



UNPREDICTABLE SUMMER SEASON LIES AHEAD AS 2010 FIFA WORLD CUP NEARS

26 November 2009

Predictions for the summer tourism season 2009/2010 are hard to call in a world where economic goalposts are constantly shifting and a peaked interest in the run-up to the 2010 FIFA World Cup has already catapulted Cape Town's global profile into unprecedented territory.

Whilst the United Nations World Tourism Organisation believes that the overall global downturn in tourism (based on international arrivals and departures) will level out at an -8% drop, Africa has managed to buck the global fall in tourism numbers by being one of the only areas to show improvement, with an increase of 4% (source: UNTWO)

South Africa remains a popular, value-for-money destination, as recognised by the allocation of several recent consumer-driven accolades, including those from The Guardian UK and www.guardian.co.uk, (readers voted Cape Town as their 2nd Favourite Overseas City) and US Travel & Leisure, who voted Cape Town its 2nd Best City in the World.

"It has been an imperative part of our marketing strategy to ensure that our key source markets recognise that Cape Town has a multitude of unique attractions and that the city has not out-priced itself ahead of the 2010 FIFA World Cup", says Lianne Burton, spokesperson for Cape Town Tourism. "Cape Town offers pristine natural beauty, cultural richness and a sophisticated, cosmopolitan vibe – the perfect package – all at rates that represent excellent value by global standards", adds Burton. Media attending the 2010 FIFA Final Draw should be able to successfully relay this message to their home countries after visiting in December 2009.

According to a local hotel industry perception survey (Howarth HTL Hotel Performance Confidence Indicator), hotel confidence in the 4th Quarter of 2009 was down, with only 19% of hotel managers anticipating an increase in sales. However, 56% of survey respondents were confident that average room rates would increase.

Based on accommodation surveys conducted (November 2009) by Cape Town Tourism for season 09/10, accommodation providers in the greater Cape Town area are reporting occupancy predictions for December 2009 of 62.4% on average. The greater concentration of bookings are being secured in the traditional holiday destinations of the City and Atlantic Seaboard, where average occupancies are expected to be 68%. However, trends are showing a big shift to last-minute bookings, so these figures could rise quite swiftly as visitors make the spontaneous decision to spend their summer holiday in Cape Town.

Whilst much speculation surrounds the issue of whether would-be visitors are holding back on a seasonal holiday in favour of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, there are many other groups within Cape Town's source market demographics that do not fall under the typical FIFA World Cup visitor profile.

These groups include those people with family ties in Cape Town, who return repeatedly, tour package groups, young individualists, families and event-focused travellers coming to Cape Town to experience the Final Draw atmosphere or, for instance, specific Cape Town summer calendar highlights like The Mother City Queer Project.

Cape Town Tourism is working hard to ensure that the destination is effectively marketed this season. Media hosting, last minute specials advertised on the Cape Town Tourism website, www.capetown.travel and fully informed staff at all the Cape Town Tourism Visitor Centres and Contact Centre will serve to ensure that the seasonal opportunities are maximised.

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