

TOURISM IN AFRICA IS ALMOST BACK ON TRACK



According to the Africa Visa Openness Index 2023 of the African Development Bank, accessibility has improved or remained the same for 50 African countries. Recent developments include abolishing visa requirements for all African travelers in Rwanda, Kenya, Gambia, Benin, and the Seychelles.

Since January 2024, all international travelers may enter Kenya without a visa. In the first week of January 2024, the Immigration Department of Kenya received almost 10,000 applications for the new Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA), which permits foreign nationals to travel to the country. **Kenya anticipates doubling its tourist numbers from approximately 2 million visitors to 5 million arrivals per year** within the next five years, thanks to the new online system. Experts say the liberal visa policy will make traveling to Kenya easier and lead to more cross-border investments in Africa.

Tourism in Africa has been developing fast as the destinations are becoming increasingly popular among travelers from the African middle class and overseas tourists. The tourism figures for 2023 in Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa reflect this trend. According to Kenya's Tourism Research Institute, African citizens comprised approximately 42% of the total tourist arrivals in the previous year. Among the emerging markets, Nigeria (+6%) and Ghana (+48%) experienced the most significant growth, making West African countries an essential target for strategic marketing measures.

According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics in Tanzania, most tourist arrivals in Africa between January and August 2023 came from Kenya, followed by Burundi, Zambia, Rwanda, and Uganda. During this period, more visitors came from Kenya than from the USA or France, and more travelers came from Burundi than from Germany or Great Britain.

A similar trend is being witnessed in South Africa, where, as per Statistics South Africa, **travelers from other African states accounted for the largest share of tourist arrivals in 2023**, making up 75.6% of the total. In the fourth quarter of 2023, visitors from other African countries exceeded the number of tourist arrivals in the same period of the pre-pandemic year 2019 by 11.9%.

According to UN Tourism, tourism in Africa in 2023 is predicted to be only 4% less than in 2019, before the pandemic. To boost tourism, African nations are increasingly eliminating visa requirements, particularly for intra-African travel.

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