

Family travel

SA reins in holiday spending

MSC World Asia – fun for everyone

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Seychelles is a
children's paradise

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family portfolio

NCL makes multi-generational
cruising an easier sell

From tots to teens,
WLH keeps them busy



Family travel

Family holidays often turn out to be the most talked-about events in a family for decades. Everyone is relaxed and ready for a good time. Agents focusing on this market and bringing skilful and considered planning, value-added offerings and great experiences can be assured of repeat business.

SA families rein in holiday spend

CHRISTIAAN SCHULTZ

SOUTH African families are not giving up on holidays in 2026 – but they are becoming far more strategic about how, when and where they travel.

According to experts, economic pressures are influencing booking decisions and getting value for money has overtaken the need for luxury. Travellers are choosing holidays that offer more inclusions, they are being careful to protect their budgets and, in many cases, booking further ahead to secure better prices.

According to **Shirley-Ann Henry**, Regional Manager at Flight Centre South Africa, the most significant shift is in how families are approaching the planning process.



Shirley-Ann Henry

Value

“Value has become the dominant lens through which every decision is made – and I don’t mean cheap. I mean intentional,” she said. “Families are interrogating every line item in a way they simply weren’t two or three years ago.”

“They’re asking harder questions before they book and they’re much more willing to make strategic trade-offs to protect the trip rather than cancel it altogether. For example, downgrading from all-inclusive to half-board or shifting travel dates by as little as a week or two to unlock savings that can be as significant as R20 000 per family.”

Other agencies agree that clients have more focus on value this year.

Wendy Schulze, CEO of Thompsons for Travel, said many South African families have reduced the number of holidays they take each year.

“We are finding that a family that historically went away more than once a year is now saving and only travelling once a year. They are doing small local breakaways and one bigger trip instead of multiple trips.”

She added that families are looking for good deals with many inclusions such as day trips, meals, etc.

“Passengers are more conscious about cancellation charges should they not be able to travel and they are thinking twice before travelling,” said Schulze.

Inge Kruger, owner of Sure Kloof Travel, said affordability has become central to holiday planning.

“Families are definitely paying attention to lower total trip costs because of the cost of living in South Africa. They are planning in advance and choosing experiences over luxury for sure. They are also choosing self-catering, family-friendly accommodation.”

Destinations

Kruger said Greece, Portugal and Montenegro are currently favourites.

Mauritius continues to perform strongly, although families are increasingly opting for half-board over all-inclusive and four-star over five-star, according to Henry.

Zanzibar is also attracting growing interest because of its affordability, while Mozambique is making a comeback, with strong demand for the December holidays already evident.



Wendy Schulze



Vietnam is becoming an attractive option for families seeking value-for-money holidays. Pictured here is the Golden Bridge at Ba Na Hills in Da Nang, Vietnam. Photo: Vietnam Tourism

Asia is emerging as another bright spot – Henry said Vietnam is gaining popularity among families with teenagers.

“It’s affordable and gaining visibility through social media in a way that’s translating into real bookings. Japan is also trending, especially for travel-savvy families with older children who are comfortable with self-guided itineraries.”

Cruising is generating strong inquiries, particularly for December and the New Year.

“The all-inclusive meals structure is a significant draw for value-conscious families right now as it removes the daily spending anxiety that comes with other holiday formats,” Henry said.

According to Henry, there is a rise in interest in stopover-as-destination.

“Families travelling via Istanbul on Turkish Airlines or through Singapore are increasingly building in one or two nights rather than treating the connection as dead time. It’s a smart way to see another country without the cost of a separate trip.”

Lost appeal

Some traditional favourites are at a low ebb in the local market.

Henry said Thailand is

seeing a slowdown for two reasons.

“The first is the overtourism perception – it’s seen as very crowded, which puts families off. The second is more practical: accommodation in Thailand is typically bed-and-breakfast only, which means daily expenses for meals and activities are unplanned and add up quickly. For a value-conscious family, that unpredictability is uncomfortable.”

Regionally, Botswana has a reputation for being expensive. “That perception hasn’t changed, and until it does, it’s going to remain a harder sell for family travel specifically,” Henry said.

Schulze said enquiries for the US had dropped sharply.

“Disney in the US, which has historically been very popular, has struggled due to the visa situation, costs and uncertainty, so enquiries have been at an all-time low.”

Europe has also softened for Thompsons’ family market this year, with travellers favouring destinations closer to home.

Local opportunities

All three experts said domestic travel continued to perform strongly.

“Domestically, the Garden Route remains a strong option and Sun City is still very much a bucket-list

experience for many South African families who haven’t done it yet,” said Henry.

Regardless, Henry believes the trade needs to be more confident in recommending local products.

“And not as a consolation prize, but as an excellent option in its own right. The Oyster Box in Durban for a honeymoon couple on a budget delivers a luxury beachside experience that competes with international offerings.”

However, she sees a recurring pattern.

“Families often research domestic options, see the cost and then compare directly against an island holiday. The gap is often smaller than they expected, which pushes some back towards international.”

She believes families which plan ahead will continue to secure the best value.

“That’s always been true, but the gap is wider now than it has ever been.”

Schulze said families now want to travel shorter distances. South African families are looking for adventure and time to relax. Sightseeing, beaches and value-adds are often determining where they go.

Kruger added that she can see that locals want more short breakaway local holidays to the bush or countryside.



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MSC World Asia packs in fun for everyone

MSC Cruises promises a huge wealth of entertainment, sport and action-packed days and nights for the whole family on *MSC World Asia*.

The cruise line has unveiled new developments, family activities and itineraries on this new, state-of-the-art vessel. Officially launching on December 4 from Barcelona, the ship will sport more than 40 bars, lounges and restaurants, as well as seven pools and 13 hot tubs.

The 6 762-passenger vessel features the Family Aventura District, a vibrant hub designed to bring families together.

The Clubhouse serves as the central hub for active family entertainment. This multi-use space features a dedicated LEGO Family Zone, roller-skating, bumper cars, sports and wellness sessions led by professional coaches.

Outdoors, The Harbour offers attractions including an adventure trail rope course, the longest dry slide at sea, Europe's first over-water swing, Cliffhanger, as well as the Twin Racer and U Drop waterslides.



The Harbour combines outdoor adventure with attractions including the adventure trail rope course, the longest dry slide at sea, the Cliffhanger over-water swing, and the Twin Racer and U Drop waterslides. Photo: MSC Cruises

Teen guests will have access to a refreshed evening entertainment programme hosted by Yuna, a new AI avatar hosting exclusive events such as the Yuna K-Pop Party and Yuna Boogie Roller Party.

The Luna Park Arena adds more family fun with high-energy entertainment and interactive experiences.

This venue uses digital technology to transform its entire floor into an interactive gaming arena, allowing guests to compete in dynamic, immersive experiences – a first on any MSC Cruises ship.

Teen-only sessions will take place in the Luna Park Arena and The Clubhouse, with dedicated editions of

Chart Toppers, Labyrinth and Code Breakers, alongside an updated Quiz O'Clock: The Battle, with new video content and multilingual support.

For younger children, Doremiland spans more than 1 000sqm, with dedicated spaces for every age group, ranging from a Baby Club developed with

Chicco to Junior and Teen Clubs featuring state-of-the-art technology, the latest gaming experiences, a full arcade and an MSC Formula Racer simulator. Families can choose supervised childcare or shared experiences.

Younger guests will enjoy two brand-new LEGO-themed rooms, one inspired by iconic landmarks and culture across Asia and another dedicated to the thrill of Formula 1.

Sailings

MSC World Asia will operate seven-night Mediterranean cruises calling at destinations including Barcelona, Messina, Marseille, Naples and Civitavecchia.

Steve Leatham, MSC Cruises Vice President of Entertainment, said: "As a family-owned company, MSC Cruises knows what it takes to keep the whole family happy on holiday, with tailored family entertainment activities and facilities for guests of all ages. On board *MSC World Asia*, family entertainment will reach new heights – bigger, bolder and more innovative than ever."

Trains – comfort and convenience

FOR families seeking a relaxed and family-friendly way to explore, train travel is well worth considering.

For many reasons, train journeys are suited for families. Everyone, including restless kids, can walk around and stretch their legs during the journey, all members of the family can use the free Wi-Fi and charging ports on the trains and, of course, there is the choice of reading, dozing or watching the passing scenery, **Corné Kotze** Senior Rail Specialist and Product Manager at Travel by Train, told *Travel News*.

What makes trains such an ideal option for families is the variety of choices.

"Rail holidays make it easy for passengers to choose their own routings or places to visit. This mode of travel allows families to experience the holiday that best suits each of them," she says.

Santa train

Kotze points to Finland's Santa Express, which travels from Helsinki to Rovaniemi, as a train that's particularly suited to family travel.

"It's a double-decker overnight train that allows you to travel either seated or as two passengers occupying a sleeper cabin."

The trains feature Wi-Fi and the cabins are equipped with power sockets. Some have their own shower and toilet.

In Rovaniemi, winter activities to suit all ages include visiting Santa Claus Village, enjoying a cocktail at The Ice Bar or seeing the Northern Lights.

Eurail pass

For clients travelling in Europe, Kotze strongly recommends they make use of a Eurail pass.

"With the Eurail pass, children under 12 years travel free with a full-



The Santa Claus Express takes passengers to Rovaniemi, a Finnish winter wonderland.

paying adult, plus there are youth rates for travellers under the age of 26 and senior rates for travellers over the age of 60," she says.

Clients can purchase a Eurail Pass for the specific country they plan to visit or they

can opt for a Eurail Global Pass, which gives them access to 33 countries across Europe – Austria, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain,

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Seychelles – children’s paradise

FOR South African families, Seychelles offers a compelling combination of accessibility, adventure, outdoor living, luxury and value, says the Seychelles Tourism Board.

The Indian Ocean Island destination offers visa-free entry for South African passport holders, direct air access, a negligible time difference (two hours ahead of South Africa) and reliably warm weather year-round. The island’s reputation as a safe destination, calm, sheltered beaches with no dangerous wildlife, means parents can properly relax and unwind. In fact, a great selling point for Seychelles is that it’s one destination that works across every age group.

The Board points out that the archipelago’s accommodation offering has grown alongside demand. Canopy by Hilton Seychelles brings dedicated kids’ and teens’ clubs, while luxury openings such as Waldorf Astoria Seychelles Platte Island and Cheval Blanc Seychelles add spacious villas



Christine Vel

and curated programmes for every age group.

In addition, many resorts add value with family-focused promotions, including complimentary stays for children, discounted meal plans, family suites, kids’ clubs and inclusions like airport transfers, spa treatments and water sports. South African operators also regularly package Seychelles with attractive air-inclusive family deals.

Activities

The beaches are a big draw, but the real magic lies in the excursions that keep children busy, curious and spellbound, turning a beach holiday into something they’ll remember forever.

A full-day reef safari to Sainte Anne Marine National Park is a highlight, with glass-bottom boat cruising, snorkelling above vibrant corals and one of the region’s largest seagrass meadows, finished with a Creole barbecue on the sand.

On Praslin, the whole family will enjoy a visit to the UNESCO-listed Vallée de Mai, one of only two places on earth where the Coco de Mer palm still grows. And from Praslin, it’s a 20-minute boat trip to Curieuse Island, where giant Aldabra tortoises roam freely beneath Takamaka trees. On La Digue, bicycles rule the road, where travellers can ride the vanilla-scented paths to Anse Source d’Argent, listed among the world’s most beautiful beaches, and among



Giant Aldabra tortoises, which can live for over 100 years, roam freely on Curieuse Island. Photo: Seychelles Tourism Board

the historic vanilla and coconut plantations of L’Union Estate.

The Tourism Board reports that families are increasingly booking longer stays and multi-island itineraries that pair beach time with adventure, sustainability and Créole culture. More families are now choosing shoulder-season trips for better value and flexibility.

“Seychelles offers families an opportunity to combine relaxation with meaningful cultural discovery,” says Christine Vel, Director at Seychelles Tourism Board.

“From Créole food and music to local festivals, village life and conservation-focused experiences, children can

engage with the destination in ways that are both fun and educational, creating lasting memories while gaining a deeper appreciation of Seychellois culture.”

Access

Air Seychelles has three direct flights a week from Johannesburg to Mahé. Kenya Airways has flights from Nairobi and Air Tanzania flies three times a week from Dar es Salaam to Mahé.

From December 1, Ethiopian Airlines will double its service to two daily non-stop flights between Addis Ababa and Mahé, totalling 14 flights a week.

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Thompsons expands family portfolio

THOMPSONS Holidays has expanded its portfolio of family-friendly holidays by partnering with resorts that offer exceptional family facilities.

Marketing Manager **Celeste Muir** told *Travel News* that Thompsons Holidays' focus was on destinations that provided spacious family accommodation, all-inclusive options and activities for every age group.

"Many of our packages include dedicated family rooms, kids' clubs, waterparks and value-added benefits such as complimentary child stays, making family travel more affordable and enjoyable."

The company's family offering continues to grow across both international and local destinations.

"Popular options include Mauritius, Zanzibar, the Maldives, Mozambique, Thailand and Bali, while we have also expanded our South African holiday portfolio with a



Celeste Muir

range of family-friendly beach, bush and self-catering holidays to suit different budgets and travel styles," said Muir.

She added that many of its family packages included exclusive benefits such as children staying or eating free (or both) at selected resorts, complimentary room upgrades and discounted family room rates.

"Affordable South African properties such as Blue Marlin All-Inclusive Seascape on the

KwaZulu-Natal South Coast offer excellent all-inclusive value for families. Castelo do Mar in Mozambique is another fantastic option, providing a relaxed beachfront escape that's well suited to family holidays.

"For families looking for a local bush getaway, the newly built self-catering accommodation at Kruger Park Lodge offers spacious units that can accommodate up to eight guests. Guests can also choose a half-board option, allowing families to enjoy the flexibility of some self-catering."

Muir said all-inclusive holidays remained one of the biggest trends, as these allowed more effective budget planning and clients looked forward to a hassle-free holiday experience.

"Families are increasingly seeking destinations that offer activities and experiences for every member. We are also seeing strong growth



Mozambique's Castelo do Mar is one of Thompsons Holidays' recommended family beach destinations. Photo: Castelo do Mar

in multi-generational travel, with grandparents, parents and children choosing to holiday together, making larger family accommodation and resorts with diverse facilities increasingly popular."

Mauritius continues to lead bookings for the sector thanks to its family-friendly resorts, value for money and convenient flight time from South Africa, while the Maldives, Zanzibar, Thailand, Bali and Mozambique also remain popular.

Muir added that interest in Disneyland Paris was growing among South African families, while domestic holidays continued to perform strongly as travellers looked for affordable local escapes.

Thompsons Holidays works closely with its hotel and airline partners to negotiate competitive family rates, secure early booking offers and

provide value-added inclusions wherever possible.

"It is especially beneficial when our airline and hotel partners run promotions where children stay or fly free, as these offers significantly reduce the overall cost of a family holiday, making travel more affordable and accessible for South African families," said Muir.

The company also supports its nationwide network of travel agents through dedicated weekly online product training, educational trips, sales incentives/rewards and easy access to its knowledgeable reservation teams across the country.

"This ensures agents have the latest product knowledge and confidence to recommend the best family holiday options for every budget and travel style," said Muir.



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NCL makes multi-generational cruising an easier sell

OVER the past year, NCL has made a series of moves that should be on every family travel specialist's radar and, according to **Nirosha Sidat**, NCL's Country Manager: Africa, the timing couldn't be better for the trade.

"Multi-generational travel is one of the fastest-growing booking patterns we're seeing and cruising is uniquely positioned to serve it," says Sidat.

"The challenge with multi-gen groups has always been that different ages want completely different things from a holiday. *Norwegian Luna* and the *Great Tides Waterpark* are our answer to that – one product that delivers for everyone at the table, from the grandparents to the grandchildren."

Norwegian Luna

When NCL took delivery of *Norwegian Luna* early this year, it was a milestone – the 21st ship in its fleet and the second vessel in its next-generation *Prima Plus Class*.

The family credentials are immediately apparent.

The *Aqua Slidecoaster*, a hybrid waterslide-rollercoaster exclusive to NCL and recently named 'Best Water Park Ride/Attraction' by

the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, handles the teenagers.

The all-new *Luna Midway's* carnival-inspired games and the *Moon Climber* obstacle course take care of younger guests.

The *Glow Court*, an interactive LED space that shifts from daytime play area to evening club, gives teens somewhere that truly feels like theirs.

Adults, meanwhile, have 17 dining

options and 18 bars and lounges, plus the award-winning *Mandara Spa* and the adults-only *Vibe Beach Club* to enjoy when the kids are off on their own adventures.

Waterpark

The headline development for families, and arguably NCL's most significant leisure investment in recent memory, is the *Great Tides Waterpark* at *Great Stirrup Cay*, NCL's private island in the Bahamas.

It's due to open on September 4. Spanning nearly 2,5ha, the waterpark centres on the more than 50-metre *Tidal Tower* and features 19 slides, industry-first cliff jumps at *Cliffside Cove*, an 836sqm kids' zone called *Splash Cay* and the 240m *Wandering River*. Day passes are available now via guests' *myNCL* accounts.

"*Great Stirrup Cay* has always been a highlight of our Caribbean itineraries. *Great Tides* takes it to another level entirely. For South African agents selling Caribbean sailings, this is a notable new reason for families to choose NCL and to book sooner rather than later," says Sidat.

With the *Free at Sea* upgrade package covering speciality dining, beverages, Wi-Fi, and shore excursion credits, and kids under 12 eating free at speciality restaurants, the value proposition for families is difficult to argue with.

"When you break down what's actually included, NCL frequently comes out ahead of what may look like a cheaper land-based alternative. That's the conversation we'd love agents to be having with their clients," Sidat says.



The *Tidal Tower* headlines the attractions at *Great Tides Waterpark* at *Great Stirrup Cay*, NCL's private island in the Bahamas, opening on September 4.

Photo: NCL

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Travel cover for oldies and youngsters

MULTIGENERATIONAL family holidays bring to mind different travel insurance considerations. Who can be included in a policy? And what about family members over the age of 69 who are travelling along on the holiday?

Insurers inevitably offer different policies for older folk and it's prudent to advise clients to inspect what those offerings are.

Sanlam Travel Insurance tells *Travel News* it offers senior cover for travellers over the age of 69 up to a maximum age of 85. While much of the travel-related cover remains consistent with a comprehensive policy, there are important differences when it comes to medical benefits.

"The only significant difference relates to the medical benefit. Senior policies exclude cover for pre-existing medical conditions, as well as vascular, cardiovascular and cerebrovascular conditions



Karen Botha and the medical benefit limit is lower," says **Karen Botha**, Head: Sales and Marketing at Santam Travel Insurance.

However, the travel-related benefits (cover for your trip and belongings) remain the same as those on a comprehensive policy and carry the same benefit limits, she adds.

Age can also affect how family members are grouped under travel insurance.

If a grandparent is under the age of 69, grandchildren may share cover with the

grandparent. However, this is not permitted on a senior policy for grandparents of 69 years and over, due to the policy's medical exclusions.

Kiddies' cover

Dependent children who are not yet 21, accompanied by parents, may often share the parent's limit of liability at no additional premium depending on the product selected.

Santam Travel Insurance defines accompanied children as the traveller's dependent children who are not yet 21, are not employed full-time and are travelling on the same trip and itinerary as the main traveller, including the same departure and return dates, destinations and flights.

There is no maximum number to accompanied children that can be added to a parent's policy and no additional premium is charged. However, families need to consider that the policy's benefit limits are



shared between the parent and all accompanied children listed on the policy.

"This means the amount of cover required for travel and accommodation per person should be taken into account when deciding how to insure the family. Families should consider whether the policy provides sufficient cover when its limits are shared between several travellers, or whether separate cover may be more appropriate," says Botha.

As an alternative, a stand-alone policy can be purchased for a child at the normal policy premium.

"Not all policies allow family members to share cover, with senior policies as one example," says Botha. "Understanding who can share a policy, the applicable benefit limits and exclusions is therefore particularly important when arranging insurance for a multigenerational family trip."

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WLH a great choice for teens and tots

WHEN a client is seeking a holiday that offers something for every generation, Mauritius delivers the perfect blend of sun, sea, adventure and quality time together, says **Edna Fischer**, Marketing and PR assistant for World Leisure Holidays.

At two of World Leisure Holidays' partner Sunlife resorts, the family-friendly Long Beach Mauritius and Sugar Beach Mauritius, family holidays are designed around shared experiences and the freedom for everyone to enjoy the holiday in their own way.

Long Beach

Long Beach Mauritius is a natural choice for families with children of all ages, says Fischer.

Standard rooms offer generous space for families, while interconnecting rooms and family suites provide additional flexibility and comfort.

"The family suites feature a separate room for children, complete with sofa beds and

their own bathroom, making them particularly well suited to family stays."

The resort's dedicated Sunlife Kids' Club, welcoming children from 3-12 year olds, offers a full programme. From mini golf and yoga to painting, karaoke, Séga nights, sandcastle competitions and mini-Olympics, children are kept entertained throughout the day.

Teens have their own space at Waves Club, with activities designed specifically for older children, including a cyber café with video games, pizza evenings and barbecues around a camp fire.

For families who love physical activity together, the resort's lagoon offers a wealth of complimentary water activities, including snorkelling, kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding.

Children can also enjoy pitch and putt, tennis, wall-climbing and tag archery, while nature-focused experiences include glass-

bottom boat trips, crab hunting and discovering the island's endemic plants.

Sugar Beach

On the island's West coast, Sugar Beach Mauritius offers a different take on the family holiday, combining a beautiful beach setting with a wide variety of activities and dedicated spaces for children and teenagers.

"The resort is fully family-friendly, with complimentary accommodation and meals for up to two children under 12 per booking, making it an appealing choice for families," says Fischer.

The shallow waters and coral reef surrounding Mauritius create an ideal environment for introducing children to water activities. There's kayaking, snorkelling and stand-up paddleboarding, and other non-motorised water sports are also available. A catamaran cruise takes adults and children further afield to explore the coastline, visit



At Long Beach, kids take part in a pizza party. Photo: WLH

Île aux Bénitiers or search for dolphins in their natural habitat.

Younger children can spend their days at the Sunlife Kids' Club, which welcomes children from 3-12 years old. It offers activities such as treasure hunts, arts and crafts and water sports. Teenagers have their own dedicated experiences, including arcade games, pool

tables, croquet and table tennis, as well as special events such as pizza parties and DJ nights.

"The result is a holiday that gives families plenty of opportunities to spend time together, while also allowing parents to enjoy some well-deserved downtime and children to make new friends and create their own holiday memories," says Fischer.

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No teddy left behind

FOR many families, a favourite teddy or comfort toy is just as essential to a holiday as a passport or suitcase. Recognising how important these treasured companions are, easyJet and easyJet Holidays have launched an initiative to help families avoid the stress of lost toys while travelling.

The airline and tour operator have partnered

with Life360, a family connection and safety app, to offer complimentary Teddy Trackers to families travelling on selected easyJet flights and package holidays this summer. The trackers attach to children's soft toys and connect to the Life360 app allowing parents to locate the teddy if they go missing.

Research commissioned by the airline and tour

operator found that 78% of parents say their child's favourite toy accompanies them on most family holidays, while 87% worry about it being lost during the trip. Nearly all parents surveyed (97%) said they would feel more relaxed knowing they could keep track of their child's favourite companion.

The free trackers are available to easyJet



The tracker fastens to the child's favourite companion, making teddy easy to track via the Life360 app. Photo: easyJet holidays

customers travelling from London Gatwick, Manchester, Edinburgh and

Belfast airports, where families can collect one at bag drop while stocks last.

Glamping – single parents welcome

AFRICAMPS makes it easy for single parents to get away and spend quality time with their children, with a special offer – kids stay free.

The offer is available at any AfriCamps location, excluding long weekends and peak season, with the parent paying only for themselves.

AfriCamps offers boutique glamping accommodation on working farms and

estates across South Africa, combining the fresh-air outdoor experience of camping with the comforts of a fully equipped self-catering unit.

Custom-designed tents feature kitchens, bedrooms and large showers and are designed to give families the flexibility of a self-drive holiday while staying close to nature. Depending on the location,



AfriCamps at Oakhurst, near Wilderness, offers children the chance to fish, canoe, enjoy the wood-fired hot tub, cycle and watch the cows being milked. Photo: AfriCamps

activities and experiences include hiking, biking and exploring the surrounding farms and natural areas. AfriCamps has properties in the Klein Karoo, Cape Winelands, Overberg and Garden Route in the Western Cape, the Midlands and the North of KZN, Magoebaskloof in Limpopo, and around Kruger National Park in Mpumalanga and Limpopo.



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SA families rein in holiday spend

From page 2
Kruger expects geopolitical uncertainty to continue to influence travel choices over the coming months.
“Everyone is watching the Middle East crisis closely – so I expect families to be looking at local destinations for their upcoming summer holidays in December, as well as popular islands off our coastline.”
Henry said Flight Centre was already receiving meaningful enquiry volumes for 2027 and some clients were placing deposits on accommodation for next year.

Book early
She says agents should advise clients to book early as possible for the best deals. “My firm advice is that they should book four to six months in advance as a minimum. Prices are not

going to drop meaningfully – if anything, they’ll increase.”
Henry also encouraged agents to get families to define their priorities before choosing a destination.
“They should know what they want before they book anything, identifying three to five things that are non-negotiable for their trip. Everything else is negotiable.”
She added that clients need to understand the real cost of activities, particularly overseas, advising that travellers should be encouraged to consider the full cost of a holiday rather than focusing only on the package price.
“Every museum, attraction or excursion in Europe or Asia costs roughly R1 000 per person.”
She also advised planning smart, not just cheap.
“Small decisions, like



Storms River Mouth Rest Camp on the Garden Route.
Photo: SANParks

accommodation location, open-jaw flights and car rental versus transfers, can make a significant difference to the total cost of a trip. I was recently planning my own family’s trip to the South of France

and discovered that a single R3 000 shuttle on the last day of the trip justified renting a car for that leg of the journey. These are the calculations most families don’t have the time or the knowledge

to run themselves. It’s exactly where a travel adviser earns their value,” Henry said.
Henry also believes advisers should be honest with clients whose travel ambitions exceed their budgets.
“Waiting, saving more and doing the trip properly serves the client far better than sending them overseas underprepared financially. That kind of advice is what builds long-term client relationships and it’s what distinguishes a travel expert from a booking engine.”
Kruger added that, despite economic pressures and growing competition, South Africans’ desire to travel remains strong.
“South Africans are adventurous and resilient and will always find a way to enjoy life. We were born to explore!” ■

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