

A group of people, mostly men wearing hats and light-colored shirts, are running on a dirt road. The scene is set during sunset or sunrise, with a warm, golden light illuminating the landscape. The background shows a hilly, arid region under a clear sky. The text is overlaid on a dark, semi-transparent rectangular area in the center of the image.

Niche Tourism Study

**Culture and Heritage: Evaluating Growth along the
Cradle of Human Culture Route**

2023

About this report:

The report provides an overview of the cultural and heritage offerings in South Africa and the Western Cape, with a key focus on evaluating the performance of key sites along the Cradle of Human Culture Route.

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1. Overview of Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Defining Cultural Tourism

According to the definition adopted by the UN World Tourism Organization at its 22nd session in 2017, cultural tourism involves “a type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination. These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions”.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Article 3 of the Charter of 1976 defines cultural tourism as that form of tourism whose object is, among other aims, the discovery of monuments and site. It exerts on these a very positive effect insofar as it contributes – to satisfy its own ends – to their maintenance and protection. This form of tourism justifies in fact the efforts which maintenance and protection demand of the human community because of the social cultural and economic benefits that they bestow on all the populations concerned (Ivanovic, 2008).

Defining Heritage (Historical) Tourism

The South African White Paper on Arts and Culture, which was written by the Department of Arts and Culture in 1996, defines heritage as encompassing wildlife and scenic parks, areas of scientific and historical significance, national landmarks, historical structures, art, literature, music, oral traditions, museum collections, and their accompanying documentation. This broad definition forms the foundation for a collective culture and artistic creativity.

1. Overview of Cultural and Heritage Tourism *Continued...*

- The Charter (ICOMOS, 1999) adopted six principles that aim to address the specific circumstances or the requirements of particular organisations and communities pertaining to culture and heritage:
 - Principle 1: Since domestic and international tourism is one of the foremost vehicles for cultural exchange, conservation should provide responsible and well-managed opportunities for members of the host community and visitors to experience and understand that community's heritage and culture first hand.
 - Principle 2: The relationship between heritage places and tourism is dynamic and may involve conflicting values. It should be managed in a sustainable way for present and future generations.
 - Principle 3: Conservation and tourism planning for heritage places should ensure that the visitor's experience will be worthwhile, satisfying and enjoyable.
 - Principle 4: Host communities and indigenous peoples should be involved in planning for conservation and tourism.
 - Principle 5: Tourism and conservation activities should benefit the host community.
 - Principle 6: Tourism promotion programmes should protect and enhance natural and cultural heritage characteristics.
- The growth of cultural tourism as an economic force is undeniable. Tourists looking for unique and authentic experiences are increasingly interested in cultural sites and innovative arts programming, and travel to find these attractions (Creative City Network of Canada, 2013).
- According to the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (South Africa, 1996a) by the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, culture is the dynamic totality of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features which characterise a society or social group. It includes the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions, heritage and beliefs developed over time and subject to change.
- The definition of cultural tourism described in the White Paper on Development and Promotion of Tourism (South Africa, 1996b:v) by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) includes cultural aspects which are of interest to the visitor and can be marketed as such. These include customs and traditions of people, their heritage, history and way of life.
- The definition of cultural tourism in the 2006 White Paper on Tourism is expanded to include culture, heritage and the physical environment. It is described as that activity, which enables people to experience the different ways of life of other people, thereby gaining at first hand an understanding of their customs, traditions, the physical environment, the intellectual ideas and those places of architectural, historic, archaeological or other cultural significance which remain from earlier times.

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Our Cradle of Human Culture

LEARN ONE STORY,
EXPLORE TWO ROUTES



Housing our heritage

Why Cape Town's oldest buildings are relevant today

Township economy success

Celebrating Western Cape entrepreneurship

The great gatsby

The history behind the supersized sandwich

2. Heritage Tourism Market: Global Outlook

US\$ 657.2
Billion

US\$ 1,316.4
Billion

7.2%

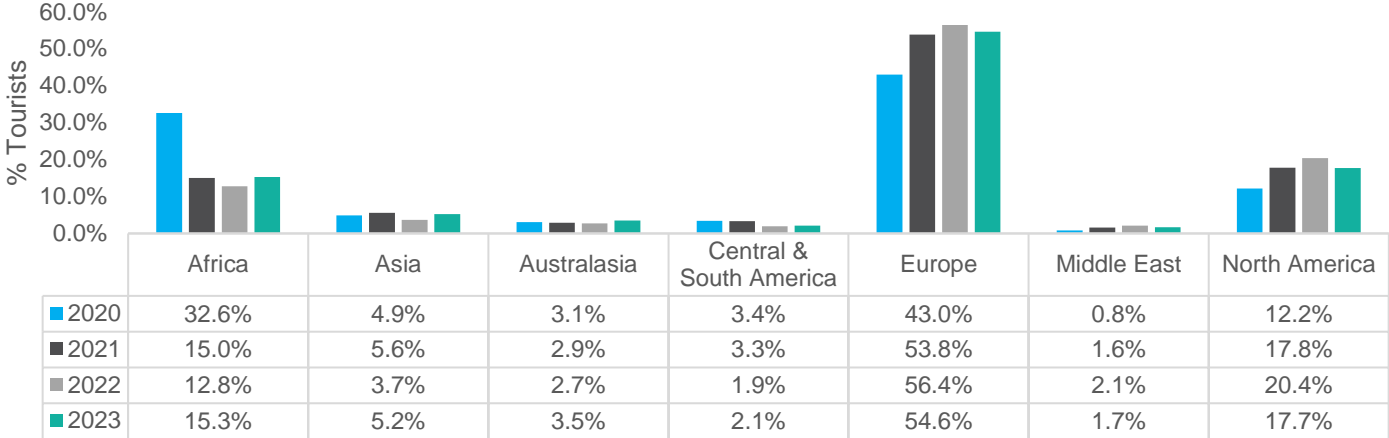
According to data released by Future Market Insights (2018), the global heritage tourism market was expected to reach an impressive US\$657.2 billion by the end of 2023. Looking ahead, revenue from this market is estimated to soar to around US\$1,316.4 billion by 2033.



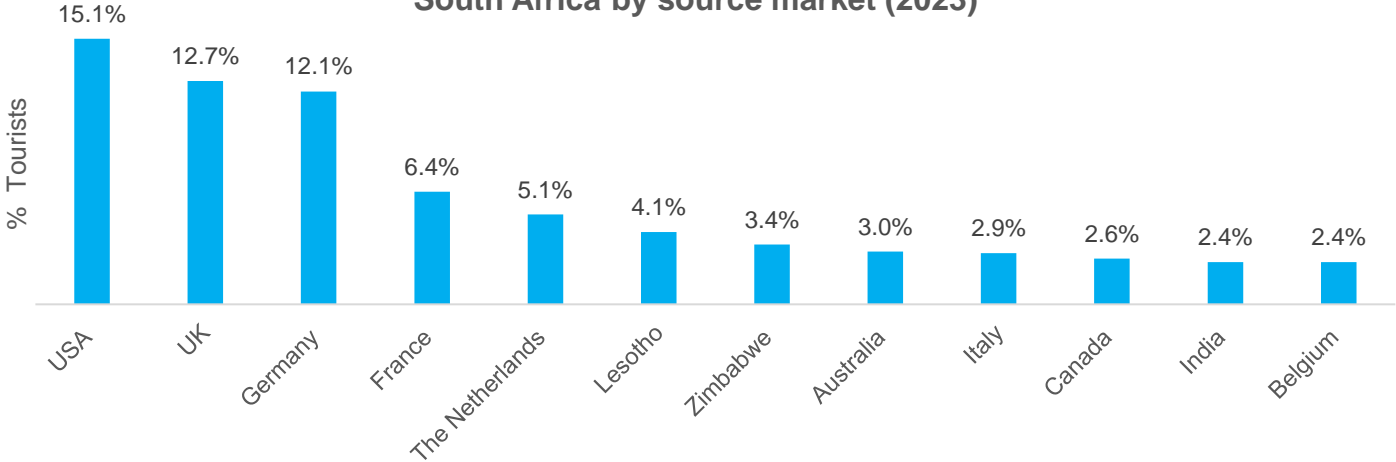
Cultural & Heritage Tourism: Traveler Trends

3.1 Cultural & Heritage Activities in South Africa

Share of tourists (%) by regions who participated in cultural / historical / heritage activities in South Africa (2020–2023)



% Tourists who participated in cultural / historical / heritage activities in South Africa by source market (2023)



- By region, the largest share of tourists participating in cultural / historical / heritage activities in South Africa originated from the European continent, followed by those from North America and Africa. Consecutive year-on-year (y-o-y) growth rates were achieved in culture / heritage tourists from Europe from 2020 to 2023.
- The United States of America (USA) ranked as the top-performing source market for cultural / historical / heritage activities in South Africa in 2023, followed by the United Kingdom (UK), Germany, France, and the Netherlands. Six out of the top 10 source markets participating in cultural activities were from the European continent.

Source: South African Tourism (2024)

3.2 Cultural & Heritage Activities in the Western Cape

By province, the Western Cape held the largest share of tourists who participated in cultural / historical / heritage activities in 2022, followed by the Eastern Cape and Limpopo. The Western Cape, however, recorded its lowest share (22.0%) of culture/heritage tourists in 2022.

According to the data presented in the table alongside, Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, Table Mountain National Park and Robben Island, which are all recognised as culture/heritage attractions in Cape Town (City of Cape Town, 2023), along with Cango Caves located in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo (Oudtshoorn), were the most visited tourist destinations in the years 2019, 2022, and 2023. It is worth mentioning that these top attractions have consistently attracted many visitors due to their unique natural beauty, cultural significance, and historical importance.

Share of tourists who participate in culture/ historical / heritage activities by province (2019–2022)

Province	2019	2020	2021	2022
1. Gauteng	16.4%	14.1%	8.2%	6.9%
2. Western Cape	45.9%	43.6%	31.5%	22.0%
3. Eastern Cape	47.0%	46.9%	32.6%	20.6%
4. Kwazulu Natal	37.8%	33.2%	12.8%	8.0%
5. Mpumalanga	19.5%	14.6%	6.5%	4.5%
6. Limpopo	3.2%	2.3%	10.9%	11.9%
7. North West	13.6%	11.6%	8.0%	7.3%
8. Northern Cape	22.4%	11.3%	7.1%	9.2%
9. Free State	4.4%	2.8%	2.4%	2.5%

Source: South African Tourism (2023)

Western Cape top 20 attractions	2019	2022	2023
V&A Waterfront	70.7%	66.7%	75.2%
Cape Town Central City	61.8%	58.7%	62.5%
Camps Bay	57.8%	54.3%	56.4%
Boulder National Park	41.6%	46.4%	56.3%
Cape Point	59.0%	50.2%	53.2%
The Winelands	41.5%	42.9%	49.7%
Table Mountain Cableway	47.6%	42.1%	48.5%
Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens	29.0%	29.8%	33.1%
The Garden Route	27.4%	26.8%	27.5%
Table Mountain (not cableway)	30.4%	30.9%	27.2%
Clifton Beach	29.2%	22.8%	22.0%
Canal Walk Mall	0.9%	1.2%	21.6%
Lion's Head	0.7%	1.7%	20.5%
Hermanus	18.6%	20.5%	20.4%
Muizenberg Beach	17.3%	18.8%	19.2%
Robben Island	17.4%	15.9%	17.7%
Tsitsikamma National Park	15.8%	13.0%	14.3%
Cango Caves	13.9%	12.7%	13.5%
Cape Agulhas	10.6%	12.3%	12.7%
Cape Town Ostrich Ranch / Cape Point / Ostrich Farms	7.4%	8.9%	11.2%

Source: South African Tourism (2024)

3.2 Culture & Heritage Activities in the Western Cape

Region of origin for tourists to Western Cape's top 20 attractions (2023)							
Attractions	Africa	Asia	Australasia	Central & South America	Europe	Middle East	North America
V&A Waterfront	74.4%	75.5%	63.5%	77.6%	75.9%	82.6%	74.8%
Cape Town Central City	51.7%	59.0%	54.7%	64.5%	65.7%	64.2%	59.9%
Camps Bay	42.2%	55.2%	41.7%	62.8%	59.8%	53.6%	56.1%
Boulder National Park	22.5%	49.6%	43.8%	66.5%	61.3%	46.5%	64.6%
Cape Point	27.2%	50.9%	43.7%	65.2%	56.0%	55.6%	61.0%
The Winelands	24.2%	39.7%	43.6%	49.2%	55.3%	34.3%	51.6%
Table Mountain Cableway	28.4%	49.0%	40.7%	65.7%	50.0%	43.3%	57.0%
Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens	14.1%	25.2%	24.9%	37.9%	36.3%	28.7%	38.0%
The Garden Route	6.2%	20.4%	19.5%	29.2%	33.4%	30.6%	21.7%
Table Mountain (not cableway)	15.0%	21.1%	20.7%	29.0%	30.1%	25.2%	27.2%
Clifton Beach	13.3%	17.6%	14.6%	21.6%	24.7%	20.2%	20.8%
Canal Walk Mall	29.8%	24.9%	12.6%	16.6%	21.3%	29.0%	17.9%
Lion's Head	10.9%	19.2%	16.6%	24.2%	21.7%	25.0%	22.8%
Hermanus	5.3%	18.6%	12.6%	20.4%	24.7%	18.6%	15.5%
Muizenberg Beach	11.2%	14.9%	9.7%	24.9%	22.5%	15.8%	15.2%
Robben Island	7.6%	11.3%	10.5%	17.6%	19.5%	12.5%	21.9%
Tsitsikamma National Park	2.9%	11.9%	8.3%	13.2%	17.8%	14.4%	10.5%
Cango Caves	4.8%	15.4%	9.0%	9.1%	16.4%	9.4%	9.0%
Cape Agulhas	4.6%	8.7%	6.8%	16.2%	15.1%	6.5%	11.8%
Cape Town Ostrich Ranch / Cape Point / Ostrich Farms	4.0%	14.5%	6.3%	8.9%	12.1%	15.9%	12.2%

- Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens and Table Mountain National Park have emerged as the top attractions for tourists from Europe, North America, Central & South America, the Middle East, Asia, and Australasia. The data reveals some 20-40% of tourists from these regions visited the sites in 2023.
- Popular tourist spots such as Robben Island and Cango Caves attracted a slightly lower percentage of visitors in comparison to Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens and Table Mountain National Park. These iconic cultural and historical sites (Robben Island, Cango Caves and Table Mountain) attracted just under 20% of tourists from all seven regions.



Performance of Key Sites/Attractions along the Cradle of Human Culture Route in the Western Cape

4.1 Two sites in Western Cape received UNESCO World Heritage status!

On Friday, 26 July 2024, the 46th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee proclaimed World Heritage status for three sites in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, as part of the South African nomination, 'The Emergence of Modern Human Behaviour: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa.'

The successful inscription of these three Middle Stone Age sites is a recognition of our significant contribution to understanding the origins of modern human behaviour. The three sites are:

- **Diepkloof Rock Shelter close to Elands Bay in the Western Cape.**
- **Pinnacle Point Site Complex in Mossel Bay in the Western Cape.**
- Sibhudu Cave in KwaDukuza in KwaZulu-Natal.

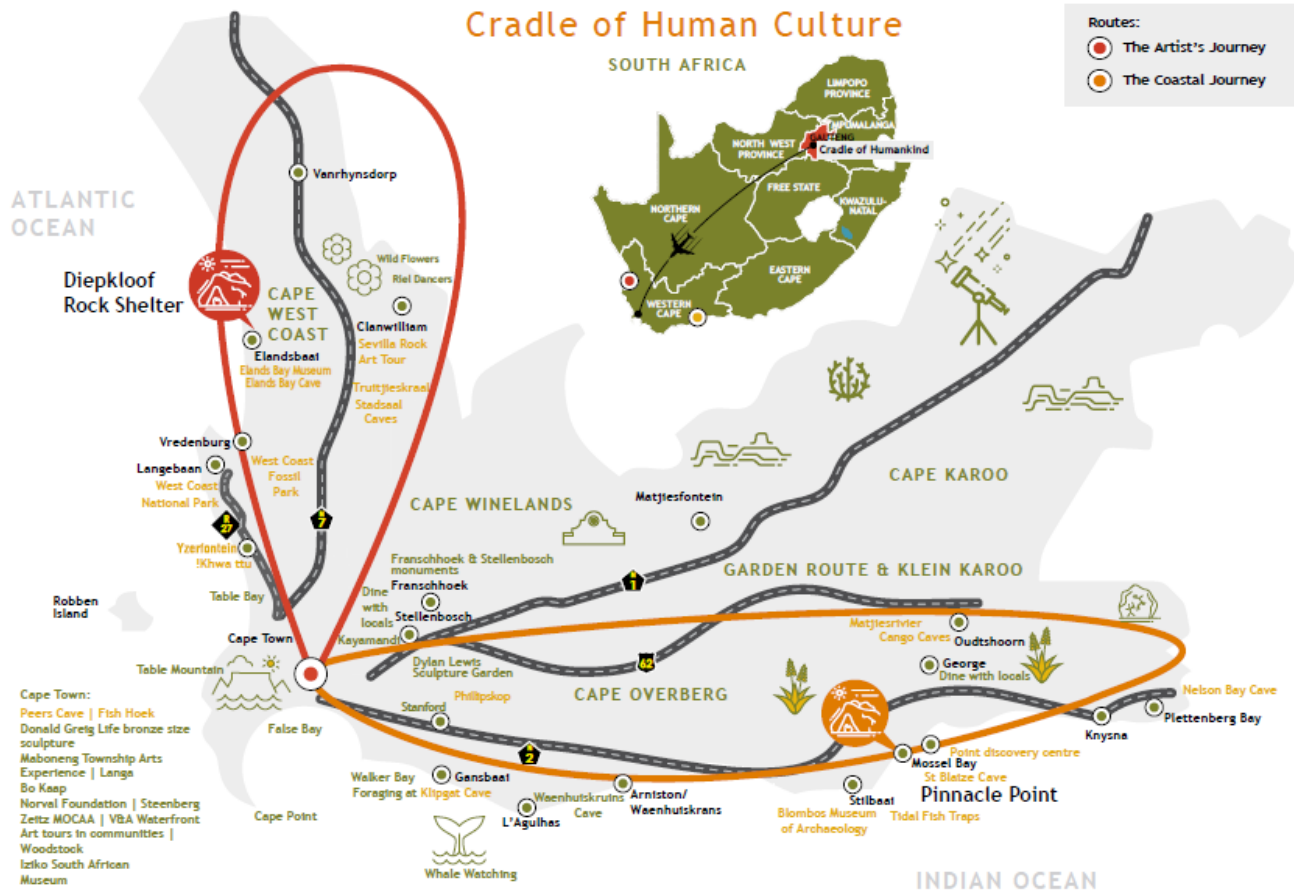
Pinnacle Point



Diepkloof Rock Shelter



4.2 Discovering the Origins of Human Culture in the Western Cape



- After discovering the earliest origins of humans at the Cradle of Humankind in the north of South Africa, visitors are encouraged to travel south to the Western Cape and find out how tradition and symbolism, human behaviour and technology continued to evolve near the southern tip of Africa over the past 100 000 years.
- If the Cradle of Humankind delves into where we came from, the Cradle of Human Culture reflects on how we became what we are today.
- The Cradle of Human Culture offers two major routes in the Western Cape, which includes the Artist's Journey along the Cape West Coast (Weskus) and The Coastal Journey along the Southernmost Cape Coast, with the Karoo forming part of phase 2.
- In addition to the three major archaeological sites, the route also showcases a number of unique and culture-rich attractions like the West Coast Fossil Park (which has the largest concentration of fossils dating back 5 million years) and the famous Cango Caves in Oudtshoorn.

Source: Cradle of Human Culture (2024)

4.3 Key Sites along the Cradle of Human Culture Route

- The Cradle of Human Culture includes several archaeological and palaeontological sites in the Western Cape. The three major ones are Diepkloof Rock Shelter in the Cape West Coast (Weskus), Blombos Cave (Stilbaai) and Pinnacle Point (Mossel Bay) on the Southern Cape Coast.
- Diepkloof Rock Shelter is situated between Elands Bay and Redelinghuys and overlooks the Verlorenvlei wetland. The site is home to an exceptional collection of over 400 intentionally engraved ostrich eggshell, dated to around 60,000 years ago. Diepkloof Rock Shelter was declared a Provincial Heritage Site in 2015 and it is currently on the tentative serial nomination list of UNESCO World Heritage sites. It is expected to be declared a World Heritage Site within the next few years.
- At the archaeological site of Pinnacle Point in Mossel Bay, an international team of researchers has found some of the earliest evidence for modern human behaviour.
- Blombos Cave is a world-famous archeological site, overlooking the sea and located in a private nature reserve not open to the public. Archaeologists have uncovered some of the first evidence of symbolism, cognitive thinking, and technological advancement, traits used to define modern human behaviour.

4.4 Performance of Key Sites along the Cradle of Human Culture Route

Cradle of Human Culture Site	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	y-o-y % change	% recovery over 2019
West Coast National Park	263 446	205 425	196 024	166 199	177 351	7%	67%
!Khwa ttu	19 022	9 741	12 870	18 023	22 402	24%	118%
Cango Caves	237 129	61 481	46 820	124 541	No data	-	-
Phillipskop Mountain Reserve	1 908	1 515	2 114	2 610	2 726	4%	143%
Point of Human Origins - Pinnacle Point	2 925	1 405	1 889	3 041	3 602	18%	123%
West Coast Fossil Park	13 460	7 629	9 973	16 151	16 360	1%	122%
Cederberg-Algeria Nature Reserve (Truitjieskraal)	19 600	13 165	15 417	17 187	13 393	-22%	68%
Cederberg-Kliphuis Nature Reserve (Truitjieskraal)	5 504	1 364	2 465	3 136	3 526	12%	64%
Robberg Nature Reserve (Nelson Bay Cave)	31 545	50 560	21 151	64 711	97 836	51%	310%
Walker Bay Nature Reserve (Klipgat Cave)	14 164	9 187	12 624	17 366	25 298	46%	179%
Blombos Museum of Archaeology	No data	337	727	808	1 165	44%	-

The table on the left reflects the performance of eleven key sites along the Cradle of Human Culture Route.

As seen in the visitor numbers, the global pandemic impacted many of the tourism products in the Western Cape. However, numerous of the Western Cape’s tourism offerings have shown strong resilience and rebounded extremely well post-COVID-19.

The figures pertaining to 2023 have confirmed a strong recovery among the key sites indicated in the table, with six out of 11 sites reaching full recovery in 2023, against 2019 levels.

Note: The Diepkloof Rock Shelter is open to the public and tours have been operating from Elands Bay Museum since 12 June 2024.

A photograph of a rocky cliffside with a wooden walkway and stairs leading to a cave entrance. The cliff is made of layered, reddish-brown rock. A wooden walkway with railings leads up the cliffside towards a dark cave entrance. The sky is clear and blue. The foreground shows a wooden railing and a wooden walkway leading towards the cliff.

Opportunities for Cultural and Heritage Tourism in the Western Cape

5.1 Opportunities for Cultural and Heritage Tourism in the Western Cape

- It is essential for tourism stakeholders to recognise the increasing public interest in heritage sites as part of the overall demand for tourism experiences.
- There is a need to develop tour packages that offer unique opportunities for tourists to engage with heritage sites and contemporary lifestyles, going beyond typical recreational packages available in the tourism market.
- Additional local heritage experiences should be introduced that can be added to recreational or business travel packages.
- Efforts should be made to incorporate the communication and presentation of natural and cultural heritage, as well as contemporary culture, into the design and delivery of tourism promotions, packages, and products.
- Collaboration with the public sector and other relevant agencies is necessary to develop specific tourism products and programmes that involve tourists in traditional heritage and local identity.
- Continued development and distribution of a variety of maps and guides through all forms of media is necessary to help tourists plan detailed journeys and explore areas away from main travel routes.
- Regional and local tourism information offices must have relevant information, brochures, and other media that provide detailed local information to prospective and arriving tourists.
- There is a need to create major tourism guidebooks and other media in the languages of the major visitor market segments.
- There is a need to enhance established touring routes to create a more immersive experience, allowing visitors to engage with heritage and culture at a slower pace.
- There is a need to encourage community-led experiences that offer insights into traditional local life, culture, and heritage interpretation in the Western Cape. This includes opportunities for visitors to interact with locals and learn about urban and rural life.
- There is a need for the use of the unique natural landscape to create enriching experiences combining culture and outdoor activities, thereby complementing coastal tourism.
- There is a need to increase foreign language offerings to cater to international visitors and expand the market appeal.

5.1 Opportunities for Cultural and Heritage Tourism in the Western Cape

Continued...

Elements in the mission of culture and heritage attractions	
Conservation	The culture and heritage manager's responsibility is to preserve heritage for future generations and to guarantee that the utilisation of culture and heritage by the current generation does not jeopardise the future generation's ability to utilise and derive benefits from those assets. In addition, they ensure that the current generation effectively oversees the culture and heritage assets it maintains for the benefit of the entire nation.
Accessibility	The importance of culture and heritage lies in the way it enriches people's lives. When people are unable to access cultural and heritage artifacts, they become disconnected from their own culture and heritage. Nevertheless, excessive accessibility can result in the deterioration of cultural and heritage assets. At the same time, conservation needs may limit the current generation's ability to fully experience culture and heritage.
Education	Education is the key to unlocking accessibility. To truly cherish culture and heritage, individuals must grasp its essence and significance, understanding the imperative need for preservation. This involves employing a diverse range of interpretation methods, from the conventional to the casual. Effective education is not only informative but also captivating.
Relevance	Culture and heritage sites and attractions should aim to appeal to a wide audience rather than just a niche group of enthusiasts. It is important for all visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the significance of these sites to themselves, the local area, and the nation as a whole. In addition, cultural and heritage attractions should strive to be something that the local community can connect with, fostering a strong sense of place and pride.
Recreative	The mission of culture and heritage sites or attractions should be to captivate visitors and offer recreational opportunities. If visitors do not have a good time, they may not come back or share their experience with others. However, conservation needs may limit the recreational potential of cultural and heritage attractions.
Finance	It is crucial for cultural and heritage sites or attractions to be financially stable in order to accomplish their goals. While generating revenue through admission fees is important, external funding, especially for costly conservation projects, is essential for their sustainability.
Local community	Cultural and heritage sites or attractions should aim to collaborate harmoniously with the host community. Visitors should not be permitted to use cultural and heritage attractions at the expense of residents. Heritage places have the potential to create significant economic benefits for the entire community.
Quality	Heritage sites must aim to exceed visitors' expectations by providing high-quality services, a range of facilities, flexibility, a high standard of cleanliness, well-trained staff, and adequate car parking. This is essential to compete in an ever more crowded tourism marketplace.

Key insights to consider when managing cultural and heritage tourism (attractions) in the Western Cape and South Africa.

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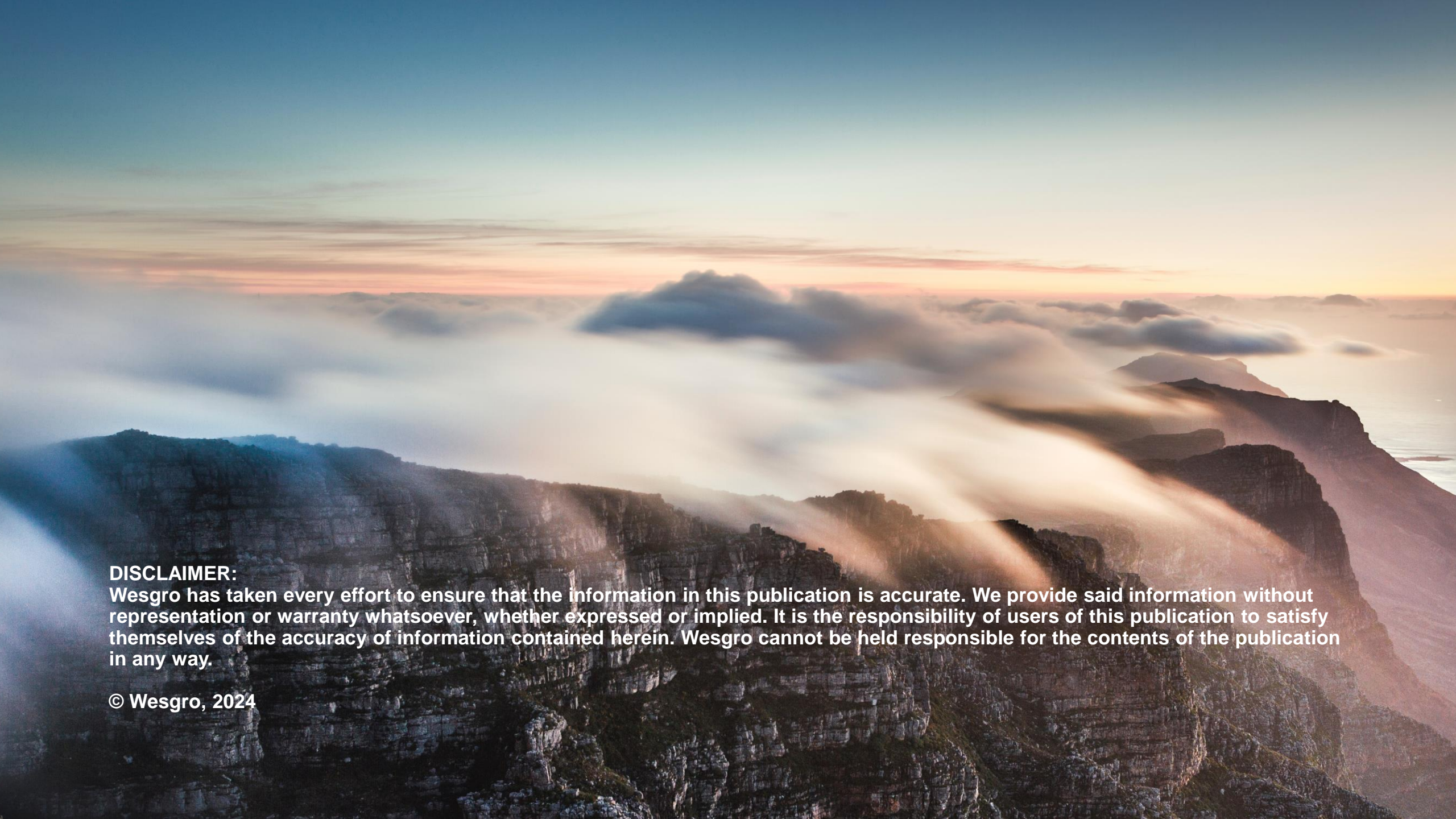
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