

Five top trends in tourism

By  Nicci Botha

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As is the case with so many industries, digital technology will be a major influencer in the tourism sector. These are some of the continuing and emerging trends in 2016.

1. Millennials

Millennials are far less driven by brand loyalty and more by novelty, so as Marriott's Jordan Heitzner, manager of marketing planning, says, "Hotels will have to move away from their traditional focus on consistency to offering different amenities and experiences."

While tourismupdate.co.za says, "Mobile payment methods, wearables and real-time mobile translation will become important tools for millennial travelers as they explore new and often off-the-grid destinations, allowing them to stay connected and make bookings as they travel. They are influencers themselves, gathering information via travel websites (67%), blogs and reviews (66%) and social media (35%), whilst inspiring their peers and parents to travel beyond the obvious and dated destinations."

2. Bleisure

Brian Havig on Fortune.com says a need for a work-life balance is responsible for the emerging phenomenon called 'bleisure'. Basically travelers are combining more leisure into their business trips, by extending their travels over the weekend, often including the family.

"They are always connected, thanks to in-flight wi-fi. Plus, they aren't stuck in some nondescript hotel business centre; while on the road they are getting work done in a café, at a restaurant, in a park - basically anywhere. The trend of mixing business and pleasure is really taking off, and marketers would do well to recognise how to cater to those who want more 'life' out of work," he says.



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3. Experiential marketing

For many travelers being able to 'see' their destination and accommodation beforehand is crucial to their decision-making

about their next trip. Currently, hotel or destination video tours are commonplace online. These virtual tours are two-dimensional views of the space, but 3Dscann is a recent addition to the scene and has arrived in South Africa.

"Our models offer a full 3D representation of a space and are not simply flat panoramic images that have been stitched together."

"We use the latest camera and infrared technology to scan a space, and then create a digital 3D model that has online viewers navigating it as if they were actually right there," says Erika Bornman, country manager for 3Dscann. The iconic [Cellars Hohenhort](#) hotel in Cape Town has added this technology to its marketing arsenal.

4. Customisation

"New mobile technology allows consumers to customise their travel experience more easily and allows the service providers to respond more efficiently, says, Susan Tinnish, dean - school of hospitality management, Kendall College in Chicago.

A prime example is Airbnb and its adaptability to match travelers with affordable accommodation in someone's home that meets their needs. PKF Hospitality Consulting president, Mark Woodworth says, "Sharing accommodation entrepreneurs present a real threat to traditional hotels. And in some markets significant percentages of Airbnb accommodations already are operated by a small number of professional managers - and are earning much higher revenue than other hosts."

More and more travellers are also seeking unique experiences and off-the-beaten track destinations. [TripAdvisor](#) says in the coming year, travelers of all ages will seek out things they haven't tried before. Globally, 69% of travelers plan to try something new, one in five will try a cruise, 17% will try solo travel and 15% an adventure,

5. Destinations

So where are people travelling in 2016? Top travel sites vary in their opinions, but neighbouring Botswana features strongly on both [Lonely Planet](#) and [National Geographic](#).

South Africa is the number three global destination of choice and number one as an adventure destination on luxury travel site, [Virtuoso](#). With the rand being in the pitiful state it is, travel to Europe and the US is slipping out of reach of many South Africans.

"But there remains a strong demand for leisure travel with all-inclusive packages to islands like Mauritius or Zanzibar as well as cruises performing very well. In this prolonged bear market consumers don't want surprises; if they pay R1 for their holiday, they want to know exactly what they will get for it," says Sean Hough, CEO of Pentravel.

A far more discerning traveler, who uses their online space to make important decisions from where they are going to stay to what experience they expect, means that traditional hoteliers and travel agents need to be far more flexible in their approach in the future.

SO HOT RIGHT NOW

MIDDLE EAST	↑ 7%
AUS/NZ	↑ 8%
NORTH AMERICA	↑ 9,1%
FAR EAST	↑ 11,5%
INDIAN OCEAN	↑ 12%

DESTINATION BREAKDOWN

% TOTAL SALES



THE NOT SO HOT



LIFE'S A BEACH

90% OF TOTAL INDIAN OCEAN SALES ARE FOR MAURITIUS

BEST VALUE: HOW FAR DOES THE RAND GO IN MAURITIUS?



R2 500 PER PERSON PER DAY

{ Return flights and taxes, return transfers, 4-star accommodation, **breakfast and dinner daily.** }



R3 000 PER PERSON PER DAY

{ Return flights and taxes, return transfers, 4-star accommodation, **all meals, selected drinks.** }

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ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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