

The Bryte Travel Index 2025

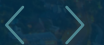




Travel Trends

“ South Africans aren’t just travelling — they’re reshaping the rhythm of travel itself.”

[Read Travel Trends](#)





Setting the pace

A snapshot of the trends shaping how we'll travel in 2026.

South Africans aren't just travelling — they're reshaping the rhythm of travel itself. Our 2025 analysis shows earlier planning, shorter getaways, and families on the move together. Technology is helping, but peak seasons and packed routes still bring plenty of turbulence. 2026 promises more movement, more meaning, and a few new surprises along the way. Here's a look at the trends shaping the year ahead.

Beat the rush, beat the risk

More travellers are ditching last-minute panic and buying policies weeks before departure. The festive season still sees the usual scramble, but early planners know the secret: visa hiccups, sudden cancellations, and pre-trip curveballs can't catch you off guard when you're already covered.

"More travellers are ditching last-minute panic"



Montepulciano
- Italy

Quick breaks that count

Long holidays aren't out, but quick getaways are gaining ground fast thanks to tight budgets, packed calendars, and rising travel costs. Modern travel is about maximising trips, not trip length. Short and sweet appears to be



Pisa
- Italy

Women at the wheel

Women aren't just travelling more; they're developing the sector in which they travel. They now dominate solo travel and set the standards, from safety to service. What emerges is an adventure market defined by authenticity, care, and connection.

Tech takes off

Digital tools and AI assistants are creeping into every step of travel planning. They speed things up, but they also leave room for admin mishaps when the tech doesn't align with reality. AI isn't perfect, and information can be outdated or incorrect.





■ Scroll to explore

TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts have replaced the brochure. What looks good online gets booked in real life, whether a hidden beach, a viral hotel, or a trending hike. Social media is now the compass, setting the tone for where and how people travel.

■ Domestic dynasty

Local travel has stepped firmly into the spotlight. But, Cape Town weekends and Durban breaks come with their own risks, proving that mishaps can happen anywhere.

■ From solo to squad

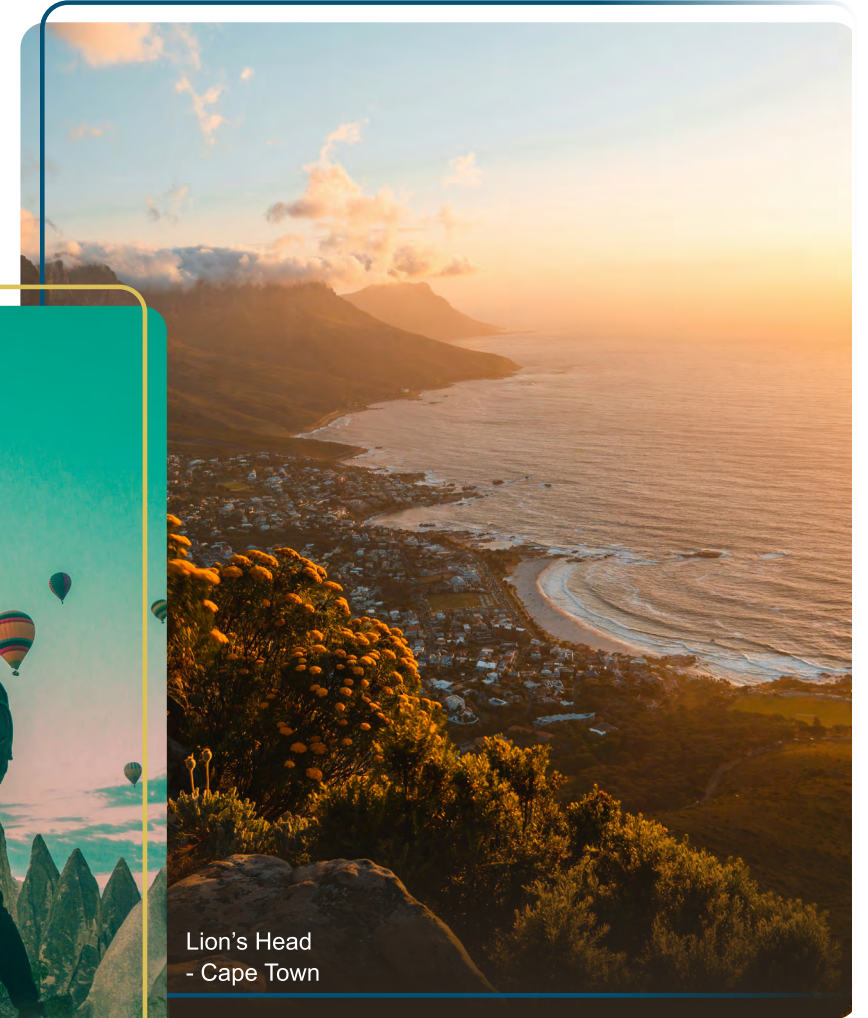
Most trips are solo or pairs — quick business hops or romantic escapes. But stretch the days or add more people, and the odds of disruption climb. A weekend for two is one thing; a month-long family adventure is another. In travel, the numbers change the risk.

■ Meaning over mileage

Travel is shifting away from ticking boxes on a map. South Africans are chasing connection, culture and purpose, making meaning the new measure of a trip.



Cappadocia
- Turkey



Lion's Head
- Cape Town





Destination Trends

Charting New Horizons

A snapshot of how and where we've been travelling in 2025.

[Read Destination Trends](#)





On the move

Multi-million rand America

America is a travel heavyweight for South Africans. Our data shows that trips stretch from 77-82 days on average, and while they make up just 5.9% of journeys, they account for almost a quarter of all claim values (**R34.9 million from 790 cases**).

The US delivers epic adventures and bucket-list memories — plus some of the priciest hospital stays. So, planning for those what-ifs is as much part of the journey as picking your road trip playlist and mapping your favourite diner stops.

The great trip squeeze

South Africans have mastered the art of punchy adventures. Our data shows that single-trip durations have changed from 28 days (2022) to 23 days (2025). We're taking more trips overall, but each one is tighter and more purposeful. This shift means we're navigating more departure lounges and arrival logistics, but that's what smart planning is designed to handle.



Statue of Liberty
- New York City



Temple of Apollo
-Turkey





Beach escape economics

Pause, breathe, repeat. Mauritius and Australia still have South Africans wrapped around their palms. Nearly 9% of our international journeys head to Mauritius, with most living the island

life for about 12-14 days. Australia matches this buzz with 5.9% of trips (and 15-20 days per visit). Research shows visitor numbers and bookings from SA are up in both, fuelled by affordable flights, family offers and, yes, craving soft sand.

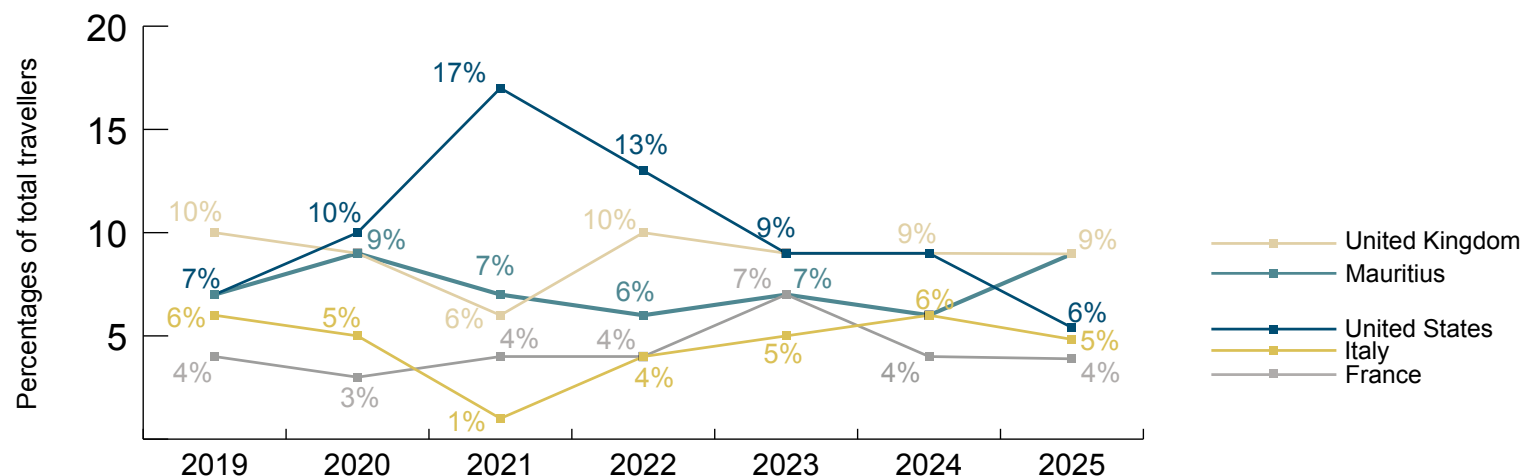
The surprise squad

Destinations like Turkey and Réunion are firmly on the South African travel map, offering authentic experiences, fashion, and rich culture that's hard to beat. Travellers typically spend 16-17 days in Turkey

and 15-16 days in Réunion. With interest rising, smart planning matters. Bryte has seen individual medical claims reach up to **R1 million** in these markets, proving that a little extra prep goes a long way. Turkey is also a hotspot for medical tourism, including cosmetic procedures like plastic surgery and getting a bit more volume up top. And — while we won't ask and won't tell — remember that travel insurance won't cover any elective treatments.

Top destinations for Bryte Travel customers

Where are you flying to?



Euro trip

Europe's still the continent of storybook moments, and plenty of airport reminders to expect the unexpected. Bryte's data shows the UK accounted for R9.6 million in claims from 680 cases in 2025, with an average claim of R14,200. Most of these cases aren't headline-worthy emergencies — they're everyday hiccups like lost baggage, missed connections or delayed flights. France, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands all follow a similar rhythm: plenty of claims, but at a friendlier price tag. It's proof that travel disruption is part of the adventure — so packing a little extra cover is the ultimate holiday hack.





Home is where the adventure is

Overseas travel isn't going anywhere, but South Africans are rediscovering home like pros. Whether it's a bush escape, a beach break, or just exploring some of our local neighbourhood gems, local trips are on the rise and bringing new rhythms. We're seeing that home holidays are less of a backup plan and more of a South African signature.

Connected continent

Travelling from Jozi to Windhoek, Maputo, or Harare is getting easier, and South Africans are loving it. With the SADC univisa pilot rolling out across South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe, passport stamps are giving way to seamless movement, bolder itineraries, and a robust regional travel economy. This shows that Africa's best stories never stop at the border.

The hub life

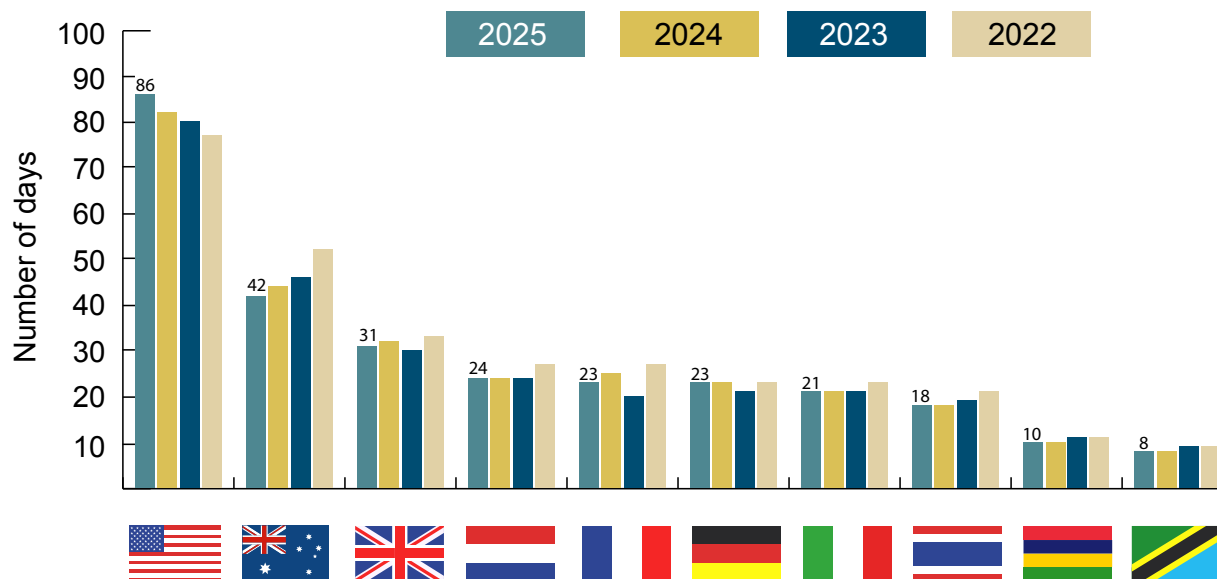
Bryte's data shows a heavy reliance on Middle Eastern and European hubs.

Emirates, Qatar Airways, Turkish Airlines, and British Airways carry a significant share of long-haul journeys booked by local travellers. New flight routes, rising frequencies, and packed skies mean even more opportunities for connection, plus more potential for schedule changes, airport queues, and that classic "will-my-bag-make-it?" suspense. This is the age of hop-off, hop-on global travel — where staying nimble, watching route notices, and building in buffer time keeps every leg of the journey on track.



Average duration per country

How long are you staying?



“Overseas travel isn't going anywhere, but South Africans are rediscovering home like pros.”





Risk Trends

When Travel Gets Tricky

Keep a close eye on emerging risk trends — it's how the best journeys stay on track.

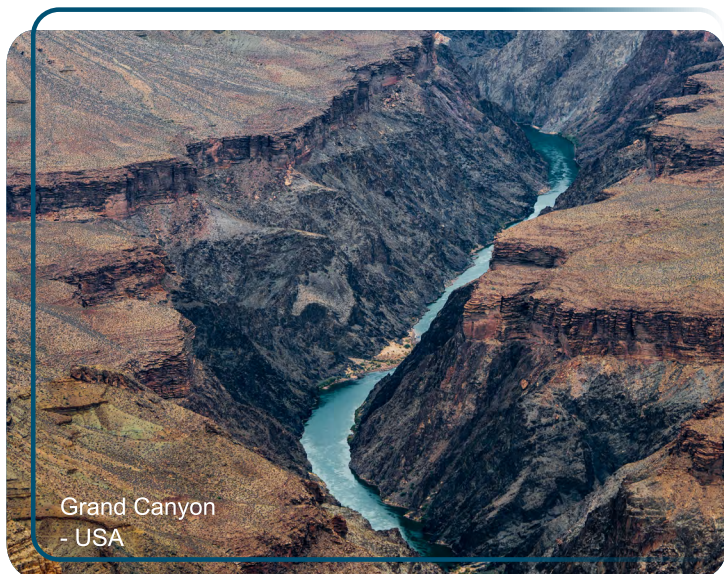
[Read Risk Trends](#)





Voyages and vulnerabilities

When it comes to travel in 2025, one thing's for sure: South Africans aren't just going further; we're travelling smarter, to more places and with new patterns — yet risk refuses to be left behind. Bryte's claims data reveals not just what's gone wrong, but why. Keep reading to understand the risk trends defining future travel.



Grand Canyon
- USA

Experience adds up

Older travellers can drive some of the largest claims in South African travel insurance. Between 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, travellers aged 70+ recorded some of the highest average claim values across all age groups, rising from around R17,000 to over R29,000 per claim. Those aged 65-69 also remained consistently high at roughly R21,000 per claim. Although senior trips are fewer in number, their average claim values remain the highest, driven by medical emergencies and long-haul travel.

The admin apocalypse

Admin breakdowns — visa hiccups, missed flights, and paperwork errors — are still major risk drivers, with thousands of claims in 2025. The US, UK, and Mauritius led for these admin-related issues. Costs escalate sharply: major hospital bills can exceed R2 million, and a single paperwork disaster can cost R171,000. There's a price for every incorrectly ticked box, so admin vigilance is essential.

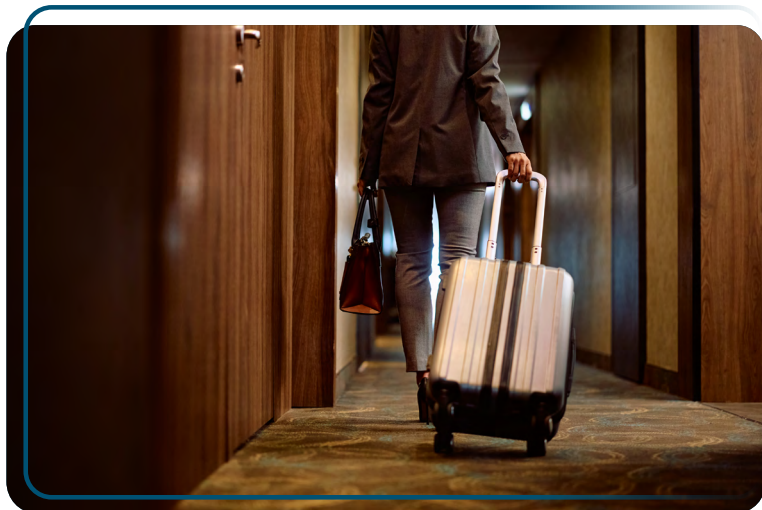
“South Africans aren't just going further; we're travelling smarter.”





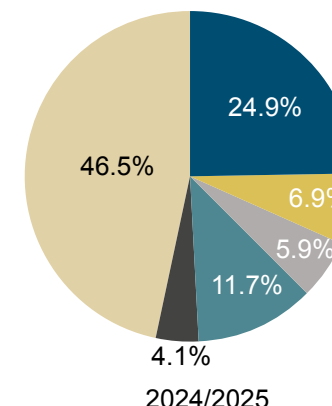
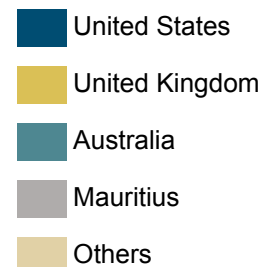
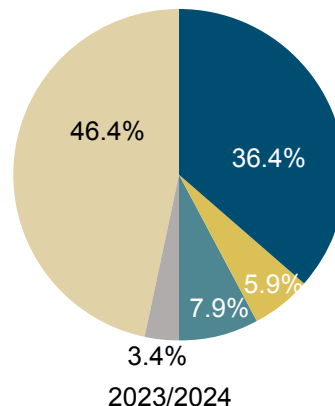
Travel tech tangles

The EU's new Entry/Exit System is set to slow things down for South Africans travelling to Europe. From October 2025, stricter Schengen border controls mean longer queues, more checks, and digital registration. With border staff and systems still adapting, Bryte expects disruption claims to rise, particularly for missed connections and delays in key hubs such as France and the Netherlands. Our 2024/2025 stats show these hubs already rack up the most travel delays and lost baggage. Claims in those regions average R24,000 to R25,000 for 2024.



Split of claims costs by country

(Rand value)



For every new rule, there's a new reason to keep disruption cover close, especially when your journey runs through Europe's busiest spots.

Disrupted journeys

Missed connections and rerouted journeys are headline risks for South Africans in 2025. The big global hubs — serviced by Emirates,

Qatar, and Turkish Airlines — may offer more itineraries but also multiply the exposure to travel disruptions. Routing snags, airline dependencies, and delays create a domino effect, so one missed transfer can unravel an entire holiday, driving the frequency and cost of claims higher.



The planning olympics

Last-minute travel planning is officially fading. South Africans are booking earlier, with average lead times rising from 33 days in 2022 to 44 days in 2025. January and March now see bookings made 47-53 days in advance, while December clings to its last-minute edge with 27 days. Earlier purchase means earlier policy activation, but plenty still leave things too late, taking on avoidable pre-trip risks and potential costs.

Holiday chaos chronicles

We know the story by heart: as soon as holidays hit, so do the mishaps. Our claims climb in June-July as South Africans swap the bitter winter cold with sunny adventures up north. We saw a similar spike in December as airports overflow with families on the go and luggage goes missing or gets nabbed. The numbers say it all — these months hammer South Africans with lost bags, missed flights, and those dreaded last-minute cancellations. The lesson? Peak seasons and robust coverage go hand in hand.

“Earlier purchase means earlier policy activation, but plenty still leave things too late, taking on avoidable pre-trip risks and potential costs.”



Venice
- Italy



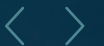


Traveller Trends

Beyond the Ordinary

From intimate duos and savvy soloists to culture seekers and hobby hunters, today's travellers are embracing bold choices, deep dives, and trips that truly matter.

[Read Traveller Trends](#)





Itineraries with personality

South African travel is evolving fast. Our latest insights reveal a traveller who's intentional yet spontaneous, culturally curious but deeply personal, and never afraid to reimagine how (or why) they get away. These are the stories in the data, and the new rules of the road are shaping everything from who we travel with to where we land and what memories we bring back.

Two's company

The romantic notion of solo wanderlust might dominate social media, but South African travel habits are more intimate. Most bookings show an average party size of 1 to 2 — usually couples or solos — with this pattern holding steady. It's a clear sign: we value flexible, personal escapes over group tours. Travel isn't less social, just more personal. Couples and friends move quicker, change plans on a whim, and build authentic cultural moments that 81% of us prioritise.



Mature and miles ahead

South Africa's average traveller is older and loving it. The sampled age for international travel sits between 51 and 53, while the 60+ group accounts for the largest share of claim value. Far from slowing down, these seasoned adventurers are booking longer, richer journeys, tapping into their resources and know-how. They shape destination

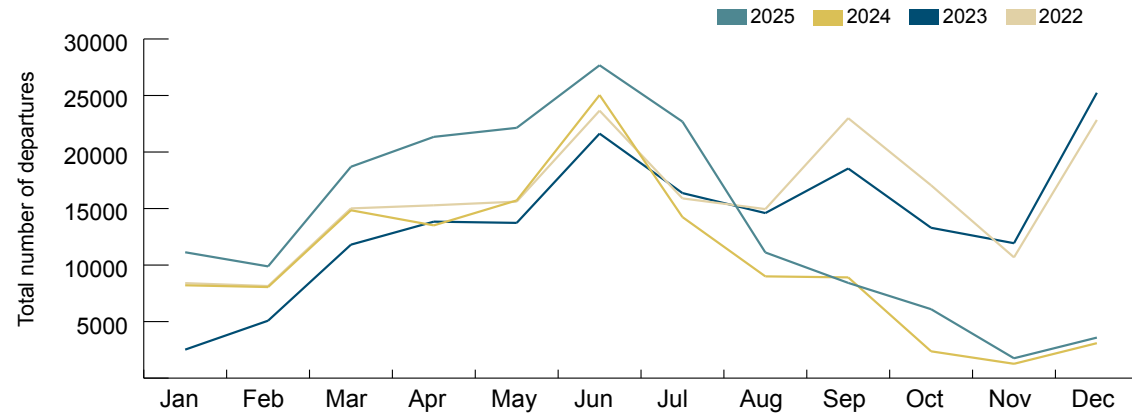
choices and how South Africans spend overseas, especially on longer trips to the UK, Europe, and beyond. This demographic blends family reunions, leisure, and “retirement gap years” into novel itineraries.





Departure trends of Bryte Travel customers

When are you flying?



Soul over souvenirs

South Africans are making cultural immersion the headline act, at home and abroad. In 2025, 81% say the only way to really know a place is through its culture. International bookings reveal a growing appetite for hands-on experiences, with Bryte's data highlighting France, Italy, and Thailand as favourites for cooking workshops, art tours, and festivals. Whether it's a food stall in Bangkok or storytelling in Tuscany, authentic connections are driving our trips, not just the sights.



Khlong Sok
- Thailand



Bangkok,
- Thailand

The great family trek

Family is at the heart of South Africa's travel reboot, and the numbers back it. Bookings are swelling with multi-generational groupings, as journeys stretch from toddlers to grandparents, all wanting shared adventure: storytelling by campfire, exploring heritage sites, or taking that

overdue big-family beach break. Data shows that children aged 0-12 are featured in claim volumes and trip cohorts, but it's the wider pattern that's compelling: families are leveraging school holidays and travel deals to maximise time together.





AI on board

South Africans are letting AI take the wheel, with nearly 48% now using AI tools for trip planning, whether to research, compare, or build itineraries. Satisfaction is high, but the curve is steepest among younger groups, with over 90% of 18-34-year-olds rating their AI-assisted journeys as a success. AI isn't just for map routing; it unlocks secret spots, compares prices, and flags family- and eco-friendly stops. Travellers are making bolder choices with help from digital co-pilots.

Passion pursuit or hobby holidays

Niche and passion-driven travel is rising, with South Africans blending interests — from marine biology to food, astronomy, and sports — into every trip. There's more appetite for learning pilgrimages, wellness adventures, and “*skill holidays*” than ever, with bookings for special-interest experiences growing year-on-year. These journeys are longer, more involved, and often spark lifelong memories. From conservation fun with kids to slow-

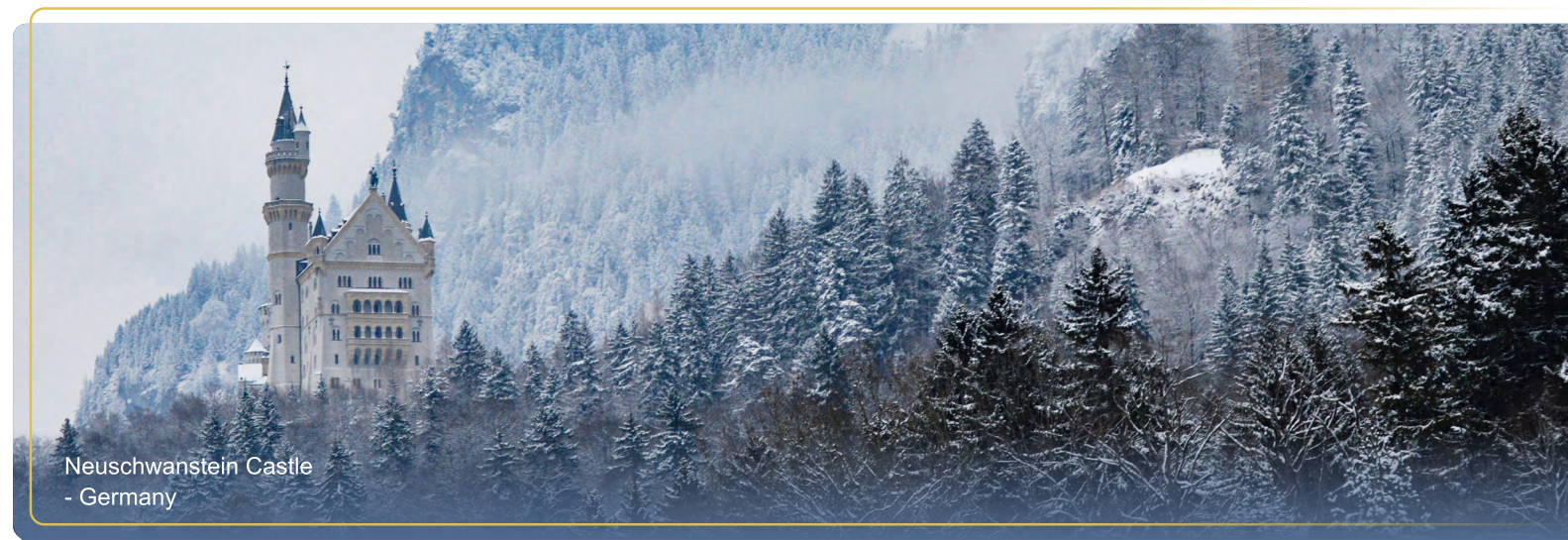
cooking workshops in Tuscany, the new bucket list is selective, immersive and personal.

Coolcations

Forget chasing the sun. Travellers are seeking cool escapes. South Africans are opting for northern destinations like Iceland or Scandinavia or European cities during shoulder season to dodge crowds and heatwaves. Chilled weather, lower prices, and a relaxed pace are the drawcards.

“AI isn't just for map routing; it unlocks secret spots, compares prices, and flags family- and eco-friendly stops.”

Our data backs it up: claim rates for France, Italy, and the Netherlands increase during off-peak seasons, with trips often lasting 21-30 days. Fewer crowds, crisp air, and cultural detours — coolcations are the new badge of savvy travel.



Neuschwanstein Castle
- Germany





Holiday Checklist

Travel Smart

Pack Bryte and breeze through your holiday with our ultimate checklist for worry-free adventures.

Holiday Checklist





Check it, don't regret it

A great holiday starts long before you settle into your window seat. With our data as the ultimate reality check, this year's big lesson is to expect the unexpected, no matter where the adventure lands. From paperwork panic to pre-trip medicals, here's how to stay one step ahead, because FOMO is real, but claims even more so!

1 Get your docs in a row

Passports and visas are the gatekeepers to holiday happiness. In 2025, Bryte saw a spike in claims denied due to “almost-ready” travel docs — especially visa holdups and last-minute passport panics. Travellers heading to high-risk or long-haul destinations should check their passport expiry well before booking and keep digital and print copies handy. Visa waiting times are unpredictable, so apply early, track your status, and avoid being the one waving goodbye from the check-in desk.

“A two-minute read now beats hours of post-trip paperwork later!”



Japan



Zanzibar

2 Insure the sure thing

Waiting until the eleventh hour to insure is a recipe for regret: In 2025, a large chunk of South Africans bought cover days before travel, often leaving pre-departure risks exposed. Bryte's data shows an uptick in claims denied due to missed cover windows, so get insured as soon as you book, and lock in protection for visa delays, flight cancellations, and curveballs from day one.





3 Clause encounters

Policy confusion is still a South African classic. Baseline cover might work for a weekend in Mauritius, but our claims data says it's rarely enough for longer trips or high-cost destinations like the US or Asia. Always review what's actually covered: adventure sports, pre-existing conditions, and baggage limits. A two-minute read now beats hours of post-trip paperwork later!



4 Health hits different abroad

Medical claims are climbing, especially for seniors and long-stayers, with a single US mishap now topping R2 million. Book travel clinics early, update vaccinations, and don't forget your chronic medication and original scripts, and a compact first aid kit. If you're flying solo, make your emergency contacts easy to find — write them down, store them in your phone, and add them to your insurance files.

5 Peak season plot twists

Travelling in high season? Queue chaos, bag delays, and airport mazes are far more common. Bryte's holiday claims confirm the juice is worth the squeeze — disruption cover, digital check-ins, and plenty of pocket snacks keep nerves cool. If all else fails, a good playlist and baggage cover make waiting for lost bags much more bearable.

"Group baggage claims are common in 2025."

6 Group or solo? Mind the gap.

Travelling solo or with the whole gang? Bryte's data says risk rises with party size — extra people mean a bigger chance that someone faces disruption. Group baggage claims are common in 2025, while solo travellers need urgent medical help more often. Tailor your policy and plans for your crew, prioritise family-friendly benefits for groups, and choose medical-heavy options for solo adventurers.





Packing Checklist

Hack the Pack

Pack Bryte with hacks that squeeze space, calm creases, and keep chaos zipped.

Packing Checklist





Pack like a pro

Packing well is the secret to travelling well. Gone are the days of overstuffing suitcases and leaving chargers behind. Our packing checklist features clever shortcuts and tiny essentials that deliver big comfort, from zipped cubes to snack packs and portable games. Invest a few more minutes before leaving home, and your future self will thank you.



Cube it or lose it

Compression or packing cubes are a packing game-changer. Pop everything in by outfit or category, then slide them straight into your case. Bonus: they double as instant drawers on arrival and keep “bursting suitcase” syndrome at bay.



Bionic battery

Every traveller’s sidekick is a universal adaptor, keeping gadgets in the green no matter the voltage drama. Tuck chargers, cables, and a multi-port plug in a single pouch, so tech never goes awol mid-adventure.



Mini everything

Decant shampoo, conditioner, and lotions into travel-sized bottles (100ml or less!). Save space by packing a microfibre towel, mini hairbrush, and a set of reusable make-up remover pads. Say goodbye to bulky bottles and surprise spills in your bag.



Roll with it

Rolling, not folding, keeps creases at bay and makes clothes easier to find. To make mornings simple, stuff socks inside shoes and arrange them by outfit. Bonus: rolled clothes take up less precious space.



Bag of tricks

Bring a lightweight, foldable tote or day bag for markets, beach days, or as an emergency overflow for souvenir shopping. It packs down to nothing but does everything.





Laundry day

Divide your kit: one cube/fabric bag for clean, and another for worn. Bring a mini soap bar and a small washing line for quick washing and drying. It's the easiest way to avoid overpacking and guarantees something clean when you need it.



Munch time

Pack easy-to-carry snacks (like oat bars or nuts) and a collapsible water bottle for airports, hikes, or long-haul buses. Add your preferred tea/coffee to keep hunger at bay.



Pillow talk

A scarf, travel pillow, or oversized wrap takes up little space but multiplies your comfort options: an improvised blanket, neck cushion, or even a beach mat.



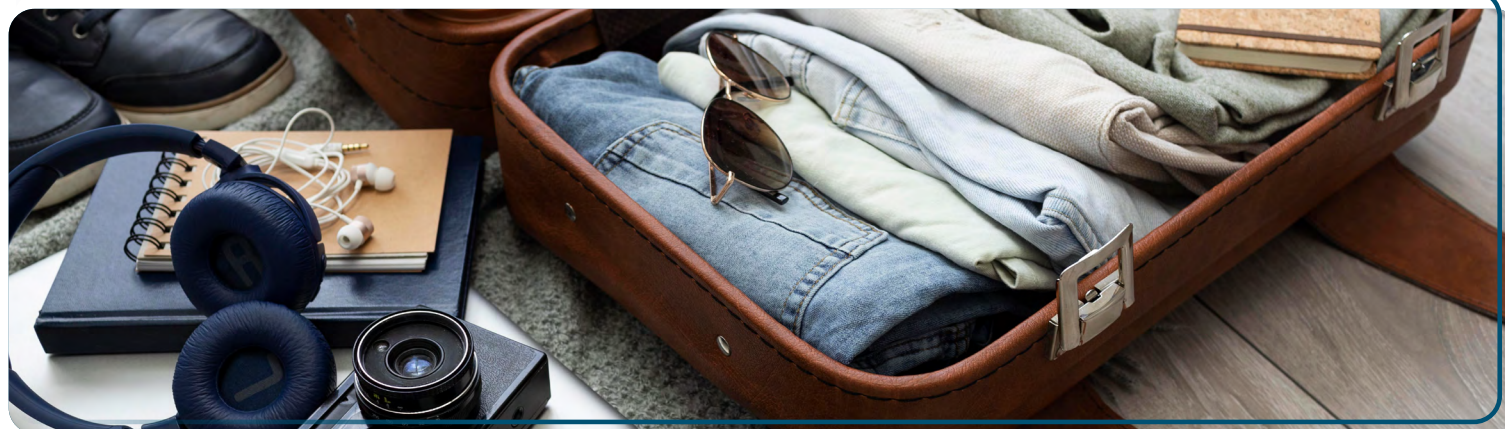
Cord control

No more mystery knots: group your phone, camera, and laptop chargers with elastic bands or reusable cable ties and store them in a single slim pouch. A little organisation now means less rummaging and less risk of leaving a charger two cities behind.



Fun in the air

Slip a small pack of cards, a portable puzzle, or a compact board game into your hand luggage. These pocket-sized distractions turn airport waits and in-flight hours into lighter, more enjoyable stretches.





Fun with Bryte

Before You Board

From airport bingo to creative colouring for mini jetsetters, we've packed a few extras to keep travel brains ticking while you wait, wander, or wing it.

Fun with Bryte





— Crayon cabin crew —

While you handle the grown-up stuff, let your little travellers take the window seat to creativity. We've turned our Travel Index into a colouring-in page made for curious minds and busy hands — perfect for layovers, long flights, or that moment before the snacks arrive.





On the (Bing)GO

Every trip comes with familiar moments, from the airport coffee run to the mid-flight nap that lasts too long. So, we turned them into a game. Play **Bryte Bingo** while you wait, while you fly, or while you wonder why the luggage carousel is so slow.

B	R	Y	T	E
Boarding pass scanned 5+ times "just to be sure"	Runway delay announcement (weather/technical/mystery)	Yelling into phone "I'M AT THE AIRPORT"	Toddler meltdown in departure lounge	Emirates flight to Dubai called
Baggage carousel that takes 45+ minutes to start	Running through terminal with roller bag	Yoga pose attempted in waiting area	Taxi queue longer than flight time	Expensive airport coffee (R80+ for regular)
Bathroom queue with someone guarding 3+ suitcases	Random accent overhead	FREE SPACE (Delayed flight announcement)	Two people arguing about gate location	Elderly person asking, "Is this the right queue?"
Business class passenger in flip-flops	Rude check-in staff encounter	Young traveller with guitar case	Turbulence that makes someone gasp loudly	Exit row passenger who clearly can't lift 20kg
Boarding gate change announced 10 minutes before departure	Restaurants all closed at 9pm	Yawning passenger using luggage as pillow	Trolley with wonky wheel squeaking past	Emergency exit row briefing in 3 languages





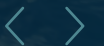
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Contact us

Travel trends change.
Peace of mind shouldn't.

”

Contact Us





Contact us

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www.brytesa.com

Get your travel insurance [here](#).



Where to start

Travel with Bryte

By choosing Bryte, you can be assured that you are covered by a premier, proactive travel insurance specialist in South Africa.

We offer a wide range of travel insurance plans, designed to suit the varying needs of travellers. Depending on your cover, benefits include emergency medical and related expenses, 24-hour assistance while abroad, cancellation, theft or loss of baggage, travel delay, missed connection, air space closure and more.

Bryte Insurance Company Limited

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Bryte is a licensed insurer and an authorised FSP (17703)





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Destination Trends

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Risk Trends

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Traveller Trends

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Holiday Checklist and Hack the Pack

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