lagos and Mauritius. London saw year-on-year growth of 47%, while Lagos and Mauritius reported year-on-year increases in numbers of respectively 35% and 34%. In fourth and fifth place are Harare and Dubai - traffic to Harare from South Africa increased by 24% and flights to Dubai were up 17%.



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1. London

"Year after year, the city of London remains at the top of South African lists for both business and leisure travellers," says Andrew Grunewald, FCBT Team Leader. "2018 was no different despite the threat of Brexit."

"The city of London itself is also enjoying rapid growth with independent studies continually ranking it above rivals such as New York and Hong Kong," adds Grunewald. "It is one of the world's leading financial centres and offers a huge variety of business venues and conference centres."

2. Lagos

With more and more South African companies seeking to exploit opportunities north of our borders, it is not surprising to see Lagos place as the second fastest growing business destination for South African travellers, according to Grunewald.

"This African city is the main financial, economic and commercial centre of the Nigeria," he says. "Lagos accounts for over 60% of industrial and commercial activities in the nation and is a financially viable city."

3. Mauritius

The fact that Mauritius with its attractive tax regime and stable economy is the third fastest growing business destination comes hardly as a surprise, Grunewald says. The country ranked as the highest economy in Sub-Saharan Africa on the World Bank's 'Ease of Doing Business' Index and the country's banks have become beacons of growth and stability in sub-Saharan Africa.

4. Harare

Harare places fourth for South African business travellers. Grunewald explains that the latest EY Africa Attractiveness report 2018 shows that Zimbabwe is the second most popular foreign investment destination in Southern Africa.

5. Dubai

In fifth position, Dubai with its strategic position, has become a hub for international business. The city's regular summits, conferences and expos bring together business leaders from around the globe.

Fastest growing South African airports

Within South Africa, FCBT reported that although Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban continue to be the most popular air travel routes, the three fastest-growing domestic airports in 2018 were, in fact, George (with a 70% growth year on year), followed by Kimberley (36%) and Lanseria (31%).

The phenomenal growth George experienced in 2018 as a business destination might come as a surprise, but this Garden Route town was in fact hailed as one of the Western Cape cities offering the highest quality of life, beating Cape Town.

"George has become increasingly popular as a business and investment destination thanks to its ideal location and low crime rate," explains Grunewald.

The Northern Cape and Kimberley remain an important business destination thanks to its mining and agriculture sectors. The area is also growing as a result of its renewable energy initiatives with a great number of solar plants developed over the past few years.

Kimberley Airport and Upington International Airport were voted in 2019 as the best airports in Africa by size and region, in the under two million passengers category. The ASQ is the only international survey measuring passengers' satisfaction while they are at the airport.

Lanseria is steadily gaining ground as the third fastest growing domestic airport. This growth is not likely to slow down as the airport has announced it is aiming to double its passenger numbers to more than four million within the next six years.

"With air travel growing at an impressive rate around the world, the popularity and growth of air routes is in constant flux. An experienced Travel Management Company (TMC) can help businesses stay abreast of the constantly changing business travel trends and give valuable insights on how to grow your travel programme and your business," says Grunewald.

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