How to Choose an Airline for Domestic South African Flights by Tracy Narvaez

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There's plenty of fierce rivalry among carriers offering flights in South Africa. There is one state owned, average costing airline and four competitive budget options. Travelers usually take more than price into consideration during their transport selection. Most want a balanced experience including comfort, value for money, service and promptness.

Kulula was among the first low cost airlines to appear in SA. Its chief priority appears to be friendly service delivered with humor. Most locals know them for their hysterically funny safety guideline presentations before take off, which never fail to make passengers giggle. Comparatively, its prices are usually the highest in the budget market.

Reasonably tasty in flight meals are offered at extra cost in the form of sandwiches and snacks. They also have hot and cold beverages. There are seldom delays.

1Time prides itself on being the lowest costing domestic airline but most of the time that pride is a little misplaced because it's hardly ever at the bottom of the price pile. On the plus side, it's also hardly ever at the top. They have managed to achieve a balanced price range over all. The best way to save pennies with them is to book months in advance.

As is the norm, beverages and sandwiches are available at extra cost, but they also grant the opportunity to buy food vouchers with tickets. This is a convenient opportunity, particularly for parents sending children on trips. Their carriers look slightly rickety but their seating is wide and has plenty of leg room. Unfortunately, when it comes to promptness, they often fail. Delays are fairly common.

Mango, with its bright orange planes coloring the sky, is another airline in this market. It compares favorably with other budget options when it comes to price but it's also running an ad campaign promising that, in the near future, they will be offering prices so low they seem impossible. Currently available are one time opportunities for incredibly low priced carriage but those taking them up on the offer are likely to find that, in the end, their purses are no heavier than if they'd chosen an alternative airline. Thus far, their adverts appear to be part of a clever marketing ploy that doesn't deliver according to expectations.

Nationwide is the final budget offering. There are many tales about unfriendly and incompetent service from their Cape Town staff. Johannesburg's employees are friendly and capable, though. They excel in the food area, offering delicious three course meals.

SAA doesn't market itself as a budget airline. Their service is competent but nowhere near as friendly as Kulula's. Passengers are treated to offerings of food and drinks more often than on any other domestic carriers. Full wine selections are available, even on local trips, but their food is little more than satisfactory. All drinks and food are integrated into the cost of the ticket. Their carriers are the newest of all domestic airlines, with comfortable seating providing ample lateral and leg room.

In comparison to the airlines from other countries, South African carriers compare very well. They're often considered better than international options and many travelers choose to travel with them instead. Travelers in and out of this gorgeous country may well enjoy their flights only slightly less than they enjoy their visits.

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