

School holidays show SA still has travel fever

Data from Cheapflights indicates that South Africans still have travel fever and a hunger to explore international destinations despite the sluggish local economy and political instability. With South Africans still travelling in their droves during the winter school holidays - especially as there's a drop of almost 20% in the lowest average fares - this proves to be true.



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“The June/July school holidays are traditionally one of South Africa’s busiest travel periods – especially in terms of international travel as locals seek to make the most of the summer season in the Northern hemisphere,” says Andrew Shelton, managing director of Cheapflights. “We are seeing particular interest in the UK and US for this period, as usual, but also this year for India.”

The most popular destinations

Based on Cheapflights data, the UK, and London particularly, remains the most popular destination for this period, with 28% of all searches from South Africa for this destination.

The second most popular destination remains the US with 9% of all searches. Interestingly, Thailand, which was the third most popular destination for South Africans last year (at 8.5% in 2016), has been replaced by Mumbai this year.

“Asia makes up the rest of the five top destinations with India, Thailand, and Bali taking the position of third, fourth and fifth,” explains Shelton. “These replace Thailand, the Netherlands, and France which occupied these positions last year. This shift in preference to Asia is likely due to the weakening rand, Asia is simply more affordable for South Africans at the moment”.

Tickets are more affordable in 2017

The average ticket price over the June/July winter school holiday period indicates that international flight prices from South Africa have gone down slightly from the lowest average of R14,992 last year, to around R11,994 this year – a decrease of around 20%.

“This can likely be explained by the weakening pound affecting much of the European flight prices, as well as aggressive specials being punted by airlines operating out of Africa,” explained Shelton. He also points out that shopping around will enable good deals to be found.

“There are slight spikes in flight cost around the 7, 14 and 18 July so it makes sense to be flexible when searching dates for bookings,” he advises. “July is historically a busy period, specifically in the Northern Hemisphere so it’s sensible to book in advance, and to try not to book on a Friday.” The cheapest days to over this period are 17, 19 and 20 July, when South Africans can save up to R3,000 on international flights compared to other times this month.

It is also worth booking tickets well in advance to benefit from deals that can be found then. “South African stand to save the most (up to 22%) by booking three to six months in advance. That’s not to say there that there are no last minute deals to be had, so our advice would be to sign up to newsletters and deals websites to find out about last minute flight specials,” advises Shelton.

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