

KENYA LOWERING TAXES TO BOOST A RECOVERY IN TOURISM



The Kenyan tourism industry has seen its fair share of problems in recent years as it has struggled to attract tourists and fight off its negative image. There is an undeniable need for recovery in the country following poor visitor numbers and a series of security warnings against Nairobi and Mombasa, cities that were once key destinations for tourists but have been in a steady decline for a number of years following numerous attacks, and this has led to Kenya Tourism Board implementing emergency measures for improving tourism economy. Creating a better image is one aspect but there is an even bigger focus on taxes.

By lowering taxes and improving public perceptions, it is hoped that the country's tourism industry will recover.

Taxes have been a big part of the problem, with landing fees at leading airports and the prices hikes for the some of Kenya more premium parks in 2013 being prime examples that are discouraging visitors and investors, but local authorities are going back on some of these measure to reduce costs and are putting more money into these airports for future gains. The entry fees for Amboseli and Nakuru Parks have been downgraded, with prices falling from \$90 to \$80, airport charges are being reduced and - from May 29th - all air tickets sold by Kenyan agencies will be VAT free. Mombasa Airport's fees are being reduced by 40% and Malindi's by 10%, however, funding has also been approved to get Malindi Airport up to international standards so it can accommodate larger aircraft and more direct flights. Malindi is a key coastal resort but a lack of direct access is problematic. With these measures, alongside an online media campaign for the European market that will be up and running in a few weeks, it seems that Kenyan authorities are making the most of resources at home and aboard to really fight this image of a dangerous nation and attract more business.

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