

Western Cape welcomes more direct flights between CPT and US

The Western Cape has welcomed the news that the South African government has agreed, in principle, to increase the number of flights between South Africa and the United States from 21 weekly flights to a total of 23.



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According to the bilateral air service agreement, United States airlines are allowed to fly 21 weekly flights to South Africa. United States airlines currently fill 17 flights per week.



Delta, United win cases to service Cape Town

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Both United Airlines and Delta Air Lines have each requested an additional three frequencies to fly directly to Cape Town in particular. To accommodate both airlines, the United States government approached the South African Department of Transport to request an additional two slots per week, taking the total allowed to 23 which, together with the remaining already allocated slots, would allow United and Delta to use an additional three flights per week.

Both airlines have publicly welcomed this tentative approval.

"More flights mean more visitors and more visitors mean more jobs for the Western Cape, and so this is fantastic news for our province which is recording a sustained tourism recovery," says Mireille Wenger, provincial minister of finance and economic opportunities,

"It is also great news that the trade and investment relationship between the Western Cape and the United States continues to grow from strength to strength.

According to provincial data:

- The United States is one of the major source countries for international tourist arrivals to the Western Cape, with more than 134,000 American tourists arriving in the Western Cape in 2019 before the pandemic.
- The United States was the Western Cape's largest export market for the first time in 2021, with exports totalling close-on R17bn, an increase of 57.5% on 2020's value of R10.8bn.
- For the past decade, the United States has also been the largest investor in the Western Cape by Capex - investing R2.9bn and R4.4bn into the Western Cape in 2020 and 2021, respectively; and
- A 24.5% increase in citrus exports and a 41.6% increase in wine exports were also notable increases to the U.S. from 2020 to 2021.

"As we welcome more flights, our objective is not only to recover to pre-pandemic levels, but to grow far beyond these figures so that we create many more economic opportunities in the province.

"To do this, we will continue to leverage the successful 'Cape Town Air Access' collaboration, we will boost our destination marketing at home and abroad, and we will tackle barriers that stand in the way of this sector's growth. We will also continue to focus on our domestic tourism market which remains essential to the sustainability of our tourism and hospitality sector into the future," concludes Wenger.

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