



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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MINISTER DE LILLE WELCOMES INCREASED INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS

Between January 2026 and May 2026, South Africa's international tourist arrivals increased by 12.8% to 4 220 586 when compared to the same period in 2025. The data further reveals that within the first 5 months of the year, the Africa market grew by 14.7% and European arrivals increased by 11.1%.

“These results affirm that our decision to invest in tourism infrastructure, improve ease of access and diversify our tourism offerings across the country is paying off. South Africa's greatest competitive advantage lies in the combination of our people, our natural beauty, our rich heritage and our world-class infrastructure. Together, they continue to position our country as a destination of choice,” said Minister de Lille.

In May 2026, South Africa recorded 861 750 international arrivals, marking 7.2% growth when compared to same period last year. These arrivals have also been boosted by a 12.1% increase in overseas tourists choosing South Africa. The USA leads the list at 41 846 tourists, followed by the UK at 22 160.

South America is also recording exponential growth, being led by arrivals from Brazil. In May 2026 South Africa recorded a 40.6% rise in arrivals from Brazil, from 4 737 to 6 660.

“We are particularly encouraged by the strong growth from Brazil as LATAM Airlines prepares to launch its direct service between Cape Town and São Paulo. Every new air route creates new opportunities for tourism, trade and investment. This latest expansion is another vote of confidence in South Africa's tourism market and aligns with the Cabinet-approved Tourism Route Development Marketing Plan, which is focused on strengthening direct connectivity and unlocking new source markets,” added Minister de Lille.

LATAM Airlines will commence its new non-stop service between Cape Town and São Paulo on 2 July 2026, operating three flights per week, further strengthening connectivity between South Africa and Latin America.

THE END

For streaming links, images, videos and further information please scan the QR Code and join the Tourism Department’s National Multimedia WhatsApp Group.



Media Queries:

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