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The Netherlands

Tourism

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Citation

Rutten, M. M. E. M. (2005). Tourism. In *Encyclopedia of African History* (pp. 1575-1576). New York: Fitzroy Dearborn. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/9632>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Samori is celebrated as a resistance hero against French oppression, and his Maninka empire is pictured as a predecessor of such African republics as Guinea and Mali. In particular, under Sekou Touré, Guinea's first president, Samori gained a foothold in popular historical imagination: Touré himself even claimed to be a descendant of Samori, which he actually only is in a symbolic sense. Nowadays, extended epic narratives on Samori are recorded in Guinea and Southern Mali; these popular narratives mix data from the school-books with local or regional models for heroic behavior. In some regions the traditions do not focus on Samori, but on his brothers who functioned as army leaders, which demonstrates how his empire was organized.

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See also: Mali (Republic of): Economy and Society, Nineteenth Century.

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Tourism

In 1889, the German Hans Meyer was the first European to reach the top of Mount Kilimanjaro. Today, 15,000 tourists, assisted by some 35,000 guides and porters, attempt to climb the mountain each year. Approximately 40 to 50 per cent do reach the summit. It is one of Tanzania's major tourist attractions and exemplifies one of today's types of tourism in Africa: trekking. Others are culture, beach (in both summer and winter), and safari (photography and hunting) tourism.

In 1869, the year the Suez Canal was opened, Cook organized the first tour to Egypt (Gamble 1989, pp.26). The Cook family was also responsible for laying out the modern town of Luxor, today one of Egypt's major attractions due to its temples and tombs. Otherwise, tourism to Africa was mainly restricted to a small number of well-off Europeans interested in hunting big game. It was not until after World War II that tourist flows to Africa increased significantly. Commercial air transportation, improved tourism infrastructure, and increasing numbers of wealthy people stimulated holiday travel to distant countries (Popovic 1972, 188). In 1998, Africa (excluding Egypt's 3.7 million visitors) witnessed some 25 million tourists. This is equivalent to the United Kingdom figure for that same year, and is 4 per cent of global tourism arrivals of over 625 million, making US\$ 445 billion. By comparison, in 1950

international tourism stood at 25 million arrivals and US\$ 2 billion receipts (WTO 1994, 1). From 1970 to 1998, Africa more than doubled its share of arrivals (from 1.5 to 4 per cent), but its share in receipts fell from 2.7 to 2.2 per cent.

Among the top 40 tourism destinations for 1998 are four African countries: South Africa (5,981,000 arrivals—position 25), Tunisia (4,718,000—position 29), Egypt (3,766,000—position 34) and Morocco (3,241,000—position 38). Whereas the position of the latter three is rather stable, South Africa stood at position 55 in 1990. The abolition of the apartheid regime is among the major causes to explain this rise.

In 1998 almost 40 per cent of tourist arrivals originated in Africa itself (9.8 million). Europeans visiting Africa (8.9 million) constituted another major share at about 35 per cent. France (2.6 million), Germany (1.7 million), United Kingdom (1 million) and Italy (0.7 million) provided the bulk of European tourists in 1997. The total number of European tourist increased by 6.2 per cent annually in the last decade. The table below shows international tourist arrivals in Africa for the 1980–1998 period.

The northern Africa region includes destinations with relatively well-established tourism industries, such as Tunisia and Morocco. Among the major tourist attractions are Tunisia's sun-covered beaches and the Sahara to the south, Africa's oldest rock paintings at Tassili (Algeria) and the Moroccan Atlas Mountains. National residents working abroad and returning home for annual holidays are a major group among the tourists to this region (e.g., more than 1 million in Morocco and half a million in Algeria). In addition to the often once-in-a-life-time cultural visit to the pyramids, Egypt tries to develop beach tourism along the Red Sea shores in order to press tourists to return to the country.

The southern African (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland) share of arrivals in the African continent increased from 13 to 31 per cent in the 1989–1998 period. The mass of tourism flows in southern Africa arises from movements between countries in this subregion, as well as arrivals of tourists coming from Eastern African countries. Non-African tourists took a share of slightly over 26 per cent in 1997. The region offers beautiful scenery such as the Etosha National Game Park and Fish River Canyon (Namibia), Chobe National Park north-east of the Okavango Delta (Botswana) and Kruger National Park (South Africa). Lately the Peace Park Foundation Initiative attempts to link Kruger National Park (900,000 visitors per annum) with parks in Mozambique (5,000 visitors only) and Zimbabwe (*African Business* 1999).

In Eastern Africa the share of total arrivals rose from 18 to 23 per cent. In 1992, Kenya lost its position as main destination in favor of Zimbabwe. However, tourism in Kenya is much more profitable in terms of receipts, which reflects the predominance of European tourism there. For the whole of eastern Africa, non-African tourists accounted for over 60 per cent of tourism in 1997. This part of Africa is richly endowed with a wide variety of spectacular views such as the wildebeest trek in Serengeti National Park (Tanzania), Victoria Falls on the Zambezi (Zimbabwe/Zambia), the source of the White Nile (Rwanda/Uganda), the Ruwenzori and Virunja Mountain gorillas (Uganda/Rwanda), the ruins of Great Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia's St. George Church in Lalibella.

The western African share has remained stable from 9.4 to 9.5 per cent between 1989 and 1998, and tourists of non-African origin had a share of 47 per cent. The region's attractions are long sandy beaches in Gambia, castles and forts in Ghana, the tomb of Ahmadu Bamba in Touba (Senegal), the "Our Lady of Peace" basilica in Yamoussoukro (Côte d'Ivoire), the Bandiagara Plateau of the Dogon and the mosque in Djenné (Mali), among others.

Finally, central Africa (Angola, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Congo, DR Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé, and Príncipe) market share is the weakest of all subregions. Tourist arrivals have remained practically unchanged, with an average annual growth rate of only 3.8 per cent, whereas receipts show a decrease of 4.5 per cent per annum.

Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world (4.5 per cent annually in the last decade). Moreover, it now holds the number one position in world trade, ahead of the automobile and oil industries. In 1997 the tourism sector had a share of over 8 per cent of total world exports of goods consumed and almost 34 per cent of the total world exports of services. For Africa these figures stood at 8 and 45 per cent, respectively. However, there are huge regional differences.

Looking at Africa's place in international tourism receipts (excluding transportation), only Egypt (27th, US\$ 3,838 million) is in the Top 40 earners in 1998 (WTO 1999a). South Africa (US\$ 2,366 million) might soon enter this category as its annual growth was in the order of 15.5 per cent in the 1989–1998 period (WTO 1999b, 18). Other major African earners are Morocco (US\$ 1,600 million) and Tunisia (US\$ 1,550 million). Tourism's share in receipts of services increased from 35.1 to 45.4 per cent from 1989 to 1997, illustrating the importance of tourism for Africa. By investing in the tourist sector, African countries hope to create jobs and earn hard

currencies. It is forecasted that total tourist arrivals in Africa will triple and reach 75 million by the year 2020 (Cleverdon 1998).

Besides positive effects, however, negative aspects in the social, cultural, environmental, and economic spheres should be mentioned. Wildlife is Africa's greatest natural asset, though, according to Western conservation organizations, it is in constant danger of extinction.

Pollution is another negative environmental effect. Trekking routes, including some of Mount Kilimanjaro's, are increasingly littered. Even the smallest hotels generate daily waste and sewage while making demands on land, water, and energy.

The problem of leakage of foreign exchange to international companies and airlines also deserves attention. For example, foreign companies, sometimes in collaboration with the local elite, reap most of the economic benefits of beach tourism at the expense of the local population's commercial activity (e.g., fishing). Investments in roads and hotels are directed to tourist areas. Yet, the tourist sector operates in a risky market. The preferences of tourists fluctuate constantly, and an economic decline affects travel abroad. The outbreak of a disease or local conflicts may also affect the tourism sector. These often unexpected and uncontrollable events could weaken the local tourist sector and force a large number of (small) entrepreneurs into bankruptcy virtually overnight.

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