

Saudi Arabia opens e-visa system to South Africans

South African Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille has welcomed the introduction of the Saudi Arabia e-visa system, which will make it easier for South Africans to visit the country for tourism purposes. "I am extremely pleased with this development as South Africa also became the first African country to be added to the list. This will certainly bring immense benefits for leisure and Umrah travellers and for our efforts to grow tourism between South Africa and Saudi Arabia," Minister de Lille said.



Source: [Wallpaper Flare](#)

The multi-entry e-visa is valid for one year and allows travellers to visit the Kingdom for up to 90 days at a time. It costs 535 Saudi riyals, which also includes medical insurance. In terms of the South African visa system, travellers from Saudi Arabia are part of the visa-exempt countries and do not require a visa to travel to South Africa for a period of up to 90 days.

Growing tourism between SA and the world

The Department of Tourism also has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Tourism Department which outlines its joint objectives to grow tourism between our countries.

Minister de Lille recently undertook an official visit to Saudi Arabia to attend the International World Tourism Day conference where various engagements took place to strengthen tourism relations and cooperation with Saudi Arabian stakeholders. Minister de Lille met with a range of Saudi Arabian stakeholders including the Air Connectivity Programme team within the Ministry of Tourism as well as the Saudi Tourism Authority.

Improving air connectivity between Saudi and SA

Discussions covered actions needed to improve air connectivity between Saudi Arabia and South Africa and a joint marketing strategy to promote both destinations to travellers in both countries.

Saudia (Saudi Arabian Airlines) has also announced the recommencement of a direct flight between Jeddah and Johannesburg starting on 1 December 2023.

"During our engagements, we shared research with the Saudi Air Connectivity Team to motivate for a direct flight between Jeddah and Cape Town.

"The e-visa development is significant for South Africa as many Muslim citizens travel for religious purposes. Along with the direct flights, this will ease travel for many tourists but especially for religious tourism and pilgrimages," Minister de Lille said.

The tourist visa allows visitors to take part in tourism-related activities such as events, family and relatives visits, leisure, and Umrah (excluding Hajj) and excludes other activities such as studying.

"We will continue working with our counterparts in Saudi Arabia, through the Minister of Tourism, Ahmed Al Khateeb to look at new and innovative ways to grow tourism between our countries as this key sector is an important part of our countries' economies and a key job creator." concluded Minister de Lille.

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