

# Maiden Air Belgium flight into Johannesburg lands more tourism

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The Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) is elated with the ever-increasing air access capacity in Gauteng following two years of flights and travel restrictions imposed by Covid 19. Compounding this excitement is the fact that Air Belgium will today, 15 September 2022 land at OR Tambo International Airport - marking the airline's first journey to the African continent.



This is good news for the golden province as more international airlines continue to prefer the OR Tambo International Airport and Gauteng as their gateway into the continent. On 29 June, Air Cote d'Ivoire commenced its maiden service into Johannesburg further boosting the province's tourism, trade and investment opportunities and interface on the backdrop of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Air Belgium's modern A330neo is scheduled to depart from Brussels every Wednesday and Sunday at 7.45pm – arriving in Johannesburg at 7.15am the following day, before flying on to Cape Town. South Africans heading to Europe will be able to fly from Cape Town International (with a short stop in Johannesburg) every Monday and Thursday. The flight offers 30 seats in business class, 21 seats in premium class, and 235 economy class seats.

As the seat of the European Union, Brussels is known as the 'capital of Europe' while Gauteng remains Africa's leading economic, trade, investment, leisure and entertainment destination of choice accounting for almost a third of the country's GDP. It is these symbiotic relations and factors that makes these developments worth celebrating and appreciating.

Belgium is South Africa's 6th largest trading partner, and the opening of this route bodes well for further growth and mutually beneficial relations.

"We are thrilled by these latest developments as the GTA because this is in line with the city region's tourism growth, trade promotion and investment facilitation strategy announced by Gauteng Premier David Makhura in his state of the province address earlier this year. We are leaving no stone unturned in bringing back the lost air-lift capacity due to Covid-19 while expanding to new grounds in the quest to remain top-of-mind," explained GTA chief executive Sthembiso 'Sthe' Dlamini.

This protracted increase in air capacity, especially in Gauteng, can be attributed among others to the collaborative work of all the role players in the Gauteng Air Access Network who continue to work tirelessly to make up lost ground. The Gauteng Air Access Network consists of public and private sector stakeholders led by representatives of the Gauteng Tourism Authority, the Gauteng Growth & Development Agency (GGDA) Airports Company South Africa (ACSA), City of Ekurhuleni, and private airport facilities.

"September is celebrated as Tourism and Heritage Month in South Africa. The launch of Air Belgium's maiden flight into Johannesburg reinforces destination Gauteng's marketing drive as we prepare to welcome and immerse more visitors and investors from this important market with our unmatched tourism and heritage offerings," concluded Dlamini.

For more information on this programme and progress Gauteng is making on Air Access Network and interviews requests, you can contact Nonhlanhla Mbethe at 0824351649 [nonhlanhla@gauteng.net](mailto:nonhlanhla@gauteng.net).

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