

Case Study: South African Fair Trade Tourism Certification

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Fair Trade Tourism (FTT) is entrenched in the global fair trade movement with a similar interest in addressing the imbalances in international trade. Contemporary tourism has witnessed the demand for fairer and more sustainable practices within the industry which has led to the rise of FTT products specifically in South America, India and Africa. The support of travel operators in such initiatives has led to a significant increase in the number of packages available; providing consumers with more choice in considering fair trade in the context of their holidays.

Baobab Travel, a UK-based African travel specialist, became the first to offer South African FTT certified itineraries in 2002. Simultaneously a trademark certification called Fair Trade Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) was implemented which currently has 64 certified tourism businesses that adhere to principles of fairness and sustainability. FTTSA certified businesses range from hostels, B&B's and five star accommodation suppliers to various activities such as safaris, shark cage diving and township tours (FTTSA, 2012). FTT packages ensure that benefits reach those who are involved in and affected by tourism in South African communities. Furthermore, a Fair Trade premium is raised to support development and tourism projects around the country (see BAOBAB Travel, 2012).

Baobab Travel's diverse portfolio of travel packages has increased opportunities for travellers interested in being ethical whilst on holiday. Currently there are four certified FTT packages including an 11 day guided tour of the Western Cape and Garden Route in the Eastern Cape. The 11 day tour visits Cape Town, townships, Cape Point National Park, the Winelands and Port Elizabeth. Secondly, there is a 7 day guided tour of the Drakensberg hiking trail, where visitors encounter Xhosa communities and stay in lodges constructed by the local community. The Third package is a 9 day Whale Watching and Safari tour in the Eastern Cape. Lastly an 8 day Wildlife packaged tour in the Gauteng and Limpopo provinces provides an opportunity for visitors to visit Soweto and Kruger National Park (refer to Baobab, 2012). All accommodation and activities used in these accredited packages are FTTSA certified.

Baobab operates on the belief that it is the responsibility of tour operators to ensure that minimal damage is created in the process of tourism. As such, they recognize the inherent tensions in tourist trends visiting unique and remote landscapes which are often home to some of the poorest communities in the Majority World. Moreover, Baobab has recognized that tourism can bring immense opportunities in terms of economic growth, development and conservation (Baobab, 2012).

References

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