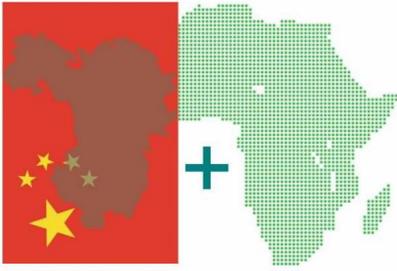


CHINA-AFRICAN TOURIST EXCHANGE



According to Beijing, China-Africa tourism exchanges have been on the rise since 2000 with China playing host to as many as 294,000 African tourists (a year-on-year growth of 23.4%). In return this is mirrored by the 35.2 % growth of Chinese choosing Africa as their destination of preference, with around 194,000 tourists traveling to this location during the last year. The three top destinations in Africa are Kenya, Egypt and South Africa, although the list of countries who are steadily improving their tourist facilities is growing as more companies try to exploit the entertainment niches to be found there.

For the keen globetrotter, Africa offers a variety of activities, the most notable being safari and wildlife-culture tourism. These entertainment sectors are arguably unrivalled and have recently gained extensive foreign sponsorship. For the burgeoning middle-class population in India and China with its rising disposable income, many Chinese and Indian companies based in Africa are taking this opportunity to offer low-cost sightseeing trips. African wildlife safari tourism has been seen as a "sleeping giant" by Harry G Broadman, Economic Advisor with the World Bank's Africa Vice-President office.

According to Chinese travel firms, there is a growing demand for overseas travel and tours and this has generated a 10-30% increase in package prices. Standard eight-day tours to Egypt and South Africa now cost about 13,000 yuan (1,665 U.S. dollars) and 16,000 yuan (2,050 dollars). Nevertheless the two lines are so popular that many operators find that they are already fully booked past the Spring Festivals. Famous Chinese photographer Luo Hong who has recently concluded an exhibition in Beijing depicting true stories of African life, does not doubt that the popularity of Africa as a destination will increase and comments that "Africa is a paradise for wildlife, the landscapes, animals and human beings there create a harmonious and beautiful picture."

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