



Tourism, Trade and Investment Flows between the United States and the Western Cape

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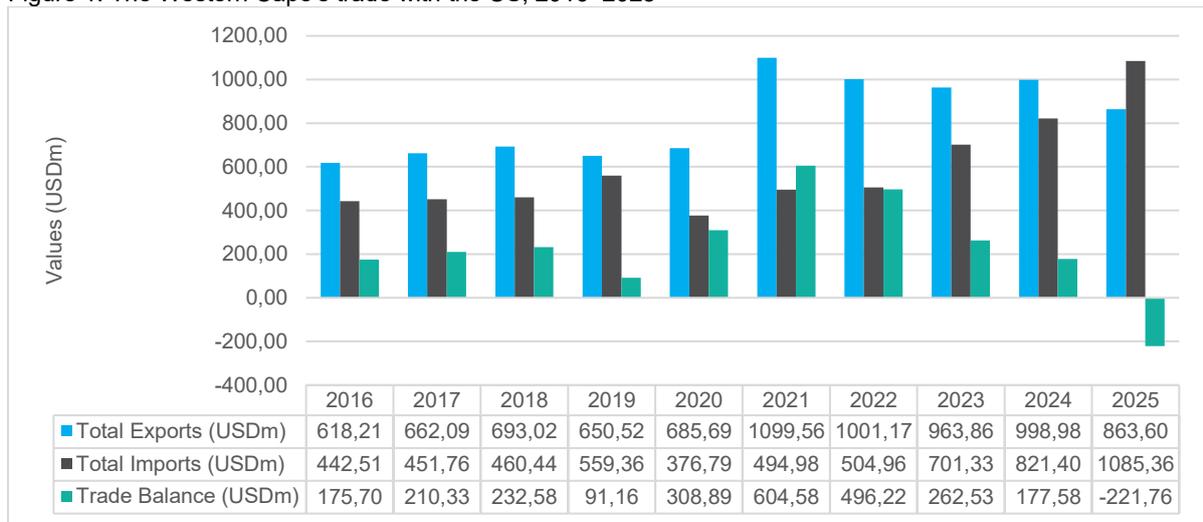
1. Trade

1.1 The Western Cape's trade with the United States

The Western Cape's trade with the United States (US) from 2016 to 2025 is shown in Figure 1. The province was a net exporter of goods to the US for most of the past decade, apart from 2025. In 2025, exports from the Western Cape to the US reached USD863.60m, decreasing by -13.55% y-o-y from USD998.98m in 2024. Imports from the US to the province expanded by 32.14% y-o-y and crossed over the billion-rand mark to USD1,085.36m (USD1.09bn) in 2025, up from USD821.40m in 2024.

Overall, both exports and imports increased over the past decade (2016–2025), with exports increasing at an average annual growth rate (AAGR) of 6.64% and imports at 10.73%.

Figure 1: The Western Cape's trade with the US, 2016–2025



Source: Quantec (2026)

The Netherlands was the leading destination market for the Western Cape's exports in 2025, with exports valued at USD1,310.96m (or USD1.31bn), and accounting for 10.63% of total Western Cape exports in the year. This is shown in Table 1. Exports from the United Kingdom followed in second place and were valued at USD953.42m (or a 7.73% share). Exports from the US were in third position, at a value of USD863.60m or a 7.00% share.

Among the province's top 10 destination markets, the fastest-growing markets (as measured by the highest AAGR) in the past five years (2021–2025) were Zimbabwe (with an AAGR of 20.69%), the United Arab Emirates (17.18%), and the Netherlands (12.70%).

On the import front, China was the leading source market for goods imported by the province in 2025, with imports reaching USD3,593.46m (or USD3.59bn), and accounting for 18.95% of total imports in that year. India ranked second with total imports valued at USD1,587.30m (or an 8.37% share); and Oman was third with imports valued at USD1,157.25m (or a 6.10% share). The US was the province's 5th largest source market for imports in 2025, with imports costing USD1,085.36m (or USD1.09bn) and equivalent to 5.72% of total Western Cape imports.

Among the Western Cape's top 10 source markets, the fastest-growing markets (as measured by the highest AAGR) over the past five years (2021–2025) were Angola (with an AAGR of 416.50%), Nigeria (39.79%) and Oman (38.71%).

Table 1: Top 10 markets for Western Cape exports and imports, 2025

Rank	Export Country	Exported Value (USDm), 2025	Ave. Annual Growth % (2021-2025)	Rank	Import Country	Imported Value (USDm), 2025	Ave. Annual Growth % (2021-2025)
1	Netherlands	1310.96	12.70%	1	China	3593.46	10.54%
2	United Kingdom	953.42	5.58%	2	India	1587.3	36.64%
3	United States	863.6	7.56%	3	Oman	1157.25	38.71%
4	Namibia	835.04	6.66%	4	United Arab Emirates	1154.91	24.08%
5	China	635.83	10.81%	5	United States	1085.36	24.31%
6	United Arab Emirates	517.94	17.18%	6	Saudi Arabia	825.38	7.17%
7	Botswana	340.5	-0.99%	7	Angola	814.38	416.50%
8	Russian Federation	331.84	10.80%	8	Nigeria	770.55	39.79%
9	Germany	330.16	0.94%	9	Italy	653.21	24.11%
10	Zimbabwe	296.98	20.69%	10	Germany	602.98	6.77%
WC Total Exports		12 332.96	8.54%	WC Total Imports		18 965.71	12.11%

Source: Quantec (2026)

Table 2 shows that citrus fruit was the Western Cape's top export product to the US in 2025, valued at USD110.94m and accounting for 12.85% of total Western Cape exports to the US in that year. This was followed by the exports of articles of jewellery and parts thereof, with a value of USD75.24 (or an 8.73% share of total exports); and then by exports of yachts and other vessels for pleasure or sports (valued at USD66.05m or a 7.65% share).

Among the top 10 export products, the fastest-growing product categories (as measured by the highest AAGR) in the past five years (2021–2025) were dried fruit, with an AAGR of 58.87%; fruit juices (including grape must) and vegetable juices (30.92%); and nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances (parts) with an AAGR of 28.91%.

Crude petroleum oils was the Western Cape's top import product from the US in 2025. At a value of USD568.77m, this product accounted for 52.40% of the province's total imports from the US in that year. This was followed by imports of petroleum oils, other than crude, at value of USD39.25m (or a 3.62% share); and polymers of ethylene, in primary forms worth USD28.69m (or a 2.64% share).

Among the top 10 import products, the fastest-growing product categories (as measured by the highest AAGR) in the past five years (2021–2025) were polymers of ethylene, in primary forms (with an AAGR of 93.73%); petroleum oils, other than crude (39.94%); and orthopaedic appliances, including crutches, surgical belts and trusses (22.38%).

Table 2: Top 10 Western Cape products traded with the US, 2025

Rank	Exports	Exported Value (USDm), 2025	Ave. Annual Growth % (2021-2025)	Rank	Imports	Imported Value (USDm), 2025	Ave. Annual Growth % (2021-2025)
1	Citrus fruit	110.94	6.53%	1	Petroleum oils, crude	568.77	-
2	Articles of jewellery and parts thereof	75.42	0.74%	2	Petroleum oils, other than crude	39.25	39.94%
3	Yachts and other vessels for pleasure or sports	66.05	24.44%	3	Polymers of ethylene, in primary forms	28.69	93.73%
4	Granulated slag (slag sand) from the manufacture of iron or steel	62.71	-	4	Soya beans	22.55	-
5	Engine parts	49.30	8.62%	5	Instruments and appliances used in medical, surgical, dental or veterinary sciences	17.82	19.45%
6	Fruit juices (including grape must) and vegetable juices	44.42	30.92%	6	Telephone sets	17.19	17.74%
7	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances (parts)	32.14	28.91%	7	Orthopaedic appliances, including crutches, surgical belts and trusses	15.13	22.38%
8	Beauty or make-up preparations and preparations for the care of the skin	31.91	17.34%	8	Udenatured ethyl alcohol	12.93	14.55%
9	Fruit, dried	27.76	58.87%	9	Wheat and meslin	12.26	-
10	Wine	27.69	-1.83%	10	Centrifuges, including centrifugal dryers	11.69	6.23%
Total Exports		863.60	7.56%	Total Imports		1085.36	24.31%

Source: Quantec (2026)

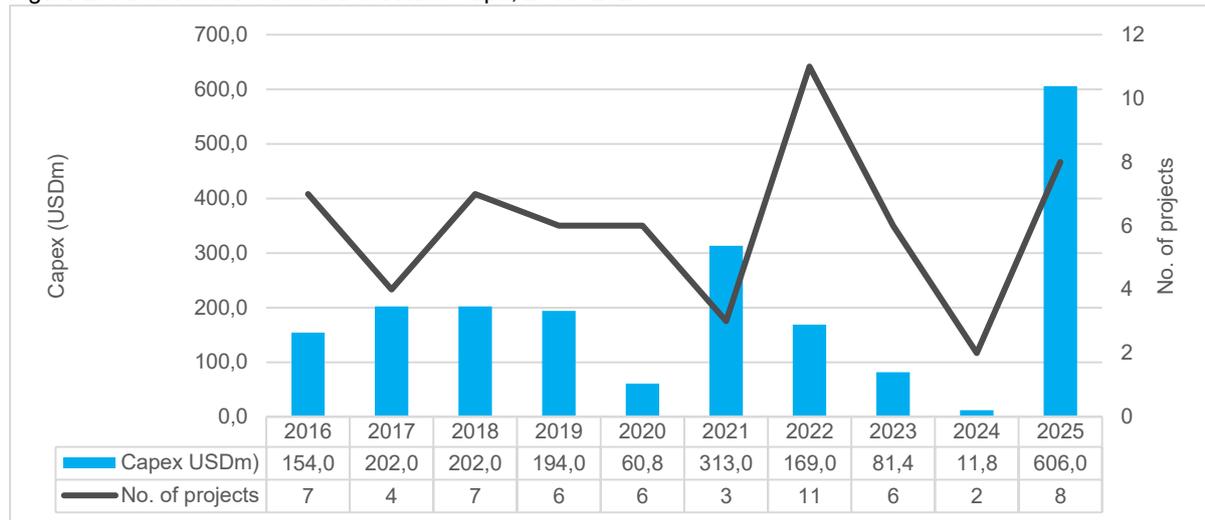
2. Foreign Direct Investment

This section analyses foreign direct investments (FDI) flows between the US and the Western Cape.

2.1 FDI from the US in the Western Cape

The Western Cape benefited from an estimated 60 FDI projects with a capex value of USD2.0bn from 51 US-based companies in the past decade (2016–2025). In addition, the projects led to the creation of an estimated 4,614 jobs. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: FDI from the US in the Western Cape, 2016–2025



Source: fDi Markets, a service from The Financial Times 2026. All Rights Reserved.

Figure 3 illustrates that the communications sector in the Western Cape attracted the most capex from US FDI in the province between 2016 and 2025. The investments in the sector were valued at USD927m and accounted for 46.51% of the total capex. These resulted from a total of 14 projects (representing a share of 23.33% of the number of projects). The software and IT services sector, which attracted FDI valued at USD658.0m and accounted for 33.02% of the total capex, was in second place. Some 16 FDI projects materialised from these investments, representing a 26.67% share of the number of projects. In third place was the business services sector which benefited from FDI valued at USD260.0m, across 10 projects.

Figure 3: FDI from the US in the Western Cape by sectors (measured in capex), 2016–2025

	Capex (USDm)	Capex %	No. of projects	Projects %
Communications	927	46.51%	14	23.33%
Software & IT services	658	33.02%	16	26.67%
Business services	260	13.05%	10	16.67%
Food and Beverages	59.9	3.01%	5	8.33%
Pharmaceuticals	53.1	2.66%	2	3.33%
Textiles	8.8	0.44%	2	3.33%
Leisure & entertainment	7.4	0.37%	1	1.67%
Industrial equipment	5.8	0.29%	2	3.33%
Electronic components	3.6	0.18%	2	3.33%
Consumer products	3.2	0.16%	1	1.67%
Chemicals	2.1	0.11%	1	1.67%
Metals	1.9	0.1%	1	1.67%
Real estate	1.9	0.1%	1	1.67%
Business machines & equipment	1	0.05%	1	1.67%
Financial services	0.9	0.05%	1	1.67%

Source: fDi Markets, a service from The Financial Times 2026. All Rights Reserved.

Table 3 lists the top 10 US-based companies that invested in the Western Cape from 2016 to 2025, ranked according to capex. In top position was Amazon.com with a capex of USD519.0m, followed by Digital Realty Trust (USD293.0m) and then by Spirion (USD244.0m).

Table 3: Top 10 US-based companies with investments in the Western Cape, 2016-2025

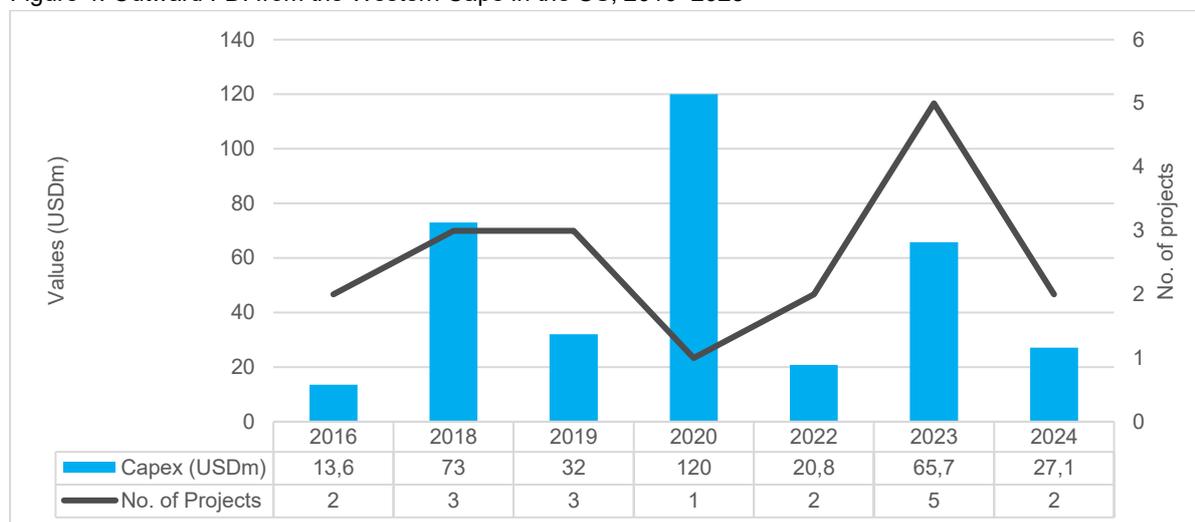
Rank	Company	Capex (USDm)	No. of projects	Jobs created
1	Amazon.com	519.0	8	2299
2	Digital Realty Trust	293.0	2	130
3	Spirion	244.0	1	81
4	Alphabet Inc.	144.0	1	21
5	Hurricane Electric	90.3	1	100
6	CloudFlare	90.3	1	100
7	Microsoft	90.3	1	100
8	Johnson & Johnson	53.1	2	188
9	Thompson Reuters	32.4	1	47
10	Rider Levett Bucknall	27.8	1	17
Total		1 993.0	60	4 614

Source: fDi Markets, a service from The Financial Times 2026. All Rights Reserved.

2.2 Outward FDI from the Western Cape in the US

During the past 10 years (2016–2025), a total of 17 Western Cape-based companies invested in 18 outward foreign direct investment (OFDI) projects in the US. Collectively, these investments amounted to a capex value of USD352.0m, and an estimated 1,182 jobs were created as a result. This is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Outward FDI from the Western Cape in the US, 2016–2025



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Figure 5 shows that the US's consumer products sector was the largest recipient of OFDI from the Western Cape in 2016–2025. This sector accounted for 34.09% of the total OFDI in capex (USD120.0m). The software and IT services sector ranked second, with OFDI investments from the Western Cape amounting to a capex value of USD82.4m, representing a 23.41% share of the total capex. The textiles sector in the US was third, having benefited from investments worth USD72.9m.

Figure 5: Outward FDI from the Western Cape in the US by sectors (measured in capex), 2015–2025

	Capex (USDm)	Capex %	No. of projects	Projects %
Consumer products	120	34.09%	1	5.56%
Software & IT services	82.4	23.41%	8	44.44%
Textiles	72.9	20.71%	2	11.11%
Leisure & entertainment	29.3	8.32%	1	5.56%
Pharmaceuticals	22.3	6.34%	1	5.56%
Business services	11.6	3.3%	2	11.11%
Plastics	9.2	2.61%	1	5.56%
Non-automotive transport OEM	2.5	0.71%	1	5.56%
Financial services	2	0.57%	1	5.56%

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The leading Western Cape-based company that invested in the US in 2016–2025 was Topwatch, as shown in Table 4. The company injected USD120.0m in one FDI project in the US. The Foschini Group invested USD51.2m in a single project and Southern Guild invested USD29.3m, also in one project.

Table 4: Top 10 WC-based companies with investments in the US, measured in capex, 2016–2025

Rank	Company	Capex (USDm)	No. of projects	Jobs created
1	Topwatch	120.0	1	166
2	The Foschini Group	51.2	1	75
3	Southern Guild	29.3	1	103
4	Wuhan General Group (M2Bio Sciences)	22.3	1	92
5	Veldskoen Shoes	21.7	1	77
6	Naspers	13.6	2	71
7	Carry1st	11.6	1	56
8	Drive Revenue	11.6	1	56
9	Dataprophet	11.6	1	56
10	African Circular Business Alliance (ACBA)	11.6	2	36
Total		352	18	1182

Source: fDi Markets, a service from The Financial Times 2026. All Rights Reserved.

3. Tourism

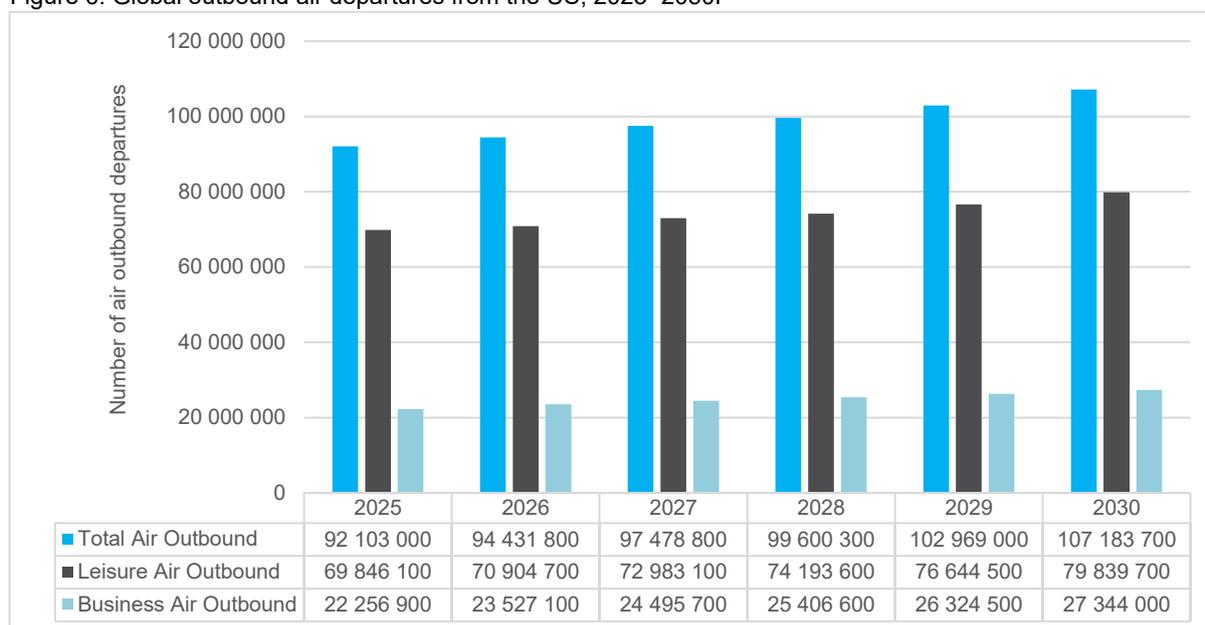
An overview of trends relating to outbound air departures from the US, as well as tourist arrivals from the US in South Africa and the Western Cape, is provided below.

3.1 US outbound air departures

In 2025, the total number of global outbound air departures from the US reached 92.1 million, reflecting a y-o-y increase of 10.19% when compared to 2024. This is shown in Figure 6. Looking ahead, outbound air departures are projected to rise steadily, reaching an estimated 94.4 million in 2026 and are forecast to increase further to 107.2 million by 2030, supported by sustained travel demand and improving international air connectivity.

Leisure travel continues to dominate outbound air departures from the US. Leisure departures are expected to grow from 70.9 million in 2026 and are forecast to reach 79.8 million by 2030. Business travel, while smaller in scale, will also expand steadily from 23.5 million in 2026 to approximately 27.3 million by 2030.

Figure 6: Global outbound air departures from the US, 2025–2030F



Source: Euromonitor International, 2026

Note: All figures shown for 2026 are estimates (E) and forecast projections (F) are shown for 2027 to 2030. *Air outbound includes outbound trips by residents taken on scheduled airlines, charter or low-cost carriers for business and leisure purposes.

3.2 US tourism highlights

Travel trends (2024 / 2025)	
South Africa	Western Cape
US tourist arrivals (2025)	
Jan–Dec 2025: 391,939 (5.26% increase compared to 2024)	Jan–Sep 2025: 133,321 (8.44% increase compared to Jan–Sep 2024)
Total foreign direct spend (2024)	
R11.5 billion (16.00% increase compared to 2023)	R2.6 billion (-1.72% decrease compared to 2023)
Length of stay (2024)	
15.5 nights (-0.4% decrease compared to 2023)	9.7 nights (-3.3% decrease compared to 2023)

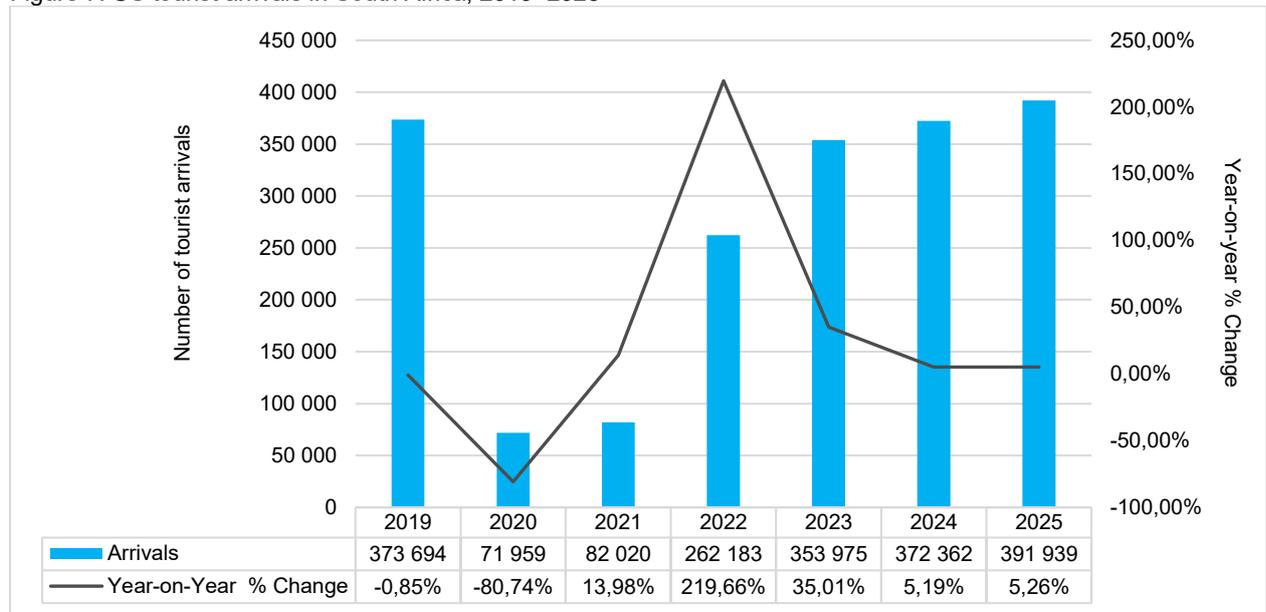
Source: South African Tourism, 2025

*Note: Full year 2025 data for Total Foreign Direct Spend and length of stay has not been released.

3.3 Tourist arrivals from the US in South Africa

Figure 7 shows that in 2025, South Africa welcomed 391,939 tourists from the US, reflecting a 5.26% increase compared to 2024. Nationally, in 2024, this market contributed more than R11.5 billion in total foreign direct spend, with visitors staying 15.5 nights on average, and spending an average of R32,900 per tourist.

Figure 7: US tourist arrivals in South Africa, 2019–2025

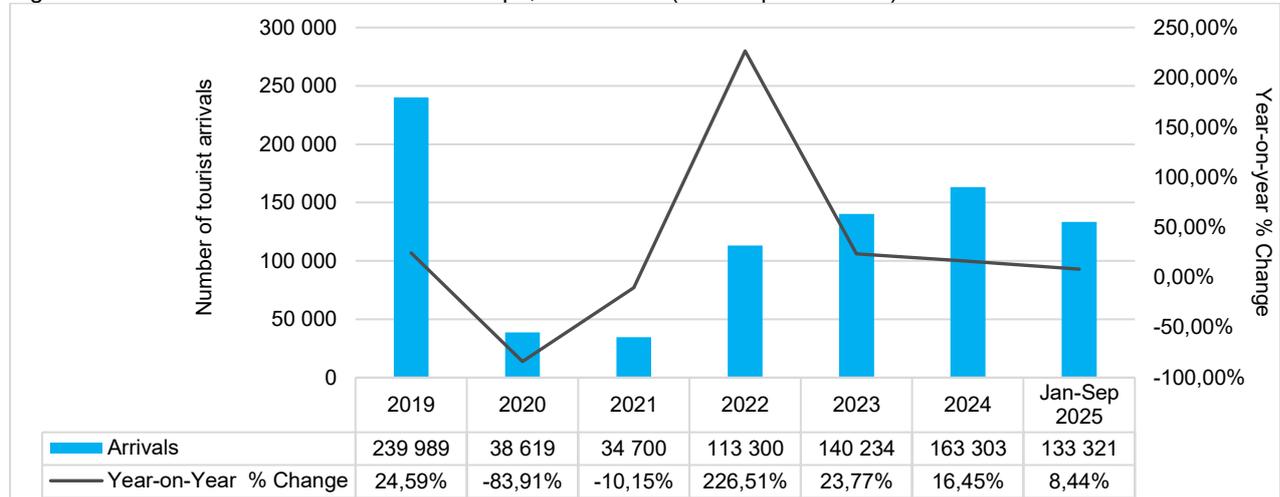


Source: South African Tourism, 2026

3.4 Tourist arrivals from the US in the Western Cape

Tourist arrivals from the US in the Western Cape reached 163,303 in 2024, reflecting a 16.45% y-o-y increase compared to 2023, as shown in Figure 8. During the period January to September 2025, the province recorded 133,321 US tourist arrivals, an increase of 8.44% in relation to Jan–Sep 2024. In 2024, the US market contributed approximately R2.6 billion in total foreign direct spend in the province, translating to an average spend of R16,500 per tourist and an average length of stay of 9.7 nights.

Figure 8: US tourist arrivals in the Western Cape, 2019–2025 (Jan–Sep 2025 YTD)



Source: South African Tourism, 2026

*Note: Western Cape data for 2025 is currently only available up to September 2025.

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