



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**MINISTER DE LILLE WELCOMES
TURKISH AIRLINES' EXPANSION TO SOUTH AFRICA**

The Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille, has welcomed the decision by Turkish Airlines to increase its direct services between South Africa and Türkiye to 20 weekly flights, further strengthening air connectivity between the two countries.

From October 2026, the airline will operate 10 weekly direct flights between Istanbul and Johannesburg and 10 weekly direct flights between Istanbul and Cape Town. Turkish Airlines currently operates 7 weekly flights to Johannesburg and 7 weekly flights to Cape Town. The additional flights will be introduced ahead of South Africa's summer tourism season.

"This expansion is the result of deliberate engagements between Department of Tourism and Turkish Airlines, supported by growing demand for travel to South Africa. It is another vote of confidence in our tourism sector and aligns with our efforts to improve air access through the Tourism Growth Partnership Plan. More flights mean more visitors, more trade, more investment, and ultimately, more jobs," says Minister de Lille.

The increased frequency is supported by strong market performance. In May 2026, arrivals from Türkiye increased by 92% compared with the same month in 2025, highlighting the growing demand for travel between the two countries.

South Africa's tourism sector continues to build strong momentum following a record 10.5 million international arrivals in 2025. Between January and May 2026, the country welcomed 4 761 108 international visitors, representing a 12.8% year-on-year increase.

To further stimulate demand, South African Tourism and Turkish Airlines have agreed to implement a joint destination marketing campaign to promote travel between the two countries and support strong passenger demand on the expanded route network.

The announcement follows a series of positive developments in South Africa's international air connectivity. In June, Spanish carrier Air Europa launched its inaugural direct service between Madrid and Johannesburg, while last week Brazil's LATAM Airlines commenced three weekly direct flights between São Paulo and Cape Town.

These developments reinforce the implementation of the Cabinet-approved Tourism Route Development Marketing Plan, which seeks to expand direct connectivity, strengthen strategic airline partnerships, and unlock new tourism and investment opportunities for South Africa. **THE END**

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Media Queries:

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