

# Kenya's Tourism Sector Growing & Boosting the Economy



The tourism industry in Kenya is now challenging tea and horticulture as the country's main source of income. Similarly, Kenya itself is outrunning North African tourism giants Morocco and Egypt in a bid to win the crown of Africa's biggest overall tourist attraction. Kenya last year enjoyed a 19% increase in tourist revenue, whereas their two big rivals managed just 12%. Earnings from tourism were tipped to peak at \$258.5 million, thus beating most other African nations by a mile. If things continue to take shape the way they have been since 2004, then a total of 1 billion tourists are expected to visit Kenya by 2010. The British market is the fastest growing, with a steady yearly increase of around 8,000 visitors coming to Kenya from the UK. The Italians come a close second.

There are a number of reasons for this positive turnaround in the fortunes of the Kenyan tourism industry. Firstly, the Kenyans themselves are beginning to appreciate what their beautiful homeland has to offer. The stunning palm-fringed beaches and national parks, full of some of the world's rarest species, are not only for foreigners to enjoy. Secondly, the government has recognised the importance of tourism and has made numerous steps to improve this sector of the Kenyan economy.

In order to help local businesses involved in tourism, VAT exemptions have been introduced to relieve financial burdens. There have also been attempts to improve the lending culture for small businesses and give Kenyan businessman the chance to thrive in the tourism sector. By reducing costs, the government is aiming to enhance productivity within the economy and they see this project as a long-term plan to bring more money into the country from abroad. The unbelievable growth in the international popularity of Kenya looks set to continue.

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