

UGANDA BECOMING TOP TOURIST DESTINATION IN AFRICA



Once a war-torn country ravaged by bloody civil war, Uganda is now one of the best places for tourists to visit in Africa. Tourists from around the world now seem to be favoring Uganda as their favored country in Africa.

Kenya tourism secretary Dr. Nelson Githinji recently said that Uganda tourism sector grew by 25% in 2011, a commendable performance compared to other countries like South Africa which recorded only 21% growth – a country which recently hosted the Football World Cup in 2010.

“One of the primary reasons for this impressive growth was the country's increasing stability and the guaranteed security it offers to tourists,” Githinji said.

Uganda suffered a civil war during the 1980s when the Uganda Bush War raged between 1981-1986 claiming more than 100,000 lives. An insurgency is still ongoing in the northern part of the country waged by the Lord's Resistance Army operating from Southern Sudan. **But for the past 20 years, most of Uganda has so far experienced relative peace and political stability, particularly in the southern part of the country.**

Githinji said that the tourism growth can be also attributed to the country's landmarks. Popular places that have welcomed great amounts of tourists include Murchison Falls Park, Queen Elisabeth National Park, and the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest with its world-renowned Mountain Gorillas.

Uganda is a country located in the African Great Lakes Region, and focuses its tourism industry on wildlife and nature destinations. The country's national parks draw about 200,000 visitors each year.

The Murchison Falls Park is the country's largest park covering an area of almost 4,000 square kilometers. Other well-known national parks are the Lake Mburo National Park, and the Kibaale National Park.

Other popular activities include boating along the River Nile and the country's lakes; hiking and mountain climbing. Uganda's well known peaks include the snow-capped Margeritha peak, Mount Gahinga, Mount Sabyinyo, Mount Muhavura, Mount Elgon, and the Mountains of the Moon of Rwenzori National Park.

Tourists visiting the country often arrive at the country through neighboring Kenya.

Tourism plays important role in Uganda's economy contributing about 5% of the country's GDP.

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