George and Wilderness Tourism Trends

January – December 2024

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Contents

1. Methodology

This report provides an overview of the tourism trends and patterns in George and Wilderness. The findings will 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, 2024).

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 Africa Tourism, 2025).*

2. Sample Size

Between January and December 2024, 322 responses to the regional visitor tracking surveys were received from the George tourism office. The breakdown of visitors to the towns of George and Wilderness is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Total number of responses regarding visitors to George and Wilderness between January and December 2024

Towns	Domestic Visitors	Overseas Visitors	Total
1. George	102	45	147
2. Wilderness	49	126	175
Total	**151**	**171**	**322**

Source: Wesgro Regional Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

3. Key Insights

- **Visitor segment and origin:** Between January and December 2024, 53.11% of visitors to George and Wilderness were domestic visitors, primarily from the Western Cape which was responsible for 8.70% of visitors, followed by visitors from the Eastern Cape (7.14%). Overseas visitors accounted for 46.89% of tourists, with the United Kingdom responsible for 28.07% of visitors, Germany for 21.67%, and the United States for 19.88%.

- **Seasonality spread:** Peak seasons for attracting visitors were January accounting for 14.29% of tourists, February for 14.91%; and December for 13.04%. During the low season, only 5.90% of tourists visited in June, while 2.80% came in July.

- **Demographics:** The dominant age groups among visitors included those aged 21–35, 36–50, and 51–70 years, with many travelling in pairs or independently.

- **Travel Motivation / Purpose of Visit:** Over 80% of visitors visited for leisure purposes. This included exploring the outdoors, adventure activities and enjoying local cuisine.

- **Length of stay**: Some 22.67% of visitors stayed for an average of seven nights, while a slightly lower share of visitors stayed for three nights. Domestic tourists stayed for shorter lengths of time compared to overseas visitors.

- **Information sources:** A share of 43.48% of visitors used the internet / websites for information, 21.74% were return visitors, and 13.66% relied on word of mouth for information.

- **Transportation and accommodation preferences:** Rental cars and own motor vehicles were the dominant forms of transport used in the towns. These modes of transport were evenly split between domestic and international visitors. When observing visitor accommodation preferences, 19.87% of domestic visitors stayed with friends and family and 30.99% of overseas visitors selected Guesthouse options in the region.

- **Spending behaviour:** Close on 33% of visitors reported daily expenditures of more than R2000 per day, while 26.40% spent an average of between R501 and R1000. In addition, 35.09% allocated a budget between R2001 and R5000 for lodging, while 23.60% spent in the range of R1001 to R2000.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

4. George & Wilderness Visitor Trends & Patterns

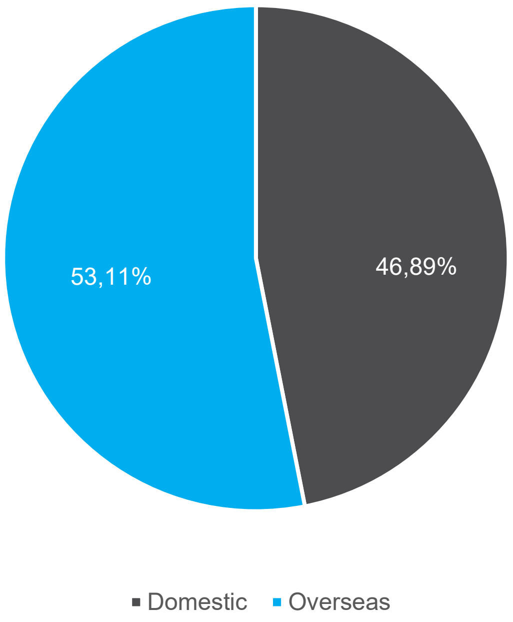
Wesgro Primary Research: Regional Visitor Tracking Surveys

4. George & Wilderness Visitor Trends & Patterns: Origin of Visitors

- Between January and December 2024, the domestic market accounted for 53.11% of visitors to the towns of George and Wilderness, while the overseas market contributed 46.89%, reflecting the area's strong appeal to both local and international travellers. This is shown in Figure 1.

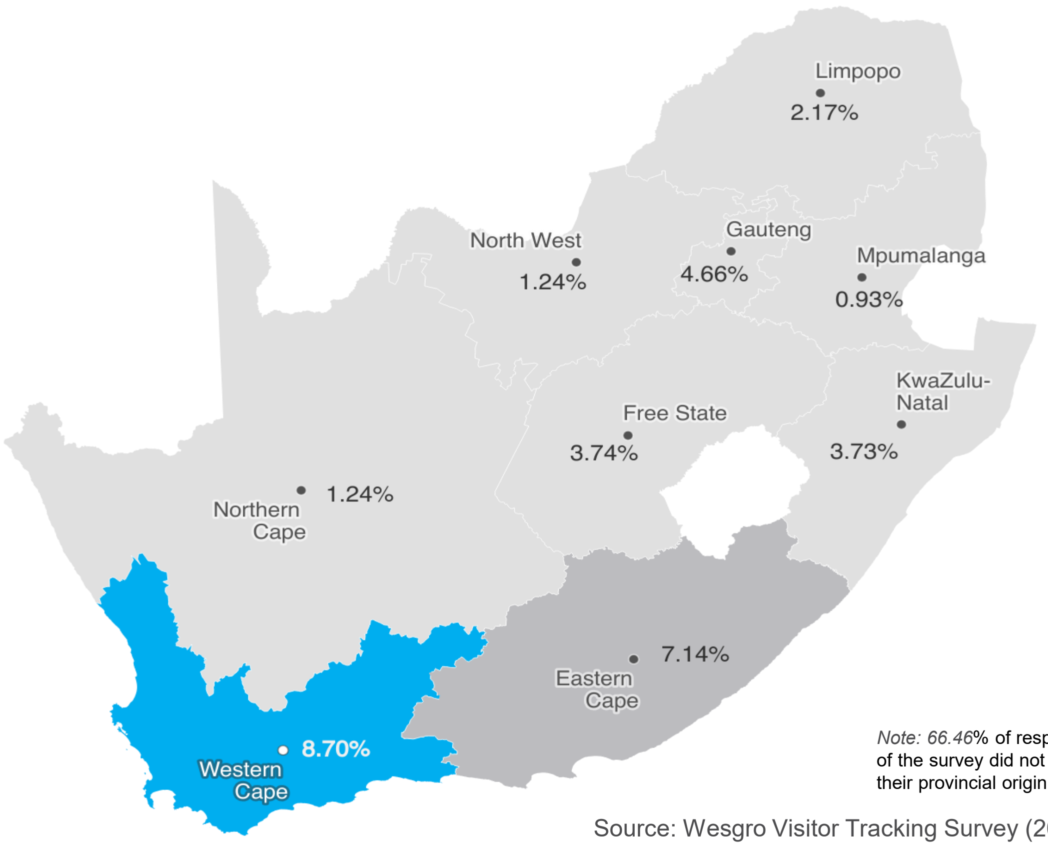
- The highest share of arrivals (8.70%) were visitors from the Western Cape, followed by the Eastern Cape with a share of (7.14%). The percentage share of domestic visitors from all nine provinces is illustrated in Figure 2, highlighting the geographic spread of arrivals in George and Wilderness from across South Africa.

Figure 1: Overseas and domestic visitors to George and Wilderness, January–December 2024



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

Figure 2: Origin of domestic visitors, January–December 2024



Note: 66.46% of respondents of the survey did not specify their provincial origin.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2024)

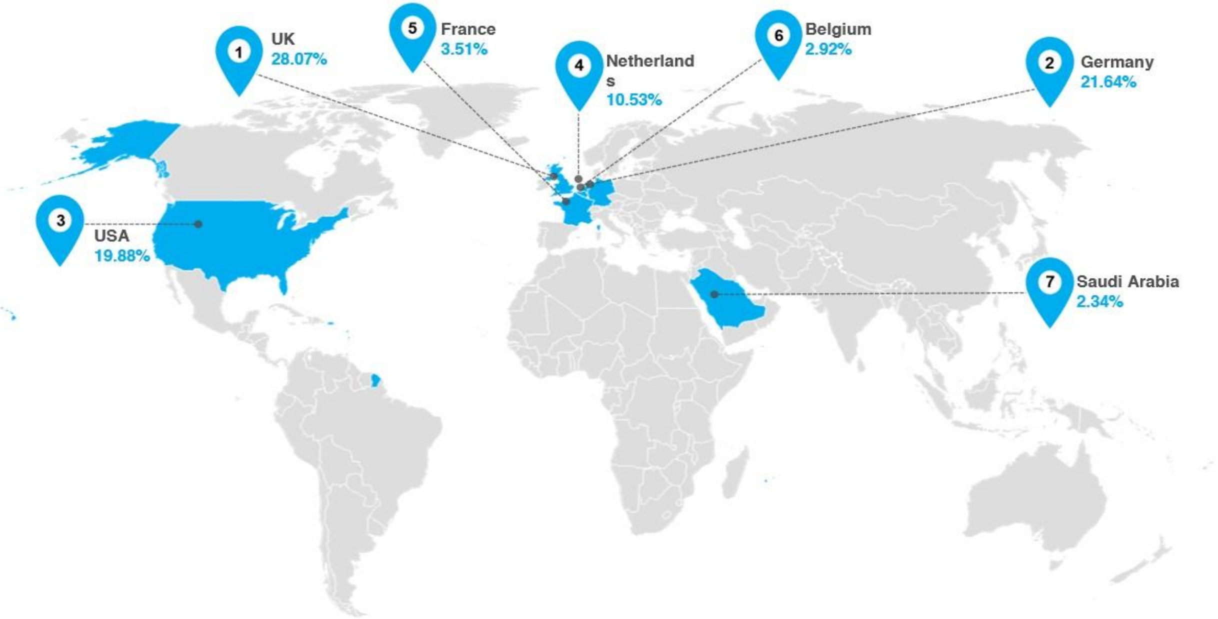
4. George & Wilderness Visitor Trends & Patterns: Source Markets

- Figure 3 illustrates the leading overseas countries of origin for visitors to the towns of George and Wilderness. The United Kingdom accounted for 28.07% of visitors, Germany for 21.64%, and the United States for 19.88%. These countries were the three largest source markets, together accounting for nearly 70% of all international arrivals in George and Wilderness in 2024.

- Other European markets also made notable contributions, with 10.53% of visitors from the Netherlands; 3.51% from France; and 2.92% from Belgium. In seventh position was Saudi Arabia, which accounted for 2.34% of overseas visitors to the towns, while the remaining places in the top ten were shared among several countries.

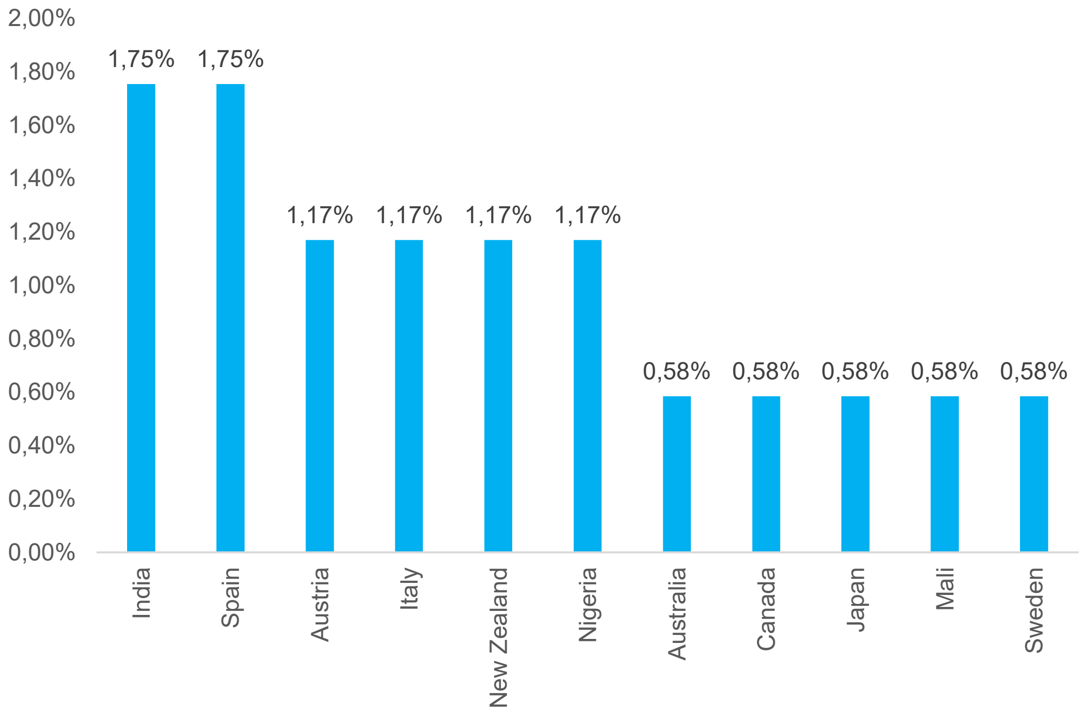
- India and Spain each accounted for 1.75% of visitors, whereas Austria, Italy, New Zealand and Nigeria were each responsible for 1.17% of arrivals.. Canada, Japan, Mali, and Sweden were each responsible for a 0.58% share of international visitors to the two towns. This is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 3: Origin of overseas visitors, January–December 2024



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

*Figure 4: **"Other"** Origin of overseas visitors, January–December 2024*

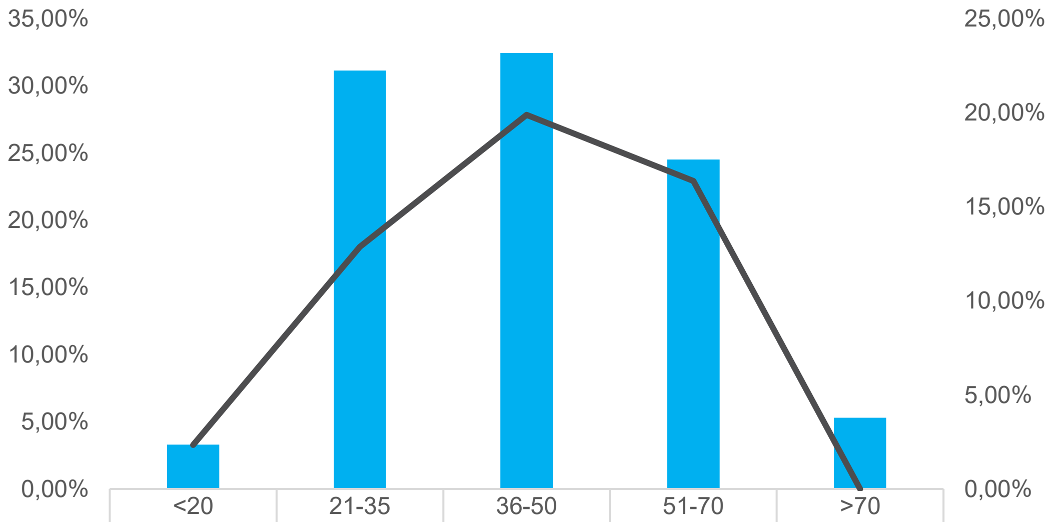


Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

4. George & Wilderness Visitor Trends & Patterns: Demographics

- This section provides an analysis of the visitor demographics of tourists passing through the George tourism office.
- Figure 5 illustrates that the highest average of visitors were in the 36–50 age group, followed closely by those who were 21–35 years (21.43%) and 51–70 years (20.19%). This indicates that the destination appeals strongly to the youth and working-age adults who together made close to 50% of those coming into the area.
- Regarding travel group size, the data indicates that most visitors preferred to travel in pairs, accounting for 45.96% of total arrivals. This was followed by groups of four (26.71%) and groups of three (10.87%). These patterns, illustrated in Figure 6, highlight the strong preference for couple and small group travel within the destination.

Figure 5: Visitor Age Groups, January–December 2024

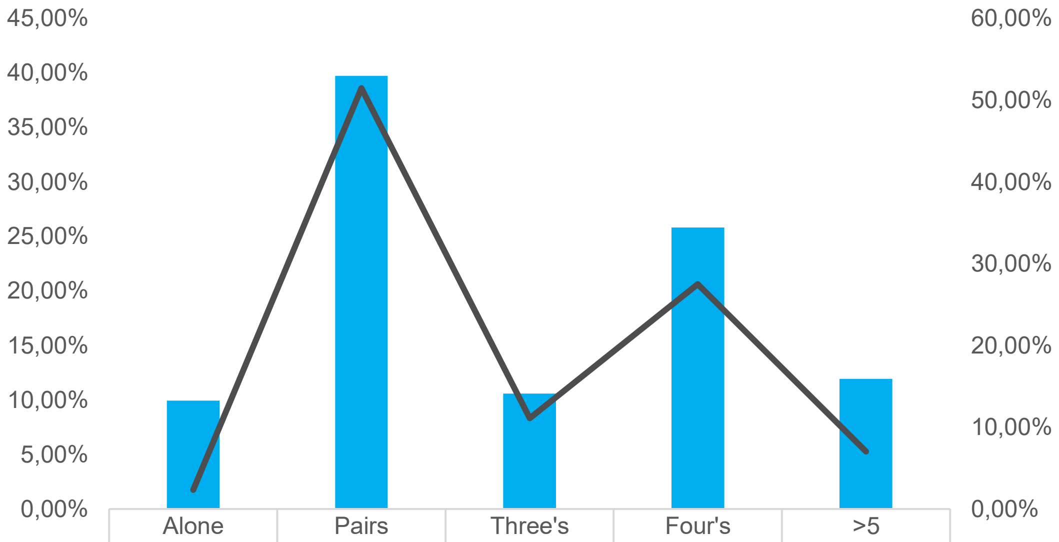


	<20	21-35	36-50	51-70	>70
Domestic	3,31%	31,13%	32,45%	24,50%	5,30%
Overseas	2,34%	12,87%	19,88%	16,37%	0,00%

Note: 27.33% of survey respondents did not specify their age.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

Figure 6: Travel Group Size, January–December 2024



	Alone	Pairs	Three's	Four's	>5
Domestic	9,93%	39,74%	10,60%	25,83%	11,92%
Overseas	2,34%	51,46%	11,11%	27,49%	7,02%

Note: 1.24% of survey respondents did not specify their travel group size.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

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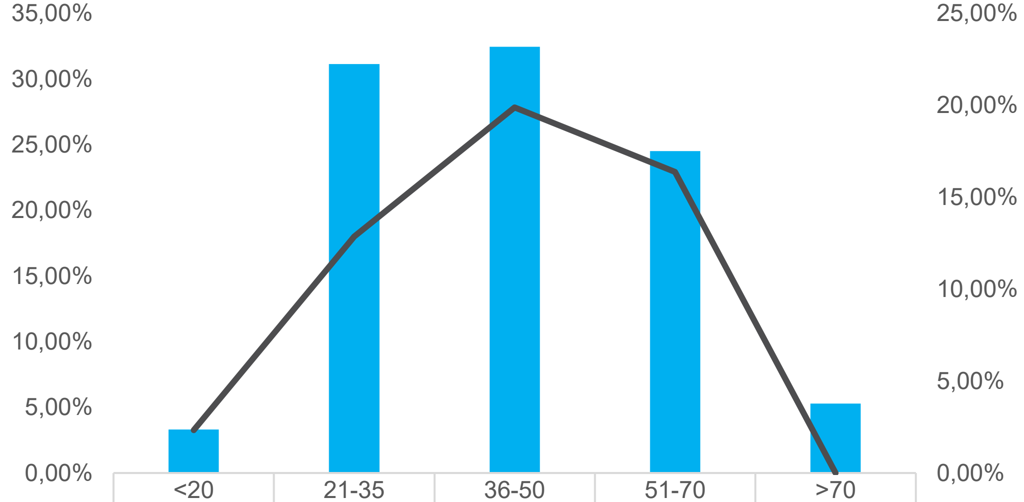
4. George & Wilderness Visitor Trends & Patterns: Demographics cont.

- This section presents information about age groups and travel group sizes in relation to domestic and international tourists between domestic and overseas arrivals.
- Figure 7 shows the age distribution of visitors, revealing clear differences between the domestic and overseas markets. Among domestic visitors, the largest number of visitors were in the age groups of 36–50 years (32.45%) and 21–35 years (31.13%), which together represented over 63% of this market.
- The overseas market showed a similar profile, with 36–50 (19.88%) and 51–70 (16.37%) forming the majority. Younger travellers were not as well represented, with only 12.87% in the category of 21–35 years and 2.34% under 20 years of age.
- In terms of group size, most travellers in both markets preferred to travel in pairs, accounting for 39.74% of domestic visitors and 51.46% of overseas visitors. Solo travellers represented the smallest share in both categories, highlighting a strong preference for shared travel experiences across markets. This can be seen in figure 8.

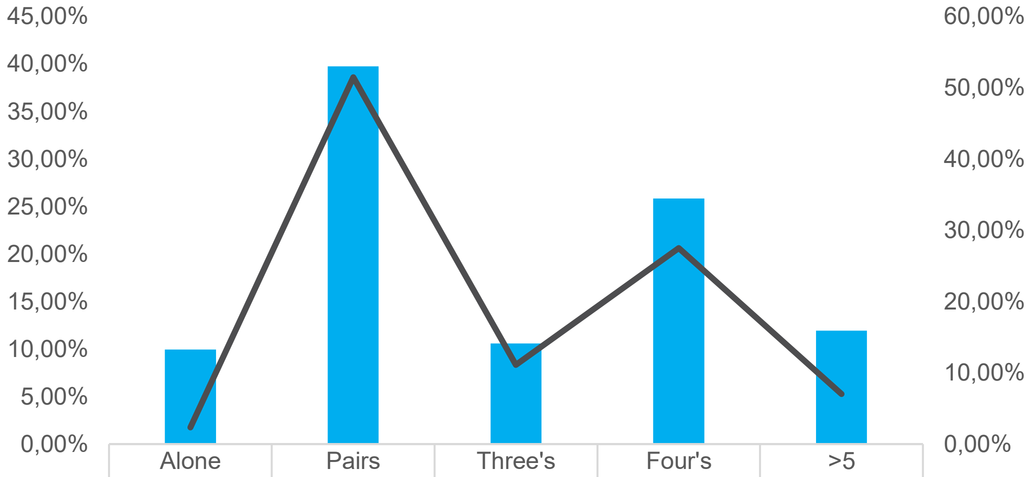
Figure 7: Domestic vs international visitor age groups, January–December 2024



	<20	21-35	36-50	51-70	>70
Domestic	3,31%	31,13%	32,45%	24,50%	5,30%
Overseas	2,34%	12,87%	19,88%	16,37%	0,00%

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

Figure 8: Domestic vs international travel group sizes, January–December 2024



	Alone	Pairs	Three's	Four's	>5
Domestic	9,93%	39,74%	10,60%	25,83%	11,92%
Overseas	2,34%	51,46%	11,11%	27,49%	7,02%

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

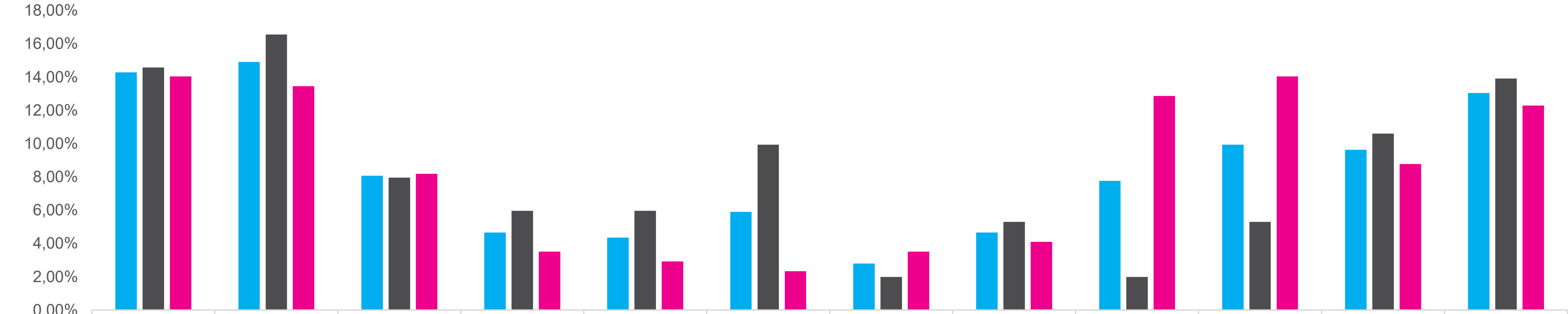
4. George & Wilderness Visitor Trends & Patterns: Seasonality

- Figure 9 shows the seasonality trends and patterns of visitors to George and Wilderness. The data highlights strong seasonal variation in visitor arrivals throughout 2024. The peak month was January. This reflected the impact of the South African summer holiday season, with high participation from both domestic visitors 16.58%, and overseas travellers 13.45%. A second peak occurred in December when 13.04% of visitors visited the region.

- By contrast, the lowest visitor levels were recorded in June (5.90%) and July (2.80%), which coincided with the winter season when both domestic and international arrivals were significantly reduced. A notable difference between markets was seen in September and October, when overseas arrivals rose to 12.87% and 14.04% respectively, compared to only 1.99% and 5.30% for domestic arrivals.

- The data indicates that international tourists are less influenced by local seasonal travel patterns, with overseas demand extending beyond the traditional South African holiday peaks.

Figure 9: Seasonality spread in George & Wilderness, January–December 2024



	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Average	14,29%	14,91%	8,07%	4,66%	4,35%	5,90%	2,80%	4,66%	7,76%	9,94%	9,63%	13,04%
Domestic	14,57%	16,56%	7,95%	5,96%	5,96%	9,93%	1,99%	5,30%	1,99%	5,30%	10,60%	13,91%
Overseas	14,04%	13,45%	8,19%	3,51%	2,92%	2,34%	3,51%	4,09%	12,87%	14,04%	8,77%	12,28%

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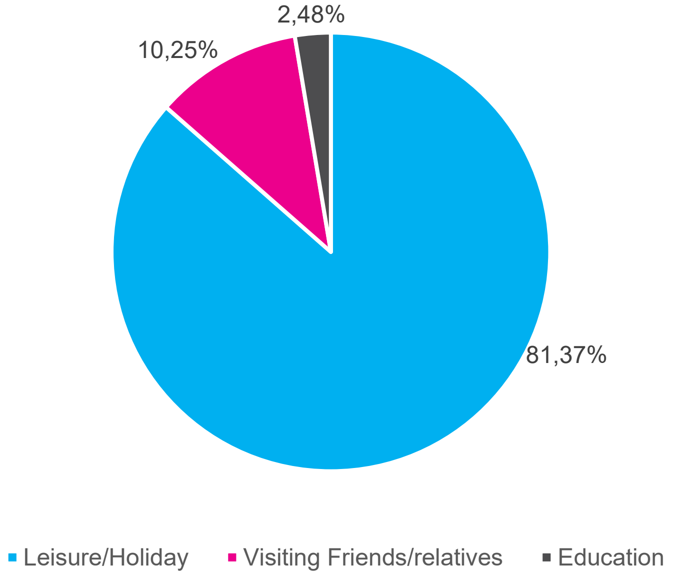
Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

4. George & Wilderness Visitor Trends & Patterns: Travel Motivations

- Figure 10 shows the top three reasons for travel highlighted by visitors in the visitor tracking survey. The data reveals that a high share of visitors (81.37%) came for leisure and holidays, while 10.25% visited friends/relatives and only 2.48% education. George and Wilderness are premier tourism destinations in the Garden Route region.

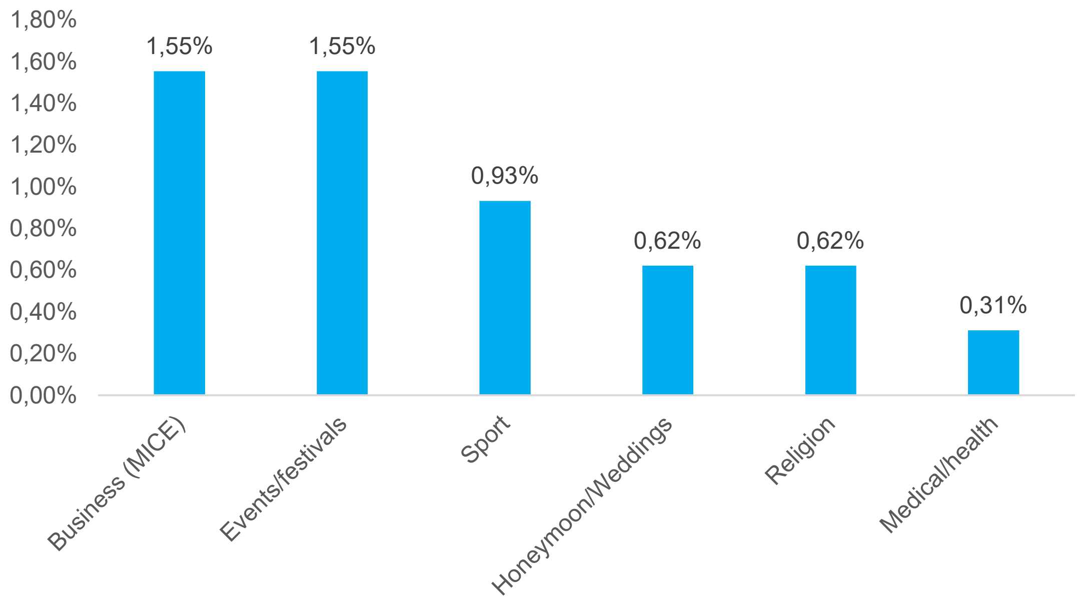
- Other reasons for travel 5.59% in the region are presented in Figure 11. Business and events attracted 1.55%, of these visitors, followed by sports (0.93%), weddings and honeymoons (0.62%), religious reasons (0.62%); and medical/health-related visits (0.31%).

Figure 10: Main purpose of visits, January–December 2024



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

*Figure 11: **"Other"** – Main purpose of visits, January–December 2024*



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

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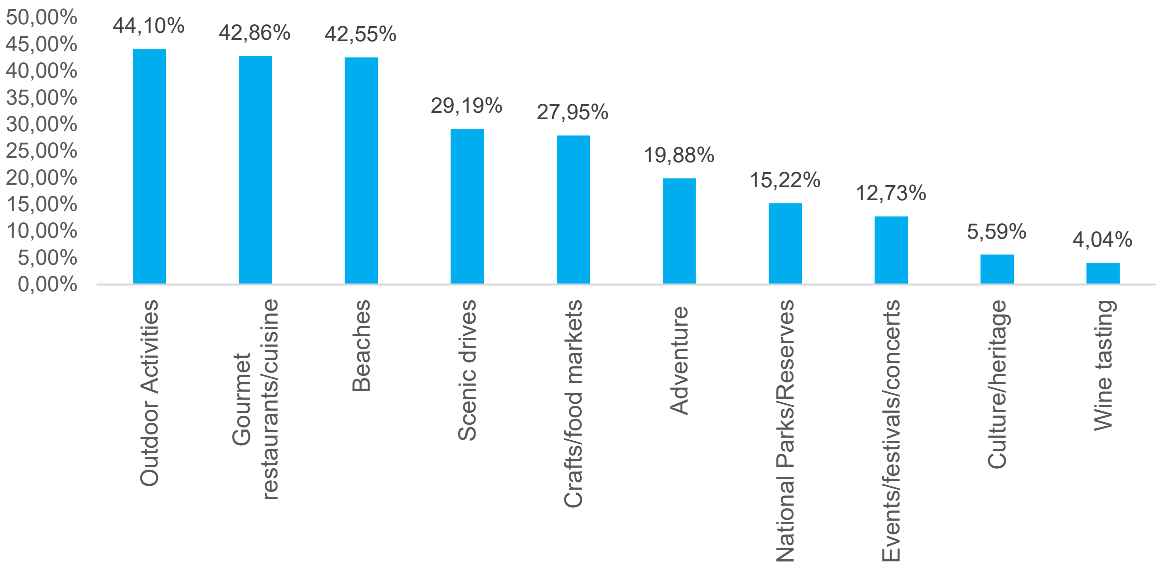
Note: 0.31% of respondents did not specify their main purpose of visit..

4. George & Wilderness Visitor Trends & Patterns: Travel Motivation cont.

- Figure 12 shows the top 10 activities enjoyed by visitors. The data reveals that the greatest share of visitors (44.10%) enjoyed the scenery with outdoor activities holding the highest share. This was closely followed by explorers seeking to experience the culinary scene with 42.86% of visitors indicating their interest in food-related activities. “The culinary scene in George is as diverse as its landscapes” – George Tourism (2025).

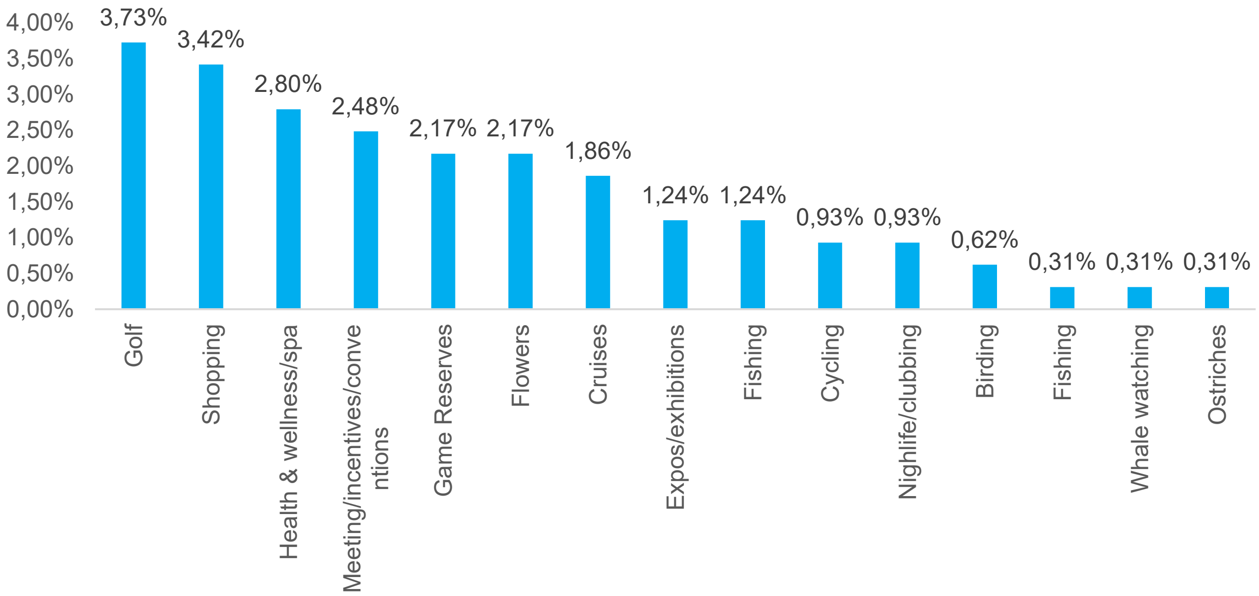
- Figure 13 illustrates "other" activities enjoyed by visitors to the towns in 2024.

Figure 12: Top 10 activities enjoyed, January–December 2024



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

*Figure 13: **“Other”** – activities enjoyed, January–December 2024*



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

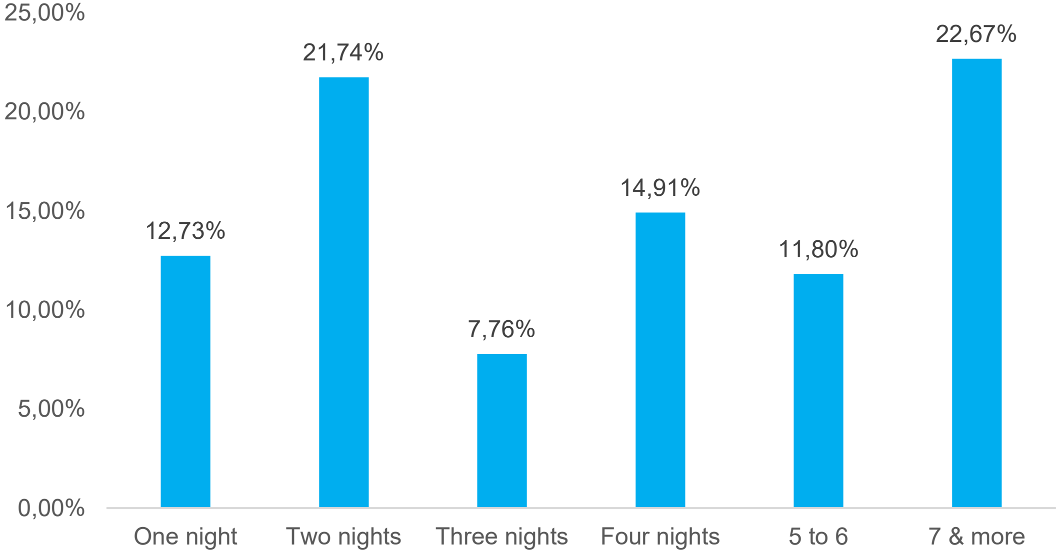
Note: 31.37% of survey respondents did not specify their activities.

4. George & Wilderness Visitor Trends & Patterns: Length of Stay

- Figure 14 shows that 7.76% of visitors stayed for a minimum of three nights while 22.67% visited for seven nights or more.
- This highlights the strong appeal of the region, as extended lengths of stay indicate that visitors perceive the destination as highly attractive and worth exploring in depth.

- Figure 15 presents a comparative analysis of the length of stay in relation to domestic and international travellers.
- A clear difference is noticeable, with domestic visitors showing more interest in short trips, as over 41% stayed for one or two nights, compared to 28.66% of overseas visitors staying for the same length of time.
- International travellers stayed for a longer time on average. Some 26.32% of these visitors spent seven nights or more in the towns in 2024, highlighting the region's strong appeal with regard to extended stays.

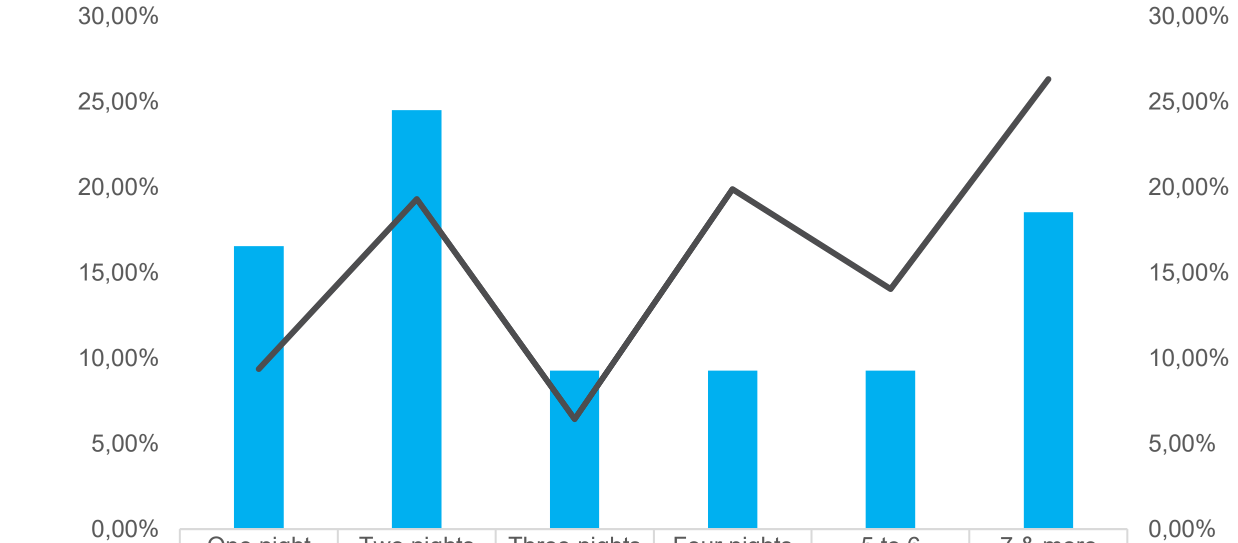
Figure 14: The average length of stay, January–December 2024



Note: 8.39% of respondents did not indicate their length of stay.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

Figure 15: Domestic vs international average length of stay, January–December 2024



	One night	Two nights	Three nights	Four nights	5 to 6	7 & more
Domestic	16,56%	24,50%	9,27%	9,27%	9,27%	18,54%
Overseas	9,36%	19,30%	6,43%	19,88%	14,04%	26,32%

Note: 12.58% domestic and 4.68% overseas visitors did not indicate their length of stay.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

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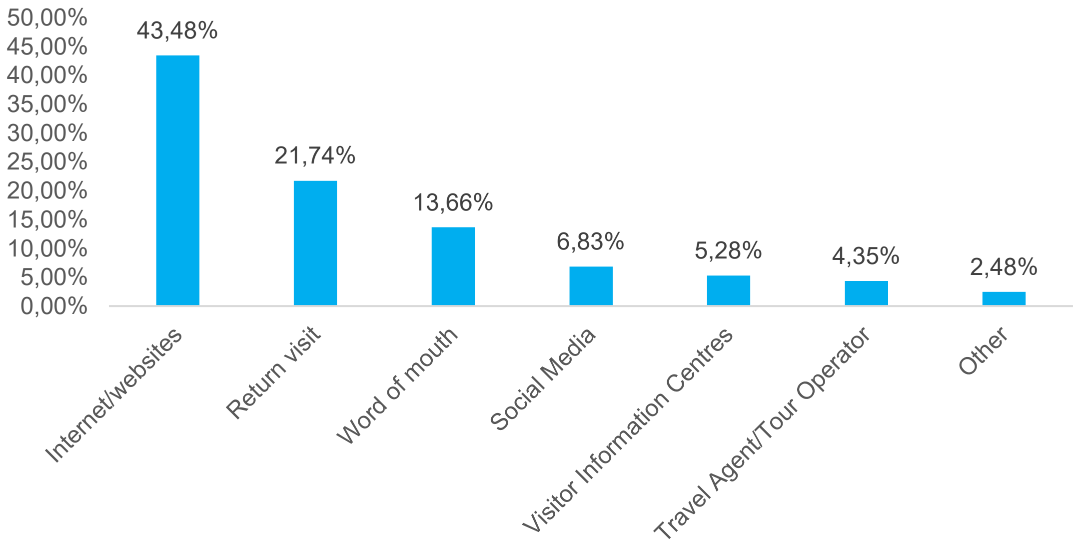
4. George & Wilderness Visitor Trends & Patterns: Information Sources & Transport Preferences

- Figure 16 shows that the internet and websites were the most important sources of information for visitors, with 43.48% of travellers relying on digital platforms to plan and explore their trips, highlighting the critical role of a destination's online presence in influencing travel decisions.
- The second most significant source was from return visits with 21.74% of visitors returning to the towns and suggesting a high level of visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Word of mouth, experienced by 13.66% of visitors, played a meaningful role, reflecting the value of positive personal recommendations in attracting new visitors. Other sources were less influential but still noteworthy: social media was used by 6.83% of visitors; visitor information centres by 5.28% of travellers and travel agencies/tour operators by 4.35%.
- Figure 17 presents the modes of transport used by visitors. Both domestic and overseas visitors showed a strong preference for rented cars, which accounted for 52.8% of all transport modes. This was followed by the use of private motor vehicles (41.2%), tour buses (2.8%), shuttle services (1.86%), and other forms of transport (1.24%).

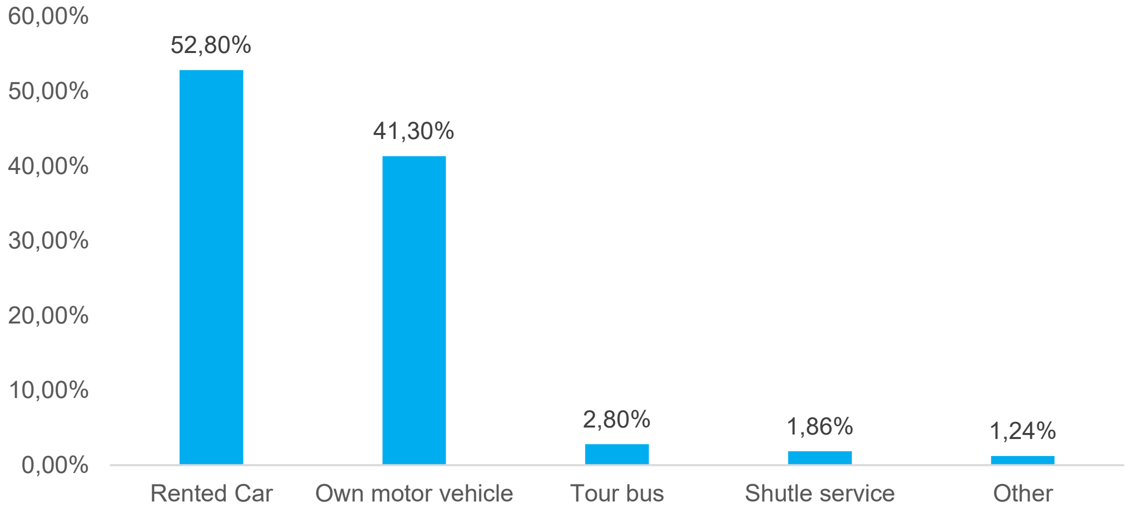
Figure 16:Top information sources used by visitors, January–December 2024



Note: 2.17% of survey respondents did not specify their top information source.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2024)

Figure 17: Modes of transport used by domestic visitors, January–December 2024



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2024)

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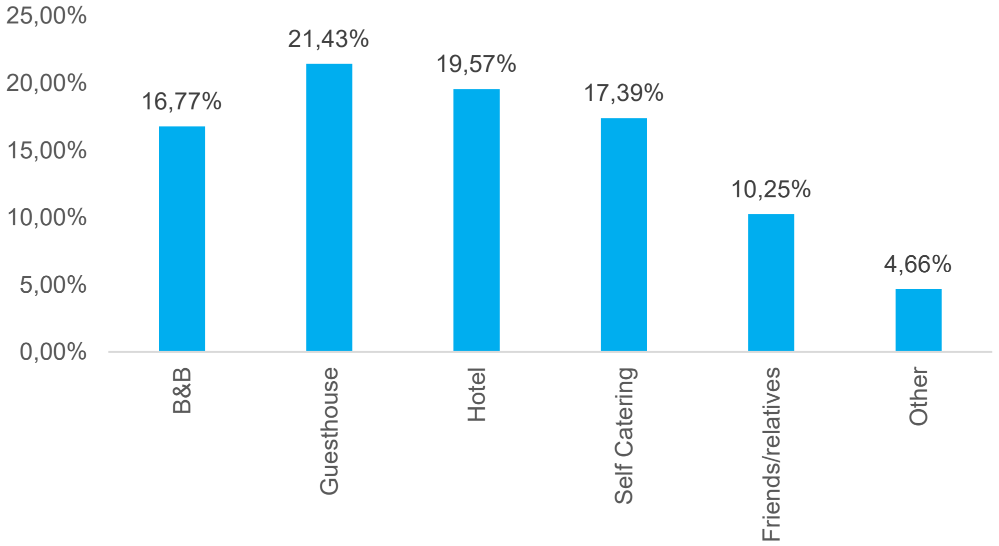
4. George & Wilderness Visitor Trends & Patterns: Accommodation Preferences

- A wide variety of accommodation is available in George, with guest houses representing the largest share used by visitors (21.43%), followed by hotels (19.57%) and self-catering establishments (17.39%) as shown in the survey responses in Figure 18.
- Figure 19 provides a breakdown of accommodation preferences from domestic visitors versus international travellers.
- Guest houses were the most preferred option for both domestic and international visitors. Among domestic tourists the highest share (21.19%) stayed in self-catering establishments, followed by those staying with friends and relatives (19.87%) and hotels (11.92%).

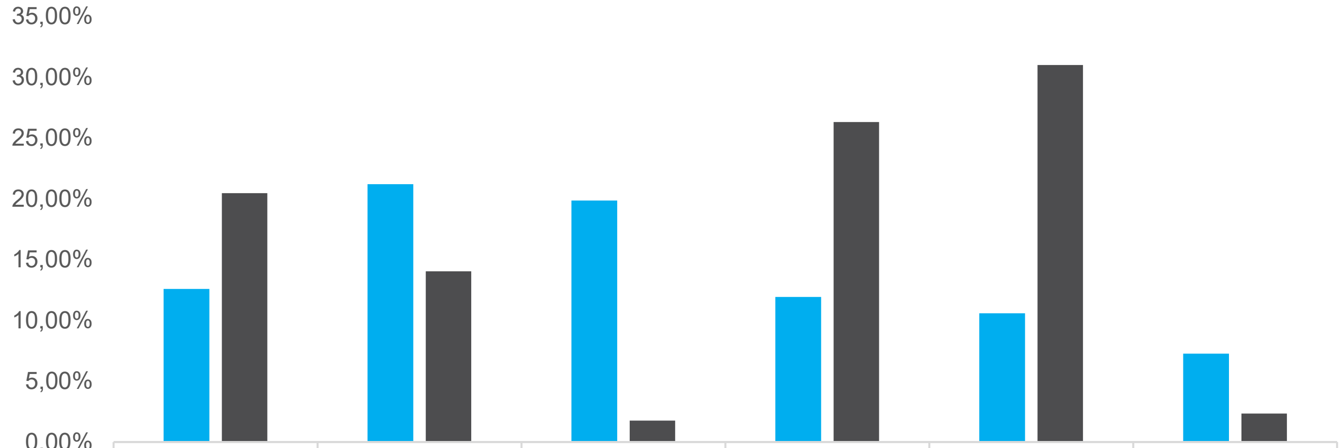
Figure 18: Accommodation usage, January–December 2024



Note: 9.4% of survey respondents did not specify their accommodation usage.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2024)

Figure 19: Preferred accommodation (International), January–December 2024



	B&B	Self Catering	Friends/relatives	Hotel	Guesthouse	Other
Domestic	12,58%	21,19%	19,87%	11,92%	10,60%	7,28%
Overseas	20,47%	14,04%	1,75%	26,32%	30,99%	2,34%

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2024)

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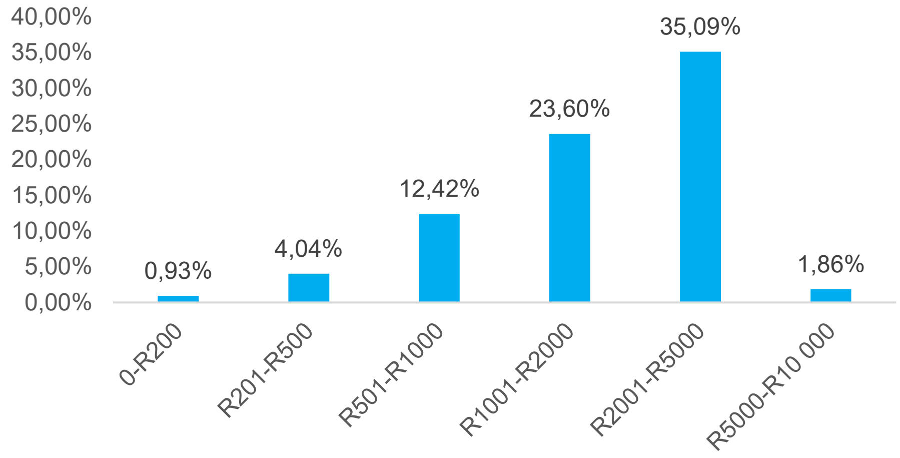
4. George & Wilderness Visitor Trends & Patterns: Accommodation Spending Behaviour

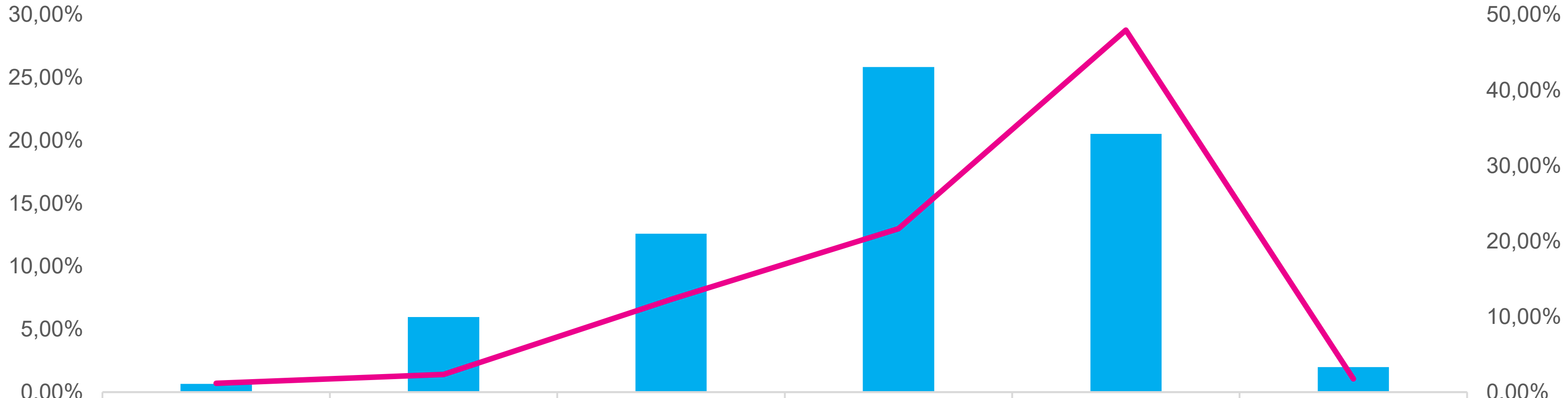
Figure 20: Average daily spend on accommodation, January–December 2024



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2024)

- This section outlines the spending patterns of visitors on accommodation in the towns.
- Figure 20 shows that 35.09% of visitors reported spending between R2001-R5000 per day on accommodation, while 26.40% indicated an average daily spend of R1001–R2000.
- A combined graph comparing domestic and international accommodation spending patterns is presented in Figure 21.

Figure 21: Domestic vs international average daily spend patterns on accommodation, January–December 2024



	0-R200	R201-R500	R501-R1000	R1001-R2000	R2001-R5000	R5000-R10 000
Domestic	0,66%	5,96%	12,58%	25,83%	20,53%	1,99%
Overseas	1,17%	2,34%	12,28%	21,64%	47,95%	1,75%

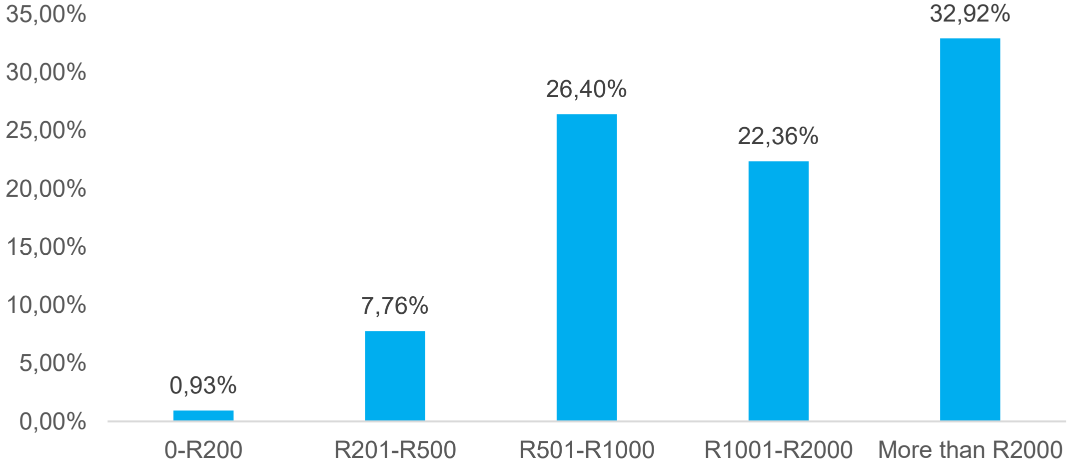
Note: 22.05% of survey respondents did not specify their daily average spend on accommodation.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2024)

4. George & Wilderness Visitor Trends & Patterns: Average Spending Behaviour

- This section outlines the average daily spending patterns of visitors to the towns. Some 32.92% of visitors reported spending more than R2,000 per day, while 26.40% indicated an average daily spend of R501–R1,000. This is shown in Figure 22.
- A combined graph of domestic and international spending patterns is presented in Figure 23.
- The data in Figure 23 shows that 33.77% of domestic visitors indicated an average daily spend of between R501–R1000, whereas 42.69% of the international market had an average spend of more than R2,000.

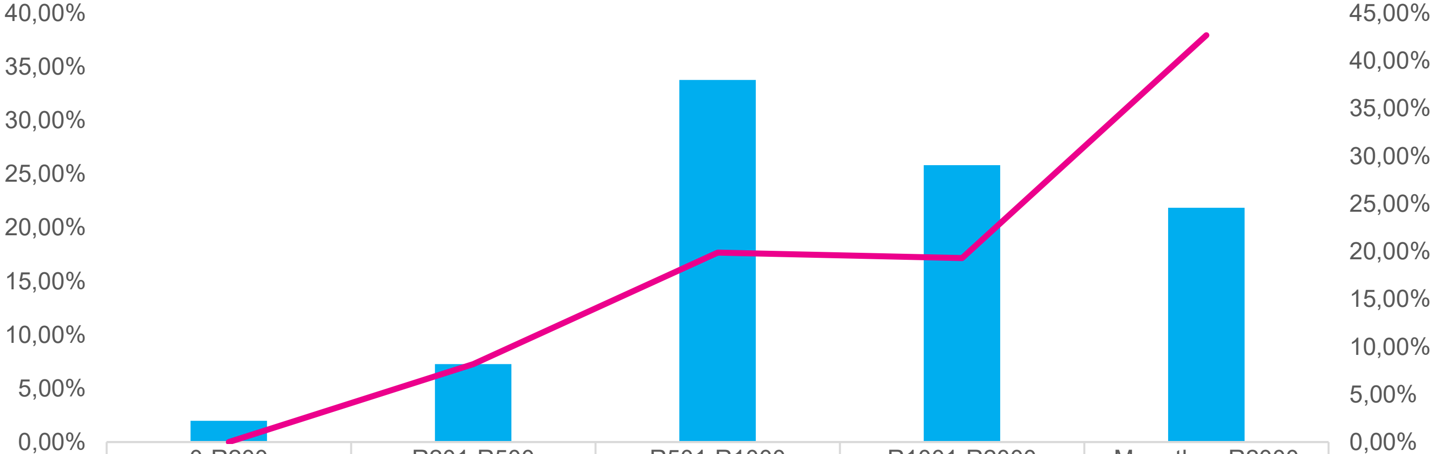
Figure 22: Average daily spend, January–December 2024



Note: 9.63% of survey respondents did not specify their daily average spend.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2024)

Figure 23: Domestic vs International Average Daily Spend Patterns, January–December 2024



	0-R200	R201-R500	R501-R1000	R1001-R2000	More than R2000
Domestic	1,99%	7,28%	33,77%	25,83%	21,85%
Overseas	0,00%	8,19%	19,88%	19,30%	42,69%

Note: 22.05% of survey respondents did not specify their daily average spend on accommodation.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2024)

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5. Visitor Trends & Patterns by Town

Table 2: Overview of visitor trends and patterns by town, January–December 2024

Tourism indicators	George	Wilderness
% Share domestic visitors	69.39%	28.00%
% Share overseas visitors	30.61%	72.00%
Top 3 international markets	United Kingdom (37.78%) Germany (20.00%) Netherlands (11.11%)	United Kingdom & United States (24.60%) Germany (22.22%) Netherlands (10.32%)
Top 3 domestic markets	Western Cape (13.61%) Eastern Cape (11.56%) Free State (7.48%)	Western Cape (4.57%) Eastern Cape (3.43%) Gauteng (2.86%)
Main purpose of visit	Leisure/Holiday (73.47%) Visiting Friends/Relatives (16.33%) Education & Sport (2.04%)	Leisure/Holiday (88.00%) Visiting Friends/Relatives (5.14) Education (2.86%)
Age profile of visitors	36-50 years (33.33%) 51-7- years (27.89%)	21-35 years (23.43%) 36-50 years (19.43%)
Group size	Pairs (51.02%)	Pairs (41.71%)
Length of stay	One night (25.17%)	Seven & More nights (34.29%)
Top 3 information sources	Internet/Websites (40.82%) Return Visitors (30.61%) Friends/Family/Word of mouth (10.20%)	Internet/Websites (45.71%) Friends/Family/Word of mouth (16.57%) Return Visitors (14.29%)
Average daily budget	R501-R1000 (36.73%)	More than R2000 (41.71%)
Average budget for accommodation	R2001-R5000 (24.49%)	R2001-R5000 (44.00%)
Type of accommodation	Hotels (17.69%)	Guest Houses (25.71%)
Mode of Transport	Own Motor Vehicle (58.50%)	Rented Car (64.57%)
Top 3 activities undertaken	Beaches (40.82%) Crafts/food markets (40.14%) Scenic Drives (38.10%)	Gourmet restaurants/cuisine (53.71%) Outdoor Activities (53.14%) Beaches (44.00%)

Note: 22.05% of survey respondents did not specify their daily average spend on accommodation.

Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2024

6. 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.

The participating local tourism office: **George Tourism**

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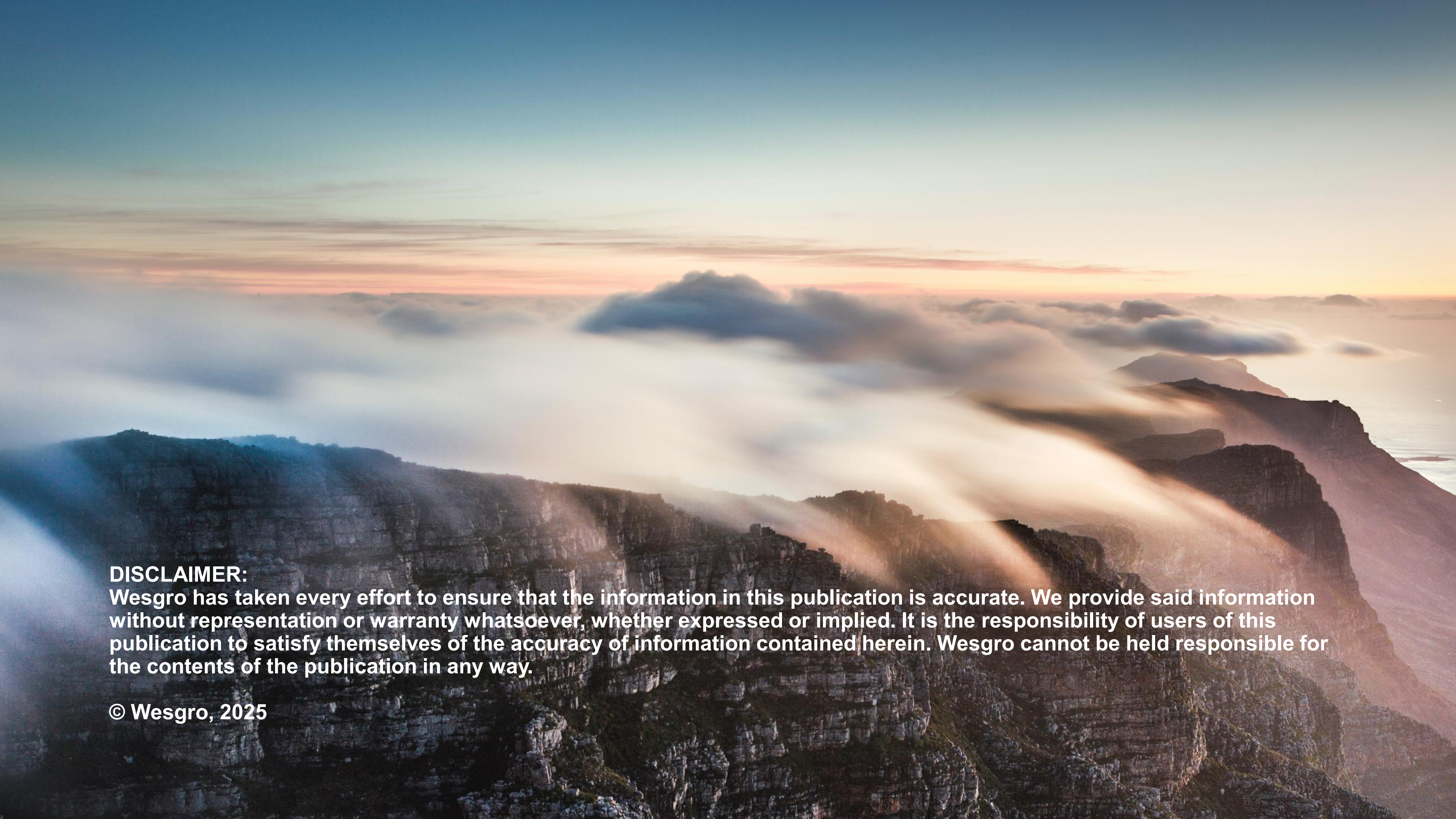
tourism, trade & investment



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