

Why South Africa needs an annual adventure summit

By [Casey van Niekerk](#)

30 Nov 2017

The human need for adventure is a well-documented school of thought, highlighting adventure as an essential and integral part of our biological makeup. Adventure, in this respect, can be described as anything uncertain or different. It's the human need for shock, challenge, excitement, surprise, change, chaos and innovation.



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SA ticks every box

South Africa can offer the world this and so much more. Statistically, it has less than 1% of the global tourism market and as a country, South Africa is uniquely set up and qualified to be the number one adventure tourism destination worldwide - if only it were given half the chance.

South Africa, as an adventure destination, can offer such a wide variety of experiences to its visitors. The extensive selection is unparalleled and makes it the perfect holiday destination for many travellers worldwide. South Africa ticks every box when it comes to the necessary requirements for adventure. It's diverse and distinct terrain offers over 3,000km of coastline, beautiful plains and bushveld, magnificent and accessible mountains and all of this within easy travelling distances.

Together with its ideal climate for adventure activities, which mostly takes place in the great outdoors, South Africa is an easy target for adventure seekers and adrenaline junkies.

No longer a niche

Adventure travel is no longer a growing niche, it is a full-blown industry. In the past few years, this industry has seen remarkable growth with more travellers wanting to experience a destination rather than simply observing it. It also appeals to a much wider audience now. Previously, it was always seen as an industry geared towards the young and the active but in recent years, this has changed to include a much bigger demographic.

Adventure is addictive, it's a thrill, it's a journey. It gets your blood pumping and your heart beating and it reminds you to live your life while you have life to live. Maybe it's the morbid reality of everyday life that has resulted in this shift. Or maybe it's the constant reminder that the people you follow on social media are living more exciting lives than you. Or maybe this

exponential growth can be attributed to the simple knowledge that as a human being with blood pumping through your veins, we all need a little adventure. Either way, South Africa is the refuge that holds all the answers.

The first ever adventure summit in South Africa

September 2017 saw the first ever [Adventure Summit](#) take place in South Africa. With over 150 delegates and industry professionals gathered to talk, discuss, experience, eat, breathe, sleep and live adventure tourism for a jam-packed, content heavy, three-day conference in Elgin, Western Cape. This first, and massively successful conference, organised by the dynamic two-man team from Dirty Boots, Esna Theron and Johan Radcliffe, was what everyone hoped would be the first of many.



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Their goal was to bring like-minded people under one roof to discuss pertinent and trending topics affecting the adventure tourism industry in South Africa. Discussions, concerns and observances around relevant issues such as government rule, regulation, restrictions and so on were debated, argued and taught to a captive audience of professionals who all walked away with a little more knowledge and insight. With ambassadors from all aspects of adventure and tourism within South Africa represented, no stone was left unturned.

This summit allowed all the attendees to have their voices heard and ask questions that they needed answers to. This, in turn, will allow the adventure tourism industry to grow and South Africa to undoubtedly become the number one adventure tourism destination across the globe. No small task, but then again, when have South Africans ever shied away from a challenge?

As a nation, we want tourism to grow. We want more jobs, better infrastructure, and safer adventures. It will not take a day, it will not take a year and it won't even take a decade to get right, but a solid foundation would be to have every person stand behind this industry, offer support, guidance and assistance where needed.

And maybe, just maybe, an annual adventure summit is the place to start.

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