

AFRICAN TOURISM - CONTINENTAL PERSPECTIVE



Africa is a mysterious and thus attractive continent for many tourists. Its countries offer wonderful experiences ranging from animal watching to traveling on a camel's back through the Sahara desert. This world's second biggest continent has simply a great potential for the tourism industry. Tourism has been growing rapidly here over the last few years and it has been rising faster than in other parts of our planet. In 2005 Mozambique and Kenya were the fastest-growing tourist destinations. Kenya is a big player in the African tourism industry. The country's tourism industry has managed to attract almost one million tourists and to earn \$857 million in 2006. Tourism is also a very important employer for this nation.

Finding the new tourism destinations is a big business these days. Some countries that were once important tourist hot spots are coming back like e.g. Tanzania or Ivory Coast. Countries are improving their infrastructure to lure more visitors and also to diversify their economy.

The reality, however, is not only bright. First of all, many African countries are politically unstable. Recent post election outrages in Kenya are putting many tourists off. Other issue that needs to be dealt with is the air safety. African tourism needs to improve its air travel security to lure more visitors. Not only visitors need to be protected. The countries also should make steps to preserve their unique ecosystems that are often the attraction for which are the foreign tourists coming to these destinations.

It is also important to mention that sub-Saharan Africa's tourism generates considerably more money than the tourism of North Africa. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization the growth of the African tourism industry will continue. Its neighbor - Europe grows at a slower pace, nevertheless, it is still number one in the industry.

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