



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Tourism House, 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside. Private Bag X 424, PRETORIA - 0001
Tel + 27 (0) 12 444 6000· Fax + 27 (0) 12 444 7000. Call Center: 0860 121 929

International tourist arrivals to South Africa approach the 10 million mark

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The latest release from Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) indicates that international foreign arrivals to South Africa reached its highest levels ever, namely 14 860 216 in 2013. This 10.5% increase in international foreign arrivals (over 13 451 565 in 2012) translated to 9.6 million international tourist arrivals. All international tourist arrivals combined increased by 4.7%, while the overseas tourist arrivals sub-category increased by 7.1%.

South Africa welcomed a total of 9 616 964 tourists in 2013, up from the 9 188 368 tourists that visited South Africa in 2012.

Tourist arrivals to South Africa in 2013 showed positive growth from all regions.

“South Africa’s tourism sector continued to show positive growth in 2013, reaching a record high of 9.6 million international tourist arrivals. Overall, South Africa recorded 428 596 more tourists in 2013 than we did in 2012,” announced South African Minister of Tourism, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk.

“Following excellent growth in 2012, when tourist arrivals to South Africa grew by 10.2%, which was more than two and a half times the global average, we are pleased to report that tourist arrival numbers to South Africa grew by a further 4.7% in 2013.

“South Africa’s tourism industry continues to show good growth and we remain confident in the ongoing performance and sustainability of the sector,” said Mr Van Schalkwyk.

South Africa’s international tourist arrivals grew at an annual average growth rate of 7.4% between 2011 and 2013, well above the global average of 4.5% during this period.

Positive growth from all regions

In 2013, South Africa saw growth from all regions and from all markets in which it is actively marketing the destination.

South Africa saw good growth out of Europe, its largest overseas market for tourist arrivals, in 2013. A total of 1 494 978 European tourist arrivals were recorded in 2013, a 7.0% increase on the 1 396 978 European tourists who visited South Africa in 2012.

“We are pleased to report ongoing good growth from the majority of our European markets, with double digit growth in 2013 for three of our largest markets in the region, Germany (14.2%), France (10.3%) and Italy (10.6%),” noted Mr Van Schalkwyk.

A total of 304 090 German tourists visited South Africa in 2013, firmly entrenching its status as South Africa’s third largest source market for overseas tourist arrivals. Tourist arrivals from France, South Africa’s fifth biggest overseas source market, grew to 134 840, while Italian tourist arrivals reached 67 790.

South Africa's largest overseas source market, the UK, however, grew by a modest 1% to reach a total of 442 523 tourist arrivals in 2013.

In total, South Africa recorded 417 582 North American tourists in 2013, up from 393 446 in 2012.

South Africa's second largest market, the USA, accounted for 348 646 tourist arrivals in 2013, reflecting 6.7% growth on the 326 643 Americans that visited South Africa in 2012.

"The US market remains a major focus of our global marketing efforts and we are heartened by the continued good growth we have seen out of this market in recent years," said Mr Van Schalkwyk.

Asia, and Central and South America continued to record good growth on top of the exceptional levels witnessed in 2012, in which these markets grew by 34% and 37% respectively.

A total of 435 076 Asian tourist arrivals were recorded in 2013, a 9.2% increase on 2012 numbers.

China, South Africa's fourth largest source market for tourist arrivals for the second year in a row, continued to perform, growing by 14.7% to reach 151 847 tourist arrivals in 2013. Arrivals out of India tempered in 2013, growing by 5.5% to reach 112 672 arrivals.

Central and South American tourist arrivals numbers grew by 8.0% to reach 129 463. Brazil remains by far the biggest market out of this region growing by close to 5.6% to reach 82 802 tourist arrivals.

South African Tourism is increasing its marketing efforts in Brazil having appointed a marketing agency in the country earlier this year and will, for the first time ever, take a delegation of South African exhibitors to the ABAV travel tradeshow in Sao Paulo, the largest travel trade fair in the Americas.

"We remain excited by the potential offered by emerging markets. We are working closely with our partners in the industry to better market the destination in these regions and to make South Africa a more accessible destination for travellers from these countries," said Mr Van Schalkwyk.

Australasia tourist arrivals to South Africa grew by 4.0% in 2013, with 148 660 tourist arrivals recorded.

Africa, by far the largest source of tourism arrivals to South Africa, grew from 6 634 933 in 2012 to 6 889 389 in 2013. This amounts to growth in arrivals of almost 4%.

African air markets continued to perform, with African air tourist arrivals growing by 12% in 2013, with growth recorded from all markets.

"Travel is becoming ever more accessible for Africa's rapidly growing middle class and we are certainly seeing this reflected in the growing number of African air arrivals to South Africa," said Mr Van Schalkwyk.

Nigeria, the largest African air market for South Africa's tourist arrivals, grew by 15.4% to reach 84 589 tourist arrivals.

"We expect our first fully fledged South African Tourism office in the continent, which we opened in Lagos at the beginning of this year, to result in continued growth in arrivals from this market of growing importance and from the West African region as a whole," said Mr Van Schalkwyk.

Tourism's contribution to the economy

The latest Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) data for tourism receipts and job creation show that South Africa's tourism sector continues to increase its contribution both to the country's GDP and to job creation.

According to TSA statistics, released by Statistics South Africa for the period ending December 2012, direct tourism contribution to GDP grew from R83.5 billion in 2011 to R93,3 billion or 3% of GDP in 2012. Similarly, tourism contributed approximately 617 287 direct jobs in 2012, amounting to about 4.6% of direct employment in the country, up from over 591 785 direct jobs in 2011.

Dashboard for tourism performance to be developed

The Minister also announced plans to take the country's industry insights and market intelligence to the next level.

"Great strides have been made by the tourism sector over the past decade to develop its knowledge base. We are now ready to take our efforts to the next level by transforming all of this information into intelligence through the development of a dashboard for the tourism sector," noted Mr Van Schalkwyk.

"This dashboard will cover indicators for both the demand and supply sides of our industry, better reflecting our full value chain, as well as forward-looking lead indicators to supplement the current focus on historical arrivals and receipts. Working closely with our key stakeholders, we will be ready to launch this dashboard during tourism month in September," said Mr Van Schalkwyk.

In conclusion, the Minister said that ongoing growth in all the markets in which South Africa actively markets the destination was proof that the country's carefully considered marketing strategy was delivering the desired results.

"The reality is that each year our invitation to come and visit South Africa, land of incredible wildlife, diverse experiences and most notably, warm and welcoming people, is being accepted by an ever growing number of people from around the world. Two decades into our democracy, I am proud of what this industry has achieved and confident of its ongoing ability to contribute to the growth and development of South Africa," concluded Mr Van Schalkwyk.

Media Enquiries:

Trevor Bloem

Chief Director Communications

National Department of Tourism – 082 771 6729

TBloem@tourism.gov.za

Risuna Mayimele

South African Tourism – 082 336 6665

risuna@southafrica.net