

Kruger National Park Bush Braai experiences: Critical success factors, visitor preferences and willingness to pay

INTRODUCTION

- The Bush Braai, a popular bush dinner experience for conference goers and other groups of tourists staying inside the Kruger National Park (KNP) in South Africa, has been available for a number of years from rest camps within the KNP.
- A need was identified by management to extend the product offering to visitors staying at accommodation facilities outside the Park, allowing this market segment access to the Park after gate closing times for an enriched experience involving a game drive and dinner in the bush.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Gauge the level of interest in and visitors' perceptions of an ideal Bush Braai experience.
- Measure Willingness To Pay (WTP) for a Bush Braai experience.
- Determine the critical success factors for a successful Bush Braai product.



STUDY AREA

Phalaborwa gate
Phabeni gate
Crocodile Bridge gate

METHODS

- A quantitative research approach was followed involving internet-administered questionnaires distributed in February and March 2016 to three target populations: A) Visitors to the KNP who stayed at the Crocodile Bridge and Pretoriuskop rest camps; B) privately owned OSV operators who bring guests from other tourist establishments to the Park for guided game drive experiences and C) tourists staying at accommodation establishments bordering the Park.
- Three different questionnaires were developed for each population, with the core aspects measured being:
 - Level of interest in the product;
 - Key determinants at play towards first purchase motivations, customer satisfaction and repeat purchase;
 - Expectations and preferences towards the experience;
 - Willingness to pay (WTP) and
 - Potential inhibitors towards acceptance of a Bush Braai product.
- A total of 496 complete responses were received from KNP visitors while 29 out of the 108 OSV operators responded.

THE EXPERIENCE

A typical Bush Braai experience involves a guided game drive in an open safari vehicle (OSV), to a remote setting in the African bush where guests are greeted by lanterns, fires and the distant sounds of animals calling.

Visitors are treated to local cuisine, involving a braai (the South African term for grilling meat over an open fire) made up of a variety of game meat, supplemented with side dishes such as vegetables and salads and rounded off with deserts and coffee or tea. Guests are accompanied by guides who lead interpretive discussions and answers questions from guests. Armed rangers ensure the guests' safety from wildlife throughout the entire experience.



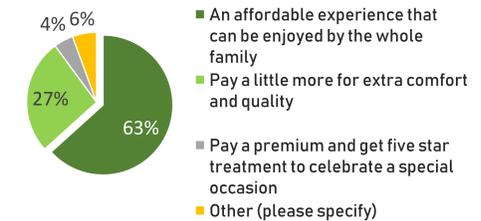
RESULTS

KNP visitors



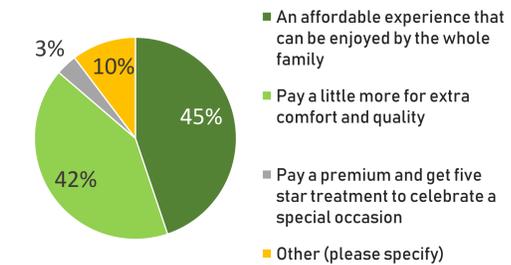
Willing to pay €14 – €29 per person

- Prefers:
- Informal and relaxed atmosphere.
 - A long sunset drive with dinner served slightly later, followed by a short night drive afterwards.



48% say they would likely book a Bush Braai on their next trip to KNP.

OSV operators



Willing to pay €21 – €43 per person

- Prefers:
- Informal and relaxed atmosphere.
 - A short drive late afternoon with a long relaxing dinner, and a short night drive afterwards.

76% say they are likely to sell the product to their guests.

RESULTS

The results from the thematic analysis illustrate there is a fair amount of agreement between what KNP visitors and OSV operators expect from an ideal Bush Braai experience.

Legend: Culinary (orange), Ideal location (green), Sights, smells and atmosphere (blue), Lighting (red), Interpretation (yellow), Facilities (dark green), Other (light blue)

OSV operators

dry riverbed, pap & sauce, lanterns, oil lamps, calls of the wild, cash bar, crisp white, welcome drink, camp fire, linen with, true wilderness, milk tart, animal print, traditional, remote waterhole, overlays, South African good storytelling, safety & security, food, overlooking a river, of guests, atop a hill, buffet style, ablutions

KNP visitors

under the stars, overlooking a, watching the sunset, ablutions, fire torches, dam, dim light, wors, chops, steak, no rowdy guests, near a waterhole, listening to the, on a sandy, guides with passion, nightlife, riverbank or in a, ice for drinks, light and, no fancy food, pap & salads, dry riverbed, crackle of, tranquillity, camp fire, a bonfire, on top of a, lanterns, roar of a lion, coffee & camp fire, mountain, guides sharing, dessert, knowledgeable, memorable stories, candlelit, guide, smell of braai meat on the grill, good red wine, ablutions

CONCLUSIONS

- Wildlife watching plays an integral role in activity offerings in the KNP.
- Both the current market of overnight visitors to the KNP and guests of OSV operators could be considered target markets for the Bush Braai products. For the OSV market however, the product would need to be operated somewhat differently than the traditional market.
- The findings from the study equipped management with an initial indication of the viability of the product and insights into the preferences and expectations of a Bush Braai experience.