



# Tourism Niche Study: Adventure

2019

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# 1. Methodology

This report provides an overview of the tourism trends and patterns amongst visitors who engaged in adventure activities throughout the Western Cape. The findings will illustrate key visitor trends obtained from the regional visitor tracking survey. In addition, the report aims to provide tourism market insights from qualitative sources for greater awareness of the Adventure Tourism market.

Responses to the regional visitor tracking surveys are used as a proxy to indicate the key trends within the Western Cape and the various regions. It is important to note that absolute figures cannot be determined from these surveys, as the survey responses are a sample of the tourists into the respective tourism offices across the Western Cape, and would thus represent a sample of the visitors. Therefore, where statistically relevant absolute numbers may be given, however, a share is provided to indicate the trend. This is based on international best practice in the use of surveys within the tourism industry for determining key trends.

**Definition: Tourist:** refers to any visitor travelling to a place other than that of his/her own environment for more than one night, but less than 12 months and for whom the main purpose of the trip is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated for from within the place visited.

# 2. Participation and sample size

In 2018, a total of **23,307** responses to the regional visitor tracking survey were received from the respective Tourism Offices in the Western Cape. Close to 4% of these respondents listed adventure as an in-destination activity. This report focuses on the **862** respondents who engaged in adventure activities from the following participating regions:

Cape Garden Route	343
Cape Karoo	78
Cape Overberg	204
Cape Town	100
Weskus	66
Winelands	71



### 3. Overview of Adventure Tourism

- According to the January 2019 addition of the United Nations World Tourism Barometer (UNWTO), international tourist arrivals grew by 6% in 2018. International tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) worldwide totalled 1.4 billion in 2018.
- The 1.4 billion mark has been reached two years ahead of UNWTO's long term forecast released in 2010. By region, Middle East (+10%) and Africa (+7%) led growth, while arrivals to Asia and the Pacific and Europe both increased by 6%, in line with the world average growth.
- The Americas increased by 3% year-on-year. These results were driven by a favourable economic environment and strong outbound demand from major source markets.
- Nationally, foreign tourist arrivals reached 10.5 million in 2018 and accounted for 37% of total tourism trips to South Africa. The foreign market to South Africa increased by 1.8% when compared to 2017, driven by positive growth across all regions.
- At 1.7 million tourist arrivals, The Western Cape accounted for 16.2% of all international tourist arrivals to South Africa and received 19.8% (R16.3 billion) of South Africa's tourist's spend.
- By province, the Western Cape was by far the most popular province for adventure activities since 2015, with +- 80% share of adventure activities compared to 2 – 30% in the other 8 provinces. In addition Adventure ranked as the top activity undertaken by respondents in the Western Cape in 2017.
- In a 2018 Adventure Travel Trends Report, the Adventure Travel Trade Association projects that the international adventure travel market can be valued at \$683 billion with a CAGR of 21% since 2012.
- The report highlights the importance of innovation in both product and marketing for adventure travel stakeholders to stay ahead in developing and selling adventure experiences.
- The demand for adventure tourism experiences continues to grow, particularly from the Asian region where it is reported that 60 million Chinese people practice an adventure sport.
- On the Western front, the biggest group of travellers are aged between 25 and 45 years. They take advantage of technologies to benefit from low flight prices to long-haul destinations.
- According to the UNWTO Global Report on Adventure Tourism (2014), Adventure Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors, attracting high value customers, supporting local economies, and encouraging sustainable practices.
- Adventure travellers are generally more willing to explore new destinations and activities, and with vast expanses of natural beauty and an abundance of adventure experiences on offer, the Western Cape is perfectly positioned to cater to this niche market.

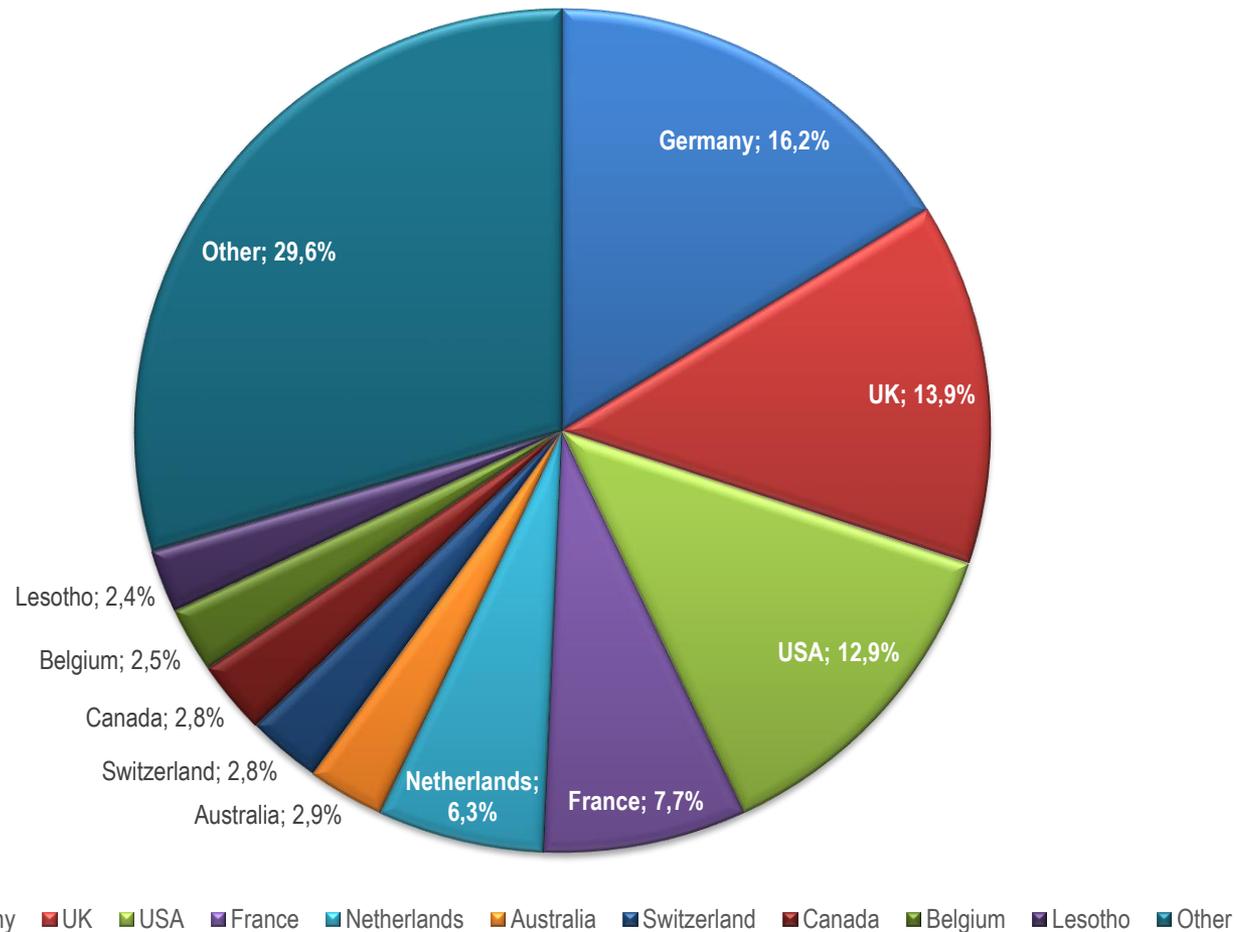


# Adventure Tourism Visitor Trends Analysis

## 4.1 Adventure Tourism Activities in South Africa

- Visitors engaging in adventure activities in South Africa are predominantly from European markets. The top 5 markets which make up nearly 60% of all international respondents who engaged in adventure activities in South Africa are: Germany (16,2%), UK (13,9%), USA (12,9%), France (7,7%), and Netherlands (6,3%).

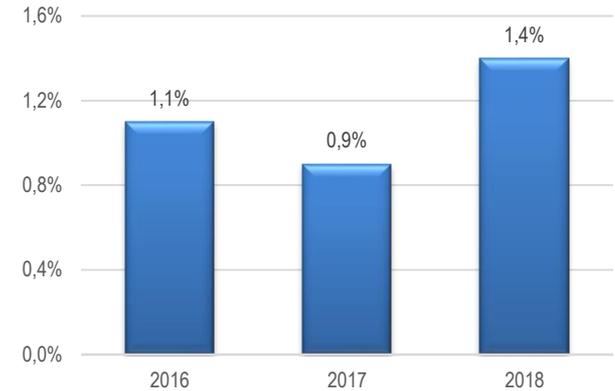
ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA BY SOURCE MARKET, 2018



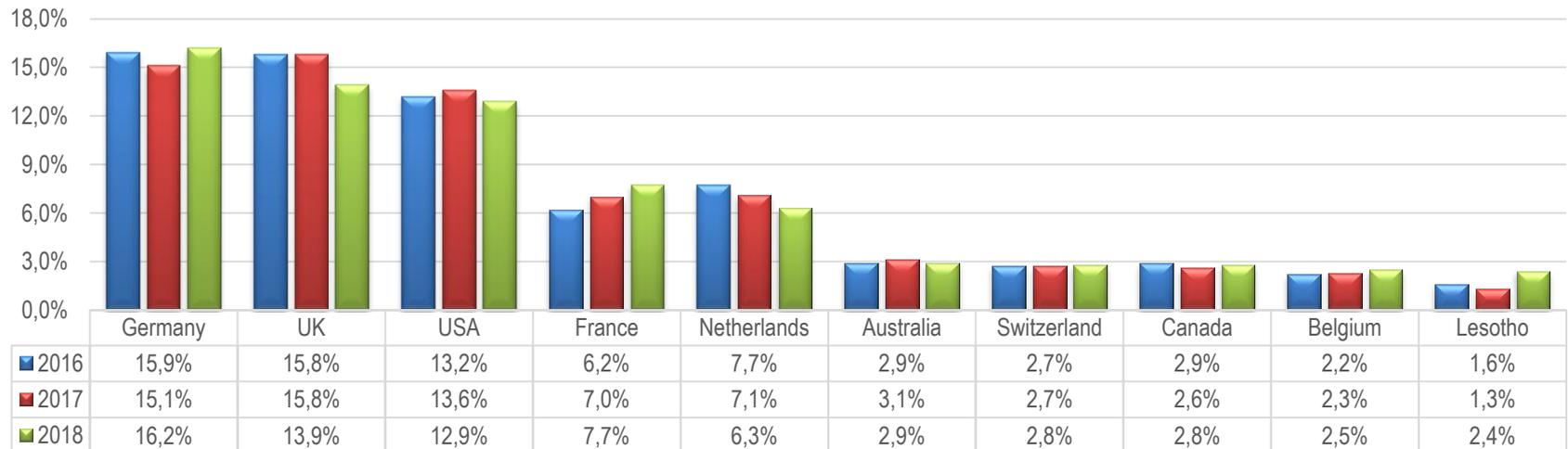
## 4.1 Adventure Tourism Activities in South Africa

- As previously mentioned, European countries dominate the list when it comes to experiencing adventure activities in South Africa with 6 out of the top 10 markets originating from the continent. From the African markets, Lesotho has seen a notable increase in adventure activities since 2016.
- Leading source markets, USA, UK, and Germany, holds substantial interest in adventure activities in South Africa.
- On the domestic front, 2018 saw a notable increase in domestic visitors engaging in adventure activities throughout South Africa, though the figures are somewhat small compared to social (39,9%), shopping (8,2%), and beach (7,6%) which were the top 3 activities in which domestic visitors engaged in 2018.
- After a decline in 2017, domestic visitors opting to engage in adventure activities went from 0,9% in 2017 to 1,4% in 2018.

DOMESTIC TOURISTS WHO ENGAGED IN ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA, 2016 - 2018

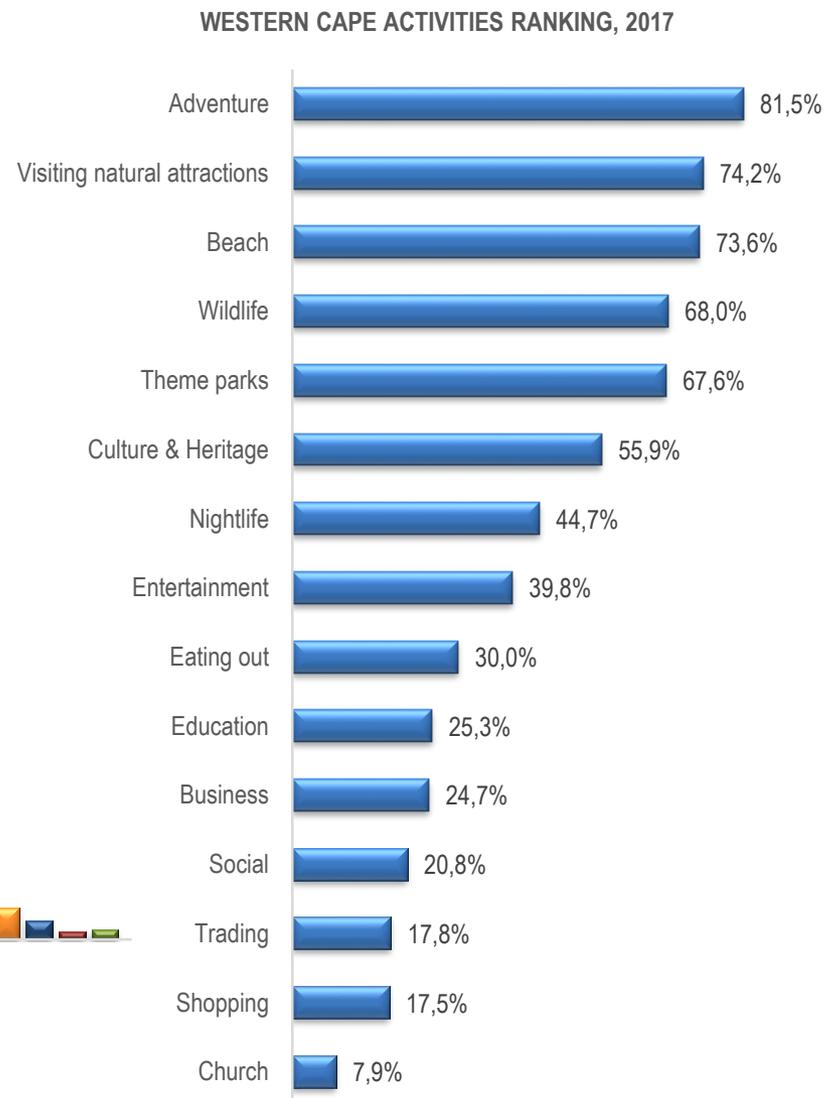
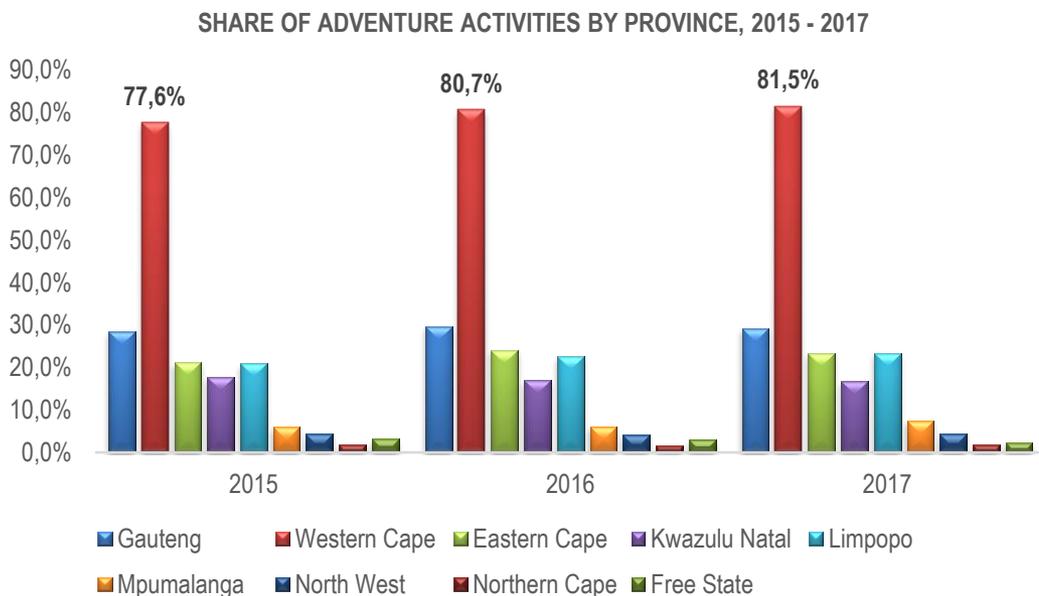


TOP COUNTRIES TO EMBARK ON ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA, 2016 - 2018



## 4.2 Adventure Tourism Activities by Province

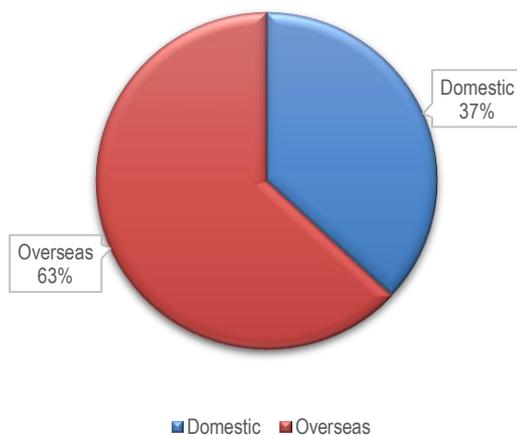
- The growth of adventure tourism as an economic force is undeniable. Tourists looking for unique and authentic experiences are increasingly interested in adventure, and travel to find these experiences.
- By province, the Western Cape consecutively held the strongest share of tourist arrivals who indicated adventure activities as one of their top activities of choice. As reflected in the figure below, the Western Cape ranked as the top province for adventure activities, maintaining its position since 2015.
- In addition Adventure ranked as the top activity undertaken by SAT survey respondents in the Western Cape in 2017.



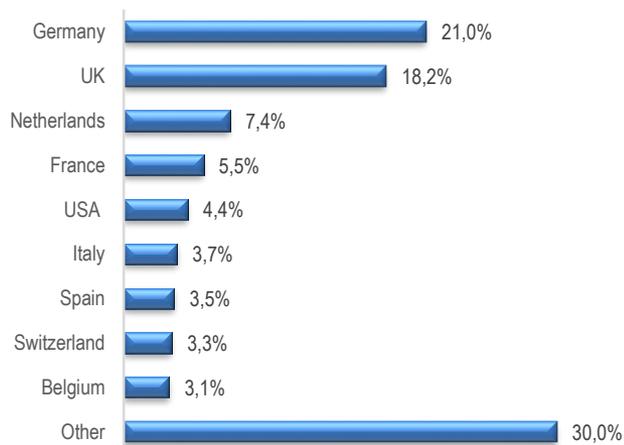
## 4.3 Adventure Tourism Activities in the Western Cape

- The strength of international visitors engaging in adventure activities is evident in the Western Cape, with 63% of survey respondents who engaged in adventure activities originating from the overseas market and 37% coming from domestic markets.
- Europe continues to dominate in adventure activity in the Western Cape with 8 out of the top 10 international markets who enjoyed adventure activities in the Western Cape originating from the continent.
- The Western Cape's top North American market, the United States, also ranked in the top 10 markets who enjoyed adventure activities in the province.
- From the domestic market, the Western Cape (50.6%), Gauteng (10.1%) and Limpopo (4.7%) ranked as the top three provinces who embarked on adventure activities in the province.
- The high number of Western Cape locals engaging in adventure activities within their province indicates that local tourism also remains a very important market for the tourism sector, particularly due to the many economic challenges the market is facing.

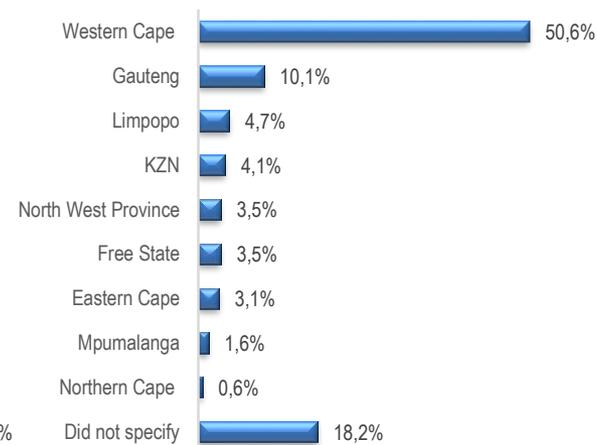
ORIGIN OF VISITORS TO THE WESTERN CAPE WHO ENGAGED IN ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES, 2018



TOP INTERNATIONAL MARKETS TO THE WESTERN CAPE TO ENGAGE IN ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES, 2018



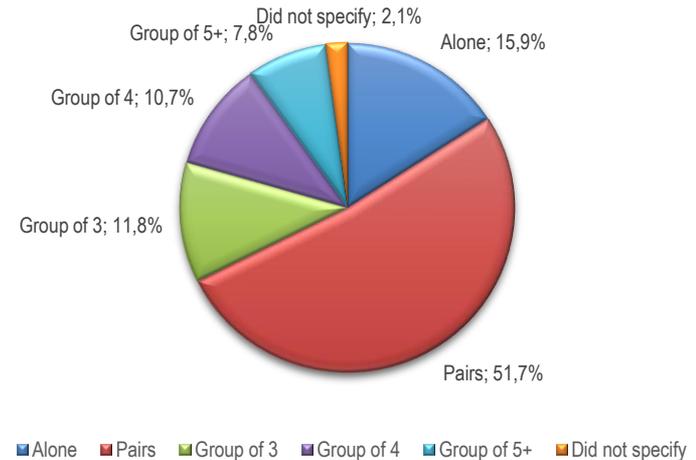
TOP DOMESTIC MARKETS TO THE WESTERN CAPE TO UNDERTAKE ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES, 2018



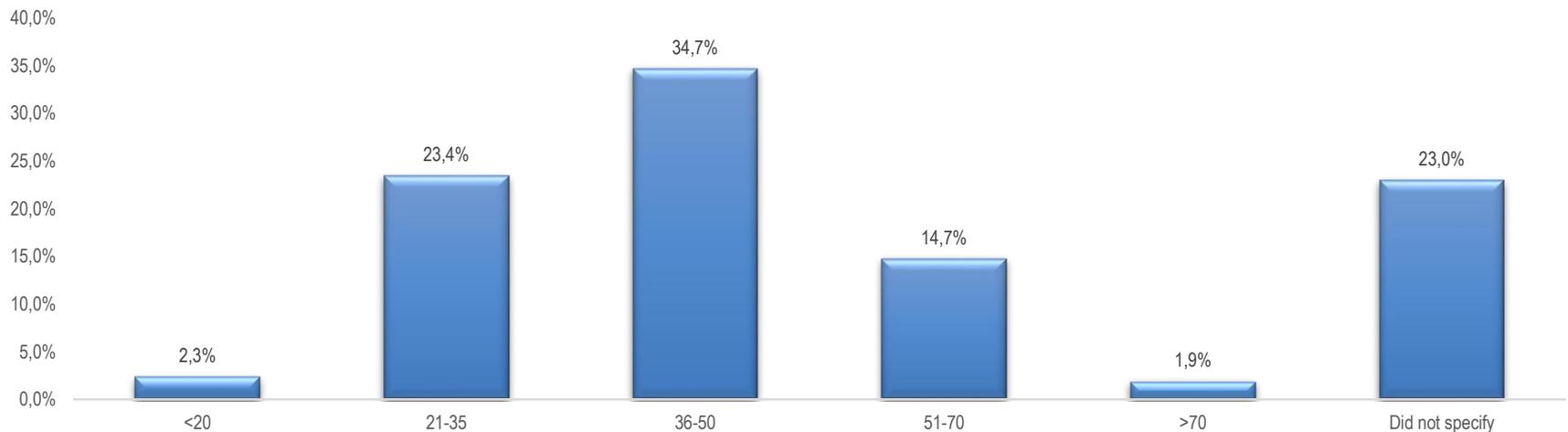
## 4.4 Western Cape Adventure Tourism Visitor Trends

- The majority of respondents who engaged in adventure activities indicated to have travelled in pairs (51,7%) or in groups of 3 or more (30,3%).
- This is not surprising given the fact that 88,5% of respondents who engaged in adventure activities cited their main purpose of travel to be for holiday/leisure.
- The vast majority of respondents who engaged in adventure activities indicated to be between the ages of 36 – 50 years (34,7%), and 21 – 35 years (23,4%).
- This is consistent with the general age categories of visitors to the Western Cape.
- However, the proportion of visitors aged 21 – 35 years (23,4%) who engaged in adventure activities is significantly higher than the 14,5% portion of 21 – 35 year olds who visited the Western Cape in general.

GROUP SIZE OF VISITORS TO THE WESTERN CAPE WHO ENGAGED IN ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES, 2018



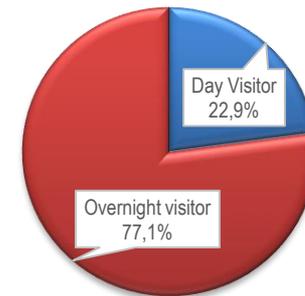
AGE CATEGORY OF VISITORS TO THE WESTERN CAPE WHO ENGAGED IN ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES, 2018



## 4.4 Western Cape Adventure Tourism Visitor Trends

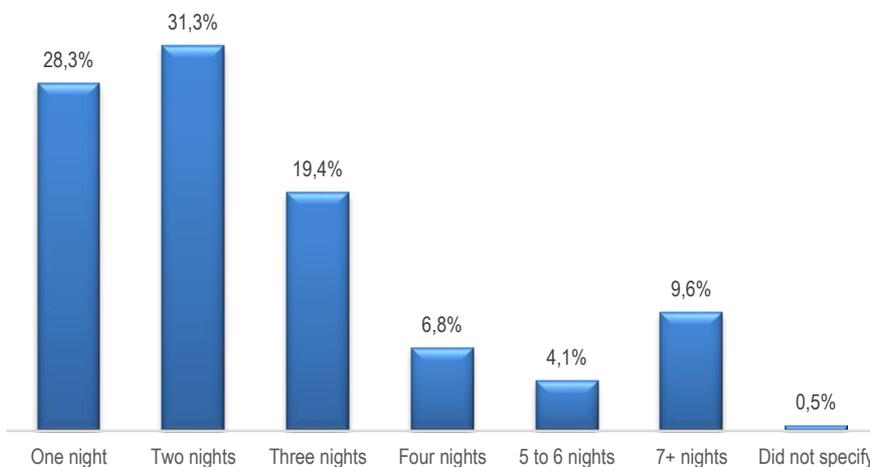
- Overall visitors to the Western Cape indicated to be majority overnight visitors (51,8%), and 77,1% of respondents who engaged in adventure activities indicated to be overnight visitors as well. This suggests that visitors who engaged in adventure activities were much more likely to stay overnight.
- Those who stayed overnight spent a longer time in the destination with respondents who engaged in adventure activities indicating to spend an average of one night (28,3%), two nights (31,3%), or three nights (19,4%) in the province.
- This trend underlines the Western Cape's desirability for weekend getaways and the popularity of day excursions for locals.
- Self Catering, Guesthouse, and Hotel were amongst the top accommodation choices for respondents who engaged in adventure activities in the Western Cape.

OVERNIGHT & DAY VISITORS TO THE WESTERN CAPE WHO ENGAGED IN ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES, 2018

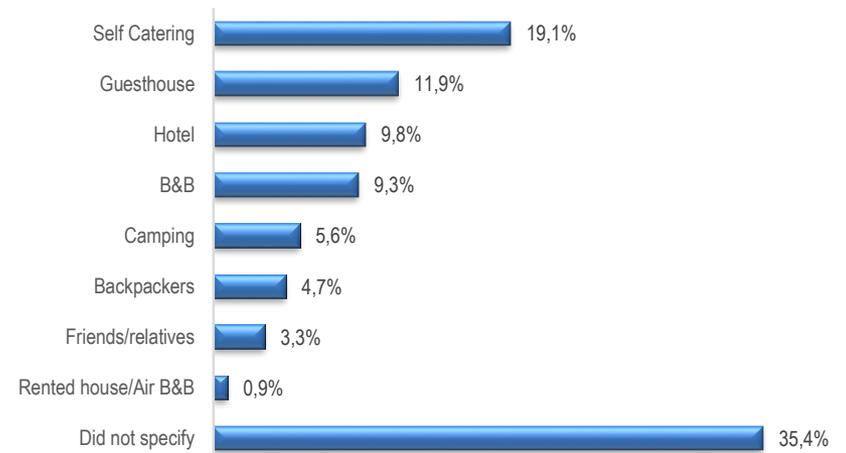


■ Day Visitor ■ Overnight visitor

AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY OF OVERNIGHT VISITORS TO THE WESTERN CAPE WHO ENGAGED IN ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES, 2018



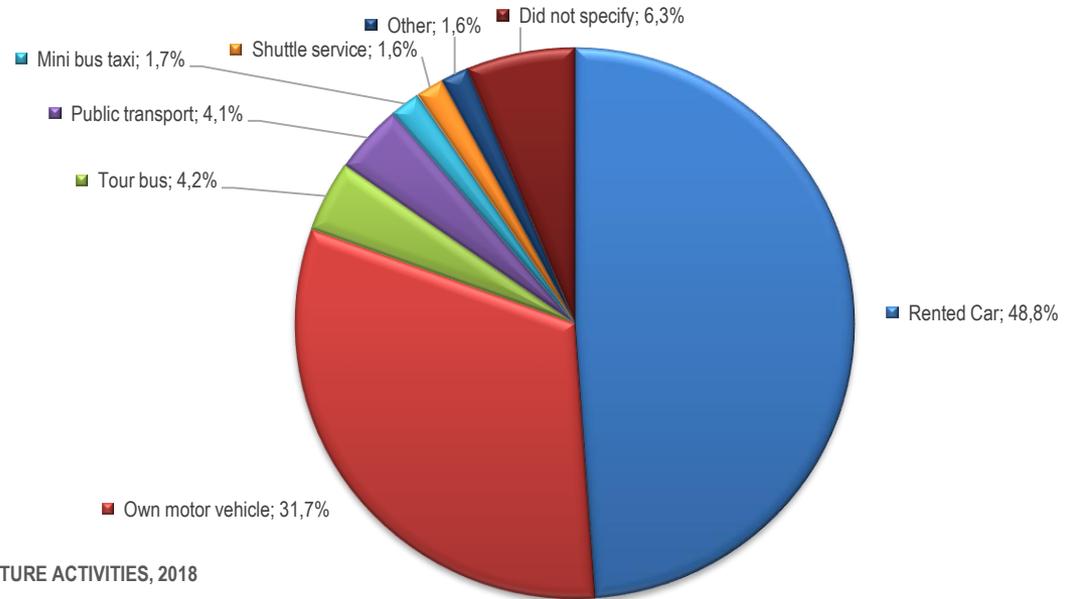
TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION USED BY VISITORS TO THE WESTERN CAPE WHO ENGAGED IN ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES, 2018



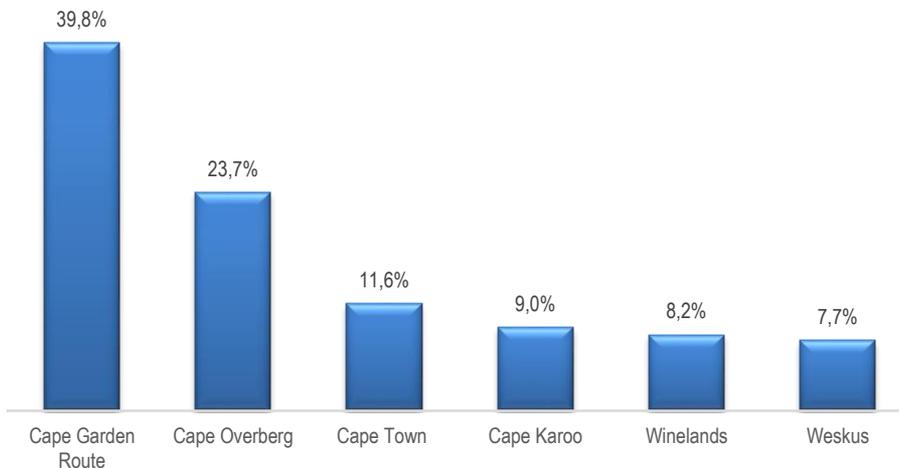
## 4.4 Western Cape Adventure Tourism Visitor Trends

- The vast majority of respondents who engaged in adventure activities indicated to have travelled by rented car (48,8%) or via their own motor vehicles (31,7%).
- This suggests that visitors who engage in adventure activities prefer to explore on their own rather than with a tour guide.
- The high number of overseas visitors engaging in adventure activities is a major contributor to these figures.

MODE OF TRANSPORT USED BY VISITORS TO THE WESTERN CAPE WHO ENGAGED IN ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES, 2018



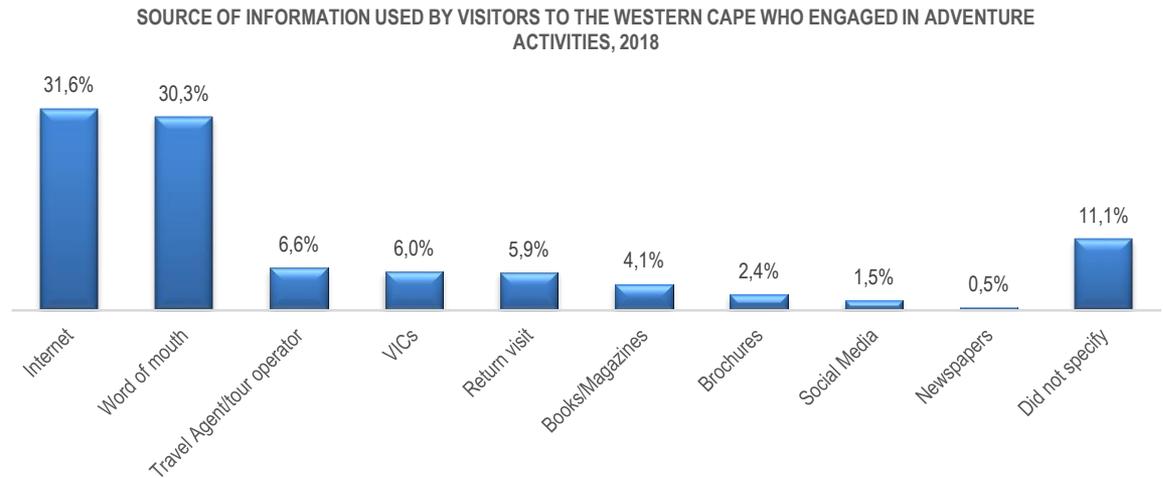
WESTERN CAPE REGIONS VISITED FOR ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES, 2018



- The most visited region for adventure activities in 2018 was the Cape Garden Route (39,8%).
- This is not surprising as the Cape Garden Route is home to many adventure sites including the Bloukrans Bridge, the world's highest commercial bridge bungee jumping site.
- The Cape Overberg and the Cape Town Metropole are also popular destinations for adventure activities.

## 4.4 Western Cape Adventure Tourism Visitor Trends

- According to respondents, the internet (31,6%) and word of mouth (30,3%) holds the greatest return on investment as effective marketing tools.
- From these trends an evident shift can be seen from marketing collateral to online platforms.



Source: Wesgro Primary Research, 2019





**Opportunities for adventure tourism from European Markets**

## 5. Opportunities for Adventure Tourism from European Markets

- Based on the findings from our visitor trends surveys, Europeans are the dominant international source market for adventure activity in the Western Cape. This section aims to provide insights into the opportunities for adventure tourism from Europe from reports published by the Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries.
- The European market is one of the largest source markets for long-haul destinations such as the Western Cape, and Europeans are increasingly choosing to travel to new and authentic destinations. Asian destinations like Turkey, Thailand, China, and India, as well as Morocco, Egypt, and Tunisia in Africa, are amongst the most popular developing destinations for Europeans.
- New tourism destinations showing the highest growth in European arrivals between 2012 and 2016 were further away places like Tajikistan, Myanmar, and Iran, confirming the trend that European travellers are increasingly seeking new and authentic destinations to experience its culture and nature.
- The report findings indicate that there are four adventure tourism trends which offer opportunities from the European market:
  - Flexible travel – European adventure travellers seek flexible itineraries and are especially interested in customised holidays.
  - Wellness and transformative travel – Adventure travellers are increasingly including an element of wellness in their holiday as a secondary activity, and are searching for travel experiences that provides personal growth and enrichment through self-reflection and reconnecting with nature and culture.
  - Small group travel – Seeking out new and authentic experiences, European travellers are increasingly interested in small group travel, of less than 12 people per group, which allows for better safety, networking and a more immersive experience.
  - Family adventure travel – Multi-generational family travel which includes grandparents, parents, and children is on the rise amongst European adventure travellers.
- European tourists who engage in adventure activities fall within five travel segments:
  - Leisure adventure travellers – They mainly engage in lighter adventure tourism activities and though adventure is their main holiday activity, they like to alternate with other activities such as culture and heritage as well.
  - Young leisure adventure travellers – They like to take risks (within limits) and are up for a challenge. They have demanding jobs and are particularly interested in new destinations and good deals.
  - Mature leisure adventure travellers – They are usually between the ages of 45 and 70 years and have enjoyed adventure activities since their youth. They take several holidays per year and require more comfort than other segments.
  - Young adventure tourism enthusiast – They are young and energetic, usually within the 18 to 44 years age category. They are keen on high-adrenaline and higher-risk activities but safety is very important. They want to be both physically and mentally challenged by their activities.
  - Mature adventure tourism enthusiast - Similar to the young adventure tourism enthusiasts, they are very fit and active and travel for the main purpose of adventure tourism but they are not necessarily thrill seekers. They do not mind some discomfort but safety is also a primary factor for them.

## 5. Opportunities for adventure tourism from European Markets

- European adventure travellers are increasingly making use of online platforms to research and plan their trip. They make use of peer review sites such as TripAdvisor, as well as travel forums and social media to gather information and share experiences. Personal recommendations from family and friends are also important.
- European adventure travellers seek exciting experiences to discover nature and culture through physical activity.
- Safety is a key element for this market segment, not only in the choice of destination but also in terms of the safety of vehicles, equipment and accommodation. The local knowledge of guides on safety within the destination and planned attractions plays an important role in the desirability of a destination for European adventure travellers.
- Soft adventure activities, such as walking, hiking and cycling are particularly popular on long-haul holidays. These travellers also enjoy safaris and culture/heritage, and they are keen to meet local people.
- European adventure travellers are more interested in comfort than luxury. They prefer small-scale accommodation, reflecting local nature and culture.
- The Adventure Tourism Development Index Report, which assesses a country's adventure tourism potential based on 10 key factors tells European tour operators which destinations are attractive for adventure tourism development.
- According to the 2018 ATDI Report, South Africa ranked second amongst developing countries in terms of tourism infrastructure. South Africa is said to have “a well-developed network of protected areas and appropriate infrastructure for adventure tourism, especially wildlife tourism”.
- Overall, the highest-ranking developing countries in the 2018 ATDI Report are: Czech Republic, Israel, Estonia, Slovak Republic, Poland, Chile, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Jordan.

Sources: CBI, ATDI, 2018



## 6. Key Findings

- European countries dominate the list when it comes to experiencing adventure activities in South Africa with 6 out of the top 10 international markets originating from the continent. From the African markets, Lesotho has seen a notable increase in adventure activities since 2016.
- By province, the Western Cape was by far the most popular province for adventure activities since 2015, with +- 80% share of adventure activities compared to 2 – 30% in the other 8 provinces. In addition Adventure ranked as the top activity undertaken by respondents in the Western Cape in 2017.
- The strength of international visitors engaging in adventure activities is evident in the Western Cape, with 63% of survey respondents who engaged in adventure activities originating from the overseas market and, similar to the national trend, 8 out of the top 10 international markets who enjoyed adventure activities in the Western Cape originated from Europe.
- From the domestic market, the Western Cape (50.6%), Gauteng (10.1%) and Limpopo (4.7%) ranked as the top three provinces who embarked on adventure activities in the province. The high number of Western Cape locals engaging in adventure activities within their province indicates that local tourism also remains a very important market for the tourism sector, particularly due to the many economic challenges the market is facing.
- The most visited region for adventure activities was the Cape Garden Route. In 2018, 39,8% of visitor survey respondents who engaged in adventure activities in the Western Cape indicated to have done so in the Garden Route.
- The vast majority of respondents who engaged in adventure activities indicated to be between the ages of 36 – 50 years (34,7%), and 21 – 35 years (23,4%). This is consistent with the general age categories of visitors to the Western Cape. However, the proportion of visitors aged 21 – 35 years (23,4%) who engaged in adventure activities is significantly higher than the 14,5% portion of 21 – 35 year olds who visited the Western Cape in general.
- Europeans are the dominant international source market for adventure activity in the Western Cape and European adventure travellers seek exciting experiences to discover nature and culture through physical activity. Soft adventure activities, such as walking, hiking and cycling are particularly popular on long-haul holidays. These travellers also enjoy safaris and culture/heritage and are keen to meet local people.
- In terms of tourism infrastructure, South Africa is said to have “a well-developed network of protected areas and appropriate infrastructure for adventure tourism, especially wildlife tourism”.
- Safety is a key element for this market segment, not only in the choice of destination but also in terms of the safety of vehicles, equipment and accommodation. The local knowledge of guides on safety within the destination and planned attractions plays an important role in the desirability of a destination for European adventure travellers.

## 7. List of Sources

- South African Tourism
- Wesgro Primary Research
- 20 Adventure Travel Trends to watch in 2018, ATTA
- CBI (Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries)
- UNWTO

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