

Ever thought about a career in tourism?

Few industries cover such a wide range of fields or offer as many career opportunities as tourism. Whether you want to plan country-wide projects or focus on small decor touches, there is probably a niche for you in the tourism and hospitality world. Here are just some of the sectors in which you can get involved.



Tour planning

If you enjoy planning, organising and dealing with people, you could consider a career as a travel agent or tour organiser. These people play a vital role in the tourism chain because they help tourists get into and around the countries they want to visit. Whether merely booking a flight or organising a full-service package, tour planners need to understand their clients, and work hard to source the best deals and combinations at the right price - a challenging and fulfilling task.

Tour guiding

Tour guides are the people at the destination who interact directly with tourists and perform a range of vital services, from showing tourists around popular attractions to assisting them with basics like checking in to their hotels. The job of a tour guide varies immensely depending on the location they work in and the sort of service they provide - from taking foreign tourists on bus tours of a city and narrating the sights in their language, to camping out in the bush for a week and leading tourists on nature hikes.

Accommodation

All tourists need somewhere to stay since, after all, they are away from home. Accommodation service providers are therefore the cornerstones of the tourism experience. Visitor accommodation runs the range from simple camping and caravanning sites to posh guest houses and five-star hotels. It also offers a range of career types - everything from front-desk people management to behind-the-scenes planning and maintenance.



Restaurants

Tourists need to eat and often enjoy dining out, so restaurants play a crucial role in the tourism profile of an area. Owning or managing a restaurant can be a stressful endeavour, but also a lucrative and rewarding one if done right. The hospitality sector also requires chefs, professional waitrons, food planners, private caterers and more.



Transport

Finally, tourists need some means of getting around. In South Africa, public transport is usually unreliable, so tourists turn to private transportation providers. There is a constant need for private taxis, coaches, chartered boats and planes and safari transport, not to mention recreational transport such as quad biking, yachting, cycling, horse riding, paragliding and much more. Sometimes the means of transport can even be the holiday itself - think of cruise ships or luxury trains like the Blue Train. This sector requires a large workforce - everyone from business managers to

drivers to equipment specialists.

For more information on the University of Cape Town Tourism Management course, contact Tamsin on 021447 7565 or tamsin@getsmarter.co.za.

Alternatively go to www.getsmarter.co.za.

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