

Why South Africans desire clarity and flexibility when booking travel

Travelport's 2019 [Global Digital Traveller Research](#) has revealed that nine out of 10 South Africans prioritise value over cost when booking travel. This aligns with the preferences of travellers across the world, who are also demanding more autonomy over personalisation and increasingly seeing the value of using digital solutions to research and manage their trips.



@gmat3r via [123RF](#)

"Travelers in South Africa are very closely aligned with global trends when it comes to booking preferences. Travellers want an experience from travel providers and travel agents that is as simple and engaging as the best retailers," says Claudette Thorne, Travelport's country manager Southern Africa.

"Travelport's latest global research shows that technology is key to this – from serving relevant and personalised offers to providing attractive propositions from trusted sources. At Travelport, we will continue to accelerate developments in all these areas, and more, to help the industry keep pace with the rapidly evolving needs of the modern traveller."

The findings of Travelport's 2019 Global Digital Traveller Research, which surveyed 23,000 people from 20 countries, including 500 South Africans are as follows:

Value is more important than cost but can be hard to find

- When booking a flight, value is a top priority for more than 9 out of 10 (92%) South African travellers today, compared to 86% globally. This trend is apparent across all age groups led by Baby Boomers (96%), who prioritise value marginally more than younger generations.

- To find offers of value, South Africans 'nearly always' use a combination of travel review sites, with almost half reporting the use of TripAdvisor (49%, 42% globally), price comparison sites like Kayak.com (28%, 38% globally), recommendation sites like Kiwi.com (44%, 36% globally), as well as having conversations with travel consultants (41%, 31% globally).
- But when shopping online, South Africans are most frustrated by complicated terms and conditions around changing bookings (70%). This is then followed by not being able to see the availability and cost of extras such as pre-booked seats, food, Wi-Fi and baggage (68%), not knowing which companies can be trusted (63%), and not being able to access their booking on all their devices (57%).

Travelers want more control and transparency

- More South Africans are looking for personalised travel experiences: 36% of South African travellers rank personalised travel offers as 'very important' for their travel apps.
- Across all age categories, when booking a flight, South Africans typically want to personalise their own experience (51%, 42% globally) through add-ons like extra legroom, additional baggage allowance and meal upgrades. Nearly half of travellers (48%) use a mobile website to purchase these extras.
- When attempting to personalise their experience, more than half of South African travellers are getting frustrated by not being able to understand what is included as standard (55%, 52% globally). Also frustrating South Africans is having to book different aspects of the trip like flights, accommodation and ground transport separately (49%), and not being able to see the availability and cost of extras (68%, of which 43% find it 'very frustrating').
- Nearly half of South African travellers (49%) are also increasingly frustrated by companies they regularly use not remembering their preferences (globally: 35%, up 4% on 2018). Frustration with this is most prevalent among Gen X between the ages of 40 and 54 (52%).

Making travel easier to research and manage through digital solutions is also a key focus for South African travellers

- Most South African travellers book their trips online: 80% book on a computer and 53% book on a mobile device. Of those booking online, 62% use multiple digital platforms (for example, booking their flights from one website and hotels from another).
- When it comes to the impact of digital technologies on travel, South Africans find that digital boarding passes and e-tickets make their experience easier (77%), as well as actively avoid hotels that still charge for WiFi (71%).
- More than three quarters (79%) of travellers in South Africa consider it important whether an airline offers a good digital experience when booking a flight. Almost two thirds (62% in South Africa, globally 58%) also consider this when choosing accommodation.
- When researching a trip, the majority (79% in South Africa, 77% globally) of travellers have reviewed videos and photos posted by travel brands on social media. Globally, this number is up 2% on 2018. Facebook is considered the most

influential social media platform by all age groups. Over half of South African travellers (56%) use social media to research and book travel.

- The three features that South Africans would like the most from travel apps are: the ability to search and book flights (82%), being able to collate their entire trip itinerary in one place (81%) and the ability to change flights in an app (80%). They are least interested in in-app live chats with travel representatives (54%).

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