Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends

January–December 2025

wesgro
cape town & western cape
tourism, trade & investment

Contents

1. About this Report

This report provides an overview of the latest data from local tourism offices in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo between January and December 2025.

The information provides insights into the origin of visitors to the region as well as their preferred activities, ages, group sizes and spending patterns. The research is not intended to represent tourism for the region, as the sample of visitors represents only the footfall at participating tourism offices.

Image source: Wesgro (2025)

2. Methodology

This report provides an overview of the tourism trends and patterns in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo. The findings illustrate key visitor trends obtained from the regional visitor tracking surveys.

Responses to the regional visitor tracking surveys are used as a proxy to indicate the key trends in 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 responses from tourists in 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 in the tourism industry for determining key trends (Wesgro Regional Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025).

Definition

***Visitor**: Any person travelling to a place other than his/her usual environment for less than 12 months and whose main purpose for the travel is other than the exercise of an activity to be remunerated at the place visited (South African Tourism, 2025).*

3. Sample Size

Between January and December 2025, a total of **2,582 r**esponses to the regional visitor tracking surveys were received from the towns of Mossel Bay, Knysna, Wilderness and George in the Garden Roue & Klein Karoo. This is indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Total number of responses from visitors to four towns in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, between January and December 2025

Region	Domestic Visitors	Overseas Visitors	Unspecified	Total
1. Mossel Bay	566	837	0	1,407
2. Knysna	469	448	13	930
3. Wilderness	71	77	0	148
4. George	48	48	1	97
Total	**1,154**	**1,414**	**14**	**2,582**

Source: Wesgro Regional Visitor Tracking Survey (2025)

4. Key Insights

The information provided in the report is obtained from the visitor tracking surveys distributed by Wesgro to participating tourism offices in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo in 2025.

•**Connectivity: P**assenger movement at George Airport is provided.

•**Visitor segment and origin:** Between January and December 2025, 54.76% of visitors to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo were international tourists, led by visitors from Germany (27.11%) and the United Kingdom (20.51%). Domestic travellers accounted for 44.69% of respondents: most of these visitors (56.33%) were locals from the Western Cape, followed by those from Gauteng (19.06%) and from the Eastern Cape (9.36%).

•**Demographics:** Looking at the ages of visitors, most visitors were from the age groups of 36–50 years, and 51-70 years.

•**Length of stay**: Most visitors were day visitors (17.62%), while 47.52% were overnight visitors, staying for one night and more.

•**Information sources:** Most visitors (29.47%) relied on the internet/websites, followed by word of mouth referrals (5.11%) and social media platforms (5.07%).

•**Transportation and accommodation preferences:** Both domestic and international travellers had a preference for using rental transportation as well as their own motor vehicles when travelling to the region. When observing accommodation preferences, hotels (chosen by 13.83% of visitors), self catering (7.94%) and guesthouses (7.82%) were top three choices among visitors.

•**Visitor spending:** Visitor spending was primarily concentrated in the mid- to high-range categories, both in relation to average daily expenditure and accommodation spending.

•**Purpose of visit:** Most visitors (57.82%) reported that their primary purpose for visiting the region was for leisure purposes and holiday

.•**Activities:** Outdoor activities were enjoyed by 11.50% of visitors; scenic drives by 9.64%, and cuisine and gourmet food experiences by 8.64% of visitors.

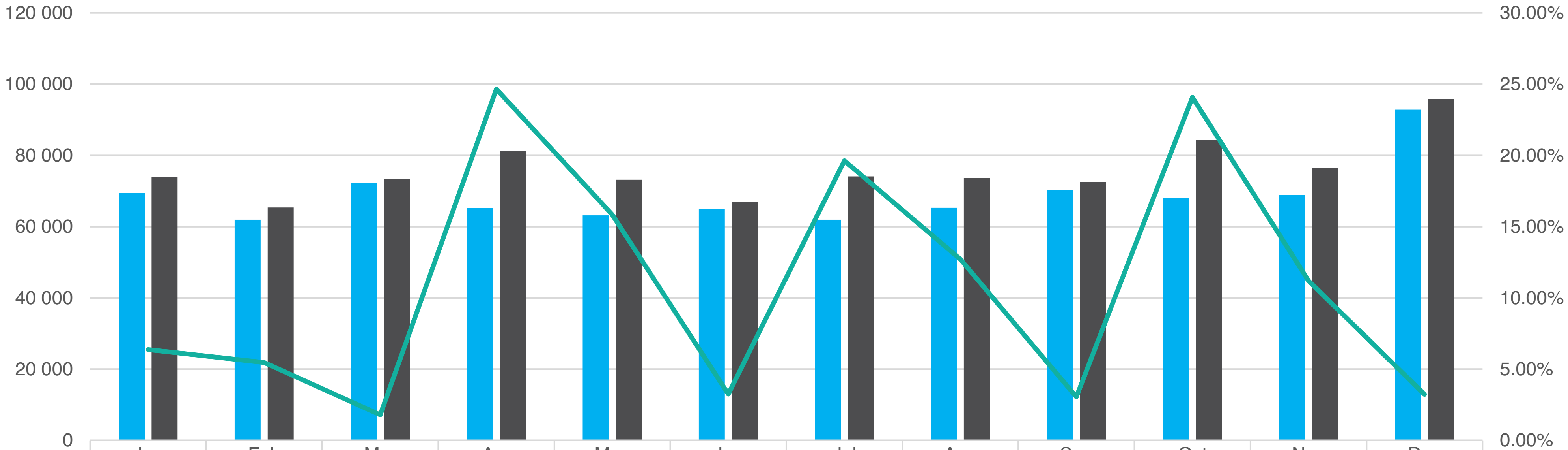
•**Attractions:** Visitor data was obtained from CapeNature for the four nature reserves located in the region as well as from the Cango Caves.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2025)

5. George Airport Passenger Movement

- Between January and December 2025, George Airport recorded a total of 911,354 two-way passengers, representing a 10.56% year-on-year increase compared to the same period in 2024. This growth, illustrated in Figure 1, reflects the continuing popularity of the region as a tourist destination.
- December had the highest number of tourist arrivals with 95,858 passengers. Other busy months were October with 84,342 passengers and April with 81,359 passengers recorded for the month.

Figure 1: Two-way passenger movement through George Airport, January–December 2024/2025



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2024	69 481	62 004	72 156	65 268	63 196	64 850	61 966	65 321	70 369	67 975	68 894	92 862
2025	73 909	65 394	73 451	81 359	73 209	66 956	74 127	73 620	72 524	84 342	76 605	95 858
Y-o-Y % Change	6.37%	5.47%	1.79%	24.65%	15.84%	3.25%	19.63%	12.70%	3.06%	24.08%	11.19%	3.23%

*Note: **Two-way passengers** refers to the sum of arriving and departing passenger totals.

Source: Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) (2026)

wesgro
cape town & western cape
tourism, trade & investment

6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns

Wesgro Primary Research: Regional Visitor Tracking Surveys

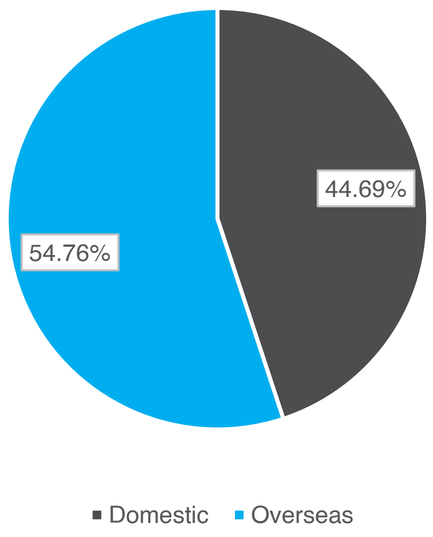
Review Period: January–December 2025

6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns:
Origin of Visitors

- Between January and December 2025, International visitors accounted for a 54.76% share of visitors recorded in four tourism visitor offices in the region, while 44.69% were domestic tourists. This distribution of visitors is illustrated in Figure 2.

- Among the domestic visitors, 56.33% came from the Western Cape, followed by 19.06% from Gauteng and 9.36% from the Eastern Cape. The percentage share of other domestic visitors to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo region is detailed in Figure 3, which shows the influx of tourists from the respective provinces in South Africa.

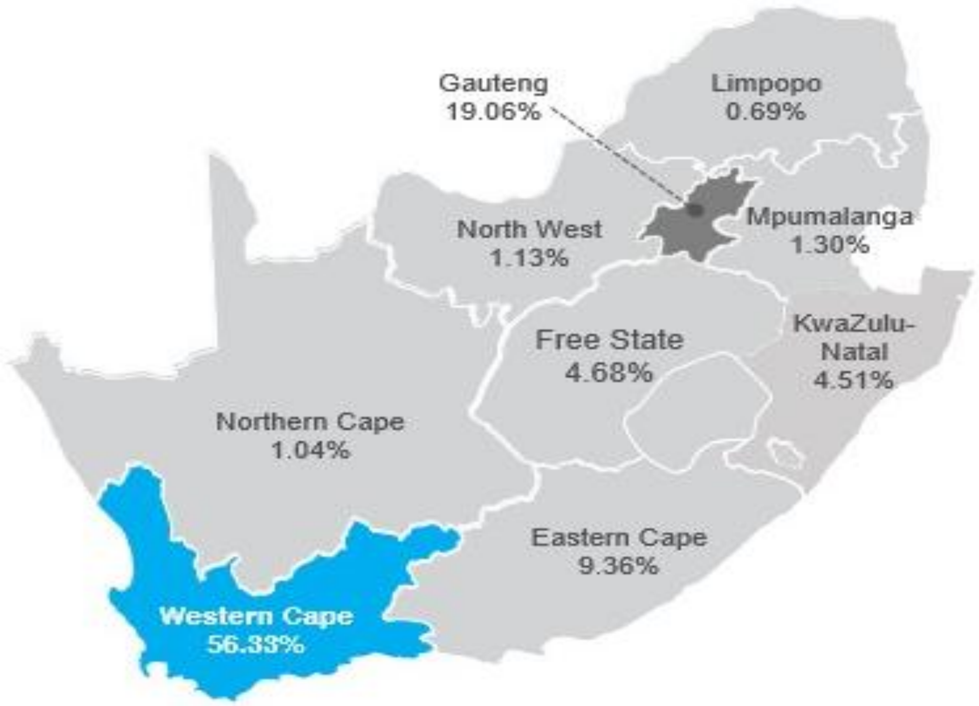
Figure 2: Overseas and domestic visitors to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo January–December 2025



Note: 0.54% of survey respondents did not specify their origin.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

Figure 3: Origin of domestic visitors to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–December 2025



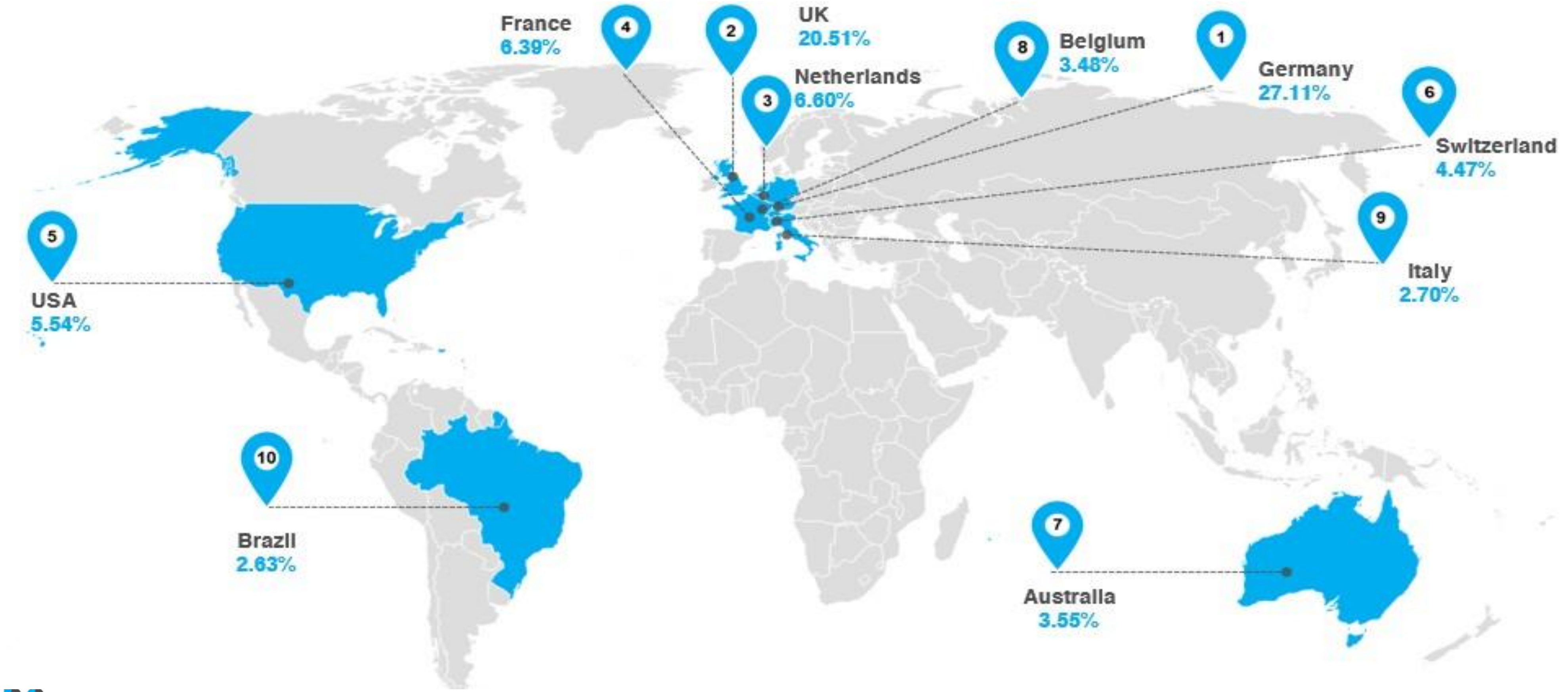
Note: 1.91% of survey respondents did not specify their province of origin.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns:
Top Overseas Source Markets

- According to Figure 4, the largest share of overseas visitors to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo region between January and December 2025 were from Germany (27.11%), the United Kingdom (20.51%) and the Netherlands (6.60%). These countries ranked as the top three source markets among the top 10 illustrated in figure 4.

Figure 4: Origin of overseas visitors to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–December 2025



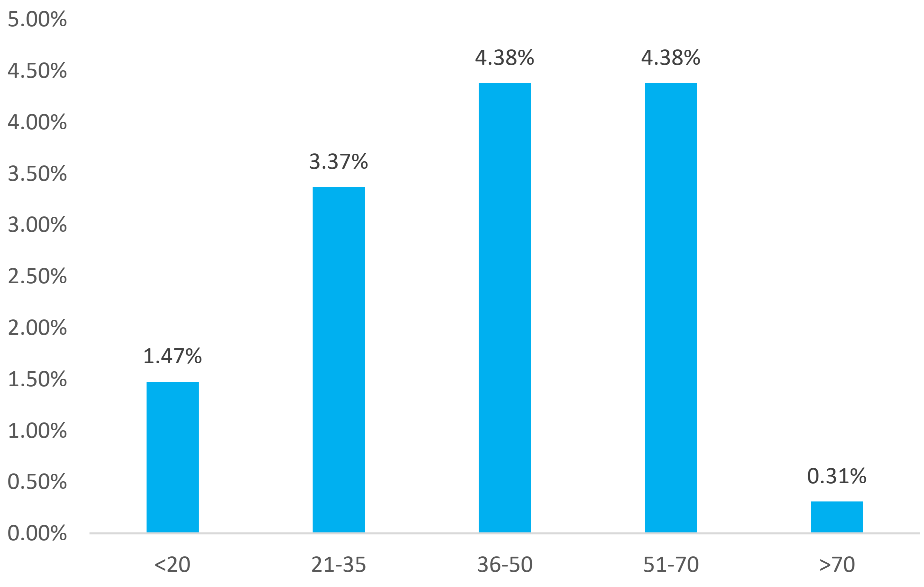
Note: Figure 4 illustrates the top 10 source markets for visitors in the region.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns: Demographics

- Figure 5 and 6 provide an overview of visitor demographics in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo region between January and December 2025. Some 3.37% of visitors to the region were young adults between the ages of 21 and 35 years, with a higher share (4.38%) of visitors between both 36 and 50 years and those who were above 50 years.
- Regarding travel group size, the data reveals that a significant portion of visitors 38.65% preferred to travel in pairs, followed by solo travellers (19.71%). Smaller proportions were recorded for groups of threes (5.96%), and groups of fours (6.70%), as well as larger groups of five and more (1.82%). This can be seen in Figure 6.

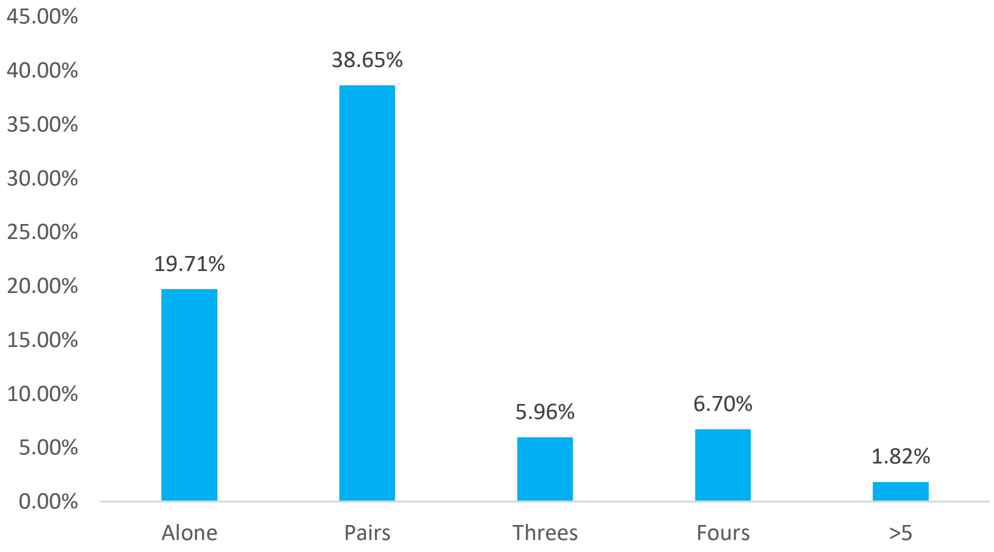
Figure 5: Age groups of visitors, January–December 2025



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

Note: 86.10% of survey respondents did not specify their age.

Figure 6: Travel group sizes of visitors, January–December 2025



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

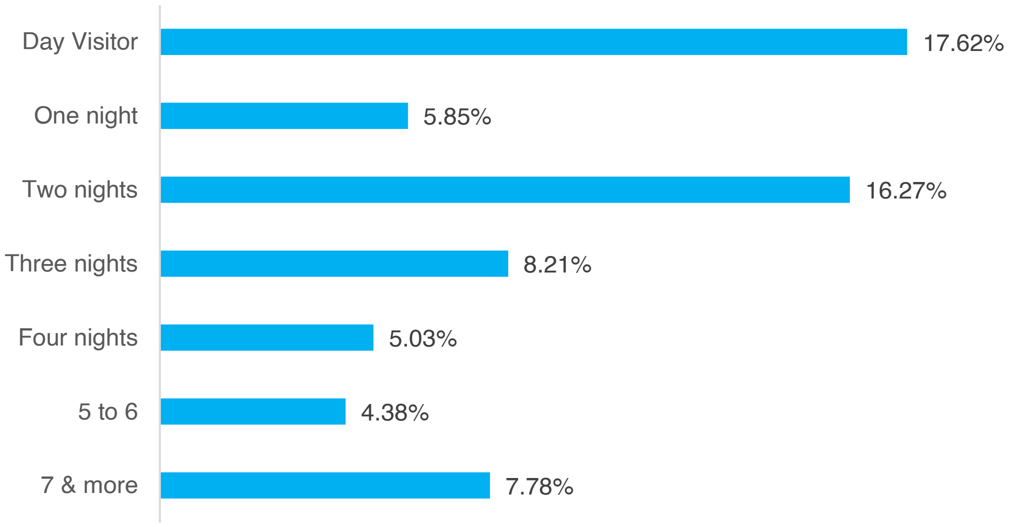
Note: 27.15% of survey respondents did not specify their travel group size.

6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns: Length of Stay

- Visitors travelling to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo were predominantly day visitors (17.62%), followed by visitors who stayed for two nights (16.27%) and those who stayed for longer periods (seven days or more; 7.78%), as shown in figure .

- Figure 8 illustrates the types of accommodation used by both domestic and international visitors. The data shows that 13.83% of visitors preferred hotels, followed by those who used self-catering establishments (7.94%) and guesthouses (7.82%). The region attracts a broad variety of visitors; ranging from nature enthusiasts and adventure seekers to families exploring cultural or leisure experiences. This diversity is reflected in the extensive accommodation offerings, which include backpacker hostels, holiday homes and camping facilities.

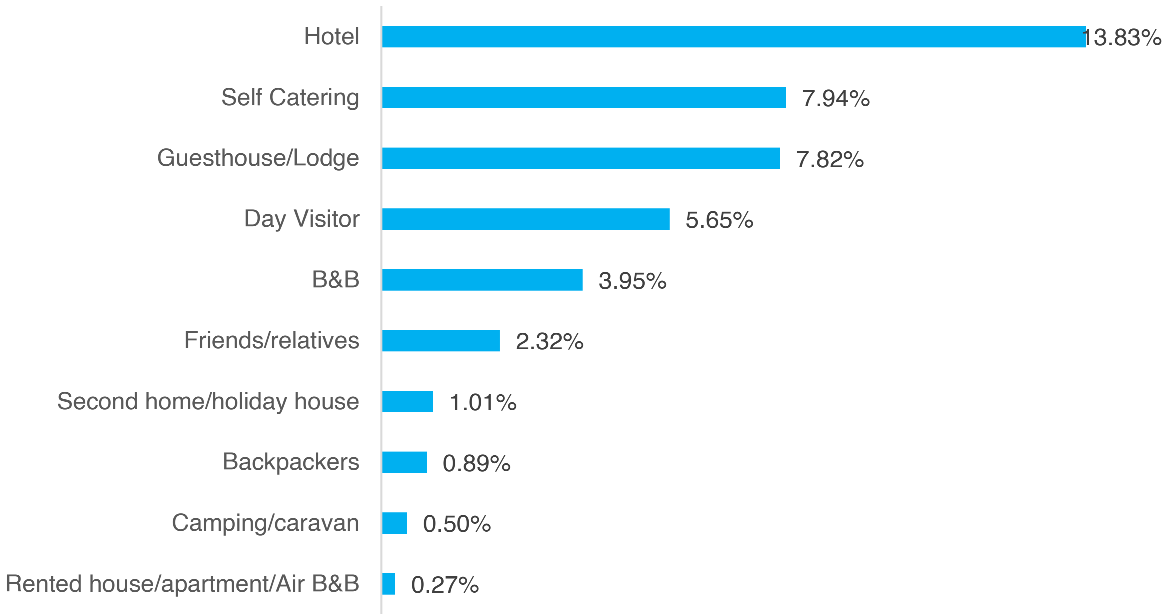
Figure 7: Average length of stay in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo region, January–December 2025



Note: 34.86% of respondents did not indicate their length of stay.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

Figure 8: Accommodation usage in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo region, January–December 2025



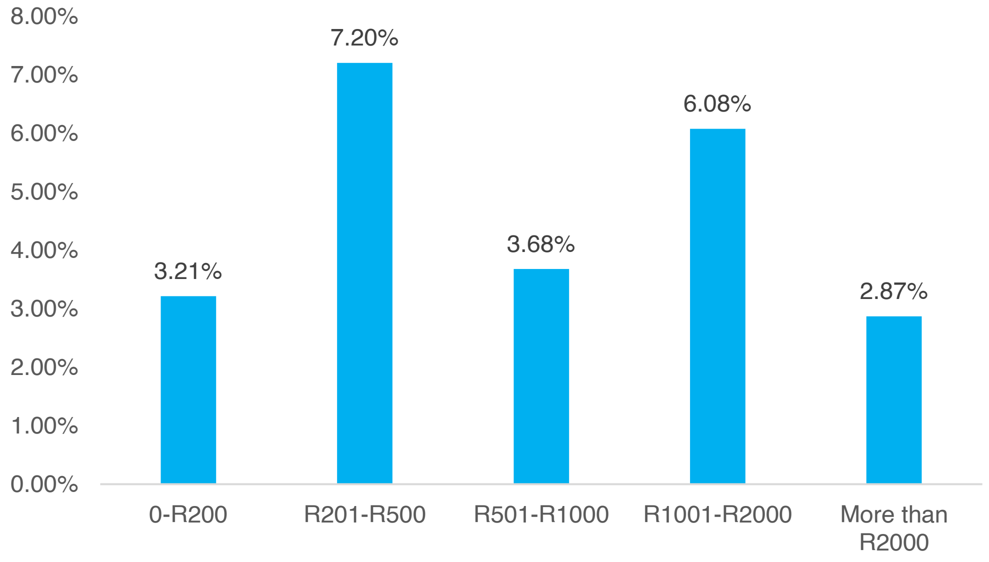
Note: 55.73% of respondents did not indicate their accommodation preference.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns:
Visitor Spending & Information Sources

- Figure 9 illustrates visitors average daily expenditure in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo. The largest proportion of visitors spent between R201 and R500 per day, followed closely by those who spent between R1001 and R2000. This spending pattern aligns with the profile of the region, as most visitors were day trippers.
- Figure 10 outlines the primary information sources used by visitors to the region. The three leading influences for visitors to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo were the internet and websites (29.47%), word-of-mouth referrals (5.11%) and social media platforms (5.07%).

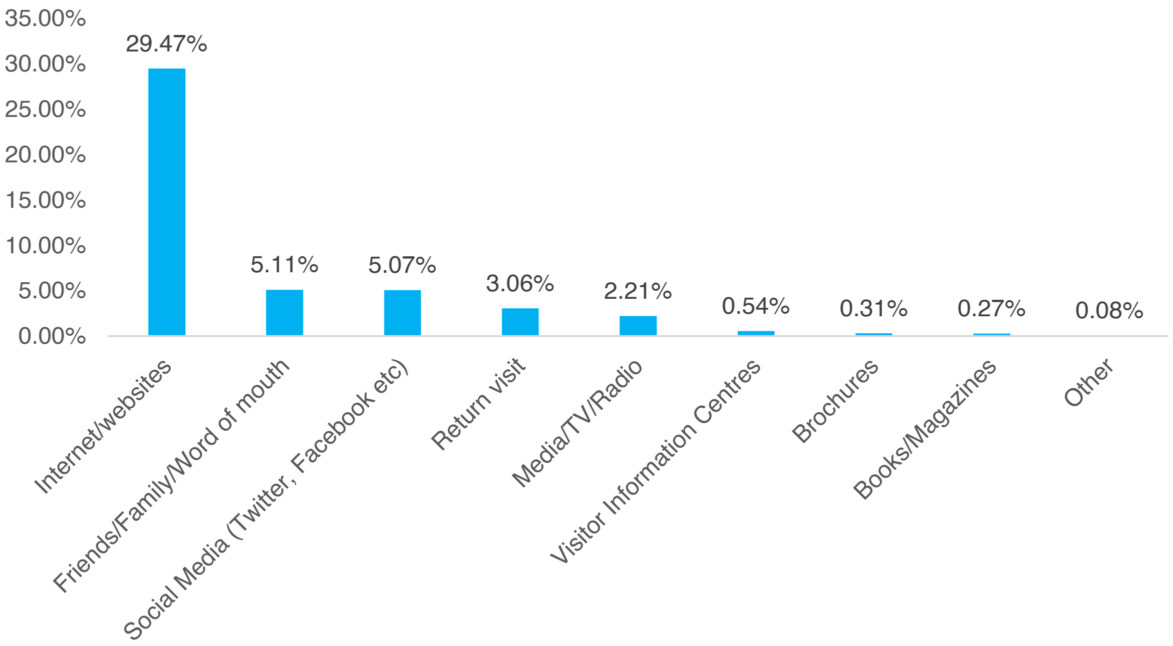
Figure 9: Average daily spend in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–December 2025



Note: 76.96% of the respondents to the survey did not specify their average daily spend.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

Figure 10:Top information sources used by visitors in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo , January–December 2025



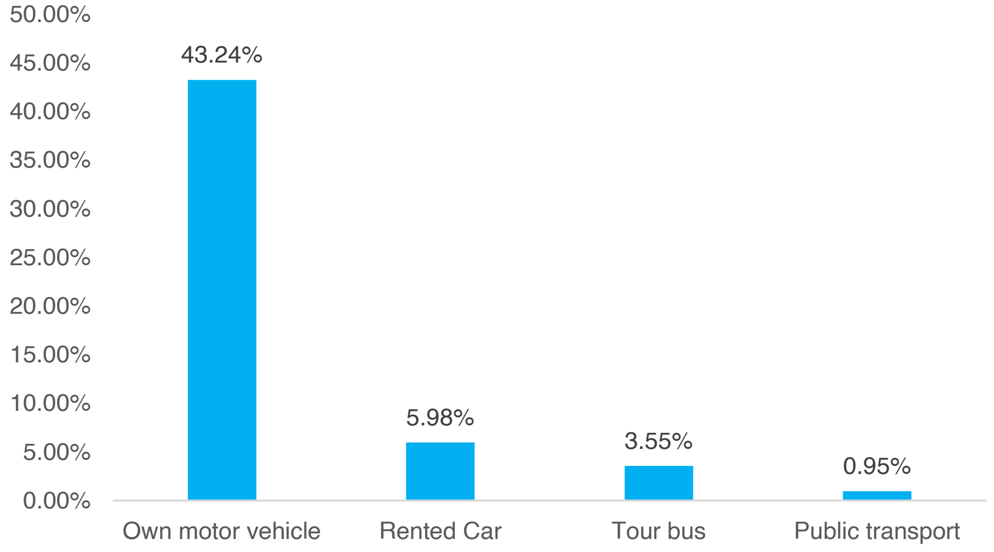
Note: 53.87% of the respondents to the survey did not specify their top information source.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns:
Modes of Transport

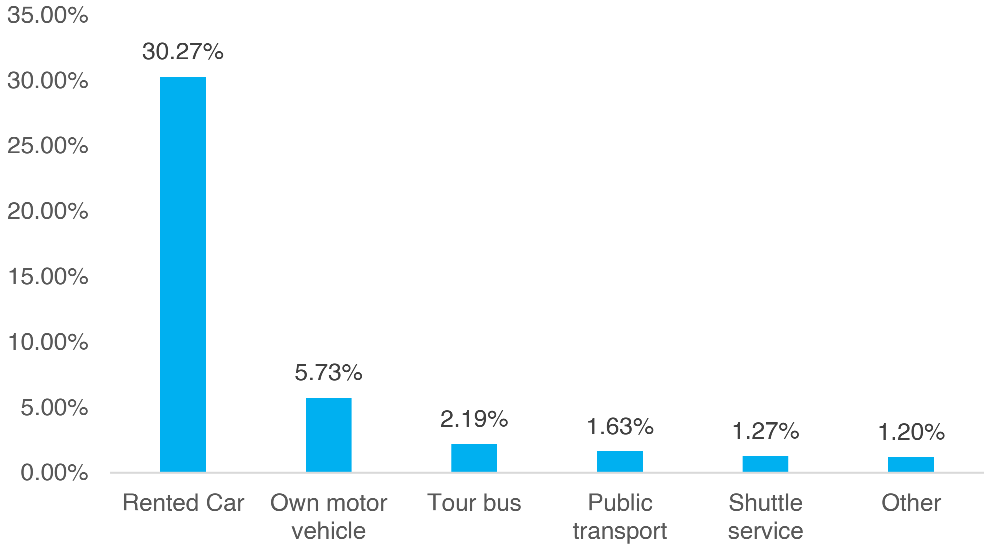
- Figures 11 and 12 provide insights into transportation preferences among domestic and overseas visitors who travelled to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo.
- Some 43.24% of domestic visitors used their own motor vehicles, while 30.27% of overseas travellers who rented cars in the region. Other modes of transport for domestic travellers included rented cars (5.98%), tour buses (3.55%) and other forms of public transport, as shown in Figure 11.
- Similarly, international visitors also made use of own motor vehicles (5.73%) and tour buses (2.19%) as their alternative transport options, closely mirroring the patterns observed for domestic travellers.

Figure 11: Modes of transport used by domestic visitors in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–December 2025



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2025)

Figure 12: Modes of transport used by overseas visitors in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–December 2025



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2025)

wesgro
cape town & western cape
tourism, trade & investment

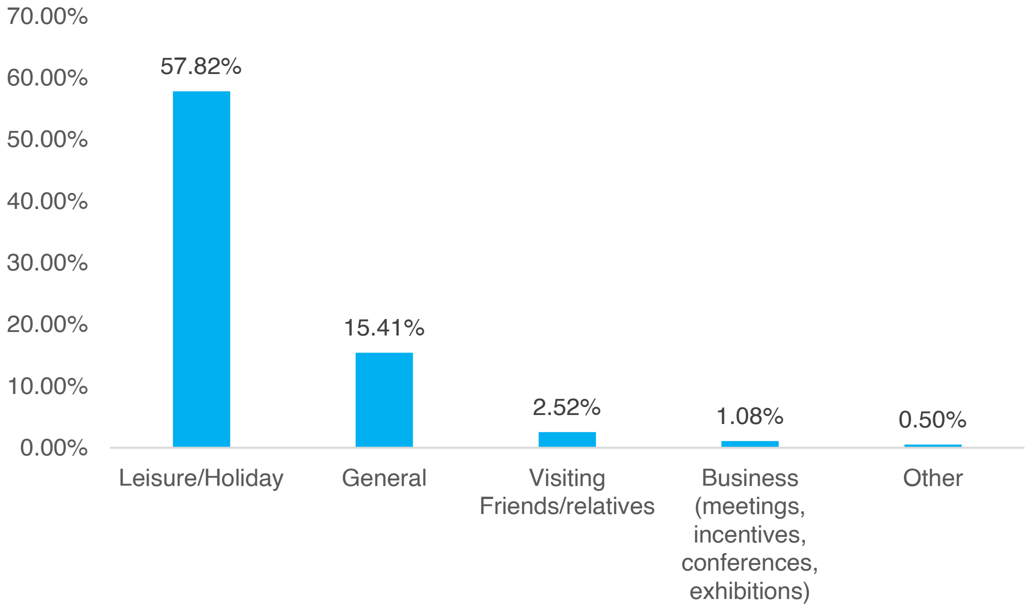
Note: 52.83% of survey respondents did not specify their preferred mode of transport

6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns:
Travel Motivations

- Figure 13 provides insight into the main purpose of visit and and shows that most visitors (57.82%) visited the region for leisure/holiday purposes. The tourism information offices in the region were largely visited for general information (15.41%) such as “people seeking directions or having a pit-stop for the restroom” etc. Findings from the survey also highlighted that 2.52% of travellers were visiting friends/relatives while others travelled for business (1.08%).

- An analysis of the top tourism activities reveals that experiencing nature and outdoor activities was the leading choice of activity among visitors to the region. Some 9.64%of travellers enjoyed the scenic drives while fine dining was also appetising for 8.64% of visitors. Other activities included seeing the region’s beautiful beaches (6.86%) as well as enjoying the local culture and heritage (5.31%) . This is shown in Figure 14.

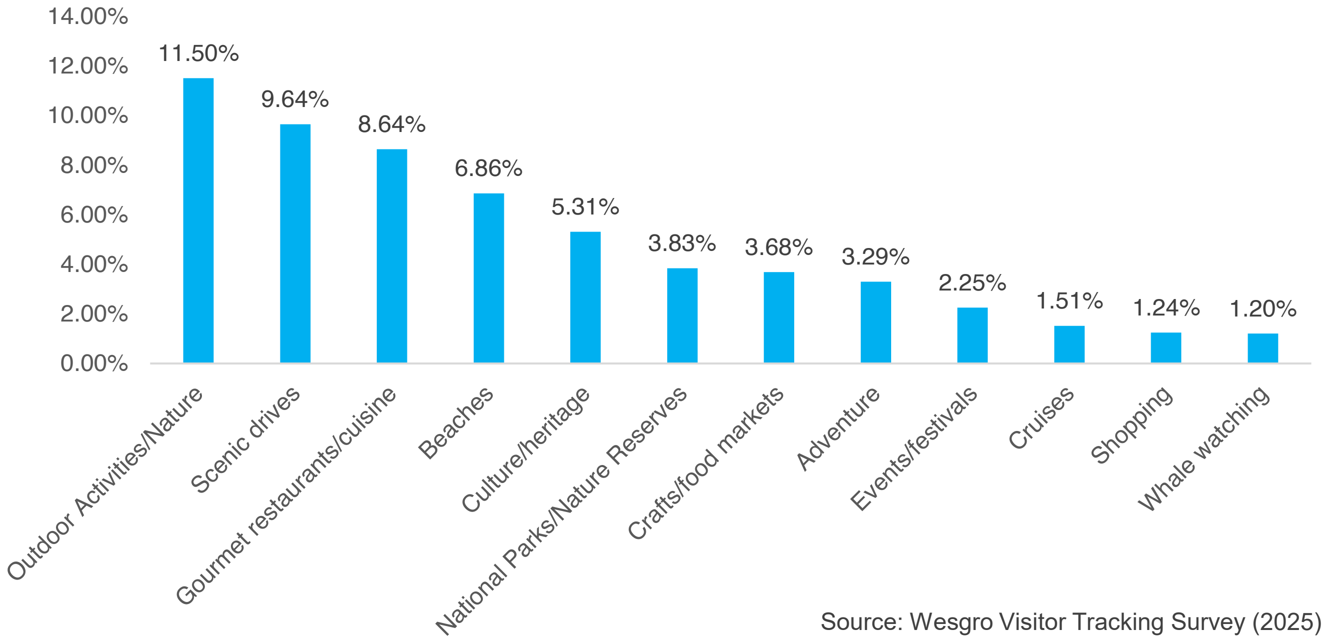
Figure 13: Purpose of visit to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo January–December 2025



Note: 22.66% of survey respondents did not specify their purpose of visit

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2025)

Figure 14: Top activities undertaken by visitors to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–December 2025



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2025)

Wesgro
cape town & western cape
tourism, trade & investment

7. Visitor Trends & Patterns in Various Towns in the Region

Table 2: Overview of visitor trends and patterns by town, January–December 2025

Tourism indicators	Mossel Bay	Knysna
% Share domestic visitors	40.23%	50.43%
% Share overseas visitors	59.49%	48.17%
Top 3 international markets	Germany (25.92%) United Kingdom (20.81%) United States (7.49%)	Germany (27.77%) United Kingdom (19.96%) Netherlands / France (9.54%)
Top 3 domestic markets	Western Cape (18.48%) Gauteng (9.03%) Eastern Cape (3.91%)	Western Cape (37.63%) Gauteng (7.20%) Eastern Cape (2.37%)
Main purpose of visit	Leisure/Holiday (38.38%) General enquiries (22.60%) Business/ Meetings (1.85%)	Leisure/Holiday (80.22%) General (8.60%) Visiting Friends/Relatives (1.94%)
Age profile of visitors	<20 years (2.56%) 21-35 years (3.91%) 51-70 years (0.85%)	Unspecified (100%)
Group size	Alone (19.55%) Pairs (34.61%) Threes (6.11%)	Alone (24.84%) Pairs (41.61%) Threes (6.02%)
Length of stay	Day Visitor (22.89%) Two nights (11.94%) Three nights (5.12%)	Day Visitor (13.33%) Two nights (22.58%) 7 & more nights (9.46%)
Top 3 information sources	Internet/Websites (27.22%) Social Media (7.11%) Word of Mouth (7.18%)	Internet/Websites (28.17%) Word of mouth (1.83%) Visitor Information Centres (1.08%)
Average daily budget	0-R200 (5.61%) R201-R500 (12.44%) R501-R1000 (5.19%)	Unspecified (100%)
Average budget for accommodation	Unspecified (100%)	Unspecified (100%)
Type of accommodation	Hotel (10.66%) Guesthouse/Lodge (8.88%) Self Catering (8.88%)	Hotel (16.88%) Day Visitor (4.19%) Self Catering (3.76%)
Mode of transport	Own motor vehicle (21.54%) Rented Car (19.76%) Tour Bus (5.05%)	Own motor vehicle (18.39%) Rented Car (10.00%) Public transport (2.58%)
Top activities undertaken	Culture/Heritage (6.82%) Outdoor Activities (3.77%) Adventure (2.99%)	Outdoor activities (17.53%) Scenic drives (15.70%) National Parks/Nature Reserves (6.77%)

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2025)

7. Visitor Trends & Patterns in Various Towns in the Region

Table 3: Overview of visitor trends and patterns by town, January–December 2025

Tourism indicators	Wilderness	George
% Share domestic visitors	47.97%	49.48%
% Share overseas visitors	52.03%	48.45%
Top 3 international markets	Germany (37.66%) United Kingdom (12.99%) France (11.69%)	United Kingdom (24.49%) Germany (14.29%) Belgium (8.16%)
Top 3 domestic markets	Western Cape (22.30%) Eastern Cape (11.49%) Gauteng (6.08%)	Gauteng (17.53%) Eastern Cape (14.43%) Western Cape (9.28%)
Main purpose of visit	Leisure/Holiday (85.14%) Friends/Relatives (13.51%) Education/Religion (0.68%)	Leisure/Holiday (83.51%) Friends/Relatives (12.37%) Business (2.06%)
Age profile of visitors	21-35 years (10.81%) 36-50 years (48.65%) 51-70 years (38.51%)	21-35 years (16.49%) 36-50 years (30.93%) 51-70 years (45.36%)
Group size	Pairs (44.59%) Fours (44.59%) >5 (8.11%)	Pairs (59.79%) Threes (8.25%) > 5 (5.15%)
Length of stay	Four nights (18.92%) 5 to 6 nights (22.30%) 7 & more nights (42.57%)	One night (15.46%) Three nights (17.53%) 7 & more nights (18.56%)
Top 3 information sources	Internet/websites (52.70%) Return Visit (16.89%) Word of Mouth (15.54%)	Internet/websites (39.18%) Return Visit (22.68%) Word of mouth (19.59%)
Average daily budget	R501-R1000 (15.54%) R1001-R2000 (54.73%) More than R2000 (27.70%)	R501-R1000 (21.65%) R1001-R2000 (41.24%) More than R2000 (19.59%)
Average budget for accommodation	R501-R1000 (12.84%) R1001-R2000 (24.32%) R2001-R5000 (55.41%)	R501-R1000 (20.62%) R1001-R2000 (27.84%) R2001-R5000 (14.43%)
Type of accommodation	Bed & Breakfast (28.38%) Self Catering (22.97%) Guesthouse/Lodge (16.89%)	Hotel (24.74%) Guesthouse/Lodge (22.68%) Friends/relatives (16.49%)
Mode of transport	Rented Car (54.73%) Own motor vehicle (41.89%) Shuttle service (2.03%)	Rented Car (46.39%) Own motor vehicle (45.36%) Shuttle service / Motorbike (2.06%)
Top activities undertaken	Gourmet restaurants/cuisine (79.73%) Beaches (57.43%) Outdoor Activities (30.41%)	Scenic drives (40.21%) Beaches (39.18%) Outdoor Activities (37.11%)

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2025)

8. Performance of Attractions in Garden Route & Klein Karoo

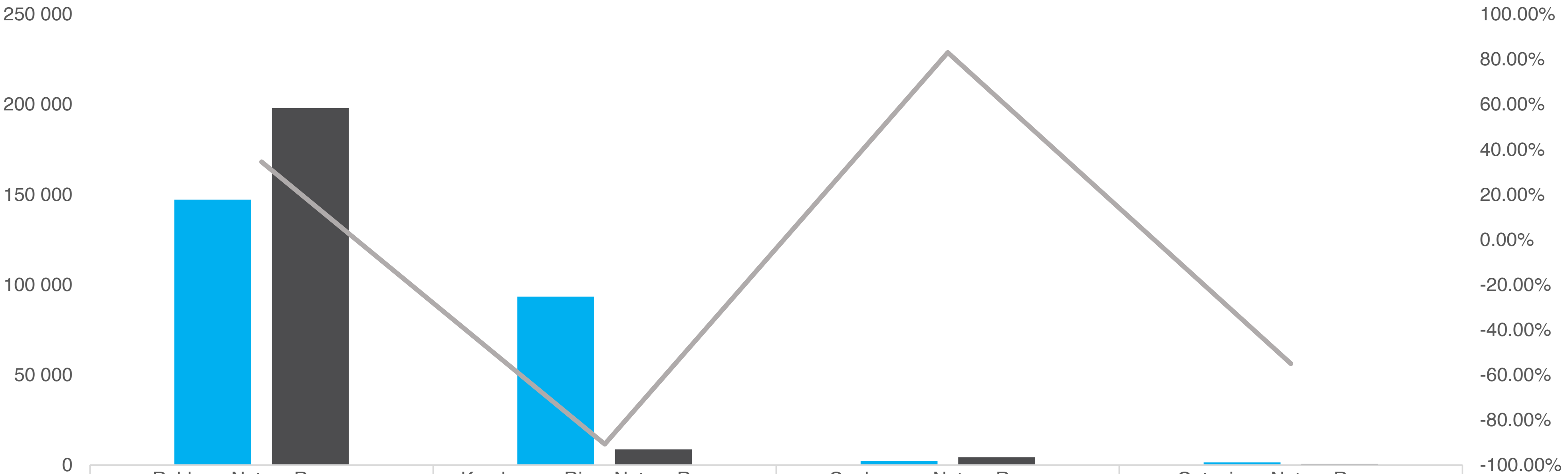
January–December 2025

8. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Attractions: CapeNature

- Figure 15 illustrates the annual visitor numbers for the four CapeNature reserves found in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, namely Robberg, Keurbooms River, Goukamma and the Outeniqua nature reserves.

- Between January and December 2025, Robberg Nature Reserve had the highest share of visitors (198,058) which represented a 34.57% growth in visitors when compared to the same period in 2024.

Figure 15: Visitor arrivals in CapeNature reserves in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January– December 2025



	Robberg Nature Reserve	Keurbooms River Nature Reserve	Goukamma Nature Reserve	Outeniqua Nature Reserve
2024	147 176	93 400	2 387	1 494
2025	198 058	8 679	4 369	672
Year-on-Year % Change	34.57%	-90.71%	83.03%	-55.02%

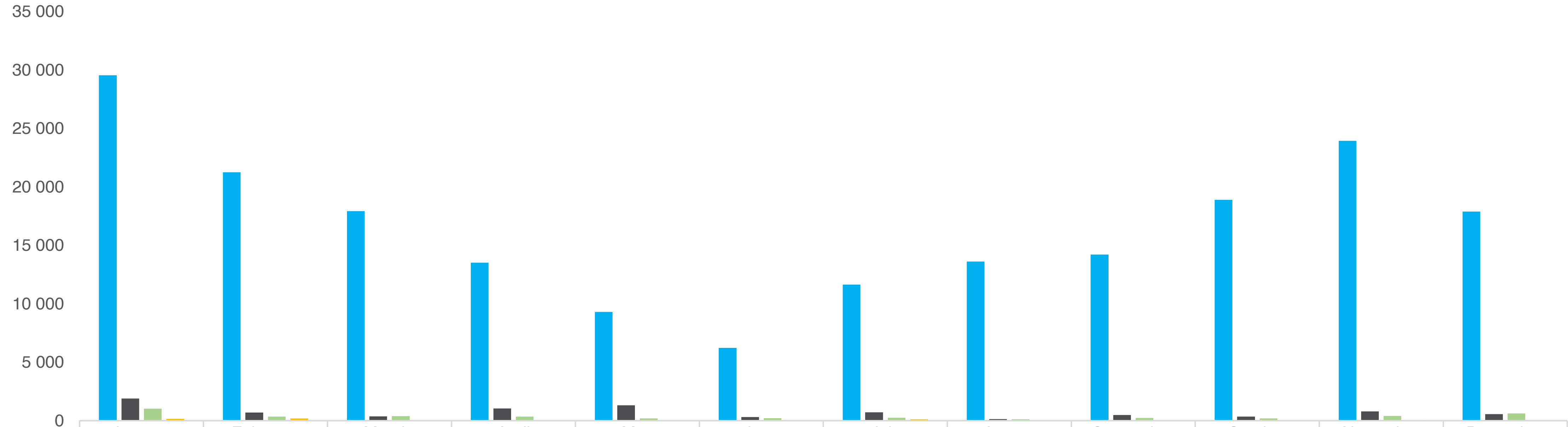
Source: CapeNature (2025)

wesgro
cape town & western cape
tourism, trade & investment

8. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Attractions: CapeNature

- A monthly breakdown of visitors at the respective reserves is presented in Figure 16. Quarter 1 (January–March 2025) recorded the highest number of visitors across the region. Robberg Nature Reserve welcomed 68,759 visitors, followed by Keurbooms River Nature Reserve with 2,960 visitors, and Goukamma Nature Reserve with 1,764 visitors. Outeniqua Nature Reserve also began gaining momentum after reopening early in 2025, having received 395 visitors during the first quarter and ending the year with 672 visitors.

Figure 16: Monthly visitor arrivals in CapeNature reserves in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–December 2025



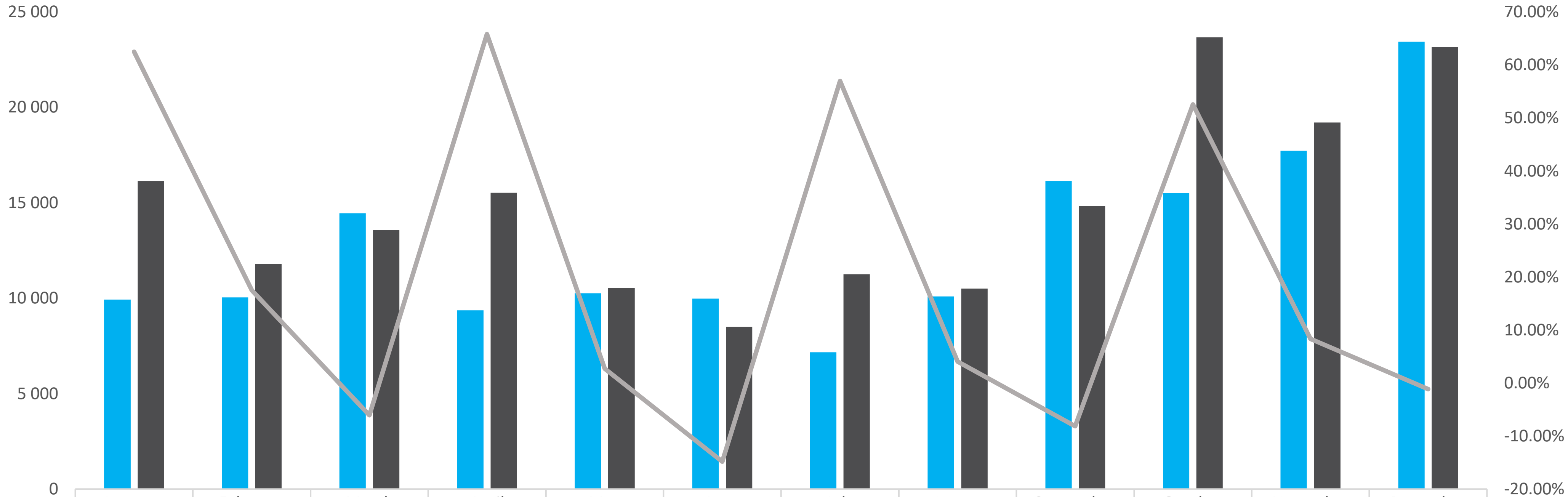
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Robberg Nature Reserve	29 560	21 258	17 941	13 530	9 308	6 225	11 641	13 621	14 216	18 909	23 955	17 894
Keurbooms River Nature Reserve	1 889	696	375	1 044	1 322	311	708	143	486	347	804	554
Goukamma Nature Reserve	1 033	343	388	352	198	212	255	113	238	196	399	622
Outeniqua Nature Reserve	149	190	56	47	2	2	111	0	4	0	56	55

Source: CapeNature (2025)

8. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Attractions: Cango Caves

- The Cango Caves welcomed a total of 178,724 visitors between January and December 2025, reflecting a year-on-year increase of 15.97% when compared to the same period in 2024. According to Figure 17, the highest number of visitors to the cave were split evenly between the spring and summer seasons. October attracted the highest number of visitors (23,670), while 23,172 tourists visited in December.

Figure 17: Monthly visitors to the Cango Caves, January–December 2025



	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
2024	9 930	10 042	14 454	9 364	10 259	9 980	7 169	10 099	16 144	15 517	17 723	23 433
2025	16 136	11 801	13 578	15 527	10 539	8 503	11 254	10 511	14 831	23 670	19 202	23 172
Y-o-Y % Change	62.50%	17.52%	-6.06%	65.82%	2.73%	-14.80%	56.98%	4.08%	-8.13%	52.54%	8.35%	-1.11%

Source: Cango Caves (2025)

9. Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements and many thanks go to the following for supplying the primary data which made this publication possible and whose continued and unwavering support will sustain the forthcoming issues.

- Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA)
- CapeNature
- Cango Caves
- George Tourism
- Mossel Bay Tourism
- Knysna Tourism