

UGANDA LOOKS TO THE RUSSIAN AND CHINESE MARKETS



In recent years, African travellers have accounted for around 76% of inbound tourism into Uganda, 47% of those from nearby Kenya. Uganda relies heavily upon tourism, and since African visitors simply do not bring sufficient revenue to sustain the economy, tourist organisations are looking for extra sources of income. The main targets have been identified as Russia and China.

Uganda has plenty to offer, with the extreme biodiversity found in the Albertine valley area, natural scenery unmatched in nearby countries, an incredible number of bird species and more than half of the world's surviving mountain gorillas. Such natural and unique assets have been placed at the forefront of most recent advertising campaigns, including the fact that these assets encompass the source waters of the Nile. Such campaigns have been specifically focused on the world's biggest and fastest growing markets.

Recently, a group of Russian tour operators arrived in Uganda to discuss and conclude contractual agreements with the Ugandan tourism authorities in an attempt to open Uganda up as a possible holiday destination to Russian people. This will be seen as a further step for Russian people away from the memory of travel restrictions in place during the communist era. The Ugandan gin, Waragi, is being marketed as a suitable substitute for the world-famous Russian vodka, and much of the local travel literature has been translated into Russian. China, too, has been targeted equally as strongly as the Russian market, as the recent conclusion of the Approved Destination Status has indicated. This is an official international agreement between two countries approving of their citizens' visits to one another. It has been considered a landmark in Ugandan-Chinese tourism relations.

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