

Gauteng Tourism joins SA Tourism to promote South Africa in Russia

The Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) will this weekend form part of South African Tourism delegation travelling to the Russian Federation to promote tourism into the country and grow arrivals from this important member of the BRICS, G8 and G20 nations. The South African Tourism Promotion Sessions are scheduled for Moscow on 29 October 2019 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel and St Petersburg on 3 October 2019 at Lotte Hotel.



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Tourist arrivals between Russia and South Africa have been showing a marked increase since the signing of the Visa Waiver Agreement in March 2017, with 2018 being the year where most growth was experienced. The number of Russian visitors to South Africa has increased by 51%, while the figure of South Africans visiting Russia has increased by 49%.

"This is a position we are not taking for granted. We want to form part of joined-up efforts led by the Tourism Minister and South African Tourism to intensify tourism promotion across our key source and tactical markets. We are adding our impressive arsenal of quality tourism experiences and products into the national mix to showcase the unique, diverse and value-for-money offerings to the lucrative Russian Market," explains Yoland Kona, CEO of Gauteng Tourism.

Forming part of the GTA offerings in Russia will be the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site which, this December, celebrates 20 years since its declaration as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1999. "The city region's breath-taking lifestyle, entertainment and quality shopping experience, coupled with authentic and vibrant township tourism offerings and prospects of mixing business and leisure on your visit will without a doubt hit the right nerve with tour operators, wholesalers and destination management companies packaging and selling South Africa in the Russian Federation," adds Kona.

The GTA delegation led by its CEO while in Russia will also initiate collaboration opportunities with key national monuments and heritage sites in Moscow and St Petersburg with the sole purpose of twinning them with our own sites like Constitution Hill, Freedom Park, OR Tambo and Sharpeville Memorials respectively.

Strengthening relations in Russia

These cities boast several well-preserved and marketed historical sites experienced by millions of visitors across the globe. "This is an opportunity to learn from our counterparts as we strive to build a sustainable and inclusive cultural and heritage tourism sub-sector in the province," laments Kona.

The South Africa Tourism Promotion Session in Russia follows the successful conclusion of the inaugural Russia-Africa Summit in which South Africa under the leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa seized the opportunity to strengthen the relationship with Russia but also cementing Russia's relationship with the African continent.

Having played a leading role in supporting the struggle for a free South Africa and decolonised continent, there is no doubt that the peoples of these great countries share a fraternal bond of friendship and relations which are now being elevated through tourism. The purpose of this marketing drive is to encourage more Russian tour operators, wholesalers, travel agents, media, independent destination marketing companies and airlines to package and sell destination South Africa aggressively to the Russian Market.

"This we believe will boost confidence in the destination amongst outbound operators and oil our drive-in supporting our President's ambitions of doubling the numbers of tourism coming through to our country by 2030," concludes Kona.

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