

Uber benefits for tourists and tourism



By [Cari Van Wyk](#)

7 Mar 2016

Uber, operating in 371 cities across 66 countries and 6 continents, has become a household name. Except for the benefits it offers locals in getting around safely and timely, it is a great option for tourists travelling to South African cities. We spoke to Alon Lits, general manager, sub-Saharan Africa about the Uber benefits tourists can enjoy.



Alon Lits

■ ***Why should tourists use Uber and not another taxi service?***

Alon Lits: Visitors can relax because they know that a safe, reliable and affordable ride is available when they land in a new city. Uber takes the stress out of travel with a familiar, easy to use service with a standard electronic payment option.

■ ***Would you say Uber is especially convenient for international visitors?***

Lits: Uber helps people get a ride at the push of a button - there's no waiting on the street or walking through unfamiliar neighbourhoods to find transport. It's the most convenient way to get a safe, reliable and affordable ride - the app detects your location, tells you about your driver in advance, and means you can pay without using cash so it is easy and safer for both riders and drivers.

Drivers undergo rigorous screening, including background and driving history checks before they can join the Uber platform. Passengers rate their driver and drivers rate their passengers through the app to ensure quality and a respectful environment for everyone.

UBER IS USED IN CAPE TOWN BY VISITORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Line thickness represents volume of Uber users

Data from the city of Cape Town between 15-07-2014 and 15-07-2015. Completed trips only.



UBER IS USED IN DURBAN BY VISITORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

Line thickness represents volume of Uber users

Data from the city of Durban between 15-07-2014 and 15-07-2015. Completed trips only.



UBER IS USED IN JOHANNESBURG BY VISITORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

Line thickness represents volume of Uber users.

Data from the city of Johannesburg, all time. Completed trips only.



- ***Especially in a country like South Africa, safety is an important issue. Getting into a car with a stranger is a risk. What does Uber do to ensure the safety and security of its customers?***

Lits: Uber is a safe, reliable, affordable and convenient way to get from A to B. Our technology makes it possible to focus on safety for riders and drivers before, during, and after every trip in ways that have never been possible before. Of course, no means of transportation can ever be 100 percent safe because accidents and incidents will always happen. But we're working our hardest to ensure that these are kept to an absolute minimum - including through new technology, increased investments in customer support and using the advice of our independent Safety Advisory Board.

- ***South Africa's business travel industry is growing exponentially? What does Uber offer business travellers to make their transport easy and reliable?***

Lits: Uber for Business is a travel management platform that helps get your team wherever they need to go. It's easy to setup and maintain with these great features:

- Centralised billing: one payment source linked to all employees
- Team management: complete control over who is riding
- Increased transparency: see how your employees travel in a new light
- Seamless travel: the same Uber you know and love
- Learn more on the [website](#)

▣ Any tips for Uber users, local and international, for when they are travelling in South Africa?

Lits: Visitors will need access to data or wifi hot spots. Once connected, visitors can relax because they know that a safe, reliable and affordable ride is available when they land in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth. Uber takes the stress out of travel with a familiar, easy to use service with a standard electronic payment option.

We suggest local and international travellers visit some of these must see destinations that are uniquely South African. In Johannesburg travel to Soweto to see iconic museums like the Hector Pieterse Museum and the Soweto Towers (bungee if you dare). In Cape Town you cannot miss a trip up Table Mountain and visit the penguins at Boulders Beach. When in Durban visit uShaka Marine World and when going to PE stop in at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum.

▣ With an eye on tourism to help create jobs and grow the economy, how will Uber contribute to this in the tourism space?

Lits: Uber has enabled over 4,000 work opportunities since launching in South Africa and globally Uber has pledged to create 1 million jobs for women by 2020. Tapping into the international market will help to increase demand and, therefore, work opportunities for more driver-partners.

▣ What is your response to other taxi services saying that Uber is negatively impacting on their business?

Lits: Our technology is open and pro-choice and we are keen to offer it to a broad number of taxi drivers to boost their occupancy rates and chances for profit. In fact many taxi drivers are already using our technology to boost their incomes and we would welcome more who wish to join their colleagues.

Uber has been engaging with taxi associations since last year to find a way that we can partner with them. We do not feel that it should be about Uber or Taxi but rather Uber and Taxi. We hope tourists, business travellers and residents alike can enjoy a safe, affordable, hassle-free time travelling whichever way they choose to get around South Africa.

▣ Uber has recently undergone a massive make-over. How has the response been?

Lits: We've launched a new brand that better reflects Uber today. We've cut the curls from our logo and made the font a bit bolder, though we've kept the grid as well as the black letters and white framing. We've replaced the U-shaped app badge with new colourful/patterned icons, as well as over 65 different colour and pattern palettes for each country we serve.

The new app icon comes from a new way of thinking about app icons for the Uber family of apps. At the centre of the app

icon is the Bit - the mark of our technology. It is contained within a geometric shape that denotes the product (the circle for riders, the hexagon for driver-partners). Underneath lies a pattern and colour, which represents the atoms we serve in every country (i.e. people, cities and cultures).

In terms of the app, there will be one, new app icon/launcher. When it loads (i.e. before you get to the map where you can book a car) there will be unique patterns and colours for the US, India, and China - and a global version of the patterns and colours for everyone else. Over time, we will localise these. For drivers, there is one global icon with consistent patterns and colours where drivers are based.

Alon Lits joined Uber as its first general manager in Africa in August 2013. Lits began his career in the leveraged finance division of Investec Bank Limited, where he provided debt and preference share financing solutions to public and private companies in South Africa, as well as Africa's largest private equity funds. Before joining Uber, Alon interned with the emerging market focused private equity fund, LeapFrog Investments, focusing on investment opportunities throughout Africa. He holds an MBA from INSEAD where he was part of the leadership teams of both the Private Equity and Africa Clubs.

ABOUT CARI VAN WYK

Cari Coetzee is a contributor to Bizcommunity Tourism, Agriculture and Lifestyle.

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