

Kenya Tourism Sector Performance Report 2019

Americans love vacationing in Kenya

[Juergen T Steinmetz January 10, 2020 09:49](#)



Vacationing in Kenya! This is a favorite for American travelers and big business for the Kenya Tourism Industry. Witness to this is the Kenya Tourism Sector Performance Report for 2019. The report was just released by the National Bureau of Statistics.

The man to be credited for an 1.6 billion Dollar African Tourism success is Najib Balala, Secretary of Tourism for Kenya.

Americans love to travel to Kenya since the US remains the largest western tourism source country for this East African Country, followed by the UK, India, China, Germany, France, and Italy. **In 2019 2,048,334 international visitors arrived in Kenya, 1,423,971 landed in Nairobi, and 128,222 in Mombasa. 29,462 visitors arrived at other airports and 467,179 visitors arrived by land. In 2018 total arrivals were recorded at 2,025,206 – it means Kenya had a 1.167% increase in 2019**

Entry through Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and Moi International Airport registered a substantial growth of 6.07% and 8.56% respectively compared with the overall growth of 1.167%. The other entry points registered a decline most significantly the land borders had a decrease in arrivals of -12.69%.

This is an indication that air connectivity will continue to be a major driver for the growth of international arrivals to Kenya

The current visitors course markets from 1 to 20

1. USA 245,437
2. Uganda: 223,010
3. Tanzania: 193,740
4. UK 181,484
5. India: 122,649
6. China: 84,208
7. Germany: 73,1509
8. France: 54,979
9. Italy: 54,607
10. South Africa: 46,926
11. Rwanda: 42,321
12. Canada: 41,039
13. Ethiopia: 40,220
14. The Netherlands: 37,266
15. Nigeria: 32,906
16. Somalia: 32,268
17. Burundi: 31,218
18. Australia: 27,867
19. Spain: 26,398
20. South Sudan: 24,646

TOP 20 SOURCE MARKETS FOR 2019 IN COMPARISON WITH 2018

	USA	UG	TZ	UK	INDIA	CHINA	GERMANY	FRANCE	ITALY	SA
2019 Arrivals	245,437	223,010	193,740	181,484	122,649	84,208	73,150	54,979	54,607	46,926
2018 Arrivals	225,157	212,216	204,082	184,002	125,032	81,709	78,388	48,189	65,134	49,993
Variation	20,280	10,794	-10,342	-2,518	-2,383	2,499	-5,238	6,790	-10,527	-3,067
% Change	9.007%	5.086%	-5.068%	-1.368%	-1.906%	3.058%	-6.682%	14.090%	-16.162%	-6.135%

	RWANDA	CANADA	ETHIOPIA	NLD	NIGERIA	SOMALIA	BURUNDI	AUS	SPAIN	S. SUDAN
2019 Arrivals	43,321	41,039	40,220	37,266	32,906	32,268	31,218	27,867	26,398	24,646
2018 Arrivals	34,758	41,859	40,322	37,703	35,552	34,317	27,680	27,656	25,027	20,383
Variation	8,563	-820	-102	-437	-2,646	-2,049	3,538	211	1,371	4,263
% Change	24.636%	-1.959%	-0.253%	-1.159%	-7.443%	-5.971%	12.782%	0.763%	5.478%	20.914%

<http://www.tourismupdate.co.za/article/197777/Kenya-tourism-sees-good-growth/37>

The age for visitors:

- 18-24 11%
- 25-34 29%
- 35-44 30%
- 45-54 18%
- 55-64 8%
- 65 and over 4%

63.15% of all visitors traveled on holiday, 13.5% on business, 10.5% visited friends and families,

Kenya's travel and tourism revenue in 2019 was a healthy USD 1,610,342,854 with 4,955,800 bed nights sold. In 2018 statistics recorded 4,489,000.

How did Destination Kenya promote?

- Global Online consumer campaigns on Google,
- Online Travel agencies such as Travel Zoo
- Aljazeera and CNN Online
- Continuous Digital consumer advertising campaigns on Expedia and Tripadvisor and on social media and Google search.
- Joint marketing campaigns with travel trade associations such as APTA, SATOA, ATTA, in key markets.
- Travel trade roadshows in the UK, India, USA and China markets showcasing experiences and services by the private sector players

Global travel trade exhibitions including MKTE in Nairobi, ITB Berlin, ITB Asia in Singapore, WTM London, WTM Africa in Cape Town, OTM in India, and USTOA, USA.

- Domestic Campaigns themed "TembeaKenyaNaMimi" through TV, digital platforms and radio.
- Destination profiling events for a global PR campaign to leverage on positives around the destination e.g Kenya Golf Open, NY Marathon and Ineos 1:59 Challenge.
- Refreshed brand – "EmbraceMoreMagic"

Positive developments that helped with increased arrivals included in 2019:

- Effects after resuming flights between Paris and Nairobi in 2018. Air France in March 2019 increased its flights' frequency from three to five weekly. The French market has also seen growth as others like the UK declined.
- Qatar Airways started direct flights from Doha to Mombasa in December 2018. This was expected to serve various markets, Doha is a major connection hub.
- Ethiopian Airlines increased flight frequency to Mombasa from one to two daily flights during the year.

- TUI and Neos increased their charter flights to Moi International Airport further boosting arrivals to via Mombasa
- The commencement of direct flights between Nairobi and New York by Kenya Airways in October 2018 has contributed to the sustained growth of the American market.

The country experienced continued political stability throughout the year. The tourism environment has enjoyed stability and consequently contributed to the recorded growth.

The security situation remained stable in the year with sustained investment in the same by the Government. There was one terrorist [attack at the Dusit2 hotel in Nairobi](#) early in the year that directly affected tourism.

World Bank rated Kenya for the Ease of Doing Business report showing that in 2019, Kenya improved five positions to 56 globally on attractiveness to investors up from 61 in 2018.

This has been pegged on among others, automation of systems that have made starting a business in Kenya easy and a commitment by the Government to continue adopting a robust regulatory framework and improve the business environment.

The recorded growth was however slower than targeted and this can be attributed to factors key among them being:

Dusit d2 terrorist attack in January 2019 and subsequent reinstatement of some travel alerts where advisories had been lifted in 2018.

- The financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20 saw a decline in budgetary resources available for tourism development and marketing.
- Generally slowed down growth globally. UNWTO reported that tourism in Sub-Saharan Africa overall was growing at 1% up to September of that year and globally, the rate of growth slowed down from 6% in 2018 to 4%.

Global Indicators: International tourist arrivals grew 4% in January-September 2019 compared to 6% growth recorded in 2018, which is in line with the annual average of 4% of the last ten years (2008-2018).

North Africa grew by 10% while Sub-Saharan Africa grew by 1% which is comparable to the growth in destination Kenya. (UNWTO)

European carriers showed a strong turnaround in 2019 driven by higher cash flow generation from operating activities. In Africa and Middle

East, passenger traffic grew by 9.9% year-on-year. The Americas recorded a 2.4% decline in air passenger volumes fuelled by increasing uncertainty in the socio-economic and political backdrop in some of the region's key economies. (IATA)

According to UNWTO Tourism Barometer, data reported by 127 world destinations for January- September 2019 point to an increase in international tourism receipts across most

regions. 78% (99 destinations) saw an increase in international tourism earnings compared to the same period last year, while 22% experienced a decrease

Free Independent Travel accounts for 36.1% of international visitors to Kenya. It is gaining popularity due to:

- Personal freedom as opposed to being “tied down” to a group of friends, family or partner.
- Personal growth from solo adventure experience.
- Wanting to maximize “me-time.
- Opportunity to meet new people and often make friends.

Some are young singles looking for social activities or to find a partner.

- Some widowed seniors use long-term hotel stays or cruises as a luxurious alternative to conventional elderly care facilities.

Tourism service providers should maximize this potential by:

- Offering packages like professional, personalized one-on one tours
- Ensuring safety, trustworthiness and destination reliability.

Value for Money

This is fuelled by various factors including:

- Last-minute offers on the internet.
- An array of price comparison tools at travellers’ disposal.
- Reading former guests’ online reviews.

It has resulted in a maximizing type of traveller. There is more sensitivity to value for money and destinations’ price rating.

Trends for 2020 and beyond

27% of holidaymakers are seeking to visit a new destination/country and almost a third (32%) are expecting to visit a new resort or city with more seeking for adventure” (ABTA).

Gastronomy is increasingly becoming a central part of the tourist’s experience as opposed to being a supporting experience. There is need for innovation in gastronomy, offer organic & special diets and observe high levels of hygiene

Tourists want flexibility where they can book products while at the destination as opposed to rigid predetermined packages. From enjoying local cuisine to celebrating regional festivals and holidays, local experiences are set to become some of the top tourist trends to watch. The more closely an experience can be tailored to a client’s desires and expectations, the more likely they are to return and to use the same service again.

Convenience Through Technology

To include people with physical and intellectual disabilities Accessible tourism looks beyond the number of people with physical and intellectual disabilities, to encompass all those with mobility needs — including seniors and babies across the human lifecycle.

Accessible Tourism The drive towards an omnichannel presence is directing influencers from social media into the tour operator space, leveraging their communities to launch tours that are curated and more personalized.

Examples are the Instagramonly app called Six Travel, where you can book hotels directly on Instagram from influencers' stories or via a link in their bio.

[Kenya Tourism Sector Performance Report – 2019](#) [Click to download](#)

[Kenya is a country in East Africa](#) with a coastline on the Indian Ocean. It encompasses savannah, Lakelands, the dramatic Great Rift Valley and mountain highlands. It's also home to wildlife like lions, elephants, and rhinos. From Nairobi, the capital, safaris visit the Maasai Mara Reserve, known for its annual wildebeest migrations, and Amboseli National Park, offering views of Tanzania's 5,895m Mt. Kilimanjaro.

The Hon. Najib Balala is a member of the [African Tourism Board Advisory Committee](#)



Kenya Secretary of Tourism Najib Balala, Doris Woerfel CEO ATB, Cuthbert Ncube, Chair African Tourism Board

<https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/kenya-needs-a-new-airport-and-convention-centre-to-boost-tourism-says-balala/>
<https://www.eturbonews.com/539335/kenya-tourism-sector-performance-report-2019/>