

Top African tourism countries and their perspectives

 By [Melissa Burns](#)

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Tourism is becoming one of the most important economic sectors for many African countries. According to [TINA Magazine](#), the top ten African countries received more than 37 million visitors in 2018 which means the whole continent might be looking into a more exciting and brighter future of tourism.



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African tourism

In 2016, the continent earned \$36.2bn in revenue from 62.9 million international visitors. When compared to the number of visitors in 1990, that is almost four times more (17,4 million), reported by [African Development Bank](#) with their latest research. The same year, Africa held a 5,1% share in worldwide tourism arrivals.

Due to tourism growth, there have been 22,8 million jobs directly and indirectly related to tourism. As the official report for 2018 has not yet been published, the same institution predicts significantly higher numbers when it comes to tourism arrival and total revenue.

African destinations with the [strongest growth in international arrivals](#) compared to previous years are: Sierra Leone, (126%), Nigeria (50,5%), Burundi (42,7%), Eritrea (24,6%), Togo (23,8%), and Madagascar (20%). With other African countries climbing the international list of the most popular travelling destinations, it's time to take a look deeper into their tourism sectors and the status they have on the international scene.

The most popular country to visit is still Morocco with 11 million visitors, the same number as in 2017. Already in the first half of 2018, Marrocco's Tourism Observatory announced that it welcomed 5,1 million visitors (+10% vs 2017), keeping its first place on the list for over a decade. In 2015, one of its most touristic cities Marrakesh was even suggested to be the

best place to visit by the Travellers' Choice awards.

South Africa

With more than 10 million visitors last year, South Africa is still holding the second place on the list right after Morocco. Favourite among wine lovers, South Africa also has various tourist attractions, such as The Tugela Falls and Cape Town. Also, it is estimated that there are 3,000 shipwrecks off the 3,000 kilometres of South Africa's coastline making its position perfect for tourism development. As the country is certainly putting more effort into wine tourism as the main category, its position on this list will unlikely change. After all, South Africa is the seventh biggest wine-producing country in the world.

Tunisia

Although it welcomed 50% fewer visitors than South Africa (5,9 million), Tunisia is still a very popular African destination, especially for European tourists. As several airlines offer direct flights to this North African country, tourists are slowly focusing back on the country's natural beauty.

Until recently, security issues were the biggest obstacle to the country's successful tourism results. However, In 2018, Tunisia returned to the global scene with [record tourist numbers](#) as a result of their strategy to bring back tourists, especially the British ones as it was among their favourite destinations before the attacks occurred.

Algeria

The largest country in Africa received around 2,5 million visitors last year. There's no doubt about Algerian enormous potential when it comes to tourism but as it [offers only 0,1 hotel room for 100 inhabitants](#), there is still a lot of room for improvement.

Even the *USA Today*, US national newspaper, highly recommended Algiers as one of the eleven cities to visit in 2018. To not miss out on all these positive international reviews, the Minister of Tourism in Algeria announced their 1,812 new hotel infrastructure projects to attract more visitors. Also, the country has recently opened Aqua Palm, an interesting tourism and leisure complex with a 22 acres wide water parks. Given the issues Algeria is facing with the oil revenue, it doesn't surprise that it's increasingly focusing is on tourism as the sector which will bring the most revenue to this country.

The future of African tourism

Other countries are also contributing to the overall African tourism, such as Zimbabwe (2,4 million visitors), Mozambique (1,6 million visitors), Namibia (1,5 million visitors), Kenya (1,4 million visitors), Tanzania (1,3 million visitors) and Uganda (1,3 million visitors), etc.

With further investments in the infrastructure, hospitality, tourism and travel services, these numbers will probably be even higher in 2019 as travellers continue adding African countries to their bucket lists.

ABOUT MELISSA BURNS

Melissa Burns is an independent journalist and business consultant. Business innovations, technology, and marketing are central topics of her articles. She started writing with a single goal of sharing her expertise with other people. Burns also provides workshops for start-ups and small businesses.

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