

FlySafair urges competition to return to the skies

The South African domestic aviation landscape has been in trouble this year, with some airlines facing tough circumstances before the Covid-19 pandemic put a halt to all air operations, pushing many airlines over the edge. Presently it's only FlySafair, Mango, Airlink and Cemair that are contesting the domestic market.



Bob Adams via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

"As at the start of November, we'll be operating at full capacity again," says Kirby Gordon, chief marketing officer at FlySafair. "While this is great for us, the problem is that we're hitting a cap now where demand for flights is going to outstrip supply resulting in higher prices unless some of our competitors can return to action."

Before the national lockdown, FlySafair was operating about 24% of the domestic seat capacity in South Africa, that share is presently sitting at about 76% because major competitors Kulula and British Airways remain in a dormant state awaiting relaunch after business rescue proceedings. While Mango Airlines is operating, their schedule remains very slim as concerns over the future of South African Airways (Mango's parent company) remain uncertain.

"We started up again on 15 June this year and have pretty much been carrying the mantle since then. It's been a privilege to fly during this time and we've been able to continually add additional seats as demand for flights has increased, but that ability is now coming to an end because we're operating at full tilt. We need our competition to return."

Stimulating consumer demand

Concerns are surfacing around the prospects of a possible second wave of coronavirus infections, and while the potential imposition of stricter regulations may be on the horizon, leading indicators show that this December season could mean a welcome boom for local tourism.

"There's a lot of pent-up demand, and word from the accommodation sector is that bookings for December are looking strong. The problem is that flights are going to be expensive unless we see some more capacity pumped into the market soon. Healthy competition makes flying more affordable and having options also stimulates consumer demand."

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