



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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MEDIA STATEMENT

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**SOUTH AFRICA TO PROMOTE TOURISM PRODUCTS
IN MEXICO BEYOND THE FIFA WORLD CUP 2026**

With a population of more than 130 million people and a rapidly expanding middle- and upper-income traveller segment, Mexico has been identified as one of South Africa's priority growth markets.

Mexico is among the largest outbound travel markets in Latin America, presenting significant opportunities to increase visitor numbers, strengthen tourism ties and unlock greater economic benefits for both countries.

South Africa has already seen encouraging growth from the market. Over the past three years, arrivals from Mexico have increased at an average rate of 13%:

- 2023 = ±4,500
- 2024 = ±4,800
- 2025 = ±5,100

The introduction of South Africa's Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) system is expected to further accelerate this growth by making travel to South Africa faster, simpler and more accessible for Mexican travellers.

Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille said the ETA represents a significant step forward in removing barriers to travel.

"This visa reform makes it easier than ever for Mexican travellers to visit our beautiful country. Applicants can apply from the comfort of their homes using a computer or mobile phone and receive their visa within 24 hours. Ease of access is one of the most powerful drivers of tourism growth, and we are already seeing strong interest from key international markets."

During the opening week of the FIFA World Cup 2026 in Mexico, Minister de Lille met with Mexico's Vice Secretary of Tourism, Dr Nathalie Desplas Puel, the Secretary of Tourism of Mexico City, Alejandra Frausto and more than 40 leading Mexican tour operators to showcase South Africa's tourism offering and promote the benefits of the ETA system.

The engagements also focused on strengthening tourism cooperation between the two countries and identifying practical measures to increase visitor flows.

Building on the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United Mexican States and the Government of the Republic of South Africa which is currently under review, the two countries have agreed to a three-year Tourism Action Plan (2026 – 2029) aimed at stimulating travel and tourism growth. Priority areas for implementation include joint destination marketing, sports and culture tourism promotion, participation in tourism trade fairs, knowledge sharing and the expansion of air connectivity.

Minister de Lille said improving connectivity remains central to South Africa's tourism growth ambitions.

“Air access is a key pillar of the Tourism Growth Partnership Plan. The challenge before us is how we reduce the friction of travel between our countries and make South Africa more accessible to Mexican travellers. Stronger connectivity creates stronger tourism flows, deeper people-to-people ties and greater economic opportunities,” said Minister de Lille

South Africa is already making significant progress in expanding its international air network. On 24 June 2026, Spanish carrier Air Europa will launch its inaugural direct flight between Madrid and Johannesburg. In July, Brazilian carrier LATAM Airlines will add three weekly direct flights between São Paulo and Cape Town.

These new routes will strengthen South Africa's connectivity with Latin America and Europe, creating additional opportunities to attract visitors from Mexico and supporting the country's broader tourism growth agenda.

As South Africa continues to expand market access, improve connectivity and streamline travel through digital innovation, Mexico remains a strategic partner in growing tourism, trade, and investment between Africa and Latin America.

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