

SA Tourism should use opportunities in US market - expert

By [Carin Smith](#)

30 Dec 2015

South Africa can benefit from the American travel industry by looking online to reach this internet-savvy market, according to Mariette du Toit-Helmbold, owner of Destinate, a destination marketing agency. "Americans have little to no annual leave. An annual survey by Expedia in 2014 showed that 54% of the US population feel 'holiday-deprived'. The new American Dream is, therefore, to work less and play hard," explained Du Toit-Helmbold.



Pezibear via [pixabay](#)

"Forward-thinking US companies have begun recognising the need for time to refresh, but for now, US holiday-makers of working age are likely to take last minute and package holidays." She said experience is everything and travellers are looking for instant and total immersion. Trips by US tourists are likely to be spread throughout the year and the current rand exchange rate can have a positive impact too.

The Stellenbosch Experience, is an example of a campaign that will focus a large part of its efforts on the American market in 2016, using online engagement to educate American holiday-planners about the non-safari side of South Africa through experiential storytelling.

Globally, travel continues to outperform other sectors despite uncertain global economic growth, rising geopolitical unrest, volatile oil prices and rising interest rates, according to Du Toit-Helmbold.

Global tourism trends

She was recently at the World Travel Market (WTM) in London to represent Stellenbosch. WTM is considered the industry's top showcase of travel products. Du Toit-Helmbold shared some of the global tourism trends she picked up at WTM.

Global tourist arrivals exceeded 1.1 billion in 2014, up by 4.3% with growth for 2015 forecasted at 3.7%.

Trends include mobile bookings that have gone mainstream, accounting for some \$96bn of travel sales globally in 2014, expenditure being on the rise and emerging markets like China showing significant increases in disposable incomes.

Bicycle tourism

At the same time the tourism market is becoming increasingly competitive, according to Du Toit-Helmbold and there are a number of key drivers at play. Tourists are opting for active holidays over relaxation focused holidays. "In 2014 it was already revealed that cycling is the new golf with the rise of MAMILs (middle-aged-men-in-lycra)," explained Du Toit-Helmbold.

"In 2015 we saw a considerable increase in bicycle tourism offered by destinations and in August 2015, sustainable transport charity Sustrans estimated that cycling tourism adds over £650m to the UK economy each year."

She said in Stellenbosch the hunger for cycling tourism is "insatiable". "Cyclists and other active travellers wanting to invest in healthy living and healthy holidays, want a balance of challenging, beautiful terrain and fine lifestyle, food and wine experiences," she said.

Source: Fin24

Read [this report](#) on News24Wire.com.

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