

Visit Stellenbosch supports small tourism entrepreneurs, boosts local economy

In a bid to create employment and stimulate the local economy, Visit Stellenbosch has created multiple opportunities for niche tourism providers in the area. "Since the start of the hard lockdown last year, we began thinking of various ways in which we could create opportunities for our tourism entrepreneurs," says Jeanneret Momberg, Visit Stellenbosch CEO. "We couldn't wait for these opportunities to present themselves; we had to go out and create them ourselves."



Source: johnthefrankmusic via [Pxabay](#)

"We developed various initiatives alongside Stellenbosch and surrounds' incredible, unique and talented local entrepreneurs, from walking tours to locally-curated food boxes for hybrid and in person events. Visitors to Stellenbosch can enjoy these experiences, knowing that they are directly supporting small tourism service entrepreneurs, contributing to the rebuilding of the tourism economy, instilling hope and providing opportunities to the benefit of our communities," says Momberg.



Visit Stellenbosch launches wine walks to support local entrepreneurs

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One such initiative, Stellenbosch Wine Walks, is enjoying overwhelming response with most dates sold out well in advance. The wine walks take place on a Saturday and encourage locals and visitors alike to discover the region's wealth of outdoor beauty as well as the food and wine appeal of Stellenbosch.

"By doing a Stellenbosch Wine Walk, you will have supported a tour guide; Ida's Valley Community Trails; the Banhoek Conservancy; the roosterkoek tannie from Kylemore; the brownie tannie from Ida's Valley; two wineries; a farm restaurant; and a Pniël transport service," explains Momberg. "Now that the tourism sector has started to recover, ensuring that its economic benefits are felt along the entire value chain is vital."

Giving small businesses a leg up

"I run a small business, Faith 4 U Tours, with about two to three people and a small vehicle," says Faith Stubbs, a registered

tour guide from Pniel. "When Covid hit, there was almost no business, but I am grateful for the opportunity provided by Visit Stellenbosch to be part of the initiatives and to participate in the walking tours, especially the wine walks. These initiatives healed my heart and soul. It kept my body healthy, and a lot of business came in. I was able to put bread on the table," says Stubbs.



Source: Supplied

"The help from Visit Stellenbosch gave me the much-needed boost to get back on my feet. All we needed was someone to help and listen to what was happening," agrees Sienna Charles from Kylemore. Charles runs Beker en Bord, a tea garden in Kylemore, and bakes the roosterkoek supplied on the Wine Walks routes.

Another guided tourism walk, the Journey of Hope and Healing, takes visitors on a 16 km route from the Stellenbosch CBD to Pniël, a former freed slave settlement. Exploring themes of social justice, the walk is about acknowledging past injustices; but also renewing hope and inspiration for the future; and, above all, connecting all communities in the greater Stellenbosch.

Visitors will also soon be able to enjoy a new Local is Lekker tour, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in four cultures in one day. Visitors can explore the township of Kayamandi, sampling African beer and trying their hand at Gembe drumming; learn about the history of slavery in Pniël; enjoy a traditional Dwarsrivier lunch, learn more about Cape Malay spices; and make a pitstop for a wine tasting all the while experiencing the living history and cultures that shaped South Africa's second-oldest town.

In a bid to **create work for local food suppliers**, Visit Stellenbosch partnered with Stellenbosch University to create meal boxes for their interactive virtual and hybrid events – all sourced from local suppliers in the communities of Pniël, Kylemore

and Ida's Valley.

Building regional tourism opportunities

For Stellenbosch University's Virtual Women's Day on 13 August 2021, with the theme of "Not all heroes wear capes", 132 gourmet lunch boxes were distributed to Stellenbosch University's female staff. Four Stellenbosch and Dwarsrivier-based tour operators delivered these boxes to Stellenbosch, Cape Town Metropolitan and the northern suburbs, the Cape Winelands and the Helderberg area. Following outstanding feedback from the lucky recipients, food suppliers were once again roped in to create food boxes for the participants of Stellenbosch University's RC Operations & Finance Fun Day Walk on 1 October 2021.

"We're overjoyed to have seen the success of such initiatives, and have received wonderful feedback from visitors, guests and recipients. Most important, however, are the jobs created. Our local communities have to benefit from this region's tourism opportunities," says Momberg.

Stubbs agrees that the projects have been a success. "I had to think outside of the box and think about how and what I am going to do to make sure that I am able to support my lifestyle. I am grateful that I was able to share my experience with the guests and share my background with them."

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