



Why use a tour operator

Why use a tour operator or specialist guiding company when you can so easily book everything online, either from an online booking agent or directly on a direct accommodation or lodge website?

Does one save money going direct? The short answer is no, you won't necessarily save any money by booking direct and our bespoke guiding services are not available online. In fact, it may cost you more. Let us explain why, and unravel some of the other benefits of using a tour operator, and specifically Cybele Eco Tours, which is owner run and managed.

Trust – and why some say we need to see psychologists.

The way we work puts us at risk of losing some bookings from people we have done a lot of work for, who may not grasp these benefits, or mistakenly think they will save money by booking direct. Some think we are mad, but we don't charge anything for providing information and advice and even building itineraries, but we like to believe that there is a moral and tangible trust factor in most clients. We listen to your requirements, provide experienced and knowledgeable advice making specific recommendations from our portfolio for your trip, without charging any fee. In most cases we even design a customised itinerary for you and send out a detailed proposal with accommodation recommendations, pictures, descriptions, day by day itinerary, and a full breakdown of costs, includes and excludes. This is all done free of charge and with no obligation to book with us.

Andrea and I reinvest a large part of our profits into our suppliers and have travelled almost 20 000kms in the past 9 months, self-funded, driving most of the routes and visiting the special properties in our exclusive portfolio.

If our advice and proposals are free of charge, what stops you from using all the advice and suggested itinerary we have given you and book everything yourself? The answer is – nothing stops you. Are there not many people who use us for advice and information and abuse our willingness to offer free proposals with no obligation to book with us? Absolutely. It does happen. We often put in hours of work with no guarantee that it will result in a booking. Just like an assistant in a camera shop may spend an hour showing someone all the

benefits and functions of a particular camera, only to have that person walk out and go and order it online. It is time consuming, costly and unethical, but it does happen occasionally.

No Brainer

Booking cheaper often ends up being costly in the long run. We make all the inclusions and exclusions apparent in the initial proposal, thereby avoiding any shocks along the way. We are sure that you will be highly impressed with our service, advice and proposed itinerary that you decide to book with us like the other 95% of our direct enquiries

What really sets us apart from booking portals, larger operators and direct business?

1. Expert Advice

Andrea and I offer current, accurate and unbiased advice. We live here, we know Africa and pride ourselves on having our finger on the pulse of Africa. We travel regularly to most of the destinations we sell, and between us we have visited the majority of the lodges and properties we have in our exclusive collections. We will never recommend a lodge we know to be substandard or questionable. We know what works, we know how long it takes to get somewhere, what the local conditions are like, what weather you can expect, the seasons, how different lodges compare to each other, which areas or lodges or roads you should avoid, which order of destinations or combination of lodges will work well.

2. Travel Design-You aren't just another booking

Our expertise is in putting together a personalised bespoke itinerary that is perfectly suited to your requirements, needs and budget. We take time to listen to your requirements and discuss various options with you either via Zoom, Skype or email. Dealing with dedicated owners and not some automated call centre, is one of the many positives in our business.

3. Independent operators

Unlike many operators we compete with, we are completely independent and have no affiliation with any particular lodge or hotel group. This means we can offer unbiased advice and don't push you towards "our" lodges. We will help you compare different options, based on our own personal, first-hand experiences. **'Customer satisfaction should always outweigh profits'**

4. Price Matching

Many cannot believe it, as it costs either the same or often or not less to book through us. We do not add any booking fees, so even just booking your hotel or game lodge or tour through us will cost the same or less than if you book it directly with the supplier, or via an online booking agent. Because of years of experience in the trade, volumes and relationships with suppliers, we are able to negotiate competitive rates with all suppliers we work with, which are not available to individuals booking directly. We pass on some of that discount to you, and the rest is how we earn our income. Direct customers often end up paying too much for too little, without reading the fine print on their 'Special'. Making a mistake like misjudging

distances, travel times or road conditions can prove to be very expensive and detracts from the nature of holiday.

5. Simplifying

Instead of booking directly with multiple suppliers, with multiple conditions and having to make multiple different payments, you can now book and pay for everything in one go and pay less than if you booked everything directly, on your own. We take all the hassle out of planning a trip. Let us do the thinking and planning.

6. We are there for you

Guests have peace of mind knowing that their trip is in the best possible hands and they always have someone you can turn to in an emergency. In the unlikely event that anything should go wrong during the trip, we are a phone call, WhatsApp or email away to sort things out. As a client of , Cybele Eco Tours you will always be valued at our hand-picked accommodation and lodges and, if it should happen that you have a complaint or require a cancellation, amendment or refund from a for whatever reason, we will negotiate the circumstance on your behalf, using our influence with the lodge to your advantage. This is a major benefit compared to booking online, in which case you have little or no recourse.

7. SATSA

We are fully bonded SATSA South Africa members, covered by financial failure insurance, which means you cannot lose any money paid upfront. In the very unlikely event that our company should close down, you will get your money back. This benefit should not be overlooked – many clients have been left stranded after booking directly.

8. Unique Service and Tours

Not only do we design all of our tours that we sell, we also provide one of Africa's most unique hosted, guided and cheffed owner run tours via our specialist company 'Butler in the Bush'. These tours are truly bespoke and shows Africa 'Through our eyes'.



Andrea Muenster and Trevor Clarke are joint owners of Cybele Eco Tours Pty LTD. They have an accumulative total of more than 50 years in African travel. Passionate accredited guides they are focussed on upliftment as well as show casing the hidden gems of Africa. Proposals and itineraries are offered both in English and German.