

## Good old Margate still the holiday treat

If you are looking for some fun in the sun this festive season head to Margate. New research conducted by travel booking and e-commerce company SafariNow found that Margate on the South Coast topped the list as the most popular, affordable and family-friendly holiday destination. It was followed by Ballito and Umhlanga.



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SafariNow found that Margate was by far the cheapest option for a holiday, with an average price a person a night of R357. Holidaymakers pay R720 a night and R790 a night in Umhlanga and Ballito respectively. "Unsurprisingly, Margate and Ballito are five times more popular than Camps Bay, which has an average per person per night price topping R1,000.

"Local travellers also love to visit Knysna, Mossel Bay, Blouberg and Plettenberg Bay, underscoring the fact that the Western Cape is a true traveller's haven and one of the country's most beautiful regions." SafariNow said Ponta do Ouro in Mozambique and Swakopmund in Namibia are popular self-driving destinations for adventure-hungry South Africans.

### Keeping it coastal

SafariNow found that most of the favoured destinations in December were coastal towns, with Bela Bela in Limpopo and Hazyview in Mpumalanga the only non-coastal towns making the top 20 list.

Ugu South Coast Tourism spokesman Nikki Tilley said Margate's "stunning beach, excellent swimming conditions, lifeguards, beach events, nightlife and wide selection of accommodation, from self-catering to four-star hotels", were the drawcard. "The South Coast has well over 17,000 beds over a 30-day period, with self-catering through to bed and breakfasts and hotels, which were, conservatively speaking, 80% full during the key peak season in 2014. "By all indicators we will be looking at very similar numbers this year. The 80% was conservative. Many establishments were running at 94% to 100% occupancy," she explained.

### Self-drive appeal

The report on tourism on last year's festive season found that more people were opting for shorter stays, reinforcing SafariNow's research, which revealed that many South Africans enjoy travelling on a whim - taking short road trips over two to three days with little advance planning.

"The local market clearly prefers self-driving holidays, as it allows people to be spontaneous and flexible, and it also enables travellers to discover new corners of their own country at affordable prices," explained SafariNow CEO Tom Williams. He said Gauteng residents were the most active travellers across all provinces, making up 80% of the visitors to KwaZulu-Natal alone. "People from the Western Cape come in a distant second and tend to stay closer to home, favouring Hermanus, Langebaan and Wilderness," he said.

*Source: The Times*

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