

South Africans encouraged to explore, experience every corner of their own country

By [Jonathan Cohen](#)

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Domestic tourism is on the decline. Times are tough; with political shockwaves, corruption scandals, cabinet reshuffles, recessions and the junk status placing our economy in a bit of a mess, but hang on a second - that's not the only reason we South Africans aren't following our feet in our own country.



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We don't have the same culture of travel that others do, especially when it comes to travelling in our own country. Just take a look at the travellers who most visit our country: the British, the Americans, and the Germans. What do they have in common? They might love coming to South Africa, but they love travelling in their own countries more than anything else.

Experiencing your home country

The British have been dubbed the 'holiday-at-home nation', the Americans are the world's biggest domestic travellers, and about a third of the German population spend their holidays in their home country, because they love their own backyards, and why wouldn't they?

They have diverse and extraordinary natural wonders. However, from snow-capped mountains to the golden Bushveld, from sub-tropical beaches to the wild expanse of the Kalahari, from carpets of wildflowers to spectacular waterfalls and wetlands, and canyons and plains, and peaks and crags – I think we too can safely tick that box.

We have so much on offer in our own country that no two trips could ever be the same. Even if you go back to the same place twice – each sunset that makes you want to freeze time will be different. The abundance of what you can experience in your own home country is mind-boggling.

How could you not be tempted by that? How could you not feel the allure of waking up enfolded by the raw beauty of the bush, the soft sound of birdsong and a canvas tent flapping gently in the fresh breeze (and I'm not talking a tiny two-person tent here, I'm talking a luxurious safari tent where you can snuggle under your duvet, feel like you're sleeping under the stars, and gaze out your large Serengeti style door).

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Giving South Africa's vibrancy a chance

Then there's the promise of a magical day as the sun stretches her warm fingers over the African plains. The acres and acres of vibrant life, teeming with thousands upon thousands of creatures both huge and small. The smell of the earth and the scent of adventure – the sound of cicadas in the midday heat, the bats at dusk, the wood crackling on an open

campfire – who wouldn't want to wake up to such an awe-inspiring escape from their daily routine?

You don't have to travel thousands of miles to get to all this – look at all that's right here on your doorstep, in your own backyard, especially in bucket-list-topping destinations like the Kruger and Pilanesberg National Park – but it comes down to the price tag again, it always does.

Let me ask you this: Do you know that it's out of your budget, or do you only assume that it is? Glamping doesn't carry the same heavy price tag that five-star experiences do.

I want to believe that our pride in South Africa could glow not just in our love of sports and our culture or in our ability to braai a good braai, but in our love of exploring every corner of our own vibrant country at every chance we can get.

Now come on South Africa, put your own country on your bucket list. I dare you.

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