



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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South Africa boasts double digit growth as German travellers enthuse over destination SA

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South Africa has once again announced increasing tourism numbers: The months from January until October 2012 showed an increase of 10,4%, with 7 535 498 tourist arrivals compared to 6 823 517 tourist arrivals for the same period in the previous year. A total of 204 247 tourists from Germany visited South Africa from January to October 2012. This represents an increase of 12,2% compared to the corresponding period in 2011. Germany is one of the key traditional overseas markets for travel to South Africa, with the United States of America and the United Kingdom taking the lead.

Tourism Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk is delighted with the continuing interest shown in South Africa: "Positive growth from the traditional markets in general – and Europe in particular – gives us confidence that the work we are doing to grow tourist arrivals is paying dividends. South Africa has every reason to feel confident about the state of its tourism industry going forward. The credit should go to the tourism industry for creatively and constructively working together to grow tourism to South Africa. It is also vitally important that we ensure that every new tourist who arrives in our country is given the best possible experience, as word of mouth remains one of our most important marketing tools," Minister van Schalkwyk said during his visit to the ITB trade show in Berlin.

Minister Van Schalkwyk also underlined the importance of the German market for South Africa, and stressed that the growth of arrivals from Germany must be maintained. To inspire and motivate German travellers, South African Tourism continues to intensify its marketing initiatives with German tour operators, and also approaches travel agents individually to educate them about the destination. Media cooperation agreements created for the relevant German target groups as well as innovative brand partnerships continue to attract German travellers to the Rainbow Nation.

The UN World Tourism Organisation's forecast for international travel growth in 2012 is only 4%, growth of 10,4% in tourist arrivals to South Africa over the period January–October 2012 exceeded that by far. According to the Minister, this is a reflection on the destination itself: "South Africa is irresistible and beautiful; it's easy to access and explore, and offers excellent value for money. In particular, our friendly people and the unique experiences our country offer make a visit to South Africa extra-special."

Minister Van Schalkwyk also reiterated the importance of tourism as an economic growth engine for the country. Tourism has been identified as one of six priority sectors in South Africa to achieve economic growth and attract investment. Tourism attracts foreign direct spend and creates jobs. In this regard, the country has identified the following targets: to attract 15 million arrivals by 2020; to increase the share of tourism in gross domestic product from R189,4 billion in 2009 to R499 billion in 2020, and to create more than 225 000 new jobs in tourism.

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