

Drought should not impede Easter travels to the Eastern and Western Cape

With both the Eastern Cape (EC) and Western Cape (WC) popular holiday destinations for tourists, there will be concerns about increased water consumption as the Easter holidays approach. Water levels are already stretched in both provinces due to the ongoing drought, however, the coastal cities should be more than capable of meeting demand from increased tourism activity, according to FNB Business tourism expert, Charnel Kara.



Hans via [pixabay](#)

“The South African Coastal Line is a popular destination for both South Africans and international tourists. In as much as the water crisis has created concern resulting in some lost tourism bookings, both provinces continue to manage the situation quite well, with many accommodation establishments reducing and implementing restrictions on water on their own,” says Kara.

The WC is one of the most popular destinations in South Africa, whereby the first quarter of 2017 which included the Easter holiday season, foreign direct was at R5.7bn. This represents an increase of 1.2% in expenditure when compared with the first quarter of 2016, making the WC an important tourism income contributor within South Africa.

“While foreign tourists only make up 1% of the WC total population, and the percentile may seem low, inferring that the impact they will have on water in the province is miniature, and even negligible, it is important to remember that these tourists carry significant weight in terms of their spend and contribution to the province's economy. A secondary consideration is that strict water restrictions are in place for the City of Cape Town at the moment and not the whole province. The EC is no different, the inner cities are the hardest hit and not so much the province as a whole,” explains Kara.

Tourism crucial to both provinces

Tourism is a crucial sector; both the EC and WC generate sizeable incomes through tourism. In the WC for, instance, it supports over 300,000 jobs across the province and contributed nearly R40bn to its economy. Thus, it would be prudent to encourage tourists to continue to visit the province, but perhaps shorten their stay in the city and rather spend more time in the regions that do not have water restrictions currently such as the Garden Route in the WC or the Wild Coast in the EC.

“Climate change is a real threat facing not only the Western Cape but the entire world as we know it, it poses a real challenge to many tourism-based economies. However, this should not impede the promotion of destinations such as the WC,” concludes Kara.

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