

TOURISM IN SENEGAL IS ON THE RIGHT TRACK



Tourism in Senegal reported positive numbers. In 2016, local authorities recorded 1.6 million tourists as compared to the 984 000 visitors in 2015.

According to a recent report by Jumia Travel, a hotel reservation platform, the increase is a result of the governmental support of the sector as well as local travel companies. **The visa-free entry, which was introduced last year, helped to boost tourism in Senegal substantially.**

The report shows that the capital city Dakar is still the destination most visited by tourists, making up 41% of the demand. However, it is also the most expensive destination with an average nightly cost of 42 000 FCFA, followed by the region of Petite Côte (35%) with an average nightly cost of 41 000 FCFA, as well as Sine Saloum (9%) 33 000 FCFA, and the river region and Casamanca (7% and 4% respectively) with an average nightly cost of 24 000 FCFA and 18 000 FCFA.

Three star hotels are the ones most sought after by tourists (42%), followed by two star hotels (31%), four star hotels (16%), and five star hotels (6%); as far as one star hotels are concerned, they only make up 5% of the total demand.

In this regard, the report insists on the maintenance and renovation of hotel establishments which are essential for tourism in Senegal “Quality is neglected by many hotels, which is a major problem when dealing with international tourism. Consumers are very demanding these days, and in order to attract more tourists, we need to create an irreproachable brand for ourselves,” stated the authors of the report.

Another important point mentioned in the report, is the development of local tourism, which, while it is still at a low level, is growing due to the development of the middle class as well as to the increase in the number of tourists from other continental countries.

In terms of distribution, international visitors represent 54% of all tourists and mainly choose leisure or business destinations. **63.8% of total tourism revenue is generated by international tourists whereas local tourism generates 32.6%.**

The report underlines several areas in which improvement of tourism in Senegal is needed, namely in the development of ecotourism, which could greatly contribute towards placing Senegal among the most popular tourist destinations. Improvements should also be made in the area of training, because despite the plethora of higher-learning establishments in Senegal, training programs for the tourism industry are almost nonexistent.

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