

WCape's December tourism soars to over 400,000 visitors

Mireille Wenger, the Provincial Minister of Finance and Economic Opportunities for the Western Cape has announced a record-breaking summer season for the province. The news said Wenger, underscores not only a triumph for tourism but also signals a promising economic upswing for the province. Minister Wenger emphasised the significance of this achievement, stating, "This is excellent news for our provincial economy and for the hundreds of thousands of jobs supported by tourism in the province."



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Highlighting the surge in international travel, Minister Wenger revealed a groundbreaking milestone at the award-winning Cape Town International Airport (CTIA). "Last week we confirmed that the award-winning Cape Town International Airport (CTIA) smashed all previous monthly records, processing an astounding 317 000 two-way international passengers. This is the highest monthly total of passengers in history, surpassing the previous high of 290 000 passengers processed in January 2020," added Minister Wenger.

The latest data also shows that George Airport's passenger numbers grew a notable 31% year-on-year for December, with over 83,000 passengers travelling through the airport, pointing to the positive recovery of domestic travel to the Garden Route.



Cape Town International hits all-time high in passenger traffic

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"Following what has been a record-breaking tourism season for our province, we must all harness this momentum towards further growing our economy in 2024. This bumper season was made possible by the thousands of hard-working hospitality staff, backed by the multiple law enforcement bodies and disaster management officials who ensured visitors to our province as well as residents, were safe.

"We are very proud of you. I look forward to us all maintaining this positive economic momentum into upcoming tourism seasons, like the upcoming school-term holidays. Through this, we can create even more jobs," said Premier Alan Winde.

Attraction highlights across WCape's top destinations

During December 2023, over 400,000 visitors explored Western Cape and Cape Town attractions, including the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway, Table Mountain National Park: Cape of Good Hope, Table Mountain National Park: Boulders, Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden and Robben Island.

Notably, says Wenger, Table Mountain National Park: Boulders registered an impressive year-on-year growth of 21.9% in December 2023, with Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden seeing an increase of 5.5% and Robben Island by 2.8% during December 2023.

Western Cape regional attractions, including the Harold Porter National Botanical Garden, Cape Agulhas Lighthouse, Arniston Hotel & Spa, !Khwatya, Shipwreck Museum and Panthera Africa recorded a foot count of nearly 20,000 visitors cumulatively.

The Harold Porter National Botanical Garden saw a 17.7% year-on-year growth rate in December 2023, and a positive increase in visitor numbers to the Cape Agulhas Lighthouse of 5.1%, Arniston Hotel & Spa of 2.0% and !Khwatya of 3.9% is also welcomed.

This is according to the monthly tourism report, compiled by the Western Cape Government's (WCG) trade, investment, and tourism promotion agency, Wesgro.

Other highlights from the report include:

- Cape Town International Airport's International (CTIA) terminal saw a 17% year-on-year growth in December 2023.
- For the full year 2023, the international terminal registered a 48% growth in relation to 2022, with 2.8 million two-way international passengers. This figure is yet again record-breaking, surpassing the previous benchmark of 2.6 million passengers recorded in 2019.
- The domestic terminal recorded a 21% year-on-year growth for December, with 688,000 passengers.
- The total domestic passenger growth for 2023 has remained steady at 16%, compared to the same period in 2022, welcoming just under 6.9 million passengers for the year.

Minister Wenger continued: "In 2023, 2.8 million two-way international passengers passed through CTIA, yet another record-breaking achievement. Without a doubt, the Western Cape is a destination in demand. I would like to congratulate the CTIA team and thank our hospitality and tourism businesses for their incredible effort in giving visitors from across the

province, country and indeed the world, such a warm Western Cape welcome.

"More tourists, mean more jobs and I look forward to sharing the rest of the data for the entire festive season as soon as it has been finalised."

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