



Cape Karoo Tourism Visitor Trends January to June 2024

About this report:

This report is based on tourism destination insights from ROVE: Mobile Location Data Insight dashboard, designed to uncover actionable insights about tourist visitation patterns, tourist origin markets, location affinity, visit times, visit duration, and tourist demographics. This is for the purposes of strengthening regional tourism promotion, destination development and management efforts.

The report details insights from the dashboard regarding the Cape Karoo region for the period between January and June 2024. The mobile location data was used to analyse the travel behavior of tourists visiting Cape Karoo and the nearby towns of Beaufort West, Laingsburg, Prince Albert, and Matjiesfontein.

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1. Cape Karoo Mobile Location Data Insights: Methodology

What is mobile location data?

- This is Geo or spatial data from smartphones. When a user installs an app, they are often asked to share their location data with the company which provides the app, and other companies who are partners with the app publisher.
- Users can “opt in” to location sharing (or choose not to “opt in”). When they opt in, then their phone collects data and shares it with the publisher companies.
- All data collected is anonymised and does not include any personally identifiable information.

Why use mobile location data insights?

- Mobile location-based data offers a more granular lens on visitor behaviour and provides a much larger sample size.
- These insights aim to facilitate a better understanding of visitor movement throughout the Western Cape’s six regions.
- Mobile location data serves as a sample. It does not represent 100% of visitors, and it should not be treated as such. Like any sampling method, it can be subject to biases or lack of volume.

Factors influencing the international and domestic sample counts:

The volume of mobile location data capture counts is influenced by several factors including but not limited to:

Data Source Variability

- Changing volume of mobile applications collecting and sharing data
- Data privacy and regulatory changes affecting sharing of data (GDPR, mobile OS policy changes etc.)

Data Collection and Processing Variability

- Mobile network and internet connectivity
- Mobile infrastructure technical issues (hardware failures, solar flare activity)
- Tourist logic to segment tourist from non-tourist mobile devices

Mobile Use Variability

- Tourists disabling data transmission services due to high international data costs
- Tourists not using partnership apps as often.

While all mobile devices are affected by the above, International mobile device counts are affected more than Domestic mobile devices when it comes to both mobile use fluctuations and data privacy restrictions. Tourists use their phones differently when travelling internationally – they may want to avoid additional out of country fees and only use their phone through wi-fi service. Tourists may not use the partnership apps they normally do while on extensive holiday. Restricting data privacy laws are also affecting the international landscape affecting data that can be shared which may affect processing that identifies tourists.

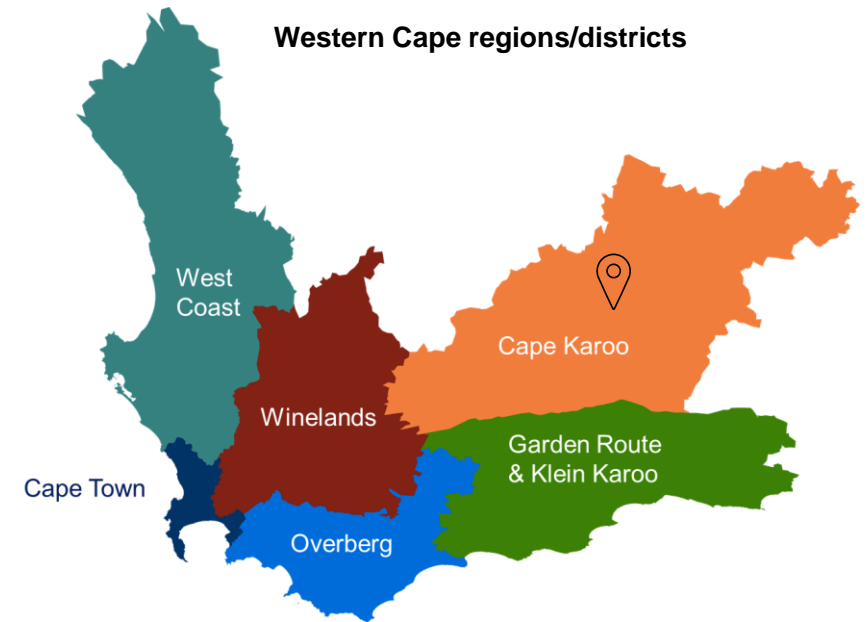
2. Introduction

The Western Cape has collaborated with various partners to uphold its position as a world-class tourism destination. This illustrates the pivotal role of collaboration in the tourism industry. However, the province is currently grappling with the challenge of ensuring an equitable distribution of tourism benefits across its six regions: Cape Metro (Cape Town), Overberg, Cape Winelands, West Coast, Garden Route (or Garden Route & Klein Karoo), and Central Karoo (also known as the Cape Karoo). Regarding the Cape Karoo, all stakeholders, including tourism officials, local businesses, and government agencies, play a crucial role in addressing this challenge and driving sustainable tourism development in the region.

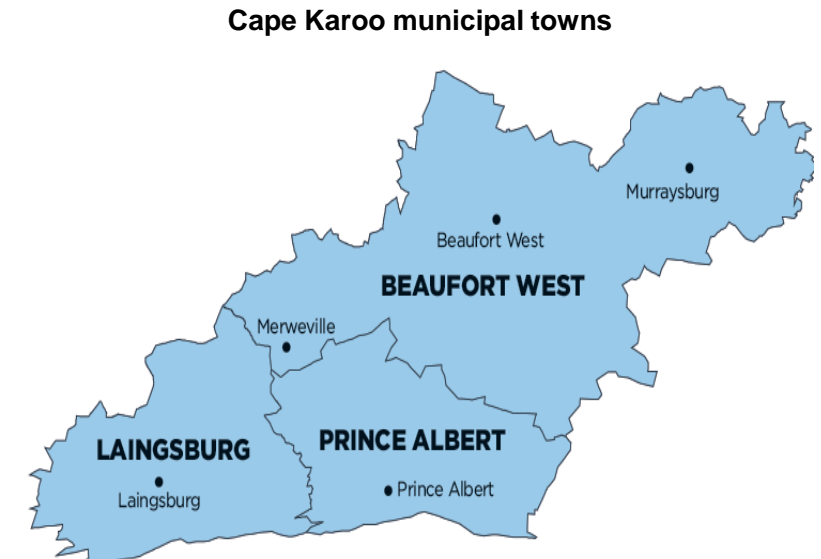
The Cape Karoo region requires support to improve its performance in tourism in relation to the other five regions. The MERO 2023/24 report has highlighted the region's distance from major markets as a significant obstacle for local businesses. This makes the region more vulnerable to challenges when crucial sectors such as agriculture and tourism are affected by external disruptions. However, it is important to recognise the numerous untapped opportunities in the tourism sector that have the potential to boost the overall tourism industry significantly in the region. The expansive Karoo region includes a total of 101 towns and spans four provinces of South Africa: the Western Cape, the Northern Cape, the Eastern Cape, and the Free State. Many visitors are unaware of the municipal boundaries, which presents an opportunity for increasing awareness.

According to the insights from the mobile location data, the Cape Karoo, as well as the towns Beaufort West, Laingsburg, Prince Albert, and Matjiesfontein, observed a stronger share of domestic tourists than international tourists between January and June 2024. Most domestic visitors originated from Cape Town and three municipal districts in Gauteng: Tshwane, Johannesburg, and Ekurhuleni, underscoring the significance of the N1 road that links these municipal districts with the Cape Karoo. The crucial role played by this road in facilitating domestic tourism highlights the need for sustained investment in infrastructure to support tourism growth, bolster the economy, and enhance visitor experiences in the Cape Karoo region.

Boosting the development of domestic tourism in the Cape Karoo requires in-depth insights into South African residents' economic status, living standards, and cultural diversity. With this understanding, destination management organisations (DMOs) can strive to distribute tourism benefits equitably across the Cape Karoo's geographical landscape. Achieving this objective, however, revolves around recognising the importance of incorporating the Cape Karoo people (community), place, products and experiences, and public-private partnership as the foundation of marketing campaigns related to the Cape Karoo.



Source: Wesgro (2024)



Source: DEDAT Tourism Blueprint 2023; MERO (2023-2024); Rove (2024)

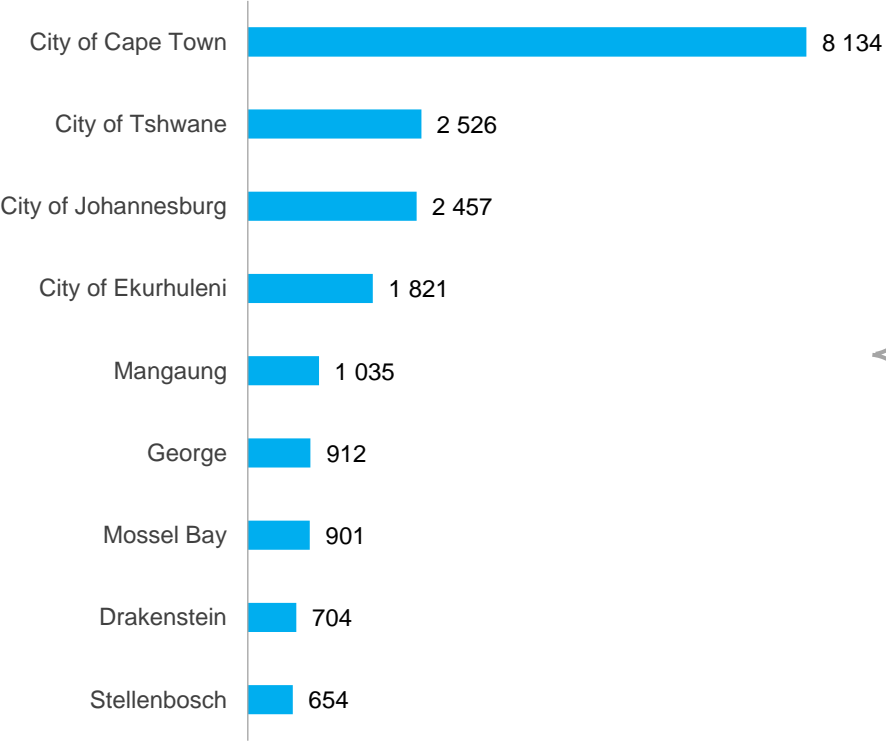
A scenic view of the Cape Karoo coastline, featuring a range of mountains in the background and the ocean in the foreground. The sky is clear and blue, and the water is a deep blue-green color. The mountains are rugged and have a reddish-brown hue, characteristic of the Karoo region. The overall atmosphere is bright and clear.

Tourism Performance in the Cape Karoo

Visitor Trends: Mobile Location Data Insights
January–June 2024

3. Cape Karoo's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic

Figure 1: Municipality of Origin for Domestic Tourists to the Cape Karoo (Jan–Jun 2024)

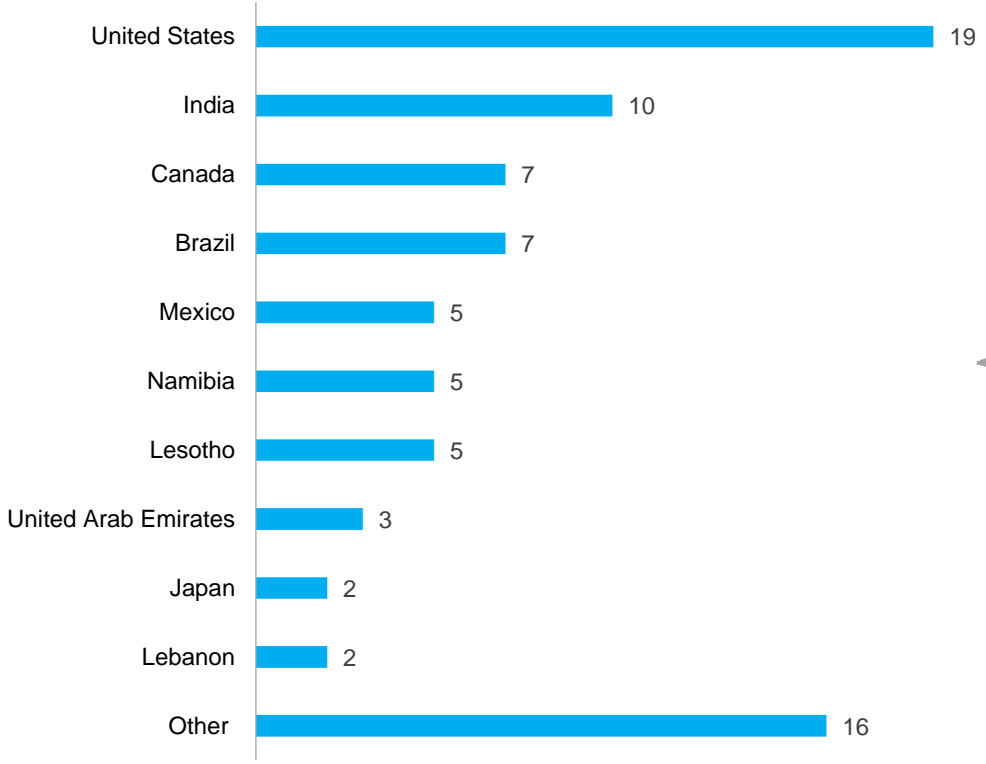


Sample Size:
29,273 domestic tourists visited the Cape Karoo between January and June 2024.

- Figure 1 shows that 8,134 of the sampled tourists were from Cape Town, 2,526 from Tshwane, 2,457 from Johannesburg, 1,821 from Ekurhuleni, and 1,035 from Nelson Mandela Bay

3. Cape Karoo's visitor trends & patterns: International

Figure 2: International Country of Origin (Jan–Jun 2024)



Sample Size:
81 international tourists visited the Cape Karoo between January and June 2024.

- Figure 2 shows that 19 of the sampled tourists were from the United States, 10 from India, 7 from Canada, 7 from Brazil and 5 were from each of these countries Mexico, Namibia, and Lesotho.

3. Cape Karoo's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic and International

- Based on the mobile data insights regarding 81 sampled international tourists, these tourists stayed on average 1.9 days in the region, 30.9% of them stayed overnight and 25.4% were repeat visitors. These figures are presented in Figures 3 and 4.
- Regarding the 29,273 sampled domestic tourists, visitors spent on average 1.4 days in the region, 22.2% of them stayed overnight and 19.7% were repeat visitors.

Figure 3: Percentage of Repeat and Overnight Visitors (Jan–Jun 2024)

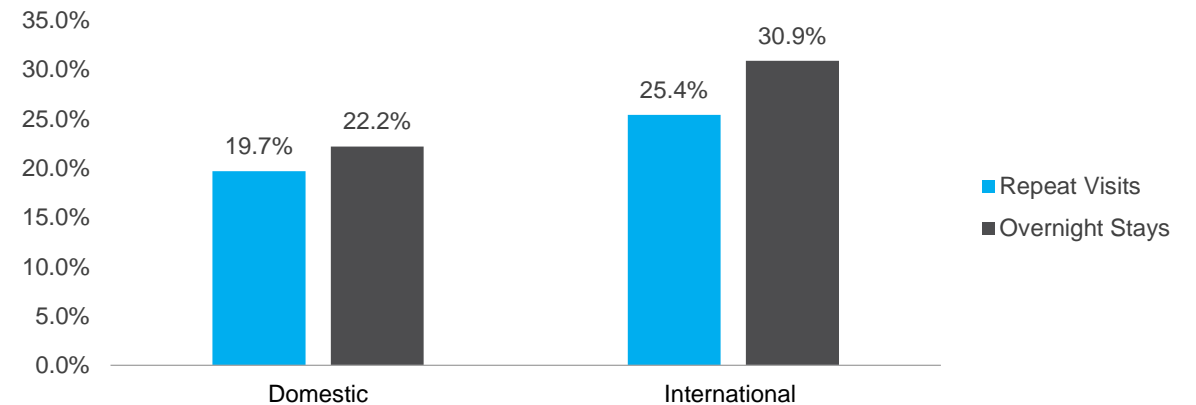
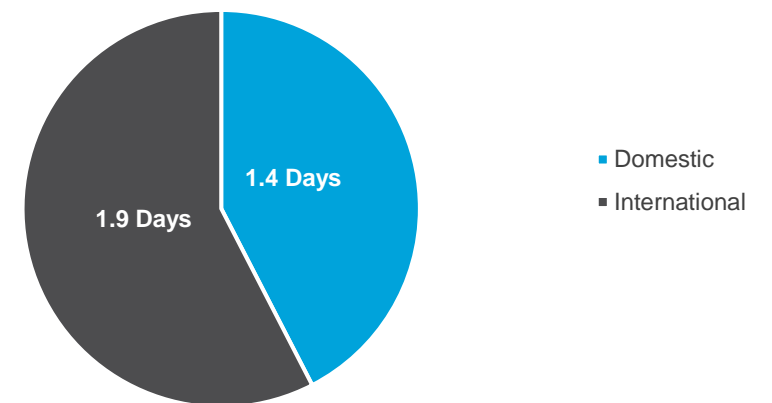


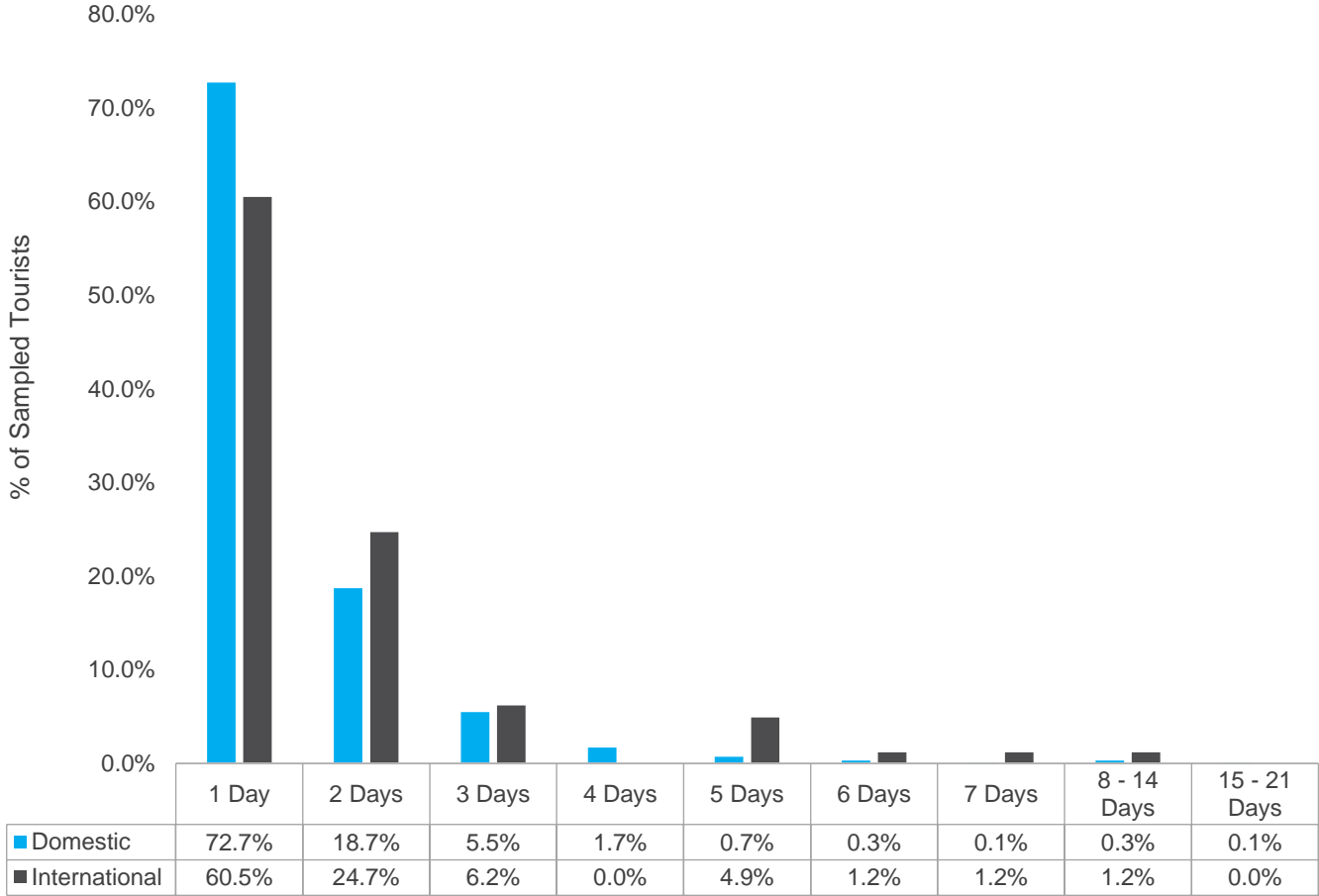
Figure 4: Average Length of Stay (LOS) (Jan–Jun 2024)



Source: Rove (2024)

4. Cape Karoo’s visitor trends & patterns: Domestic and International

Figure 5: Average Length of Stay: Number of Days (Jan–Jun 2024)



- As shown in Figure 5, most domestic and international visitors to the Cape Karoo stayed for between one and two days.
- Over 70% of domestic tourists stayed for one day and 18.7% stayed for two days. On the other hand, 60.5% of international tourists preferred to stay for one day and 24.7% stayed for two days.

3. Cape Karoo’s visitor trends & patterns: Domestic and International

The mobile data analysis revealed the following about arrival and departure days for domestic and international tourists visiting the Cape Karoo (illustrated in Figures 6 and 7):

Domestic visitors

- Arrival day(s) – Friday, Saturday or Sunday
- Departure day(s) – Saturday or Sunday

International visitors

- Arrival day(s) – Monday, Wednesday or Sunday
- Departure day(s) – Monday, Thursday or Sunday

Figure 6: Popular Arrival Days of the Week (Jan–Jun 2024)

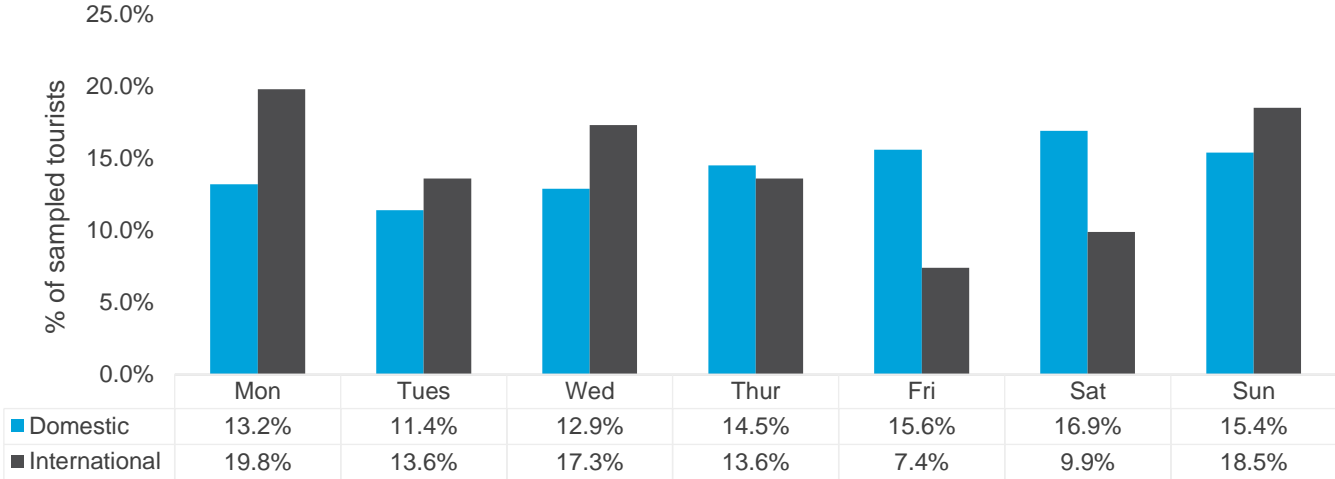
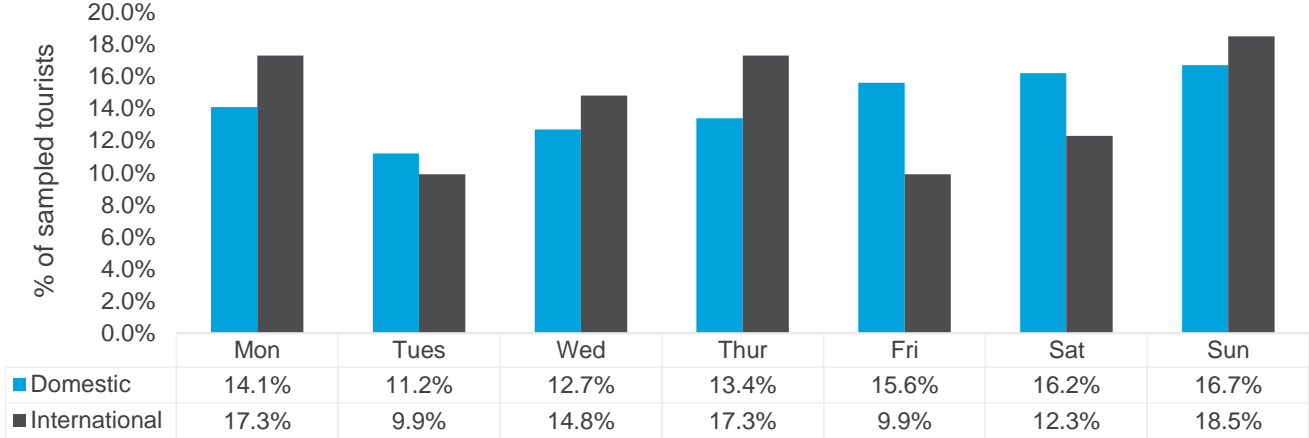


Figure 7: Popular Departure Days of the Week (Jan–Jun 2024)



Source: Rove (2024)

3. Cape Karoo's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic and International

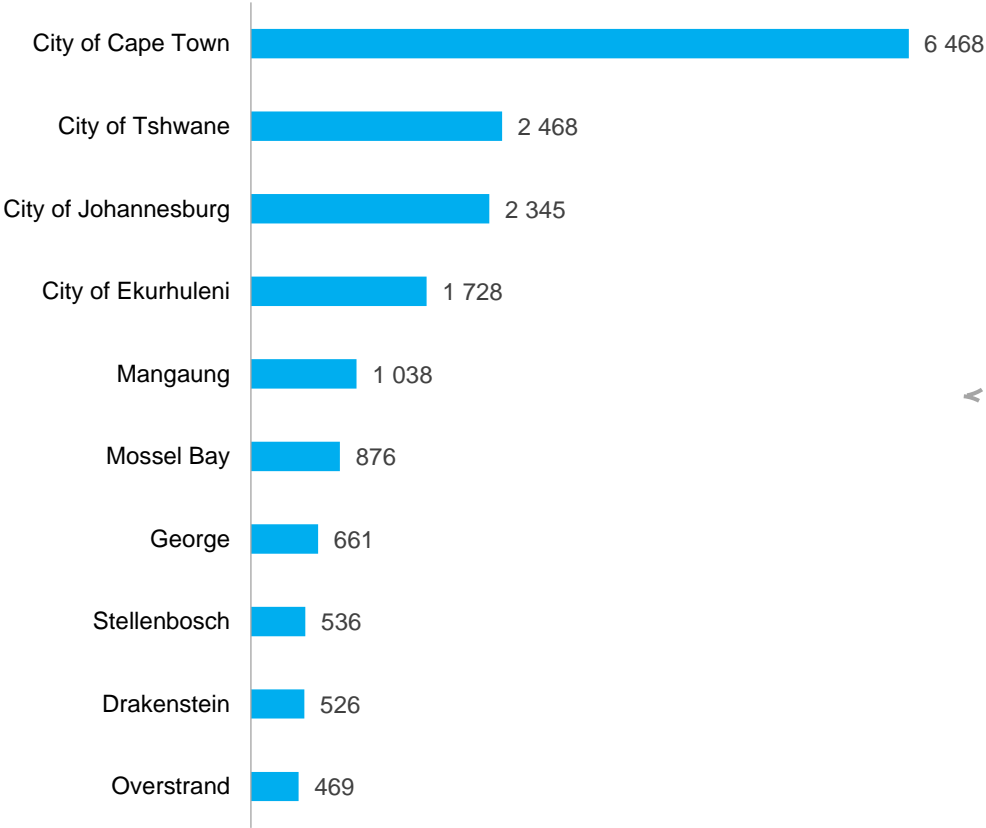
Figure 8: Popular Times to Visit to Cape Karoo by Tourists



- Figure 8 showcases the percentage of the 29,273 domestic tourists and 81 international tourists who visited Cape Karoo between January and June 2024.

4. Beaufort West's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic

Figure 9: Municipality of Origin for Domestic Tourists Visiting the Beaufort West (Jan–Jun 2024)

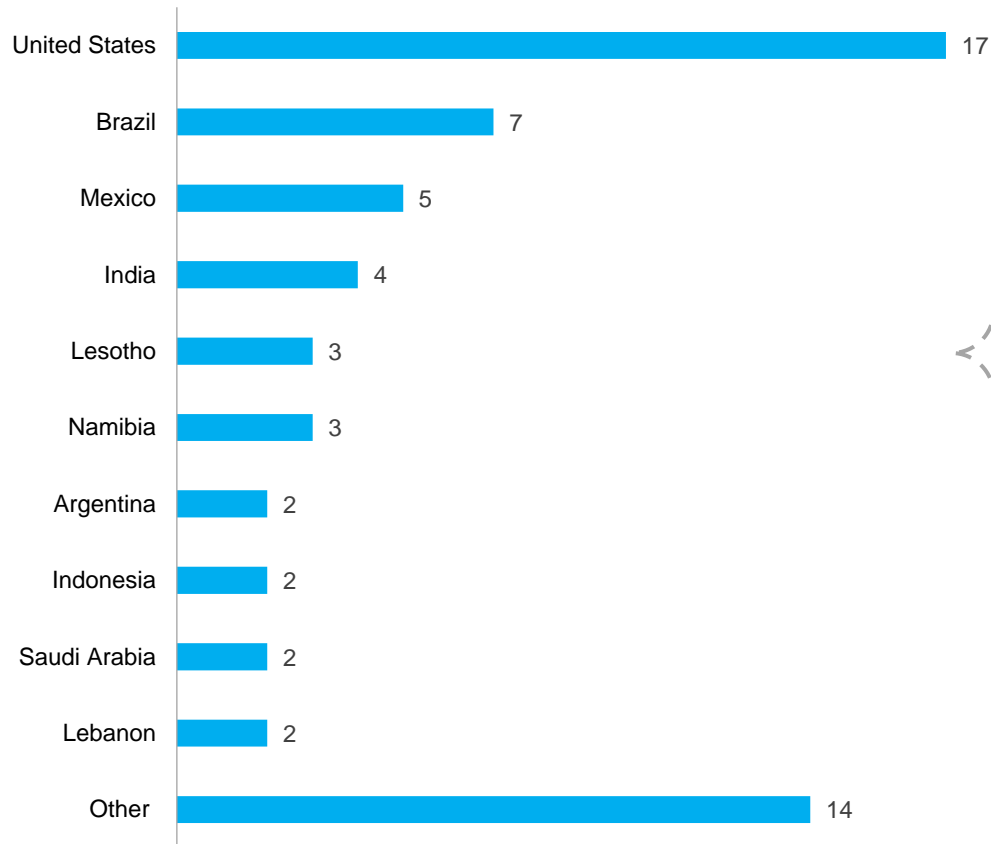


Sample Size:
26,193 domestic tourists visited the town of Beaufort West between January and June 2024.

- Figure 9 shows that 6,468 of the sampled tourists were from Cape Town, 2,468 from Tshwane, 2,345 from Johannesburg, 1,728 from Ekurhuleni, and 1,038 from Mangaung.

4. Beaufort West's visitor trends & patterns: International

Figure 10: International Country of Origin
(Jan–Jun 2024)



Sample Size:
61 international tourists visited
Beaufort West between
January and June 2024.

- According to the mobile data findings, among the 61 international tourists who visited the Cape Karoo between January and June 2024, 17 were from the United States, 7 from Brazil, and 5 from Mexico. This is shown in Figure 10.

4. Beaufort West's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic and International

- Regarding the international visitors to Beaufort West, these tourists stayed for an average of 1.6 days in the town, 21.3% of them stayed overnight and 16.7% were repeat visitors. This is shown in Figures 11 and 12.
- And looking at the 26,193 sampled domestic tourists, these visitors stayed for an average of 1.3 days in the town, 16.1% of them stayed overnight and 19.8% were repeat visitors.

Figure 11: Percentage of Repeat and Overnight Visitors (Jan–Jun 2024)

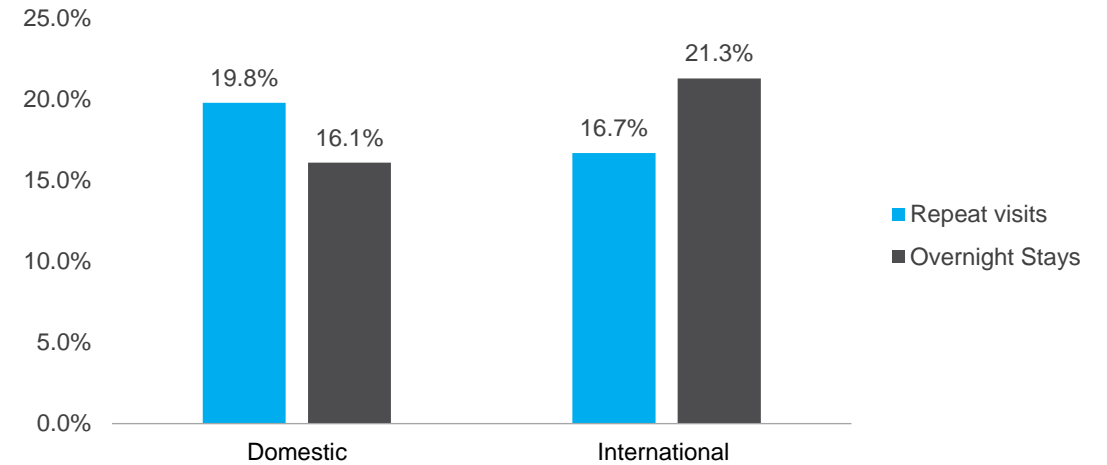
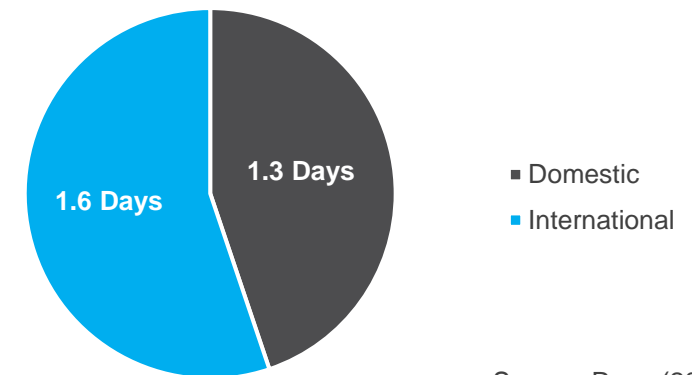


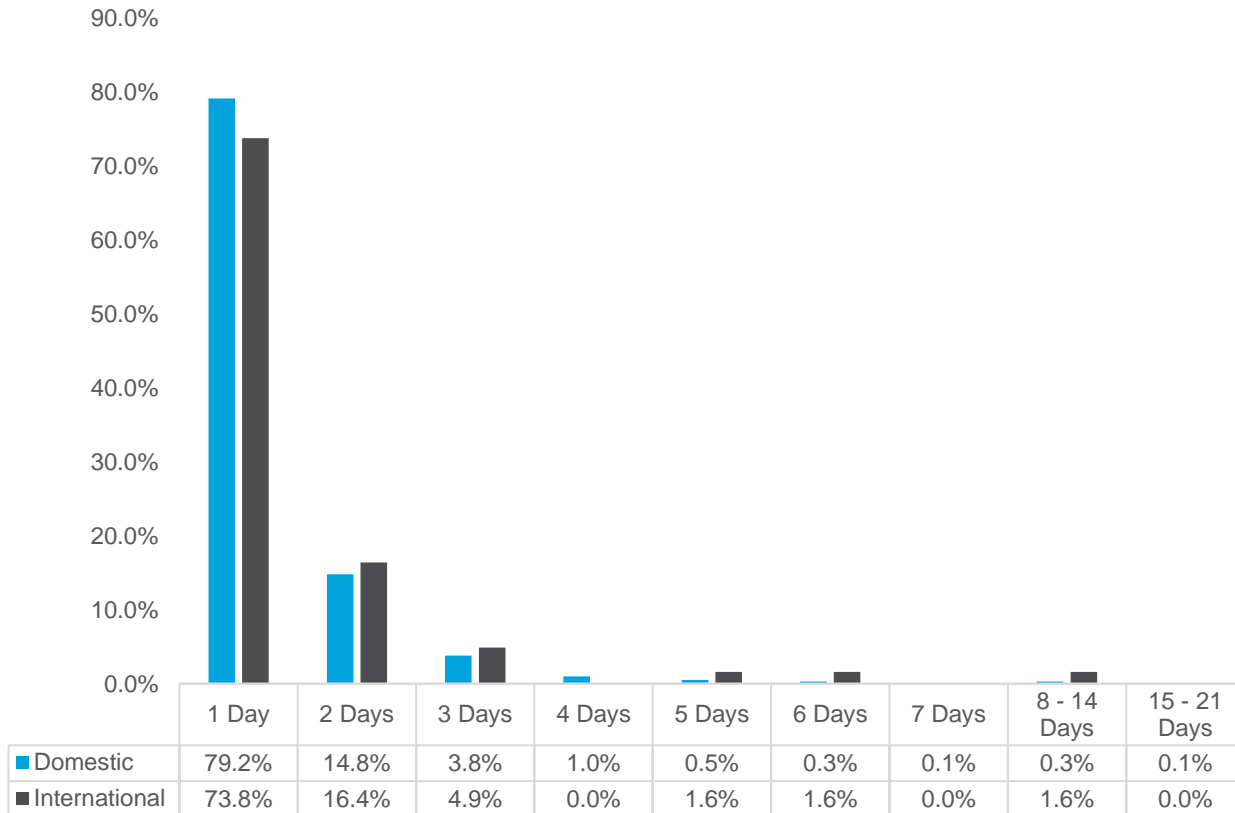
Figure 12: Average Length of Stay (LOS) (Jan–Jun 2024)



Source: Rove (2024)

4. Beaufort West's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic and International

Figure 13: Average Length of Stay: Number of Days (Jan–Jun 2024)



- In Beaufort West, most visitors stayed for an average length of stay of one day. Specifically, nearly 80% of domestic tourists and 73.8% of international tourists opted to stay for a day in the town. This is illustrated in Figure 13.

Source: Rove (2024)

4. Beaufort West's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic and International

Figures 14 and 15 illustrate the following about preferred days of arrival and departure for international and domestic tourists visiting Beaufort West:

Domestic visitors

- Arrival day(s) – Saturday or Sunday
- Departure day(s) – Saturday or Sunday

International visitors

- Arrival day(s) – Wednesday, Thursday or Sunday
- Departure day(s) – Thursday or Sunday

Figure 14: Popular Arrival Days of the Week (Jan–Jun 2024)

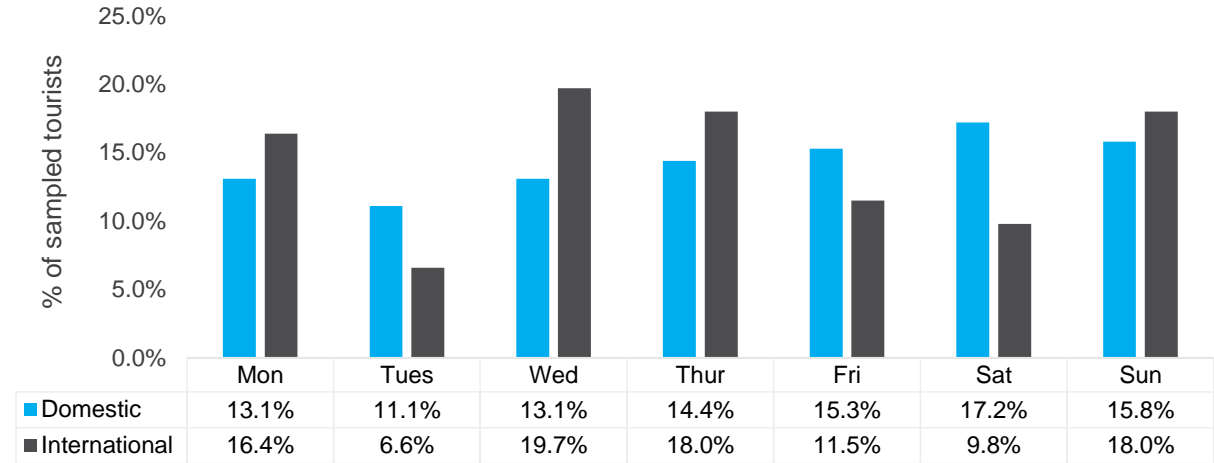
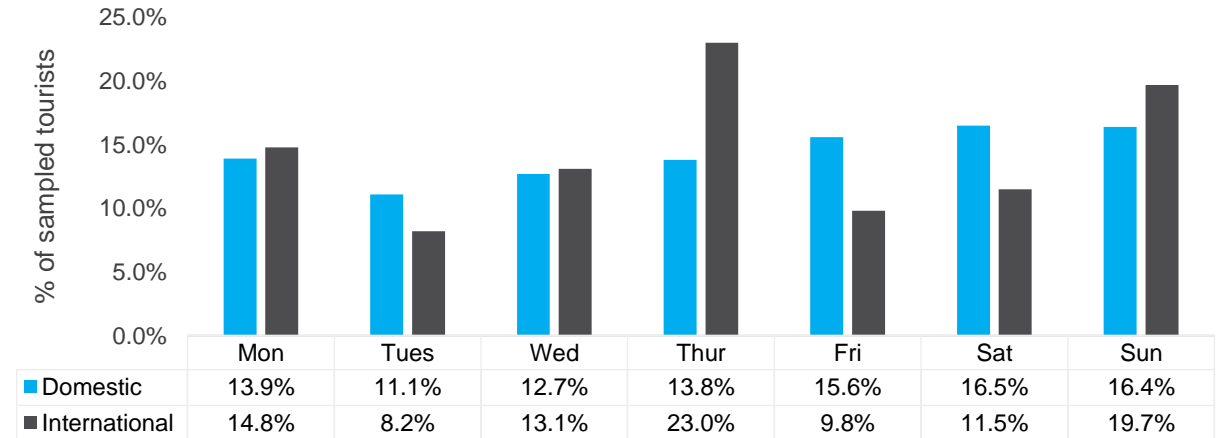


Figure 15: Popular Departure Days of the Week (Jan–Jun 2024)



Source: Rove (2024)

4. Beaufort West's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic and International

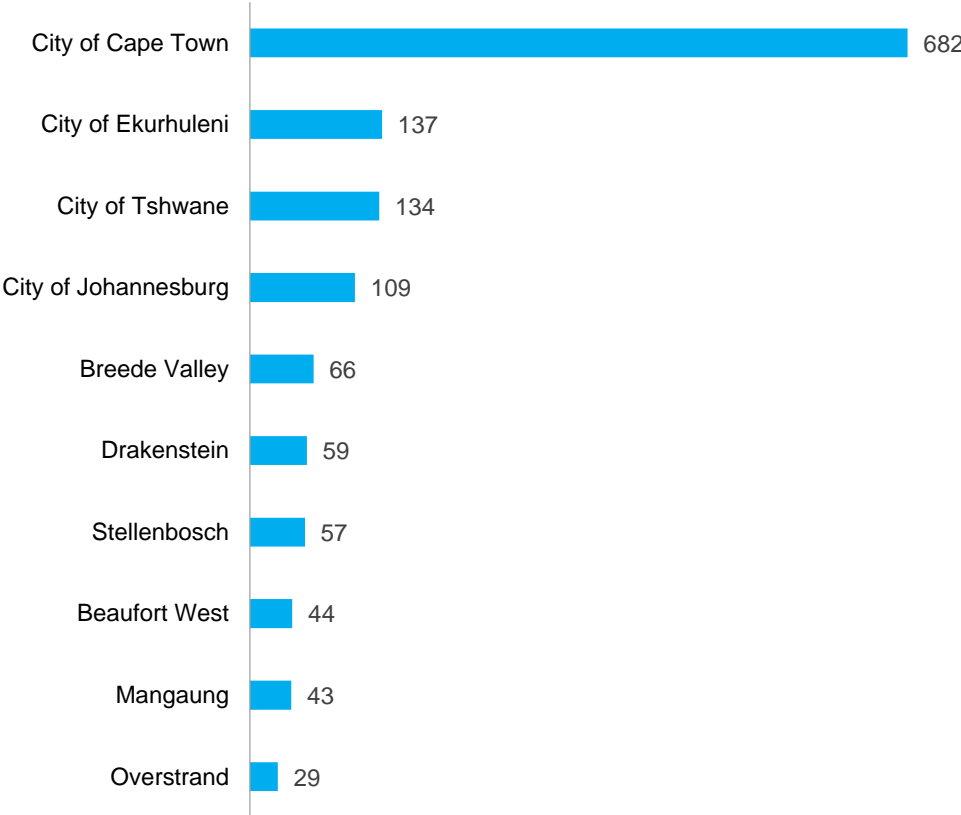
Figure 16: Popular Times to Visit to Beaufort West by Tourists



- Figure 16 showcases the percentage of 26,193 domestic tourists and 61 international tourists who visited the town of Beaufort West between January and June 2024.

5. Laingsburg's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic

Figure 17: Municipality of Origin for Domestic Tourists Visiting Laingsburg (Jan–Jun 2024)



Sample Size:
1,860 domestic tourists visited the town of Laingsburg between January and June 2024.

- Figure 17 shows that 682 of the sampled tourists were from Cape Town, 137 from Ekurhuleni, 134 from Tshwane and 109 from Johannesburg.

5. Laingsburg's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic

Figure 18: Percentage of Repeat and Overnight Visitors (Jan–Jun 2024)

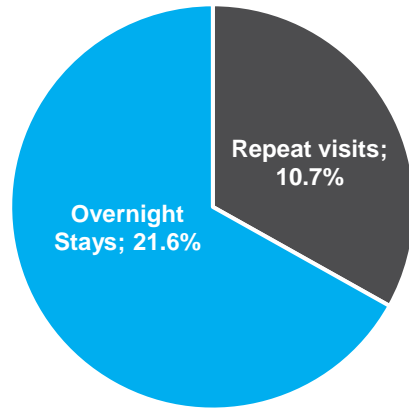


Figure 19: Average Length of Stay (Number of Days) (Jan–Jun 2024)

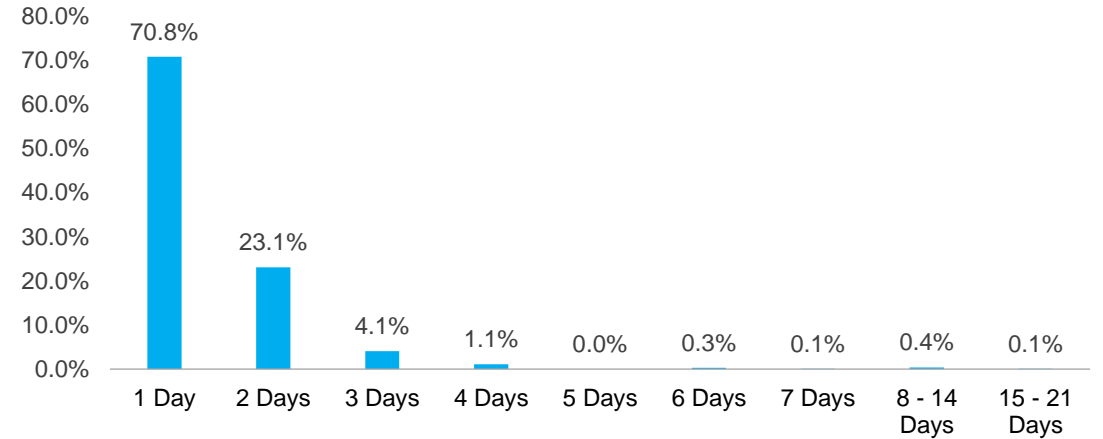
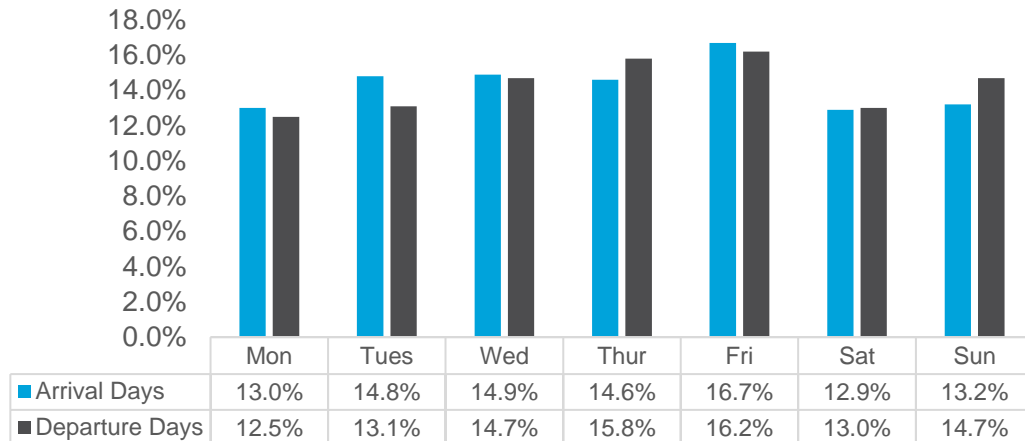


Figure 20: Popular Arrival and Departure Days of the Week (Jan–Jun 2024)

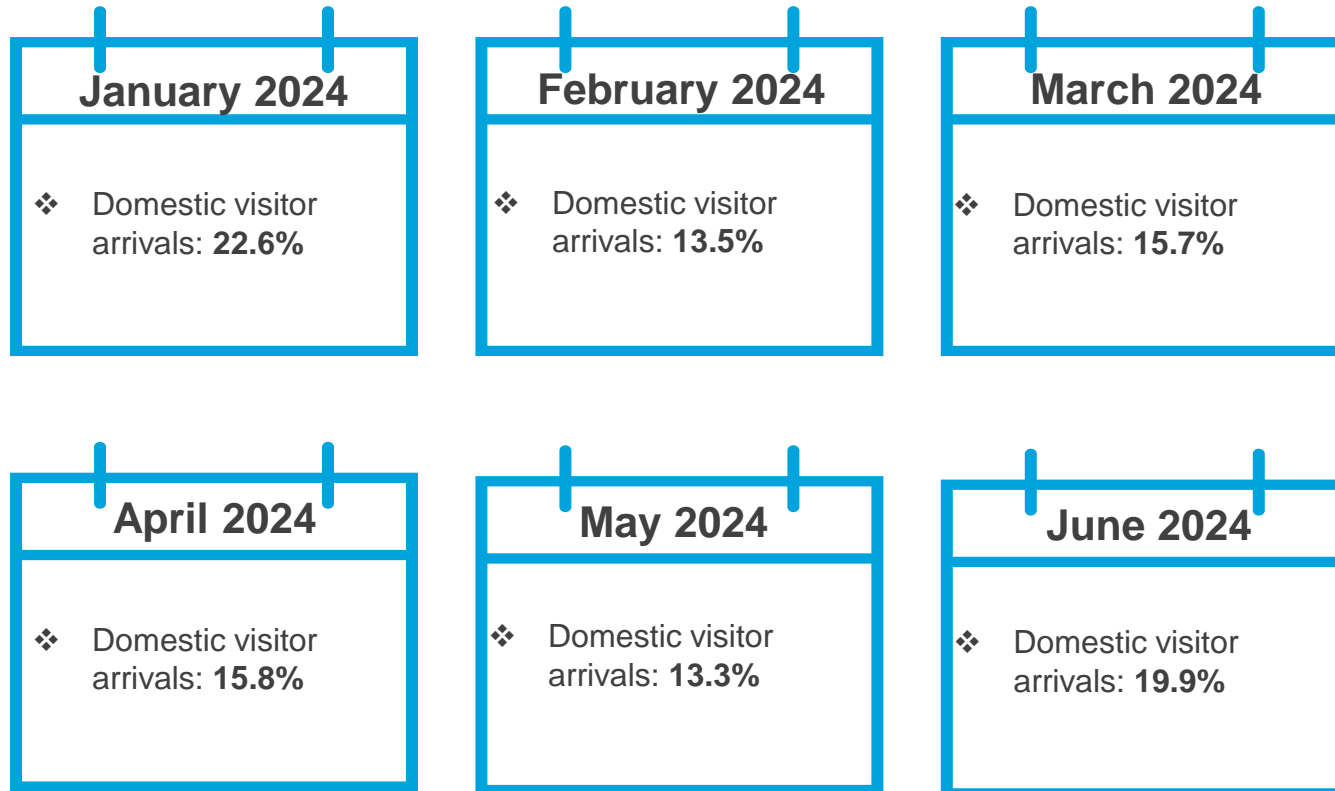


- Based on the mobile data insights regarding 1,860 sampled domestic tourists, on average tourists stayed 1.4 days in the town, 10.7% stayed overnight and 21.6% were repeat visitors. This is shown in Figure 16.
- From January to June 2024, 70.8% of domestic tourists' average length of stay in Laingsburg was one day and only 23.1% stayed for two days, as illustrated in Figure 19.
- And as shown in Figure 20, Friday was the most popular day for arriving and departing.

Source: Rove (2024)

5. Laingsburg's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic

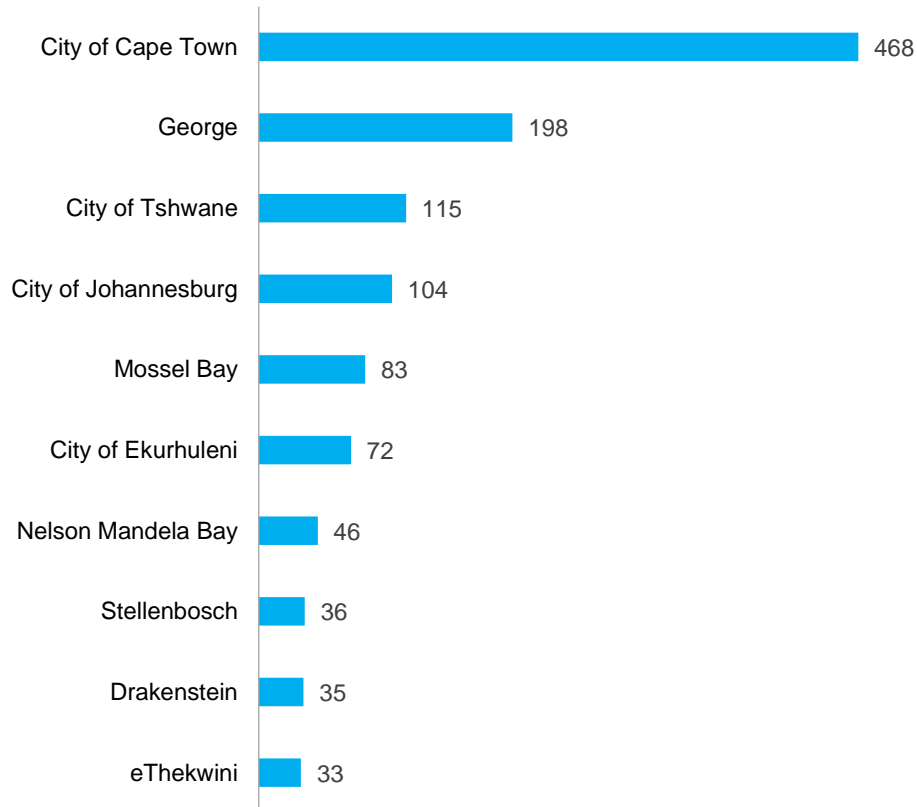
Figure 21: Popular Times to Visit to Laingsburg by Tourists



- Figure 21 showcases the percentage of the 1,860 domestic tourists who visited the town of Laingsburg between January and June 2024.

6. Prince Albert's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic

Figure 22: Municipality of Origin for Domestic Tourists Visiting Prince Albert (Jan–Jun 2024)



Sample Size:

1,593 domestic tourists visited the town of Prince Albert between January and June 2024.

- Figure 22 shows that 468 of the sampled tourists were from Cape Town, 198 from George, 115 from Tshwane, and 104 from Johannesburg.

6. Prince Albert's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic

Figure 23: Percentage of Repeat and Overnight Visitors (Jan–Jun 2024)

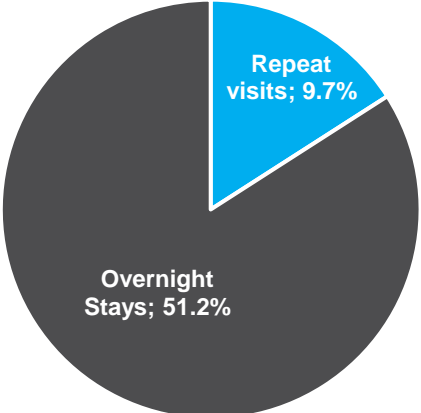


Figure 24: Average Length of Stay: Number of Days (Jan–Jun 2024)

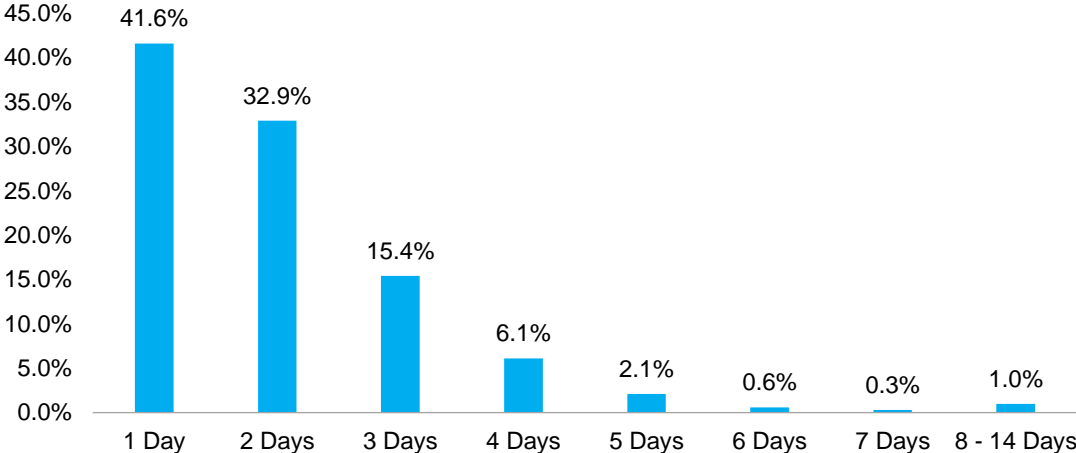
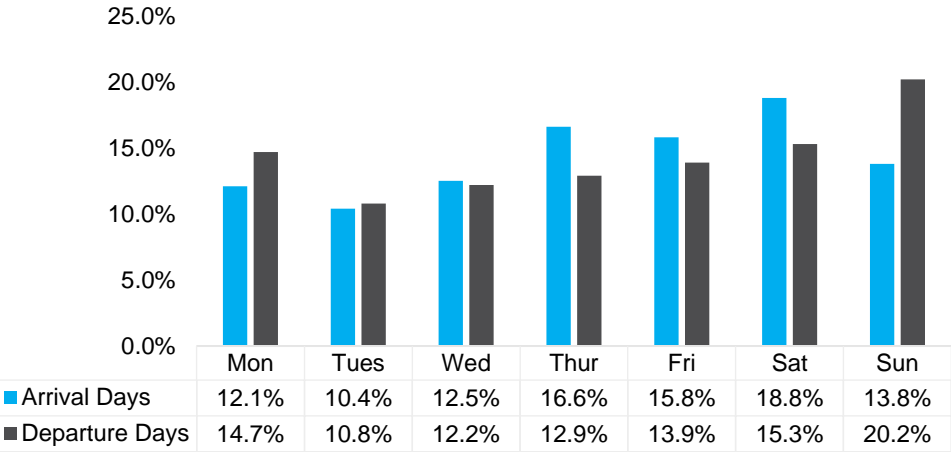


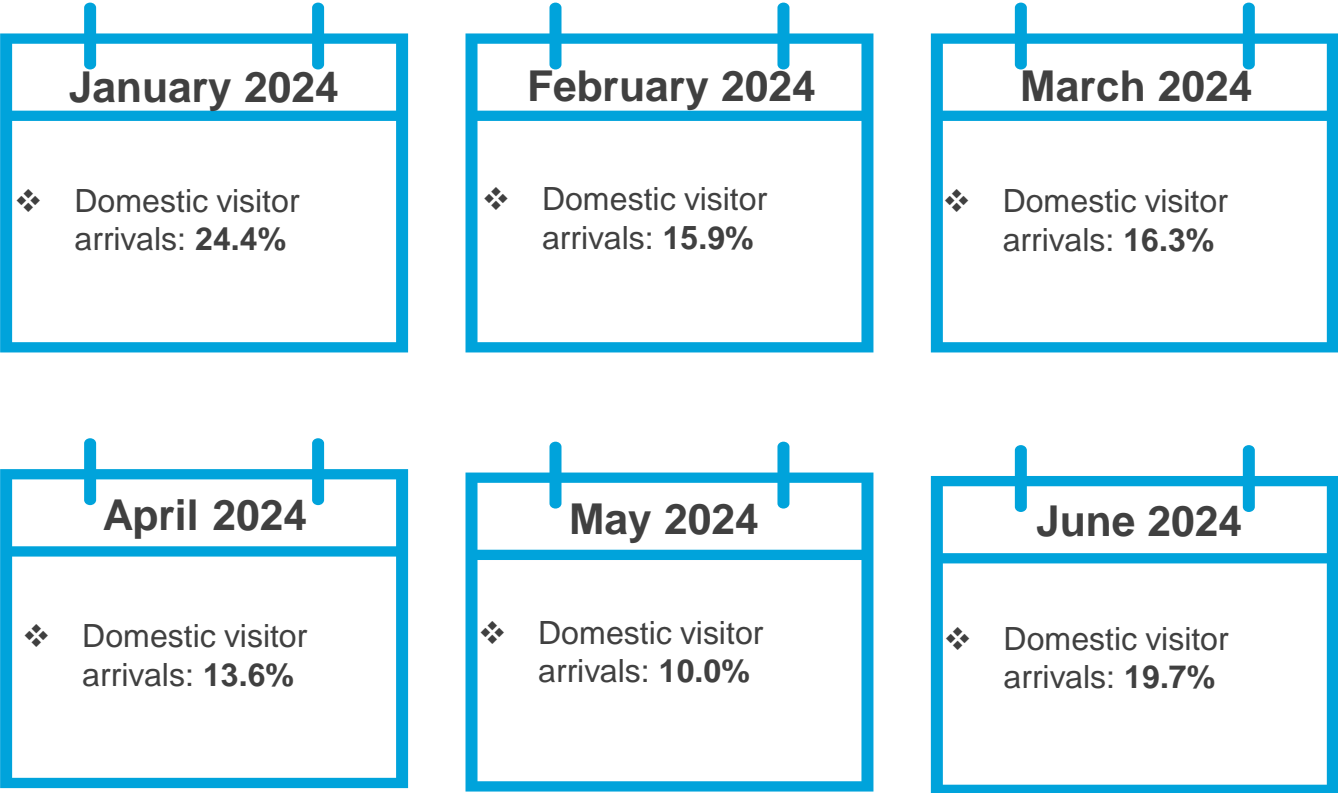
Figure 25: Popular Arrival and Departure Days of the Week (Jan–Jun 2024)



- The mobile data showed that of the 1,593 sampled domestic tourists, on average tourists stayed 2.0 days in the town, 51.2% stayed overnight and 9.7% were repeat visitors.
- From January to June 2024, 41.1% of domestic tourists' average length of stay in Prince Albert was one day and only 32.9% stayed for two days, as shown in Figure 24.
- Figure 25 illustrates that Friday was the most popular day for arrival and departure. However, for those who stayed for two days, Wednesday was the most popular arrival day and Friday was the preferred day of departure.

6. Prince Albert's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic

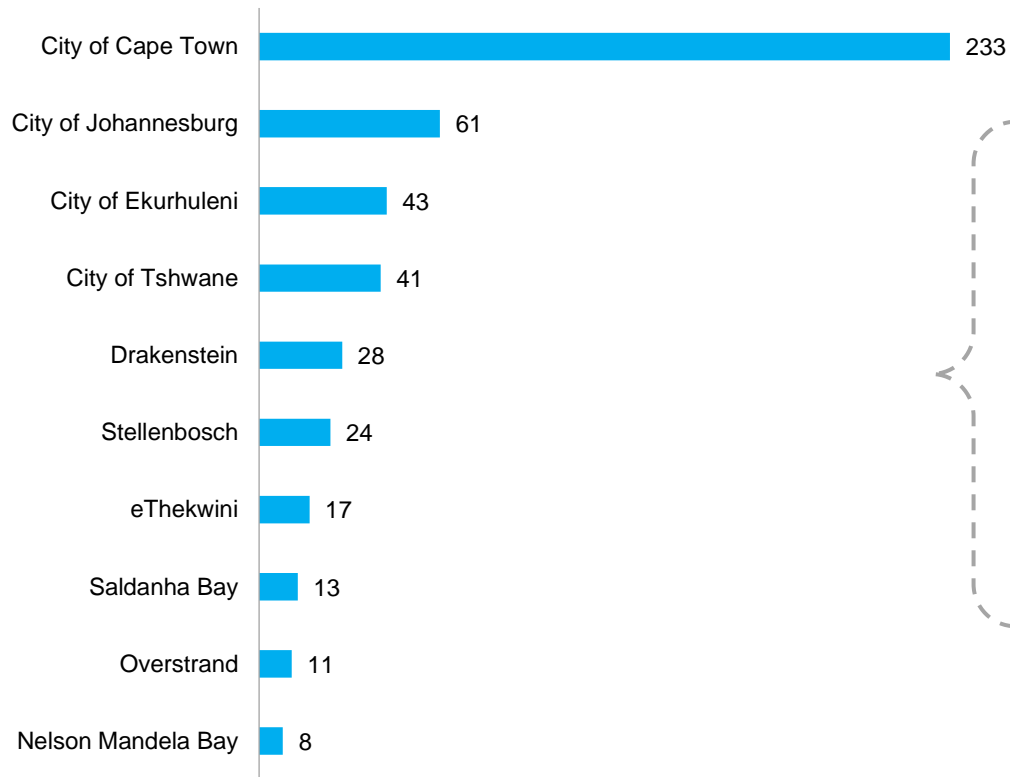
Figure 26: Popular Times to Visit to Prince Albert by Tourists



- Figure 26 showcases the percentage of the 1,593 domestic tourists who visited the town of Prince Albert between January and June 2024.

8. Matjiesfontein's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic

Figure 27: Municipality of Origin for Domestic Tourists to Matjiesfontein (Jan–Jun 2024)



Sample Size:
610 Domestic tourists visited the town of Matjiesfontein between January and June 2024.

- Figure 27 shows that 233 of the sampled tourists were from Cape Town, 61 from Johannesburg, 43 from Ekurhuleni and 41 from Tshwane.

7. Matjiesfontein's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic

Figure 28: Percentage of Repeat and Overnight Visitors (Jan–Jun 2024)

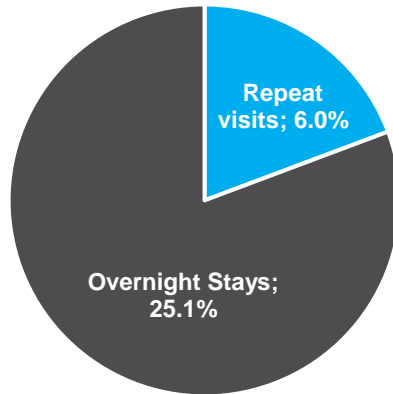


Figure 29: Average Length of Stay (Number of Days) (Jan–Jun 2024)

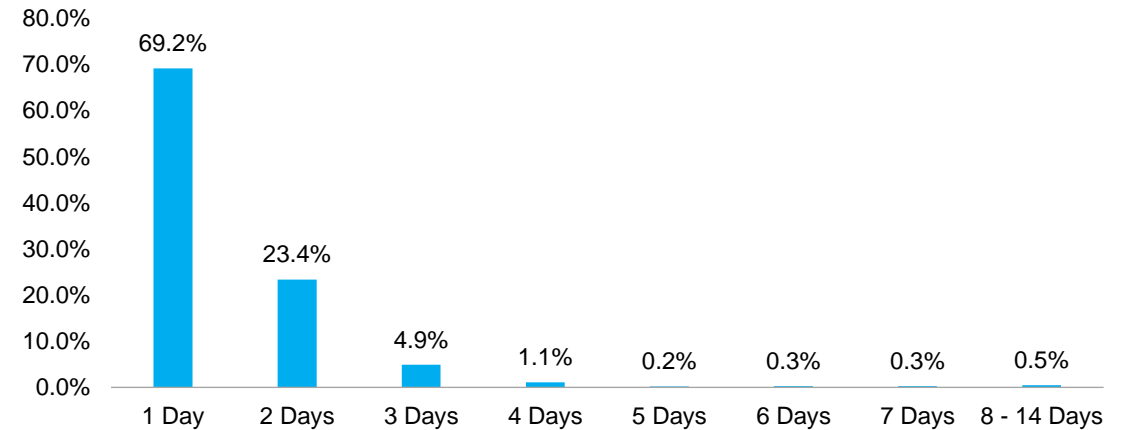
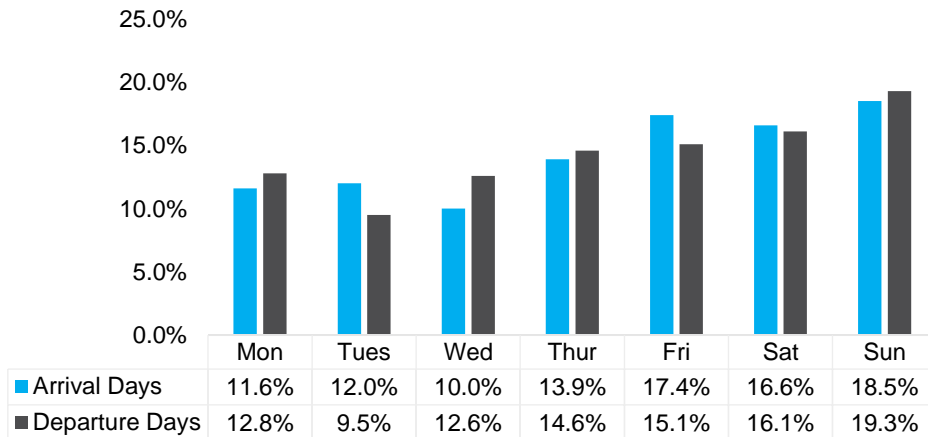


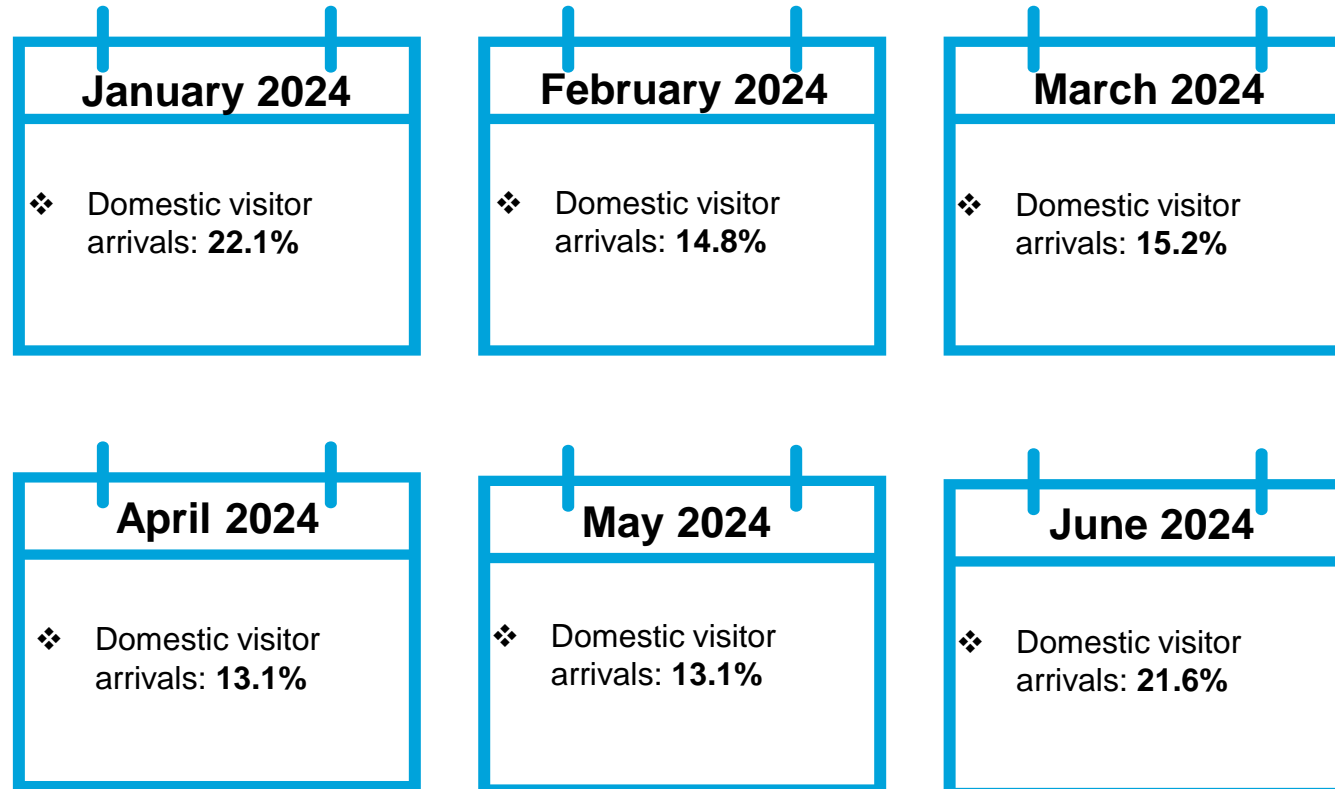
Figure 30: Popular Arrival and Departure Days of the Week (Jan–Jun 2024)




- Based on the mobile data insights regarding the 610 sampled domestic tourists, on average tourists stayed for 1.5 days in the town, 25.1% of them stayed overnight and 6.0% were repeat visitors. This is demonstrated in Figure 28.
- From January to June 2024, close to 70% of domestic tourists' average length of stay in Matjiesfontein was one day and only 23.4% stayed for two days, as shown in Figure 29
- Figure 30 illustrates that Sunday was the most popular arrival and departure day. While Friday was the most popular day for arrivals, and Sunday was the most common day for departures for those staying two days in town.

7. Matjiesfontein's visitor trends & patterns: Domestic

Figure 31: Popular Times to Visit to Matjiesfontein by Tourists



- Figure 31 showcases the percentage of the 610 domestic tourists who visited the town of Matjiesfontein between January and June 2024.



Performance of Cape Karoo attractions

January–June 2024

8. Performance of Cape Karoo attractions

Table 3: Performance of Cape Karoo attractions			
Cape Karoo Attractions	Jan–Jun 2023	Jan–Jun 2024	Y-o-Y Growth
Karoo National Park	15 348	11 394	-26%
Gamkaberg Nature Reserve	798	1 035	30%
Anysberg Nature Reserve	294	620	111%
Swartberg Nature Reserve	67	159	137%
Total	16 507	13 208	-20%

- Four participating attractions across the Cape Karoo recorded a total of 13,208 visitors between January and June 2024, representing a 20% decrease in growth in the number of visitors compared to January–June 2023. This is seen in Table 3.
- The Karoo National Park recorded a total of 11,394 visitors between January and June 2024 and experienced a 26% decrease in growth in the number of visitors in relation to January–June 2023.

Sources: CapeNature and SANParks (2024)

An aerial photograph of the Cape Peninsula coastline in South Africa. The image shows the ocean in the foreground, with white surf from a boat's wake. In the middle ground, the rugged, dark mountains of the Cape Peninsula rise from the coast. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is bright and scenic.

Packaging Tourism Experiences

Discovering the Cape Karoo and Increasing the value of tourism experiences

9. Discovering the Cape Karoo | Itineraries by Wesgro

TOURISM EXPERIENCES ACROSS CAPE TOWN AND THE WESTERN CAPE

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Discover the Cape Karoo

Day 1 | Touws River
Aquila Private Game Reserve
 A mere two-hour drive from Cape Town, lies the Aquila Private Game Reserve near 'Touws River'. Boasting the Big 5 - elephant, lion, rhino, buffalo and leopard - and many other iconic African animals, such as the Cape Zebra and Hartebeest, the 4 star Aquila Safari Lodge is the perfect place to start your journey into the Cape Karoo. Supporting a wide range of conservation initiatives, including Rhino conservation, compact recycling and mutton farming, this is responsible tourism at its finest. The family friendly reserve has something for everyone to enjoy with the Africa Roma restaurant that offers local cuisine, the pool deck overlooking the vast open spaces and a children's entertainment area just some of the offerings. Enjoy a game drive and sundowner as your guide stops en-route for light snacks and drinks, providing for perfect photo opportunities.
www.aquila.co.za

Stayover at Aquila Private Game Reserve
 Aquila offers a perfect room for anyone, and every budget for your relaxing overnight stay.
www.aquila.co.za/accommodation

Distance from Touws River to Matjiesfontein: 56,8km

Day 2 | Matjiesfontein
Tour of Matjiesfontein
 Take a step back into time and visit the charming Victorian town of Matjiesfontein. Fondly known as "The Grand Duchess of the Karoo", the town was established in the year of 1854. The whole town of Matjiesfontein is a national monument and is believed to be one of the most beautiful places in South Africa. And there is no better place to base yourself for the first half of your visit to the Karoo. The Lord Milner Hotel is a grand attraction as well as the Landini Red Bus, which will take you on the shortest tour in the country accompanied by the local tour guide, Johnny. His humorous and informative tour is a must when visiting. Lasting no longer than 10 minutes, you will be back in no time for a special gift at the Landini's shop right next door to the hotel. End your evening on The Dining Room at the hotel, where we recommend you order the Lamb, sourced from the local Karoo Farmers. The Dining Room at The Lord Milner Hotel has been serving its guests for the last 120 years, and boasts the same historic ambience found throughout Matjiesfontein. Dine in a Victorian setting filled with period antiques and let the red-jacketed porters welcome you and offer a selection of fine wines from across the Western Cape region.
www.matjiesfontein.com

Stayover at Matjies Motel
 A number of comfortable quality motel rooms are situated within the hotel gardens, with views overlooking the hotel gardens or the river, with the quaint Travellers Chapel and duck pond nearby. Each room has either its own patio leading to the garden or a balcony veranda overlooking the Monument road.
www.matjiesfontein.com/collections/matjies-motel

Distance from Matjiesfontein to Laingsburg: 29,8km

Day 3 | Laingsburg
Flood Museum
 Just 20km from Matjiesfontein, the charming town of Laingsburg offers old-school hospitality and with buildings dating back to the 1800s, you will remain in time capsule mode. Make sure you visit the Flood Museum in town, which allows you to view artefacts and images from the terrible flood that hit the town in 1981.
www.facebook.com/laingsburgtourism

Jagerskraal Guest Farm
 The experience is near Laingsburg opposite Matjiesfontein. The Karoo being the largest ecosystem in South Africa, there is no better way to explore than on a quad bike. The farm offers three unique scenic routes, ranging from moderate to challenging terrain. Basic instruction is provided for beginners ahead of the ride. Some of the wildlife that can be seen on these routes include Grey Rhebok, Duker, Steendok, Springbok, Blackbuck, Kudu, Cangoos, Zebra & Sheep roam the farms pristine expansive arid plains & hills.
www.jagerskraalfarm.com

Stayover at Grand Hotel Laingsburg
www.laingsburggrandhotel.co.za

Distance from Laingsburg to Prince Albert: 130km



Cape Karoo – Open Spaces

Heuningland Karoo Trail - Karoo Camino
 Follow in the footsteps of Sylvester the lion, by walking a circular route for about 100 km over four days through the beautiful and tranquil Karoo. This trail will revitalise your soul as you take in the natural surrounds and clear starry night skies. The hiking trail will be clearly marked and every one walks at their own pace.
www.heuningland.com

Day 4 | Prince Albert
Tour of Prince Albert
 The charming town of Prince Albert in the Cape Karoo is a 40km drive off the W12. Along this road you will discover vast landscapes and empty roads making for perfect photographic moments. The Karoo drive, that the Showroom Theatre that hosts a number of unique productions, join on board the Red Bus for a historic tour around the town. Enjoy a great tour that happens every Friday you discover the spooky stories as your journey through the graveyard and the quiet streets at night. Easily accessible from the town of Prince Albert you find Matjiesfontein a scenic drive to Oudshoorn and then back again via the Swartberg Pass makes for a perfect day trip. This historic town has a charming coffee shops, art shops and accommodation that make for the perfect getaway.
www.princealbert.org.za

Olive Experience at O for Olive
 A short gravel drive allows you to taste picked olives and a number of Olive jams, chutney and products to purchase. Go on a guided tour through the olive factory and discover how the olives are stored and sorted before packaging.
www.ofolive.co.za

Stayover at Karoo View Cottages
 All you deserve if wide open views, spectacular views, peace and tranquility, sun sets, sun beds and clear starry nights, biking, nature, cycling or hiking? If so Howard and Marion would like to invite you to share and enjoy their dream which may live every day in the quiet Karoo village of Prince Albert in the Great Karoo.
https://karooview.co.za

Distance from Prince Albert to Beaufort West: 131,2km

Day 5 | Beaufort West

www.sanparks.org/parks/karoo

Stayover at Lemoenfontein Country House
 Set in the vast expanse of the South African Great Karoo, this beautiful heritage building dates back to 1950. Built lovingly and steadily to the exacting standards and architectural style of the time, the building remains unchanged with characteristic high ceilings, original wooden floors and wide verandahs which offer guests a sweeping panoramic view of the Karoo landscape.

Distance from Beaufort West to Murraysburg: 158,5km

Day 6 | Murraysburg
Sneeuberg Scenic Route
 Murraysburg is blessed with the most beautiful environment and with little effort you can enjoy it. On the R63 between Murraysburg and Graaff-Reinet the Sneeuberg gravel road makes a half circle scenic route. About 30km out of Murraysburg you will find the turn off on the Sneeuberg road. Following the route, you will exit again in to the R63 road towards Graaff-Reinet. So next time you drive the R63, make the turn off and choose the scenic route.
<https://murraysburg.co.za/activities/sneeuberg-scenic-route>

Die ou Waenhuis
 Come and enjoy a real Karoo farm breakfast a hearty lunch or just something on the power side. The little shop is a treasure chest of all things nice, with a lot of locally made products.
www.facebook.com/DieOuWaenhuis

Grootdriehoek Farm
 Come and experience a sustainable living, working farm. The farms have been in the family from 1949 but some of the old ruins and rock enclosures date back to the 1800s. There are also some beautiful and old bushman drawings. You can join the family and see what a working

Cape Karoo

Known for its wide-open spaces, the Cape Karoo is where you want to go when the pace of city life is something you want to escape. This is where you go to get off the grid. A place of incredible beauty, wild game, clear skies and magical sunsets, the Cape Karoo has a number of Nature Reserves and game farms, boasting an abundance of wildlife. The Karoo National Park, for example, is home to black rhino, lions, and other wild game. Another animal in abundance in the Karoo is sheep, who roam 'freely' around the area on large plots of land, sampling a wide range of indigenous, aromatic plants. As a result, the Karoo has become famous for its succulent and tasty lamb dishes. You need to sample some when in the area! Perhaps the best way to see this ancient land is by train, with the luxurious Rovos Rail running through the area, as well as the more affordable Premier Classe, Blue Train and Shosholozza trains. What better way to see this magical place than by train? While in the area, be sure to visit Matjiesfontein, a tiny 19th Century town, seemingly untouched by time, and was once considered the jewel of the Western Cape.

Must-do experience:

Stargazing:

Stargazing is a must when visiting anywhere in the Cape Karoo it only takes you to look up and view stars pinned against a black canvas. From open vast landscapes, to sunsets followed by open starry night skies. The Cape Karoo is an untouched region just waiting to be discovered by you

Your Cruise Guide to Cape Town and the Western Cape

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10. Increasing the value of tourism experiences in the Cape Karoo

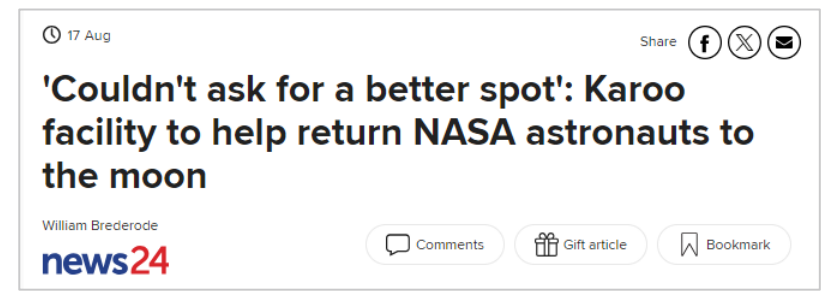
(A) Astro-tourism as a niche offering for the Cape Karoo

The objective is to actively promote Astro-tourism as a unique offering that will act as a driving force for the sustainable development of tourism in the sparsely populated Cape Karoo region. This initiative will require close collaboration between the Western Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT), Wesgro, and tourism officials from the Cape Karoo to implement a comprehensive campaign that effectively showcases the Cape Karoo as a leading destination for both food enthusiasts and avid stargazers within the province.

The Cape Karoo's appeal lies in its expansive, unspoiled dark skies, which have the potential to captivate and attract tourists. Encompassing vast rural areas and secluded small towns, the Cape Karoo provides pristine, unpolluted skies that render it an exceptional location for stargazing and astronomy enthusiasts.

Notably, Sutherland, home to the Southern African Large Telescope, one of the largest optical telescopes in the southern hemisphere, is situated near the Cape Karoo. While not technically part of the Cape Karoo, the region serves as a crucial passage for travellers journeying to the telescope, thereby presenting worthwhile opportunities for developing tailored products and services for these visitors along their way.

In addition, according to the Daily Maverick article published in 2023, there are plans to build a brand new deep-space ground tracking station in Matjiesfontein, right in the heart of the Central Karoo District of the Western Cape. This tracking station will be pivotal in supporting the United States Artemis missions, which are focused on taking humans to the Moon.



10. Increasing the value of tourism experiences in the Cape Karoo

(B) The N1 Highway: Slow Travel


The Cape Karoo region presents an exciting opportunity for developing a highly marketable and appealing destination for international and domestic travellers. The region has seen a significant influx of tourism, particularly from domestic travellers, based on mobile location data insights. This trend suggests that the packaging and promotion of the N1 road can be tailored to appeal to the domestic tourist market in South Africa.

To further capitalise on this trend, it is proposed to develop a "Joy Of Missing Out (JOMO)" campaign centred around the concept of "Slow Travel" in the Cape Karoo region. This campaign aims to attract tourists who seek to disconnect from the fast pace of modern life and immerse themselves in less crowded, off-the-grid destinations while prioritising health and wellness through a digital detox experience.

The Cape Karoo's inland location presents a unique opportunity for visitors to engage with the local community and explore the region in depth. With agriculture, particularly sheep farming, serving as a major economic driver in the area, promoting slow travel to visitors can open up new avenues for agritourism.

Source: DEDAT Tourism Blueprint 2030

What Does Slow Travel Mean? (And How To Do It)

 WRITTEN BY
NATALIE GALE
FEBRUARY 9, 2024

"Simply put, traveling slowly means staying for longer in one place."

"In general, move around less — and when you move, move slower."

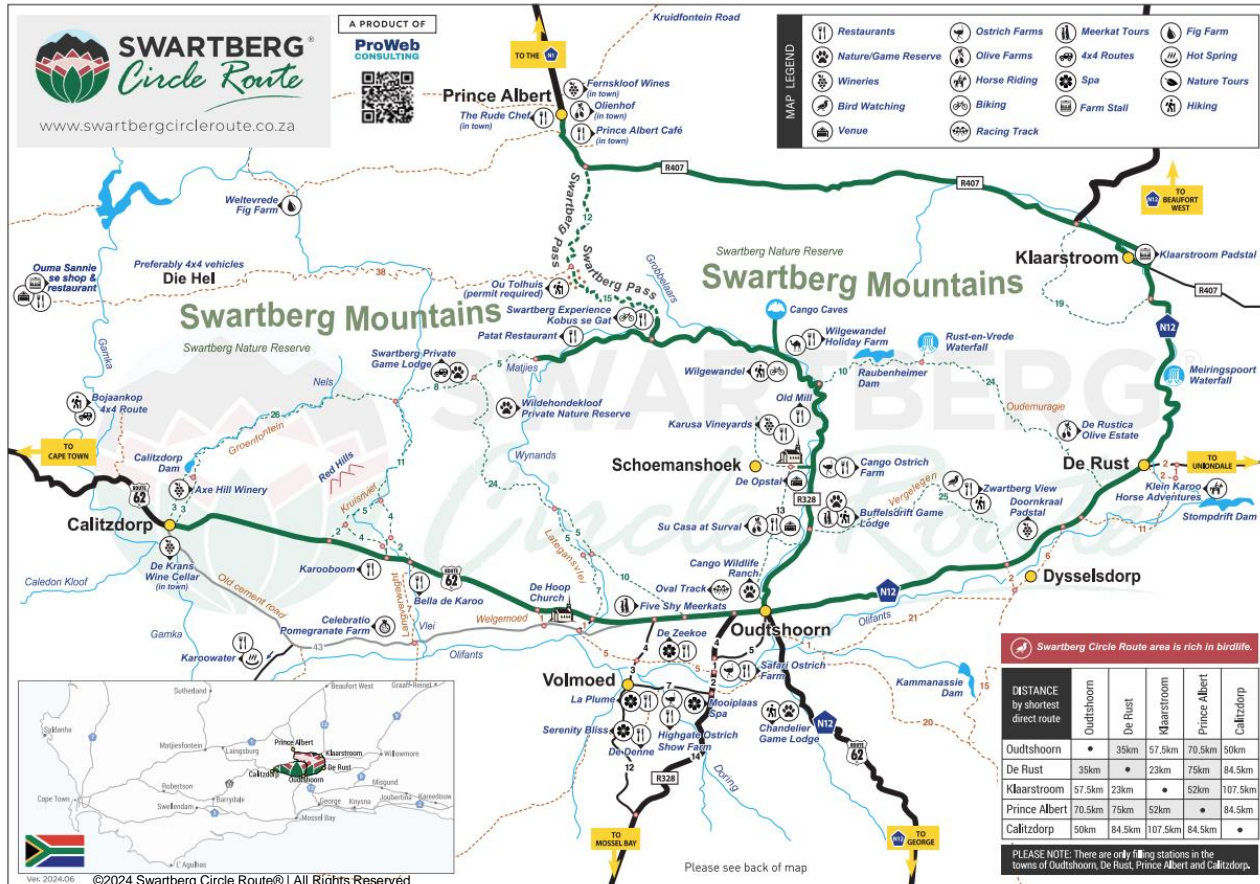
"Traveling slowly gives you a more mindful connection to the place you're visiting."

"If you only have a short travel window of a few days, use it to explore destinations closer to home that don't require a flight."

"We have an entire lifetime to travel."

– Gi Shieh, a slow travel content creator

10. Increasing the value of tourism experiences in the Cape Karoo



(C) Scenic Routes: Swartberg Circle Route

The Tourism Blueprint 2030, put out by the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDAT) emphasises the importance of actively promoting the Swartberg Circle route to solidify its status as a world-renowned scenic drive. This route connects the Central Karoo to the Klein Karoo and is home to South Africa's oldest pass.

The 23.8km Swartberg Pass, designated as a national monument, is adorned with significant historical landmarks, providing travellers with an unending series of breathtaking views. With its ties to Prince Albert, it is crucial to launch impactful and dynamic marketing and promotion campaigns for this route.

Source: DEDAT Tourism Blueprint 2030; Wesgro (2024)

10. Increasing the value of tourism experiences in the Cape Karoo

(E) Knowledge: Visitor data

In the DEDAT's Tourism Blueprint 2030 the lack of visitor data for sites that are assumed to be significant attractions for the region has been identified as a gap. To address this issue, Wesgro has partnered with ROVE, an international analytics company. The objective of this collaboration is to provide valuable insights into the visiting patterns of tourists across the six regions.

It is essential to acknowledge that the *'mobile location data serves as a sample. It does not represent 100% of visitors, and it should not be treated as such. Like any sampling method, it can be subject to biases or lack of volume'*. Despite these limitations, the insights derived from mobile data offer a valuable perspective on the flow of tourism in the region. The initial overview presented in the report provides a glimpse into the region's performance from January to June for the years 2021 to 2024. Although the information does not provide details about the spending patterns, group size, age, or preferred activities, this information can still hold significant potential for fostering domestic tourism in the Cape Karoo region.

Moreover, in addition to the collaboration with ROVE, Wesgro has teamed up with CapeNature and SANParks to gather visitor data at natural attractions such as the Karoo National Park, Gamkaberg Nature Reserve, Anysberg Nature Reserve, and Swartberg Nature Reserve. These endeavours collectively aim to assist in bridging the gaps in visitor data and offer a more comprehensive understanding of tourism in the Cape Karoo region.



An aerial photograph of a coastal landscape. In the foreground, the ocean is a deep blue with white foam from a boat's wake. The middle ground shows a coastline with a town and a prominent, dark, rocky mountain peak. In the background, a range of mountains stretches across the horizon under a clear, light blue sky.

Appendix: ROVE Mobile Location Data Key Terms and Definitions

Definitions of Mobile Location Data and Tourists vs non-Tourists

- About Mobile Location Data

- Privacy compliant data is collected from location-enabled apps on mobile devices. Data is collected when those location-enabled mobile devices enter our geo-fenced areas.
- Data is collected through applications (news, weather, games, texting apps, traffic, etc).
 - Year-over-year numbers could be skewed by increased app penetration and data privacy settings/policies.
 - The exception is China which does not share data...
- Think of mobile data like survey data on steroids.
 - A sample size greater than 30 yields a 95% level of confidence.
 - This may be the largest sample size of data pertaining to visitors•
- This should not be compared to visitation data. •
- Many factors impact total sample size:
 - Number of app partnerships
 - Usage of apps
 - App developer policies
 - Volume of visitors

- Who Are Tourists?

- A tourist is typically defined as follows:
 - A visitor who does not live or work within the study geography
 - A visitor who travels a minimum distance to the study geography
 - A The visitor who appears in the study geography for a minimum period of time (exclude commuters/passers through, etc.)

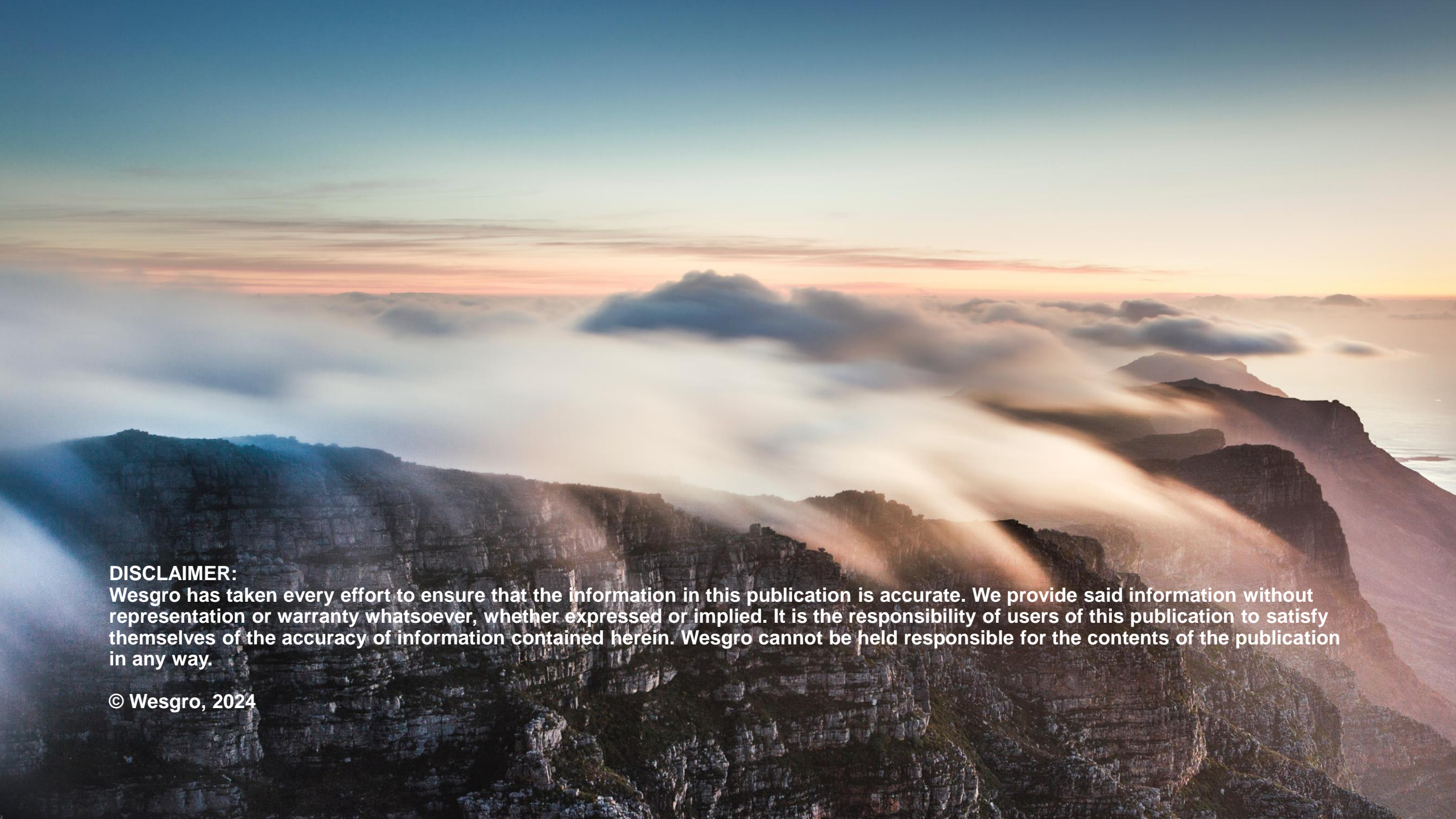
Source: Rove (2024)

Definitions of Mobile Location Data and Tourists vs non-Tourists

Primary Study Geography		Tourists are defined as:
Province/Tourism Regions	When a visitor does not live or work in Cape Town, Winelands, Cape Overberg, Weskus, Garden Route & Klein Karoo and Cape Karoo and they have travelled more than 25 miles (40km), and they have stayed in the polygon for more than 120 minutes, they are a tourist.	
Notes and Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents of the Western Cape are not counted as a tourists Minimum distance travelled to meet the definition of tourist. Distance travelled is calculated from the visitors' Common Evening Location (latitude and longitude) to the centre of the polygon Minimum duration of visit of 120 minutes excludes commuters driving through each region 		
Secondary Study Geography		Tourists are defined as:
City or Town	When a visitor does not live or work in the city or town and they have travelled more than 25 miles (40km), and they have stayed for more than 45 minutes, they are a tourist.	
Notes and Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents of a city are not counted as tourists to the city Minimum distance traveled of 40km satisfies tourist definition for minimum distance travelled. Distance travelled is calculated from the visitors' Common Evening Location (latitude and longitude) to the centre of the polygon 		
Point of Interest Study Geography		Tourists are defined as:
All Tourism Experiences	When a visitor stays in the polygon for more than 15 minutes and has not visited the polygon more than 20 times in any 90 day period, they are a tourist	
Notes and Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any 90-day period refers to any consecutive 90 days in their mobile location data history Filter out visitors not staying for any meaningful length of time (couriers, taxis etc.). 		
What are Tourist Segments?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Tourists: Tourists who reside within the same region. Domestic Tourists: Tourists who reside in South Africa outside of the Western Cape International Tourists: Tourists who reside outside of South Africa 		

Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition and Usage
Study Geography	A specific geography, defined by a boundary called a polygon.
Primary Study Geography	The largest area in the destination in which you want to capture mobile device data. For most destinations this is usually a country, province, or state.
Secondary Study Geography	Often destinations want to derive insights about sub-geographies within their destination, such as counties, tourism regions, and city regions.
Point of Interest	Points of interest are the smallest study geographies in your destination such as tourism businesses, parks, roadways, or city districts.
Sample	Not all people carry GPS-enabled, opted in mobile devices with location services always activated. Thus, in any period of time, in any given study geography, mobile location data is a sample. Therefore, whenever this whitepaper discusses “visitors” or “tourists” or “residents” or any other grouping of devices, it should always be understood to be a sampling of real-world visitorship or foot traffic.
Visitors	Mobile devices seen within the study geography during a specific period of time
Common Evening Location (CEL)	Derived latitude-longitude point near which a device spends most of its time on evenings and/or weekends. While most often associated with a device’s home, there is nothing that inherently guarantees that it is a home (e.g. a person who works an overnight shift at a power plant).
Common Daytime Location (CDL)	Derived latitude-longitude point near which a device spends most of its traditional workweek [Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm local time]. While most often associated with a device’s office or work location, there is nothing that inherently guarantees that it is an office or work location (e.g. a person who is a stay-at-home parent).
Residents/Workers/Locals	Terms referring to a visitor segment comprising devices which are determined to have a CEL or a CDL with the study geography or within a certain (usually short) distance of the study geography. For most tourism analyses, these devices are eliminated from the project because they are not, by definition, tourists. However, it is possible to include these devices within a broader visitor study.
Tourists	Term generally referring to a visitor segment comprising devices which are determined NOT to have a CEL or a CDL with the study geography or within a certain (usually short) distance of the study geography but have come to the study geography from a different origin market.
Tourist Segments	Groupings of tourist segments which have a defining characteristic associated with their appearance in a study geography, such as “Short Haul Tourists” or “International Tourists” or “In State Tourists.”
Overnighters	Term which characterises a specific visitor segment where mobile devices are seen in the study geography for more than one consecutive day. An overnight stay is defined as tourists who arrived prior to midnight (0:00) and stayed until 07:00 the following day.
Day Trippers	Term which characterises a specific visitor segment where mobile devices are seen in the study geography for less than one day.
Length of Stay	Duration of trip within the study geography. The methodology for calculating length of stay is based on the characteristics of the geography.



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