

The Good Life: South Africans seek quality travel experiences

 By [Teresa Richardson](#)

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Teresa Richardson, managing director of The Travel Corporation South Africa, identifies overseas and domestic trends that are influencing South African travel decisions and how this will impact travel patterns in 2019 and beyond.

Trafalgar recently embarked on a study to establish what consumers believe to be 'The Good Life' and how they prioritise travel. Our research delved into individuals' work/life balance, the role of social media, the desire for genuinely authentic experiences, and topics such as sustainability.



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These findings have helped fine-tune our forecast for 2019 and identified five dominant travel trends.

1. Work/life balance

The results of the survey show that South Africans struggle to relax and disconnect from work and social media while away on holiday, and significantly more so than our global counterparts.

Sixty-seven per cent of respondents felt guilty about staying on top of their e-mails, much higher than other markets. 63% felt guilty if they did not visit all the sites, compared with only 39% of Britons, 49% of US travellers and 43% of respondents from Australia. Not only do we feel guilty being separated from work and our mobile devices, but that we are not doing a 'good job' of being on holiday!

Research firm GlobalData has projected family travel sales will increase 25% by 2022. Travelling presents a valuable opportunity for families to connect and,

already, our bookings reflect this.

Active and wellness travel is another growing market, while 93% of respondents said travel had positively impacted their lives, given them distance from their routines and a chance to relax.

2. Obsession with social media

Interestingly, the South African traveller's relationship with social media is even more significant than the rest of the world's, based on our research findings.

At least 54% indicated they spent "extensive hours" on online research and holiday planning; 67% check social media while on holiday; and 65% post pictures. The numbers are considerably higher than in other countries including the UK and the US.

3. The search for authenticity

'Authentic experiences' has been a buzzword of late but many travellers are sceptical. True, immersive experiences are even more important to South Africans who, more so than other markets, want to see the real culture of a country, connect with the locals and are much keener on attending local experiences and festivals than travellers from other markets.



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For example, Trafalgar provides travellers with the opportunity to connect with locals in a way they would find challenging to arrange if travelling independently. Be My Guest dinners lets groups dine with local families, while Dive into Culture highlights hidden local gems. Stays with Stories lets travellers engage with the people at their accommodation. These are truly authentic experiences.

4. The rise of Africa

For the first time in its 72 years, Trafalgar launched ten tours to nine countries in Africa this year.

The family that owns The Travel Corporation is originally from South Africa, and we are expecting good sales growth in international markets in 2019. For locals who may not wish to travel overseas, a Trafalgar guided holiday on one of our trips within South Africa or greater Africa may be a very enticing alternative, especially while the rate of exchange is so weak.

5. Sustainability

Mass and over tourism concerns have escalated in 2018, and travellers are increasingly conscious of sustainability and are looking for sustainable choices and ethical operators. Travel companies have a responsibility to the planet and their travellers.

The TreadRight Foundation is a non-profit organisation and joint initiative between The Travel Corporation's family of brands, established ten years ago to encourage sustainable tourism through conservation, support and leadership for communities. We are very conscious of our footprint on the world.



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ABOUT TERESA RICHARDSON

Teresa Richardson is the Managing Director of The Travel Corporation (TTC) SA, a Group of Companies which include Trafalgar, Cost Saver, Insight Vacations, Luxury Gold, Contiki, Uniworld Boutique River Cruises, U by Uniworld as well as the brand, Busabout introduced to South Africa by Teresa.
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