

Africa: Tour Operators Helping Locals

Giving back to the community is increasingly becoming a very important factor when selecting tour operators. This is especially true for any one travelling to Africa for a safari. This trend has seen the driving force of the various community based projects now being run by various tour operators in Africa. Such initiatives give all the three main parties involved a better chance to not only interact but also help one another. This has been hailed as the best way of going for a safari in Africa. Here we explore the top tour operators helping locals in Africa.



East Africa: Eyes on Africa Safaris

Eyes on Africa Safaris is a ground tour operator which is based in Mombasa Kenya. The tour operator organizes tours in Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania. All these countries are in East Africa. This is one of the most respected tour operators in this region with an experience spanning more than 10 years. So how does the company give back to the community? First, Eyes on Africa Safaris supports local community based projects via education and direct investments. Secondly, the company engages in a number of eco-friendly practices. They also have started their very own community based project under the banner "Maji Moto Eco Camp in the Maasai Mara area. Through the camp, the tour operator reaches the local Maasai community through education programs, direct employment and environmental conservation. The tourist benefits through getting a better opportunity to interact with local African people in their local setting. Visit Eyes on Africa Safaris' website at Eyesonafricasafaris.com



West Africa: Arch Tours

In West Africa, there are a number of tour operators also giving back to the community just like their East African counterparts. One notable operator who cannot escape mention is Arch Tours based in Gambia. Over the years, Arch Tours has distinguished itself as one of the leading tour operators in West Africa. This coupled with responsible tour practices such as eco tours, investment in community projects and sponsorships make the company the tour operator of choice to any one travelling to West Africa. The "Arch Tour Community Development Project" run by the company is designed in a manner that the

tourist, the locals and the environment benefit mutually. Through the project, Arch Tours gives back to the local community via investing in local schools and villages among others. The inclusion of the local community especially in the eco-tourism program endears the tour operator to both locals and tourists. Visit the operator's website at Arch-tours.com

South Africa: South Africa 365

The tour operators in South Africa have also not been left behind in giving back to their local communities. Recent studies have indicated that some of the responsible tourism practices embraced by most tour operators in South Africa include employing locals, purchasing local supplies, participation in education, health as well as environmental conservation initiatives in their sphere of operation. Other areas which have been identified as avenues for helping local communities include partnerships, and donating to charity. This again has impacted positively the tourism industry in the region. This is especially important considering the poverty levels in Africa.



An example in this region is South Africa 365, a South African based tour operator whose operations cover most countries in the region. The tour operator whose headquarters are in Cape Town has over the years participated in various community based projects and is well respected by the locals. South Africa 365 is affiliated with "Fair Trade in SA (FTSA)" which is a nonprofit organization whose mandate is to certify businesses whose operations benefit the local community in one way or another. Visit Southafrica365.com/industry-affiliations/ for more about this community participation.

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