



# tourism market insights

Ireland

**WESGRO**  
cape town & western cape  
research

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# 1. Overview of Ireland

## About Ireland

Where is Ireland? Ireland is located in Western Europe, occupying five-sixths of the island of Ireland in the North Atlantic Ocean, west of Great Britain

Population (millions) 4.9 (2019)

Time Difference South Africa is 1 hour ahead of Ireland in summer and 2 hours ahead of Ireland in winter.

Language English and Gaelic are the official languages

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, Ireland's economic outlook is subject to considerable uncertainty.

Consumer expenditure per capita in Ireland amounted to USD 23,040 in 2019, and is forecast to grow at an average annual rate of 3,4% through to 2030. In 2019, real disposable income per capita amounted to USD 26,068.

The country's population was around 4,9 million in 2019 and is expected to reach 5,6 million by 2040. Ireland has one of the youngest populations in Europe, with a median age of 37,6 years. The fertility rate is stable at 1,8 births per female. .

### General Overview

Per capita gross income in Ireland is forecast to increase by 64% in real terms over 2021-2040. Late Lifers are projected to become predominant in the top-income band by 2040, shaping luxury spending patterns in Ireland.

Outbound departures reached 2 613 000 trips in 2020, declining by 74,3% from 2019. By 2026 the number of outbound trips is expected to recover to 2019 levels with a forecast expenditure of EUR 10 138 300.

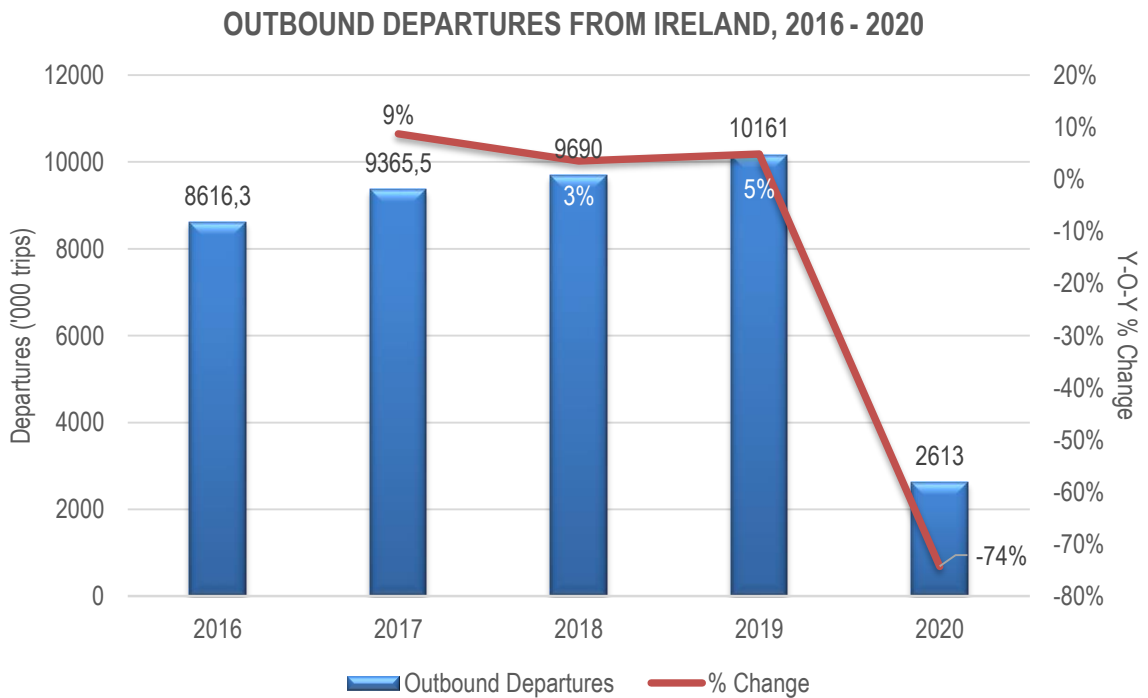
South Africa is the most visited African destination for Irish travellers. Trips from Ireland to South Africa made up 0,3% of all outbound trips in 2019 and 2020.

*Source: Euromonitor International, 2021*

## 2. Overview of the Ireland Travel Market

### Ireland Travel Market

Largest Cities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dublin</li> <li>2. Cork</li> <li>3. Galway</li> <li>4. Limerick</li> <li>5. Waterford</li> </ol>
Outbound Departures ('000 trips)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2018: 9,690</li> <li>2. 2019: 10,161</li> <li>3. 2020: 2,613</li> </ol>
Top 5 Outbound Destinations ('000 trips, 2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. UK: 612,4</li> <li>2. France: 335,5</li> <li>3. Italy: 318,8</li> <li>4. Spain: 331,5</li> <li>5. USA: 80,3</li> </ol>
Type of Outbound Trips	Leisure: 87% Business: 13%

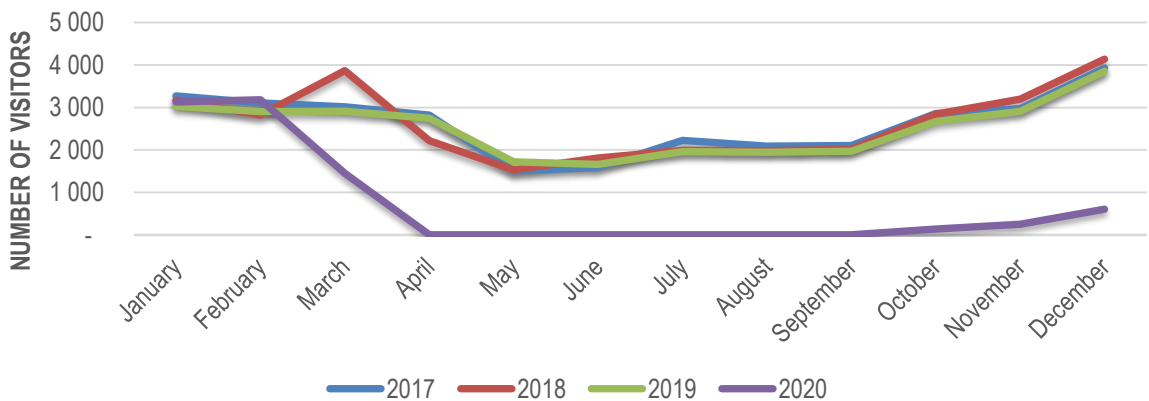


### 3. The Irish traveller to South Africa

#### Ireland Travel Market

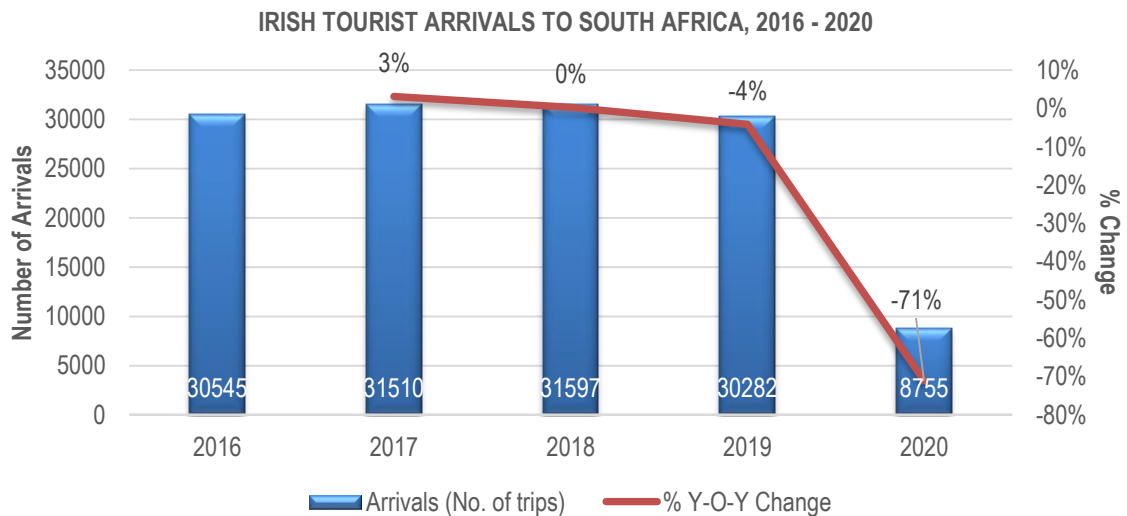
Number of Arrivals	2016: 30 545 2017: 31 510 2018: 31 597 2019: 30 282 2020: 8 755
Purpose of visit to South Africa (2020)	Holiday (50,2%) VFR (31,8%) MICE (7,4%)
Average length of stay in South Africa (Number of nights)	2018: 17,4 2019: 16,1 2020: 17,1
Age profile (2020)	25 – 34 yrs (27,2%) 35 – 44 yrs (13,7%) 44 – 54 yrs (14,8%) 55 – 64 yrs (17,8%)
Repeater Rate of Ireland Travellers (2020)	1. First Time: 57,8% 2. 2 – 3 times: 15,1%
Accommodation Usage (2019)	1. Friends & Family 2. Hotels 3. Self Catering
Total Foreign Direct Spend in South Africa (R in millions)	2018: R 588 2019: R 637 2020: R 168
Average Spend in South Africa	2018: R 20 100 2019: R 22 400 2020: R 20 300

SEASONALITY PATTERNS: IRISH TRAVELLERS TO SOUTH AFRICA BY MONTH, JAN - DEC 2017 - 2020



## 3. The Irish traveller to South Africa

### 3.1. Visitor Arrivals to South Africa



### 3.2. Purpose of visit to South Africa

Travellers from Ireland to South Africa are predominantly visiting for holiday purposes or to visit family and friends. A fair amount are also visiting for Business and Meetings, Incentives, Conferencing and Events (MICE).

In 2020, Irish travellers stayed in South Africa for an average length of 17,1 nights

#### Top reasons for travel to SA

Holiday (50,2%)

VFR (31,8%)

MICE (7,4%)

Business (4,9%)

Average  
length of  
stay

17,1  
nights

### 3.3. Activities in South Africa

#### Top activities undertaken

1. Adventure

2. Wildlife

3. Visiting natural attractions

4. Beaches

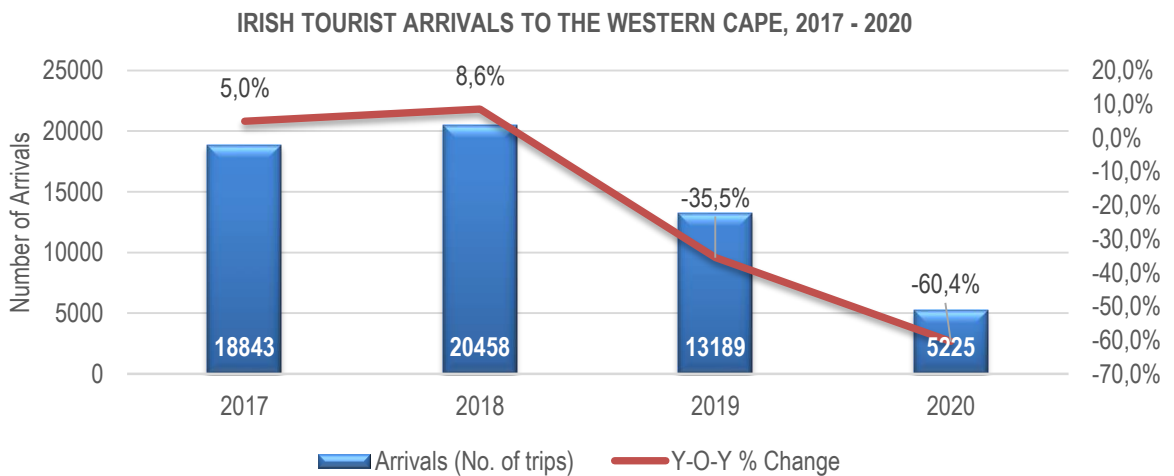
Adventure, wildlife, visiting natural attractions, and beaches were among the top activities undertaken by Irish tourists while in South Africa.

They are more likely to stay with family and friends. Many travellers from Ireland also make use of hotel and self catering accommodation.

## 4. The Irish traveller to the Western Cape

### 4.1. Visitor Arrivals to the Western Cape

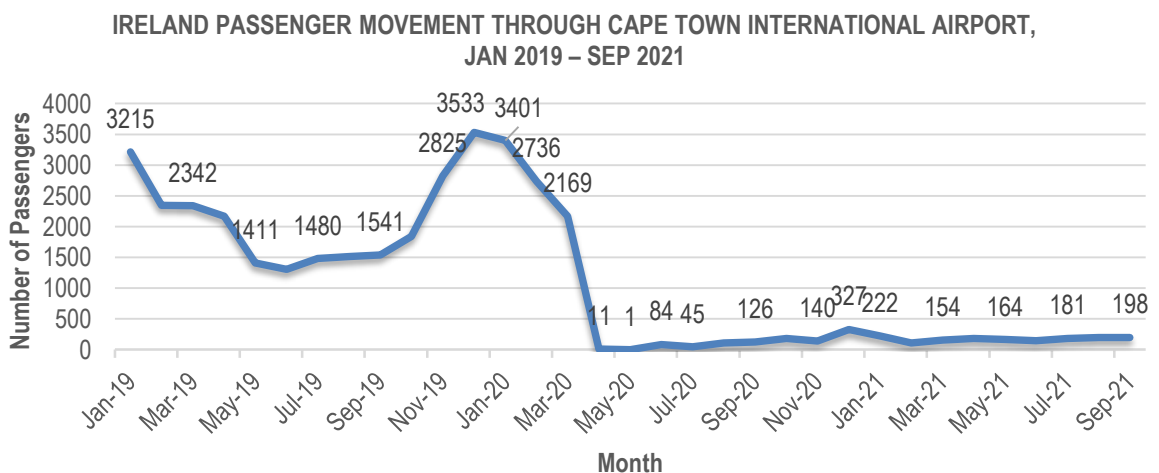
Irish visitor arrivals to the Western Cape reached its peak in 2018 increasing by 8,6% from its 2017 figure. A decline -35,5% followed in 2019, and the decrease in tourist arrivals continued into 2020.



Source: South African Tourism, 2021

### 4.2. Passenger Traffic through Cape Town International Airport

Passengers through Cape Town International Airport from Ireland were highest over the period November 2019 to February 2020. However, due to travel restrictions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, passenger arrivals decreased dramatically throughout 2020 and have remained low into 2021.



Source: OAG Traffic Analyser, 2021

## 5. Key Findings

- The COVID-19 pandemic has caused sharp declines in both inbound and outbound tourism flows as well as commercial activity across Ireland.
- Outbound departures declined by 64,6% in 2020 from the previous year. By 2024 the number of outbound trips is expected to recover to 2019 levels.
- South Africa is the most visited African destination for Irish travellers. Trips from Ireland to South Africa made up 0,3% of all outbound trips in 2019 and 2020.
- Travellers from Ireland to South Africa are predominantly visiting for holiday purposes or to visit family and friends. A fair amount also visited for Business and Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE) in 2019 and 2020.
- Irish travellers stayed in South Africa for an average length of 17,1 nights in 2020.
- They are more likely to stay with family and friends. Many travellers from Ireland also make use of hotel and self catering accommodation.
- Passengers from Ireland through Cape Town International Airport increased by 16,8% in February 2020 when compared to the previous year. However, due to travel restrictions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, passenger arrivals decreased dramatically throughout the rest of 2020 and have remained low into 2021.



## 6. List of sources

1. South African Tourism
2. StatsSA
3. Euromonitor International
4. OAG Airline Passenger Traffic Analyser
5. CIA Factbook

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