

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Africa to receive 25M travelers per year by 2022: Euromonitor

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Niche tourism and luxury travel are fueling the growth. Image credit: Four Seasons

By DANNY PARISI

International travel to Africa is expected to reach 18 million travelers this year, marking a significant increase in tourism to the continent.

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According to Euromonitor, digitalization and niche tourism are driving travel to Africa in greater numbers than usual this year, presenting an opportunity for travel companies to capitalize on the increased interest. Travel to Africa has grown by almost 7 percent over the last year, signaling a boost in popularity for Africa's many resorts and hotels.

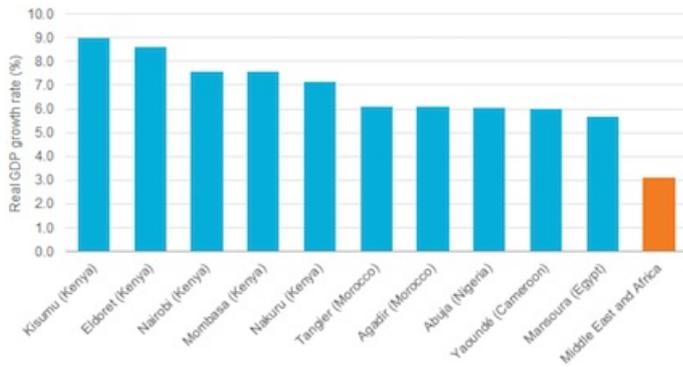
"Many countries are moving away from only promoting Africa as a traditional safari destination, exploring other niche categories such as beach and medical tourism," said Christy Tawii, research analyst at **Euromonitor**, Cape Town.

Global travel

When people think of luxury travel, they usually think of some of the hubs of Europe and Asia, such as Paris and Tokyo.

But a new report from Euromonitor shows that Africa is increasingly becoming a destination for leisure travel, to the tune of 18 million expected visitors this year.

That number represents 2 million more visitors per year than the last measurement, indicating a 65 percent increase in travelers to Africa in 2017.



Source: Euromonitor International

The top destinations in Africa. Image credit: Euromonitor

Euromonitor attributes this growth to a number of sources. For one, travel in general has become easier thanks to the increasing availability of digital tools that unify flight booking, hotel booking and trip planning all in a single service.

Additionally, niche tourism, such as safaris, are popular among wealthy travelers, who can afford to visit some of the more exotic locations in Africa.

South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Mozambique, Cameroon, Mauritius and Tanzania are the key markets for this travel boom, representing most of the market for African travel this year.



Four Seasons Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa. Image credit: Four Seasons

Euromonitor predicts this growth will continue, reaching as many as 25 million travelers to Africa in 2022.

African investment

The development of cities is needed for emerging markets to grow as urban areas have the largest share of economic growth. Many cities attribute GDP growth to economic and population growth, and accordingly, some cities can achieve 40 to 70 percent more rapid growth than their countries.

With major cities driving economic growth, sometimes more so than the entire country, the fastest growing metropolitan areas will be in the Middle East and Africa in 2017 ([see story](#)).

This growth translates to increased resources for luxury travelers.



Fairmont's The Norfolk in Nairobi, Kenya. Image credit: Fairmont Hotels & Resorts

Many luxury travel companies have begun investing in African resources in order to meet the growing demand for travel to the region.

Four Seasons Safari Lodge Serengeti is helping the Frankfurt Zoological Society take on poaching by funding its mobile de-snaring team.

The lodge is among the tour operators supporting the effort, which patrols Serengeti National Park looking for poachers operating in the bush meat trade. Hotels often take on causes central to their community, and with Four Seasons' property centrally located in the Serengeti, environmental and wildlife conservation are at the heart of its outreach ([see story](#)).

With the growing interest in travel to Africa, expect more developments and investments in the region from travel companies to meet that demand.

"The travel and tourism market continues to introduce products that suit different type of travelers, accounting for strong growth in major cities across Sub-Saharan Africa," Euromonitor's Ms. Tawii said.

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