

# Air Belgium lands in South Africa to a warm and energetic Gauteng welcome

Issued by [Gauteng Tourism Authority](#)

21 Sep 2022

Air Belgium arrived in South Africa to a rousing welcome, African drum beat and the traditional water cannon salute marking the airline's first foray into Africa.

Heralding this move as a further cap into Gauteng's wings and energy to fly the South African economy to recovery, acting Premier Panyasa Lesufi explained that Gauteng is pulling all the stops to roll out the red carpet in attracting tourism, trade and investment inflows, while strongly rolling back the red tapes and reducing the cost of doing business as directed by the province's Growing Gauteng Together vision 2030.

Flights aboard the airline's modern A330neo will depart Brussels every Wednesday and Sunday at 7.45pm – arriving in Johannesburg at 7.15am the next day, with continuation to Cape Town. South Africans heading to Europe will be able to fly from Cape Town International (with a short stop in Johannesburg) or OR Tambo every Monday and Thursday. The flight offers 30 seats in business class, 21 seats in premium class and 235 economy class seats.

"It is an exciting and important chapter for Air Belgium," says CEO Niky Terzakis. "But we're equally thrilled to introduce South Africans to a new airline and an alternative route – and thereby direct access to the heart of Europe." According to Terzakis, Air Belgium is committed to offering passengers an experience that is affordable, comfortable, hassle-free, green, and trustworthy.

"We often talk about 'Belgitude', and our motto is 'Fly Belgian Class', which is all about bringing joy back to international travel," says Terzakis.

"And while our travellers value our fun and engaging approach to travel, we also deliver what really matters: a safe, seamless journey; transparent billing (no hidden fees); and a generous luggage allowance.

What's more is that we offer travellers an environmentally friendly travel option as the Airbus A330neo consumes on average 25% less fuel compared to previous generation aircraft. Lower fuel consumption also means less CO<sup>2</sup> emitted into the atmosphere. Our aircraft offer what is best in comfort aboard: reduced noise level, mod-lighting, and state-of-the art inflight entertainment with Wi-Fi and internet connection throughout the flight."

Fares start at R11,569 for an all-in return ticket between Johannesburg and Brussels, and passengers are allowed 30kg baggage allowance free.

"Of course, for South Africans the real drawcard is Brussels," says Terzakis. "Not only is it the gateway to Europe, with high-speed trains connecting the city to hubs like London, Paris, Frankfurt and Amsterdam in a couple of hours, but it is also a destination in its own right, with visitors delighting in its rich heritage, food, culture and Belgian spirit."

The twice-weekly flights are good news for business travellers, as Belgium is currently South Africa's 6th largest trading partner as well as the Western Cape's 7th largest European export market. As such, Belgium is ideally positioned to capture the interest of the corporate and government sectors in South Africa.

"I welcome Air Belgium's new triangular route between Brussels, Johannesburg and Cape Town. Whether for leisure travel or business travel, this flight will undoubtedly contribute to boosting the country's tourism, its economy and job creation," says South African Tourism chief operations officer, Nomasonto Ndlovu. She added that international arrivals to South Africa are increasing steadily, and each new route and connection should be celebrated.

Ndlovu said: “We are thrilled to welcome the Air Belgium team, and it’s fitting that their first flight arrives in the middle of September, which is Tourism Month in South Africa, when we celebrate, champion, and recognise the importance of our tourism industry.”

Acting Premier Lesufi further indicated that, Gauteng province will continue to champion increased air access, and views air connectivity as crucial to the economy through promoting investment and innovations, improving business operations and efficiency, and facilitating key economic sector drivers such as tourism to boost economic growth, job creation, and improved standards of living.

Ease of connectivity and eased restrictions on the movement of people and goods across borders allows for the development of social and economic networks that will have a sustainable long term impact.

For more information, visit [www.airbelgium.com](http://www.airbelgium.com). For additional questions or to arrange interviews with Air Belgium, please reach out to Dorine Reinstein, Big Ambitions, on +27 (0)83 278 8994 or [dorine@bigambitions.co.za](mailto:dorine@bigambitions.co.za).

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#### Gauteng Tourism Authority

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