

SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM ANALYSIS



South African economy is nowadays witnessing considerable growth. Among other factors that caused it is the boom in the tourism industry. In fact tourism along with bio-fuels and business process outsourcing has been identified as the key high-growth potential area in the government's Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa. This initiative is supposed to raise the country's economic growth rate to 6% and to lower the poverty and unemployment to 50% by 2014. The growth of international tourism in South Africa began after the end of apartheid. Last year the South African tourism grew much faster than the global tourism. The fact is that the global tourism growth rate was 4.5% over the same period. The country also witnesses a growth in the air travel. China Eastern Airlines stands as an example because it has announced its first direct service between China and South Africa. The growth of tourism has of course a very positive effect on the country's hotels as well. Statistics South Africa reported a 6.4% increase in the occupancy rates at hotels and other forms of accommodation in 2006. Another well performing sector of tourism industry is the meeting, incentive travel, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) sector. The annual Trends & Spends survey has shown Cape Town the number one long-haul tourism destination for conference groups. "The MICE market is a hugely important one for this province, so our progression in these rankings is vital," Calvyn Gilfellan of Cape Town Routes Unlimited said. "Our mandate is to bring more visitors here, to get them to stay longer, spend more, visit more often and visit throughout the year, not just in the summer months," he added. South Africa was also voted the second country in terms of long-haul destinations. The number one is the United States of America.

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