

# TOURISM REVIEW

APRIL, 2012

The Respected Voice of Tourism

ONLINE MAGAZINE



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Dear readers,

Tourism Review Online Magazine, the April issue, is pleased to present a number of remarkable places around the world worth seeing. Start with the Destination part and discover the untamed beauty of Kenya and its wilderness. Get more nature in the Adventure supplement presenting a number of stunning national parks inviting tourists and hikers with a wide range of animal species. If you are getting ready for the summer though consider seaside resorts presented in the Heritage part – discover Indian resort for Ayurvedic enthusiasts, Spain's coastal towns and top resorts in the UK. Business companies should get updated on the latest trends of the charter jet segment in the Transport supplement. The Professional part discusses the current opportunities and challenges tourism industry faces. Enjoy the spring!

Milada Sovadnova

Editor

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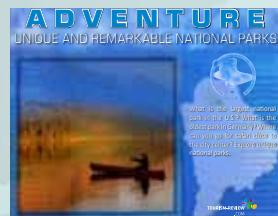
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# HERITAGE

## SUN AND SEA HOLIDAYS FOR VIP



Sandy beaches, hot sun, pleasant sea waves – there are many seaside resorts around the world inviting tourists with their laid-back atmosphere. Discover the best resorts in UK, Spain or even Malta.

# RUSTIC LUXURY IN KERALA, INDIA



**There is something quite special** about arriving at a resort in a small canopied boat, an arrival made all the more intriguing when it includes a 15-minute ride along the palm-lined natural canals that parallel Kerala's coastline facing the Arabian Sea. There to greet me at the dock of the Poovar Island Resort ([poovarislandresort.com](http://poovarislandresort.com)) was my assigned Guest Relation Executive ready to dispatch bags to my room and guide me up the winding pathway to the elegant open-air reception area. "Here is my card," he said once I checked in, "If you have any questions or want me to organize anything for you, just call my mobile." I'm off to a good start!

The priority of the moment was lunch on the up-hill side of an inviting, geometrically-designed swimming pool. Lunch table choices were indoors with air conditioning or outdoors on a three-sided veranda where most resort guests seemed comfortable to eat despite the 30+ degree C temperatures on a February afternoon. The buffet offered three walls of international and Indian dishes, including a dazzling dessert selection that kept grabbing my attention despite my best efforts to focus on the soups, salads and main dishes.

Having booked on short notice, all that was available at the resort was a standard land room in a two-storey cottage (two rooms up/two down), but I was curious during my stay to see what other accommodation options I had missed. Happily, the Chief Executive Officer of the Resort, R. Sritharan ("call me Sri"), took me on a walking tour of the property during which we peeked into one of 16 romantically-isolated Floating Cottages moored along the water-



The brackish backwater canals have long been an important highway into this water-saturated part of Kerala where fishermen and farmers, and now guests from around the world come together.

Photo credit: Alison Gardner

front, and the Premium Land Cottages, where I was able to identify true luxury at this seaside resort. For my money, I would choose one of the eight Premium Land suites (four per two-storey cottage), newest in the resort's collection of accommodation options, and bristling with amenities that define luxury.

My time with Sri allowed him to share his vision for transforming every element of the resort into a model eco-friendly stay. In what is a challenging inaccessible property, these initiatives are well under way with promise of more steps to be taken over the next couple of years.

Also with environmental impact in mind, the resort recommends patronizing backwater tour operators who pole their long wooden

fishing canoes (standing like Venetian gondoliers) around a magical watery landscape for early morning birding expeditions, botanical explorations and a memorable sunset cruise. Not only is this kinder to the shoreline and passers-by than boats with engines that make waves and erode banks, but also less intrusive for close-up glimpses of wildlife amidst the tranquil backwaters.

Upon arrival, I had noticed a cream-colored sandbar about five minutes by boat over to the canal shoreline opposite the resort. "Any time you want to cross to the public beach, just walk down to the dock and one of our boat drivers will take you to the Arabian Sea," my Guest Relations Executive had said.



The resort's architecture and interior design reflect traditional Kerala elements, including stilted boardwalks and cottages, and colorful paint washes to walls, windows and doors.

Photo credit: Alison Gardner

But the caution was instant and urgent, "You cannot swim there, the currents and waves are too dangerous!" Neither was swimming in the canals encouraged, again because the currents are very unpredictable. I did stroll along the sandbar to witness another memorable sunset, but the steep sandy drop-off made the reason for the caution all too obvious.

One of the reasons I had selected this seaside resort was to learn about its Ayurveda Village, a separate 15-room element of the resort property with two Ayurvedic doctors, 13 treatment rooms, numerous massage practitioners, its own Ayurvedic restaurant heavy



The resort's architecture and interior design reflect traditional Kerala elements, including stilted boardwalks and cottages, and colorful paint washes to walls, windows and doors.

Photo credit: Alison Gardner

on fruits and vegetables, and a serious commitment to curing or relieving health problems such as joint pain, obesity and chronic stress. Minimum check-in is one week for rest and relaxation clients with no medical agenda, two weeks for clients with medical challenges. Having only three days to spend at the resort, I was still able to book an Ayurveda massage treatment, accessed with a five minute walk along wooden boardwalks on stilts over the water

and through manicured Ayurveda Village gardens.

Owned by Aitken Spence Hotels & Resorts with properties in Sri Lanka, India, Maldives and Oman, Poovar Island Resort's chief international clientele in more than a decade of operation has been European, especially when it comes to the Ayurveda Village. To health-oriented Germans, Swiss and Swedes, two or three weeks of focus on retaining or regaining a healthy life balance in such a beautiful, undistracted setting is motivation enough.

Many British retirees come for a month or two annually to escape the worst of winter in the UK. And, of course, the Indian middle class, now 350 million strong across the country, is becoming an increasingly important resort market, particularly in the shoulder seasons. November through February is high season.

By Alison Gardner

Editor/journalist, Alison Gardner, is a global expert on nature-based vacations and cultural/educational travel. Her Travel with a Challenge web magazine is a recognized source of new and established operators, accommodations and richly-illustrated feature articles covering all types of senior-friendly alternative travel.

Source:

<http://www.travelwithachallenge.com>

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# MALTESE ISLANDS: SIGHTSEEING AND NIGHTLIFE



**Seaside resorts on the Maltese Islands** are plentiful. Many of them were developed in the early 1970s to cater for the ever growing tourist industry. Most of the seaside resorts in Malta and Gozo offer what is typical of a resort, i.e. various accommodation options, restaurants and bars, entertainment venues and of course lovely beaches.

It can safely be said that seaside resorts on the Maltese islands do not have many historical attractions. In fact, the major historical sights on the islands are not found anywhere near these resorts. However, seeing that the islands are so tiny, you're never far off from all the major attractions anyway.

So if you stay in a resort town, you will practically have the best of both worlds in the sense that you can do all the sightseeing that you want and in the evenings, when you return to your hotel or self-catering apartment, you can enjoy a fantastic nightlife without having to travel at all.

If you're visiting in the summer and you'd like to have some peace and quiet, then it's best to avoid staying in a seaside resort because they are all jam-packed with tourists.

The most popular resort towns in Malta are Sliema, St. Julians, Mellieha, Bugibba, Qawra and St. Paul's Bay. While in Gozo, the most popular ones are Xlendi and Marsalforn.

Sliema is an upmarket resort town and is a very popular spot with the locals as well. Some of the best shopping on the islands can be had at Sliema.

Bugibba and Qawra are usual seaside resort towns and apart from the things mentioned previously, offer little else to the visitor.



Mellieha on the other hand, has successfully retained its local charm and traditional feel and is quite different than other resorts.

The ones in Gozo are quite charming as well, despite the fact that they're also very busy during the summer. Marsalforn is the favorite

place to hang out at for Gozitans as well. Xlendi offers some excellent dining venues and is also home to the best nightclub in Gozo.

By **Marica Zammit**

Source:

<http://www.maltabulb.com>

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# SUMMER HOLIDAYS IN UK'S MOST FAMOUS SEASIDE RESORTS



**It is not until the late 19th century** and the expansion of the UK railway network, following the Industrial Revolution, that seaside resorts started to boom. It is typically the case of Northern seaside towns like Blackpool, Scarborough and Bridlington that saw day-trippers from northern mill towns such as Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester fill their guesthouses, stroll along their promenades, and have picnic on their beaches. This trend did not just stop at Northern towns it also spread south to towns like Brighton, Bournemouth and Newquay. These seaside towns are still popular amongst day trippers nowadays, particularly during the summer holiday period.

Located in the North West of England, Blackpool lies on the Irish Sea coast. It rose to popularity with the expansion of the UK railway network when mill workers from surrounding towns like Manchester and Liverpool came there to spend Wake Week, which was a week during which all the cotton mills would close.

It later developed into a prized summer break destination that reputedly still has more hotels and B&B beds than the whole of Portugal. Like many other Northern seaside towns, Blackpool remains popular for its beach, its promenade and its amusement arcades. This is particularly the case during the summer holiday period when it becomes a popular destinations amongst families.



On the English side of the Severn Bridge, on the North Atlantic coast of Cornwall lies Newquay. Often dubbed as the "Blackpool of the West Country", Newquay is renowned for its party culture as it is particularly popular amongst hen and stag party organizers. However, unlike Blackpool and other more "traditional" seaside resorts, Newquay was established in sections throughout the 20th century. Its rise to popularity came during the late 1960's thanks to the favorable surfing conditions it offers. Newquay has therefore become a popular surfing spot; particularly during the summer holiday period when the population rises from 22,000 to 100,000.

Further, down the Irish Sea coast, on the other side of the river Mersey there lies Llandudno. Like many other UK seaside resorts, its rise to popularity came during the 19th century with the development of the railway network. Llandudno is also the largest seaside resort in Wales and is thus dubbed as the "Queen of the Welsh Resorts". Another reason for this nickname is the town's reputation for its Victorian Extravaganza. Llandudno is also famous for being mentioned in Lewis Carroll's novel "Alice In Wonderland" as a place where the "real Alice" and her family regularly spent their summer holidays in their holiday home.

Located on the English Channel Coast, Bournemouth is another town that rose to popularity thanks to ideal surfing conditions. It was founded in 1810 and first became recognized as a town in 1870. Its proximity to the Jurassic Coast and Poole Bay has turned Bournemouth into a prized summer holiday destination.

Further along the coast, located in East-Sussex, lies Brighton. It first rose to popularity amongst day-trippers with the arrival of the railway in 1841, who were able to travel down from London for a short summer break. The seafront, which offers a wide variety of restaurants, bars and beaches, is particularly popular during the school summer holidays due to its proximity to London.



Brighton is also famous for its West Pier, which is one of the only Grade I listed piers in the UK; however, it has been awaiting renovation work since 1975 because of continual setbacks that include the two fires that further damaged the pier in 2003.

**By James H Hunt**

**Source:**

<http://www.pontins.com>

# ENJOYING SPANISH SUNSHINE IN COASTAL TOWNS



Located on the Orihuela Costa coastline some 20 kilometers away from the town of Orihuela itself you will find two wonderful seaside resorts which are very popular with holidaymakers visiting this part of south-eastern Spain. These fine resorts are known as Playa Flamenca and Punta Prima.

The lovely town of Punta Prima is recognizable mostly by the tall water tower located on the N-332 coast road. Also, it is here that 3 rival car boot sales (rastros) are held every Sunday attracting people from all along the coast.

Punta Prima has a fine beach and this is backed by an attractive row of huge palm trees, one of the famous landmarks for this part of

the coast. Just a short drive from Punta Prima you can find the busy town of Torrevieja with its famous water park (Aquopolis) and its fantastic marina and promenade.

A little south of Punta Prima the resort known as Playa Flamenca was, up until the 1970's, just a stretch of bare but attractive coastline with no development whatsoever. Situated just south of the busy town of Torrevieja, it attracted the attention of a number of Flemish property investors in around 1972 and they thought that it would have a great deal of potential as a holiday resort. It was from this time onwards that the resort began to grow and develop into the popular destination that it is today.

Playa Flamenca has become very popular with foreign buyers looking to buy holiday property in Spain and those who invested back in the 1980's have made a good return on their investment. The resort now has a good range of facilities and a wonderful sandy beach where holidaymakers can enjoy the 300 days of sunshine which the town boasts every year.

For evening entertainment, most will head for the Flamenca beach commercial centre where they will find countless shops, bars and restaurants with plenty of live entertainment, bingo, quiz nights, karaoke etc. On Saturdays, a large number of people head for the busy street market in Playa Flamenca where hun-



dreds of stalls sell a wide variety of local goods, fruit and vegetables and high quality leather goods.

To the south of Playa Flamenca and Punta Prima you will find several other excellent resorts including La Zenia, Cabo Roig and Cam-paomor, and further south still the towns of Pilar de la Horadada and San Pedro del Pinatar.

Pilar de la Horadada was built around an ancient watchtower that stood there since the 14th Century. Pilar de la Horadada ('The Drilled One') is the southernmost coastal resort of the Costa Blanca. To the south lies the Mar Menor ('Lesser Sea') and the Costa Calida ('Warm Coast').



The watchtower, similar to many others along the coast, was built to warn of attacks from Berber pirates who sailed this coastline many centuries ago. Today a popular seaside town with fine sandy beaches, Pilar de la Horadada is also a great area for nature lovers and the nearby Rio Seco ('Dry River'), boasts a wide variety of flora and fauna including some species of wild orchid and some endangered species of dwarf palms.

San Pedro del Pinatar (St Peter of the Pine-woods) also has a history going back to the Arab occupation and has some fine sandy beaches.

By Steve Locke

Sources:

<http://www.playa-flamenca.my-costa-blanca.co.uk>  
<http://www.punta-prima.my-costa-blanca.co.uk>



# Executive Master in Tourism Management

# PROFESSIONAL

## TOURISM INDUSTRY TODAY – OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES



Tourism is a fast developing industry employing millions of people. Discover the current opportunities in the travel trade as well as the challenges travel stakeholders need to face.

# TOURISM IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD



When tourism and travel historians decide to write the history of the industry's first decades they may well call upon classical author's such as Charles Dickens. Dickens wrote about a different time and era, yet in his classic work a Tale of Two Cities (1859), his opening lines seem to describe much of the current state of tourism. Dickens wrote:

*"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short,*

*the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only".*

Dickens' words seem to describe much of twenty-first century travel and tourism. In no period of human history has travel been relatively cheaper and open to more people, yet the public continues to complain about poor service, personnel rudeness and a desire to stay home. Thus we are faced with the irony that travel and tourism have perhaps never been more democratic and available, and ironically it appears that we have returned to an age of darkness in which the public sees travel not as a joy but rather as an obligation or undesired necessity. This mixed feeling toward travel has produced the "staycation" in which individual choose to stay at home rather than put up with travel costs or hassles.

Travel and tourism are clearly not separated from the world in which they exist. Travel and tourism professionals have had to deal with a worldwide economic crisis, multiple mini-wars, acts of terrorism, local governments seeking tourism as an easy way to obtain money from non-voters, potential pandemics, and industry consolidation that has challenged and called into question what is left of customer loyalty. For example, the front page of the BBC's web-

site for February 13, 2012 provides its reader with the following pieces of news: Riots in Athens as the Greek parliament accepts new austerity measures, bomb threat at Amsterdam airport, Syria rejects new peace plan, and Japan's economy worse than forecasted. All of these news items mean that tourism professionals must face a world of uncertainty and crisis.

Despite all of these events, one item dominated world travel: the world's economy. Travel and tourism for the most part is a leisure-oriented industry that depends on the travel's disposable income. The one great exception to this rule would appear to be the business traveler, but during difficult economic times, businesses too have a tendency to cut back on travel.

While after several years of a downward spiral, business travel appears to be on the increase, however this recovery is fragile and another economic downturn can impact this important travel and tourism component. Smart tourism and travel professionals will need to find ways to allow business travelers to create the combined business-and-leisure travel experience.

This reliance means that when the economy coughs tourism is likely to catch pneumonia. If 2011 was a challenging year, 2012 may provide the industry with even greater challenges. Despite governments' abilities to demonstrate statistical creativity both unemployment and under-employment continue at record levels. Because governments tend not to count the unemployed or those who have simply dropped out of the workforce, the challenge



to a disposal income dependent industry is far greater than governments would ask us to believe.

To further add challenges to the tourism professional's life food and fuel prices continued to soar. Added to this level of economy malaise, family incomes decreased and consumer confidence continued to be low. While the Obama administration continues to put a happy face on suffering, seeking buy off the electorate by means of faux-income redistribution, the situation in Europe appears to be even worse.

Despite all of these economic challenges the tourism and travel picture is not as dismal as we might at first expect. For example, around the world nations are developing travelers' bills-of-rights. These bills of rights provide extra legal protection to weary travelers. Tourism companies have come to understand that they must serve and protect their visitors or face potential law suits and police departments around the world are establishing TOPPS (Tourism Oriented Policing/Protection Services) units in which the safety and security of travelers is a top priority.

With a world ever more dangerous, tourism officials will need to make security and safety their number one priority. From cruise travel to hotel security, from protecting iconic sites to assuring a safe food and water supply traveler safety and security will present new challenges to the tourism industry.

Here is a quick synopsis of some of the industry's major components.

**- Airlines.** The airline industry continued to see consolidation and cutbacks in both service



and frequency of flights. Both European and US carriers are now famous for poor service, higher prices, and more fees. On the brighter side, first class travel especially on Asian airlines has increased and is now better than ever. Furthermore airport officials are beginning to hear the public and coming to realize that they must decrease the hassle travel security factor while still providing state-of -the-art travel protection.

**- Rental cars.** This has been a bright spot within the travel industry and the rental car industry has become a viable alternative to

air travel. For example in both Europe and the US rental car companies have decreased significantly the paperwork and hassle factor, they have improved customer service and in many places have created off-site rental agencies that help travelers to avoid the expensive cost of parking at an airport and paying airport usage fees.

**- Hotels and Restaurants.** Customers continue to express greater satisfaction with many hotels and despite the rise in restaurant prices, seem to be satisfied with out of home dining opportunities. Hotels have, for the most





part, found ways to contain costs, and increase customer service. An increasing number of hotels have found ways to work with travelers' schedules so that travelers no longer have to deal with the challenges of late check-ins and early check-outs. One major problem for both restaurants and hotels is the need of free business travel services such as "wi-fi" access. This is especially true as business travelers switch from laptop computers to electronic tablets.

There are a number of ways that the travel and tourism industry can face any potential challenge or threat. Among these are:

- Good customer service goes a long way in solving many problems. Travel professionals may not be able to change the world, but how they choose to deal with the world impacts bottom lines. The industry dare not forget that it must promote customer service and find ways to use the smile as a major marketing tool. Travel professionals need to get the message through to all front line per-

sonnel that the traveler is the customer and not the enemy!

- Keep prices as low as possible. No one has to take a vacation, provide travelers with good value and they will return. No one expects something for nothing, but no one wants to be taken advantage of either. Value for dollar (or value for euro, yen etc) is especially important when the world's economy is far from stable
- Create travel bundles or packages. Often a travel package is less expensive and provides local businesses with an economic boost. Creative bundling may be one of the new building blocks of tourism,
- Go beyond marketing. Too many travel and tourism professionals see themselves as nothing more than another form of marketers. Hospitality is a lot more than mere marketing. If you see a problem, fix it rather than try to explain it away. Brilliant results come about when we show others that travel and tourism is all about creating positive memories that will last a lifetime.
- Return to the basic three building blocks of tourism: create satisfaction by providing good security, good service and a clean and hospitable environment.

By Dr. Peter E. Tarlow

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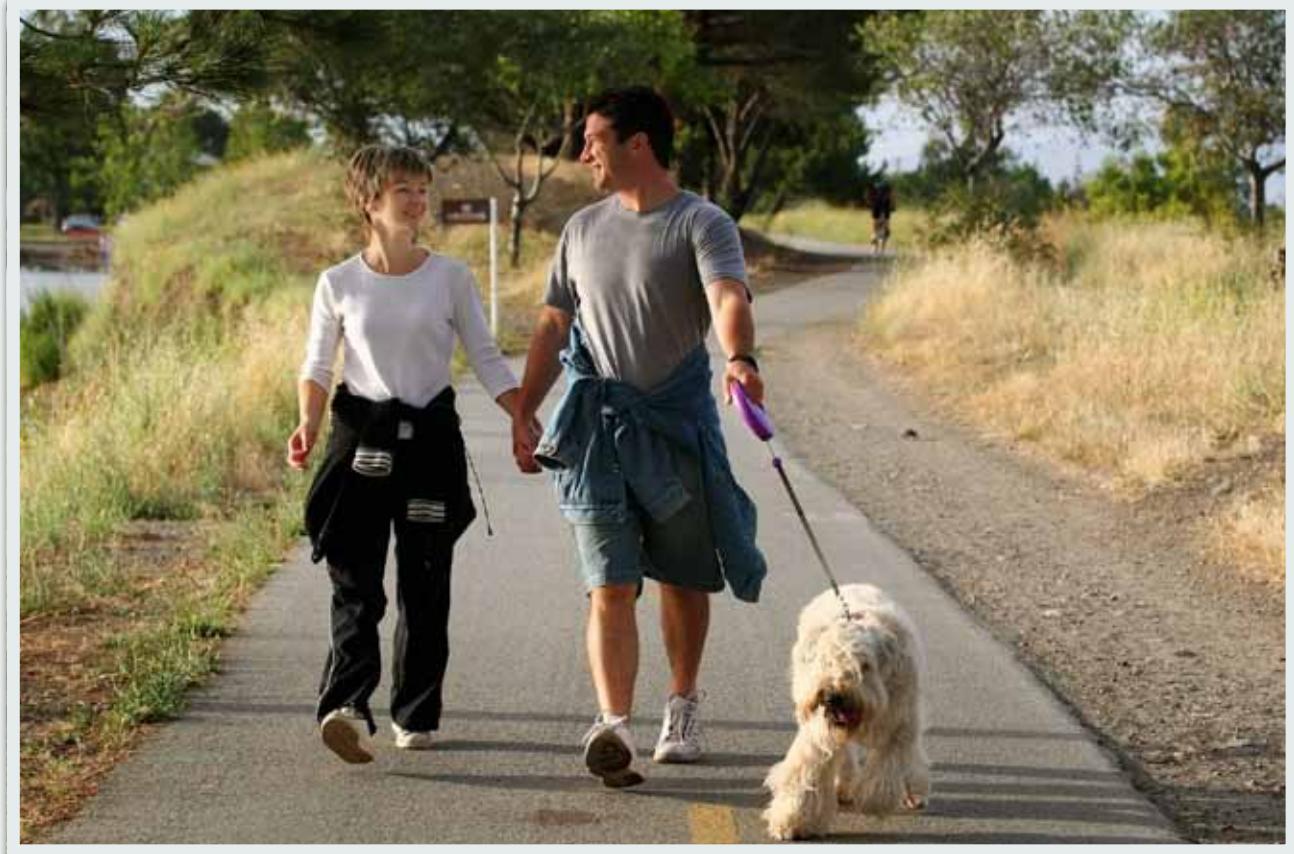
# TODAY'S TRAVEL INDUSTRY: RICH IN OPPORTUNITIES AND NICHES

**It is often said that the process** of travelling is more important than the destination itself. With the rapid growth of international tourism, popular travel hotspots are becoming 'common' as victims of mass tourism and tourism promotions.

With the death of the destination, refreshing departures from the traditional package holidays are gaining popularity. Tourists are rewriting travel rules and experiences by visiting the world in creative, exciting and unusual ways. Holiday travels for pleasure and escape from reality have given way to alternative lifestyle choices for 'discovering' and escaping from comfort-induced boredom.

With **reality tours** offering 'real', harsher and more esoteric experiences, hardship tourism is in. Today tourists want to raise consciousness of actual conditions through first-hand experience on how prisons are run, how toxic wastes are disposed, effects of overuse of pesticides on fields just as they wish to talk to teens serving murder sentences and garment workers sewing round-the-clock. Reality tours are on offer in USA, Israel, Iran, Vietnam, Cuba and India.

**Disaster tourism** involving travelling to disaster sites are common in tsunami-ravaged beaches (Phuket and the Andamans), terrorist-targets (New York's Ground Zero and Bali),



battle-sites (Kargil, India), Nazi concentration camps (Poland), etc. Although, politically incorrect or even Lucresian, such tours actually create public awareness and generate viable solutions with special interest groups as journalists and experts.

**Experimental tourism** is also gaining popularity. Blind Man's Buff as the name suggests is one partner blindfolding himself and experiencing the journey/destination through the eyes of another. In ero-tourism, couples arrive apart in a foreign place to find one another



without having recourse to any means of communication or deciding on a meeting place.

**Counter-tourism**, a critique of classical tourism which involves doing the opposite of what is conceived normal like taking pictures with your back to key tourist sites for results which could be exciting and revelatory, is in fashion. **Slow-return travel** involving visiting a destination using the fastest mode of travel and returning using the slowest way is in.

New forms of tourism are also gaining popularity worldwide with tourist destinations moving from one-dimensional attitudes by offering varied special interest niches and new tourism products. The traditional 'sun and sea' holidays have given way and the natural beauty, history and cultural traditions of tourist destinations are being translated into opportunities for a rapidly growing alternative/niche tourism segment (of educated, affluent clients) for preserving traditional ways of life, contributing significantly to sustained economic development and ensuring local participation.

In Europe, more than 35 million tourists are involved in alternative tourism with about 20 per cent rise annually. Some popular forms of its manifestation in recent times include:

- **Agro-tourism:** visiting farms or any agricultural/horticultural operation for enjoyment and education and assisting with farming tasks like picking farm produce, working in cattle ranches and vineyards, riding horses, tasting honey or even living in villages
- **Bookstore Tourism:** supporting independent bookstores struggling to compete with



larger chains by promoting them as travel destinations. This is by encouraging reading groups, promoting literacy campaigns, organizing literary outings to places with independent bookstores, etc.

- **Cinematic tourism (film tourism):** visiting locations of popular films as Harry Potter (Scotland), or Lord of the Rings (New Zealand)
- **Drug tourism:** travelling for procuring narcotics from countries where it is legal (Amsterdam, Southeast Asia and South America)
- **Ecotourism:** responsible travel to natural areas to conserve the environment and sustain well-being of the locals – safaris (Kenya), rainforests (Belize) and national parks (Kruger)
- **Educational tourism:** travel to educational institutions or attending personal interest classes as cooking, crafts, ikebana, etc.
- **Ethnic tourism:** involving indigenous people directly either through control and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of attraction
- **Gambling tourism:** travelling for gambling at casinos (Las Vegas, Monte Carlo)
- **Heritage tourism:** visiting historical or industrial sites, old canals, vintage railways, battlefields, etc.
- **Health tourism:** for improving one's health, relieving stress, visiting health spas and resorts, hot springs with medicinal properties, etc.



- **Hobby tourism:** individual or group travel of like-minded individuals sharing similar hobbies (garden tours, ham radio DXpeditions, square dance cruises)
- **Inclusive tourism (or ‘tourism for all’):** by involving those with functional limits or disabilities to destinations employing suitable practices and universal designs
- **Literary tourism:** covering places, events and settings from stories, lives of authors, routes of fictional characters (Sherlock Holmes, London), or haunts of novelists (Dublin, the Lake District, U.K.)
- **Medical tourism:** for availing free, less expensive or advanced health care systems unavailable in one's homeland or to forgo long waiting lists for surgeries, non-invasive procedures or treatments not covered under insurance, or for what is illegal in one's own country, e.g., abortion, euthanasia (Dignitas in Switzerland)
- **MICE tourism:** travel combined with business as attending meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (Singapore, Bangkok, Jakarta)
- **Perpetual tourism:** involves wealthy individuals on vacation for tax purposes, to avoid being resident in any country.
- **Sports tourism:** skiing, golfing, scuba diving, snorkeling, or attending special sporting events as the Wimbledon, Olympics, Grand Prix, etc.
- **Urban tourism:** visiting interesting cities for experiencing cultural heritage (museums, art galleries, theme parks), trade/business opportunities (fairs, exhibitions), and enter-

tainment facilities (cinema, theatres, shopping malls) as London, Paris, Rome, Beijing, Tokyo, etc.

The rapid development of the travel industry is closely related to the incredible leap of technology enabling potential customers to obtain a wide gamut of information about a tourist product/destination from print and electronic media.

**Information Technology (IT)** has changed the best practices in the travel industry and provided opportunities for business expansion in geographical and operational areas. The Internet and the world-wide-web have revolutionized the distribution of tourism information and sales with the Computerized Reservation System and Global Distribution Systems enabling availability, update and support for reservations, confirmation and purchase processes in transportation, accommodation and tour operations at the mere click of a button from anywhere in the world thereby, widening choices among best possible travel options.

**Virtual sightseeing** has started a breed of armchair or virtual tourists who do not travel physically but explore the world using the Internet. Information on shopping, entertainment, etc., can be obtained from videotext while hi-tech equipment provides multi-lingual guided tours through museums and shopping complexes.

**Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)** is emerging as yet another important component in the countries' strategy to facilitating tourism development in an economic, environmentally sustainable and spatially balanced manner.

Co-operation between Government authorities i.e., transportation planners, information departments, development agencies, national parks and national tourist organizations and private enterprises i.e., airlines, hotel chains, tour operators are developing leisure amenities to address the needs of resident communities, develop tourism infrastructure (roadways, railways, bridges, airports, waterways, power, water, sewerage, solid waste management, convention centers, etc), and quality tourism products.

To enlist PPP in tourism mega projects often myriad tax waivers (luxury, sales, entertainment, etc.,), are announced for benefitting private entrepreneurs. Under the PPP model, tourism projects are developed in the build, own, operate and transfer; build, operate and transfer; or build, own and operate modes.

**Brand campaigning in tourism** by generating awareness and interest about a destination, event or product through aggressive marketing and promotional strategies, media campaigns, press conferences, production of publicity materials, travel trade briefings, seminars, workshops, familiarization trips, road shows and advertising strategies by the Government, non-government organizations (NGOs) and travel trade is gaining stronghold. Besides focusing on targeting key decision makers, corporate end users, IT, insurance, automotive industries and direct selling companies (radio, television and newspapers) are being targeted.

*The Incredible India* campaign wherein the brand equity of India is being created in the international arena with special niche markets/ products being encouraged including medical





tourism, heritage and spiritual tourism, adventure and eco-tourism and cultural tourism is an example. Non Resident Indians and Persons of Indian Origin are being particularly targeted as also the short/medium haul markets of the Gulf, West and South East Asia.

The present times have also witnessed new professions in travel and tourism in addition to the traditional ones. Festivals, conferences, meetings, celebrations and event management have emerged as prospective areas.

**Travel writing** for professional magazines and journals is emerging as an interesting avenue with travel writers translating through their distinct style all that is observed into publishable stories loaded with lead paragraphs, descriptive passages, interviews, quotes, facts and photographs. Preparation of travel documentaries, portraying thrill-seeking adventures and travel tips as a view-

ing option about people, journeys and countries is in.

Comprehensive assistance for itinerary planning for tourists (domestic/foreign and individuals or groups), media groups and trade bodies is rising in demand too. Research and consultancy with a distinct focus on tourist destinations (rural and urban), the industry, Government-private sector is becoming popular.

Tourism NGOs working on alternative tourism have made their presence felt in destination planning and sustainable tourism management with local residents with minimal negative impacts on the natural, socio-economic and cultural environments and optimizing overall economic returns.

Likewise, promoting tourism awareness and education for **sustainable development** among all tourism stakeholders for benefiting indigenous communities, managing tourism impacts and recognizing the importance of dialogue, partnerships and multi-stakeholder processes is gaining popularity.

The gradual process of globalization over the past decade, improvement of infrastructure, progress in standards in the hospitality industry etc., are all pointers to the direction in which the tourism industry is heading and it is therefore very important for the industry not to lose its objectivity at this stage.

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# TOURISM FEELS THE HEAT OF GLOBAL WARMING



The promoters of ‘adventure’ or ‘ecotourism’ have popularized slogans such as: “Go visit the last paradises... before they’ll be destroyed by tourist hordes.” In a similar fashion, the British daily The Observer recently suggested that world travellers need to hurry up if they want to see the ‘10 wonders of a vanishing world’. According to the related article, the most wondrous natural tourist attractions we can no longer take for granted due to global warming include:

Africa’s highest mountain – the spectacular Kilimanjaro in Tanzania will never look the same as snows are disappearing at an alarming rate.

The Caribbean coral reefs – particularly the Meso-American reef, the world’s second biggest, stretching from the coast of southern Mexico down past Belize and into Honduras, is threatened by a three-fold environmental disaster: Warmer water disrupts coral growth; acidic water affects coral’s abilities to secrete new skeletons; and increasingly intense hurricanes break it up. As a result thousands of marine species are on the brink of extinction.

The Maldives in the Indian Ocean – many tropical islands forming the Indian Ocean archipelago are likely to become submerged in the next two decades as a result of rising sea levels and increasing numbers of heavy storms.

Traditional ski resorts in the Alps such as Kitzbuhel in Austria for example will disappear from the tourist map within 20 years because of the lack of snow.

Furthermore, the future of many unique animal species that have attracted wildlife





tourism is in jeopardy as habitats, breeding grounds and migration routes are changing. If global warming gets worse, entire populations of polar bears in the Arctic region, Wildebeests in East Africa, Mountain Gorillas in Uganda and Rwanda or Monarch Butterflies in Mexico may be destroyed.

#### TOURISM WORLD WAKES UP TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Climate is an essential resource for tourism, and especially for beach, nature and

winter sport tourism, and the phenomenon of global warming already gravely affects the industry and an increasing number of destinations. In 2003, the Madrid-based UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) convened the 1st International Conference on Climate Change and Tourism in Djerba, Tunisia, to help the travel and tourism industry to respond to these issues. The UNWTO, that only a few years ago became a special UN agency, is traditionally driven by a strong Business Council that aggressively advances the interests of the

world's most powerful tourism-related corporations.

That the UNWTO declared climate change a priority issue shows the growing awareness among industry leaders and policymakers that the impacts of global warming pose a serious threat to tourism – one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries, generating over 10.4 per cent of world GDP, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC).

Notably, the Djerba conference recognized that the relationship between climate change and tourism is two-fold: Not only is tourism affected by a changing climate, at the same time it contributes to climate change by the consumption of fossil fuels and resulting greenhouse gas emissions.

It was concluded that there was an “urgent need for the tourism industry, national governments and international organizations to develop and implement strategies to face the changing climate conditions and to take preventive actions for future effects, as well as to mitigate tourism’s environmental impacts contributing to climate change.” (Djerba Declaration 2003).

#### IMAGE IS ALL

While the global travel and tourism lobby has adopted the rhetoric of corporate social and environmental responsibility, reality checks on the ground show that tourism's environmental performance has remained very poor. Neither the UN-initiated International Year of Ecotourism 2002 or multilateral environment agreements such as the Tourism Guidelines under



the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD), have achieved anything to stop tourism from pervading pristine coastal areas, islands, forests and mountainous areas.

On the contrary, more fragile ecosystems and biodiversity are destroyed, local communities displaced and traditional livelihoods destroyed – all for the establishment of huge exclusive resorts, golf courses and marinas. These massive tourism complexes are also notorious for high per capita consumption of energy and water. But however damaging and wasteful these projects may be, with the right PR efforts, they can still pass as ‘ecotourism’ developments and even raise their profile thanks to eco-accreditation schemes, or environmental Best Practices awards.

As long as no proper legally binding frameworks are in place to check and redress excessive and damaging tourism activities, ‘green-washing’ continues and climate change culprits are likely to get away scot-free.

Ecotourism promoters’ intention to help minimize tourism’s carbon footprint is laudable. The GEC07 Oslo Statement, for example, outlines an action plan that aims at “encouraging adapted travel patterns (e.g. increase length of stay per trip); promoting more energy-efficient, alternative or non-motorized transport options; utilizing reduced and zero-emission operation technologies; and increasing participation in reliable high-quality carbon offsetting schemes.”

But many of the new initiatives that promote ‘zero-carbon’ or ‘carbon-neutral’ tourism businesses need critical examination because they



may just be marketing gimmicks. For instance, The Guardian (UK) announced in January that Per Aquum, the brand behind some of the world’s most luxurious resorts, was the owner of the first ‘zero-carbon’ five-star beach resort designed by architects in London. The developers of the resort claim the project has no negative environmental impact and is totally self-sufficient, using only energy from the sun and wind and producing little waste or carbon emissions. “The only drawback, environmentally speaking, is its location—thousands of fuel-guzzling miles away [from London] in Nungwi, Zanzibar,” cautioned The Guardian.

Six Senses Resorts and Spas, a Bangkok-based luxury hotel chain with properties in Thailand, Vietnam and the Maldives is now specialized in ‘carbon-cutting getaways’ for millionaires who do not want their “vacation dampeden by global warming guilt”. Apart from introducing energy-saving innovations at the luxurious island resorts, all visitors are required to pay

a tax for their flight, which goes into a carbon offset fund.

The project owners say the fund will be spent on renewable energy projects for villages in Sri Lanka and India, thus, offsetting among the poor the carbon emissions caused by jets transporting the rich to their holiday destination. Yet, can Six Senses really be called an environmentally friendly company considering that it consumes exorbitant amounts of water to run their spa facilities, for example?

## CONTROVERSIAL CARBON OFFSETTING

A growing number of airlines have included carbon offsetting into the price of tickets. However, there are increasing reports about shady ‘think green – see cash’ carbon trading businesses that are trying to take advantage of well-intentioned air travellers. When Lufthansa was looking for a partner to offer a carbon offsetting scheme to customers, half of the 13 studied companies were considered unreliable.

The activists Timothy Byakola and Chris Lang exposed a Dutch company called GreenSeat which promised to invest airline passengers’ carbon offset contributions in climate friendly projects in poor countries. For the paltry sum of US\$28, one would be able to cover the costs of planting 66 trees to ‘compensate’ for the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of a return flight from Frankfurt to Kampala.

But looking closer at one of these projects, in Mount Elgon National Park in Uganda, the activists found that local people were harassed



and even driven from their land to pave the way for the tree plantations. GreenSeat has since stopped selling carbon credits from Mount Elgon – because of the problems there. Earlier this year, farmers cut down half-a-million of the project's trees and planted crops and fruit trees on the land.

Carbon trading that enables companies and consumers to buy themselves out of responsibility are highly controversial. It "dispossesses ordinary people in the South of their lands and futures without resulting in appreciable progress toward alternative energy systems," argues Larry Lohmann of the UK-based The Corner House, who has co-edited the book 'Carbon Trading: A Critical Conversation on Climate Change, Privatization and Power'.

"Tradable rights to pollute are handed out to Northern industry, allowing them to continue to profit from business as usual. At the same time, Northern polluters are encouraged to invest in supposedly carbon-saving projects in the South, very few of which are actually helping to halt dependence on fossil fuels."

## WHAT NEXT?

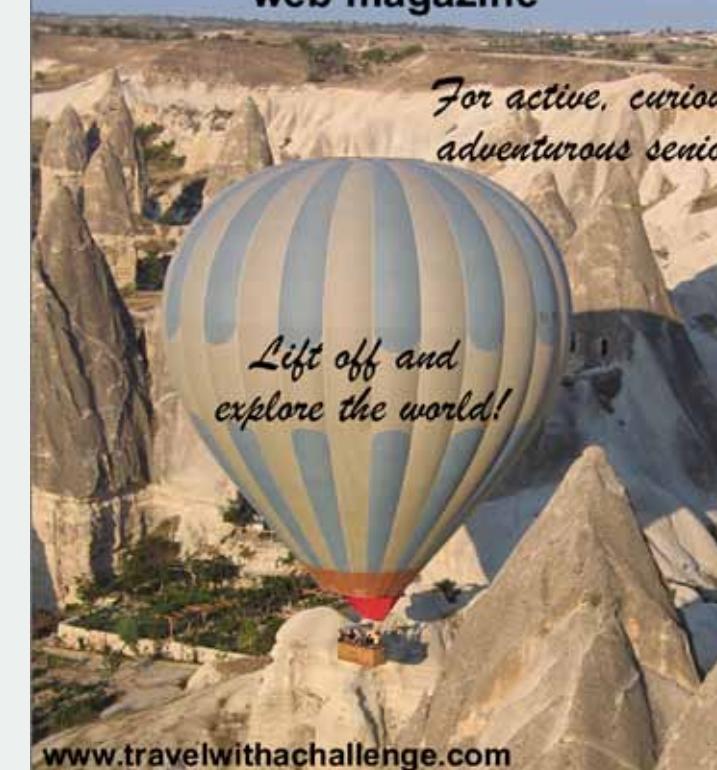
It is urgent that civic movements concerned with climate change issues monitor and respond to these ongoing activities because travel and tourism is one of the world's most omnipotent industries, not only because of its size and growth but also as a driver of globalization and trade liberalization.

Existing campaign networks such as Third World Network or the UK Working Group on Climate Change and Development that includes the New Economics Foundation (nef), Friends of the Earth (FoE), Greenpeace, Oxfam and WWF, should pay more attention to the problems of tourism-related climate change issues in their action plans and help lobby industry, governments, and intergovernmental agencies to take more decisive steps to curb relentless tourism expansion that exacerbates the climate change crisis.

By **Anita Pleumarom**

Source: Excerpt from "Tourism Feels the Heat of Global Warming" (Tourism Investigation & Monitoring Team, October 2007)

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# INTERNATIONAL TOURISM TO REACH ONE BILLION IN 2012

**International tourist** arrivals grew by over 4% in 2011 to 980 million and with growth expected to continue in 2012, at a somewhat slower rate, international tourist arrivals are on track to reach the milestone one billion mark later this year.

International tourist arrivals grew by 4.4% in 2011 to a total 980 million, up from 939 million in 2010, in a year characterized by a stalled global economic recovery, major political changes in the Middle East and North Africa and natural disasters in Japan.

By region, Europe (+6%) was the best performer, while by subregion South-America (+10%) topped the ranking. Contrary to previous years, growth was higher in advanced economies (+5.0%) than in emerging ones (+3.8%), due largely to the strong results in Europe, and the setbacks in the Middle East and North Africa.

"International tourism hit new records in 2011 despite the challenging conditions," said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai. "For a sector directly responsible for 5% of the world's GDP, 6% of total exports and employing one out of every 12 people in advanced and emerging economies alike these results are encouraging, coming as they do at a time in which we urgently need levers to stimulate growth and job creation," he added.



## EUROPE SURPASSES THE HALF BILLION MARK IN 2011

Despite persistent economic uncertainty, tourist arrivals to Europe reached 503 million in 2011, accounting for 28 million of the 41 million additional international arrivals recorded worldwide. Central and Eastern Europe and Southern Mediterranean destinations (+8% each) experienced the best results.

Although part of the growth in Southern Mediterranean Europe resulted from a shift in traffic away from the Middle East and North Africa, destinations in the Mediterranean also profited from improved outbound flows from markets such as Scandinavia, Germany and the Russian Federation.

Asia and the Pacific (+6%) was up 11 million arrivals in 2011, reaching a total 216 million international tourists. South Asia and South-East Asia (both +9%) benefited from strong intraregional demand, while growth was comparatively weaker in North-East Asia (+4%) and Oceania (+0.3%), partly due to the temporary decline in the Japanese outbound market.

The Americas (+4%) saw an increase of 6 million arrivals, reaching 156 million in total. South America, up by 10% for the second consecutive year, continued to lead growth. Central America and the Caribbean (both +4%) maintained the growth rates of 2010. North America, with a 3% increase, hit the 100 million tourists mark in 2011.

Africa maintained international arrivals at 50 million, as the gain of two million by Sub-Saharan destinations (+7%) was offset by the losses in North Africa (-12%). The Middle East



(-8%) lost an estimated 5 million international tourist arrivals, totaling 55 million. Nevertheless, some destinations such as Saudi Arabia, Oman and the United Arab Emirates sustained steady growth.

### RECEIPTS CONFIRM POSITIVE TREND IN ARRIVALS

Available data on international tourism receipts and expenditure for 2011 closely follows the positive trend in arrivals.

Among the top ten tourist destinations, receipts were up significantly in the USA

(+12%), Spain (+9%), Hong Kong (China) (+25%) and the UK (+7%). The top spenders were led by emerging source markets – China (+38%), Russia (+21%), Brazil (+32%) and India (+32%) – followed by traditional markets, with the growth in expenditure of travelers from Germany (+4%) and the USA (+5%) above the levels of previous years.

### INTERNATIONAL TOURISM ON COURSE TO HIT ONE BILLION IN 2012

UNWTO forecasts international tourism to continue growing in 2012 although at a slower





rate. Arrivals are expected to increase by 3% to 4%, reaching the historic one billion mark by the end of the year. Emerging economies will regain the lead with stronger growth in Asia and the Pacific and Africa (4% to 6%), followed by the Americas and Europe (2% to 4%). The Middle East (0% to +5%) is forecast to start to recover part of its losses from 2011.

These prospects are confirmed by the UNWTO Confidence Index. The 400 UNWTO Panel of Experts from around the globe, expects the tourism sector to perform positively in 2012, though somewhat weaker than last year.

#### GOVERNMENTS URGED TO FACILITATE TRAVEL

As destinations worldwide look to stimulate travel demand under pressing economic conditions, UNWTO is urging governments to con-

sider advancing travel facilitation, an area in which in spite of the great strides made so far there is still much room for progress.

UNWTO advises countries to make the most of information and communication technologies in improving visa application and processing formalities, as well as the timings of visa issuance, and to analyze the possible impact of travel facilitation in increasing their tourism economies.

“Travel facilitation is closely interlinked with tourism development and can be key in boosting demand. This area is of particular relevance in a moment in which governments are looking to stimulate economic growth but cannot make major use of fiscal incentives or public investment,” said Mr. Rifai.

Source: UNWTO World Tourism Barometer



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# ADVENTURE

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What is the largest national park in the U.S.? What is the oldest park in Germany? Where can you go for safari close to the city center? Explore unique national parks.

# WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS: THE LARGEST NATIONAL PARK IN THE U.S.



**Proper preparation** is essential and all safety precautions – including completing and registering your backcountry trip itinerary with local authorities – should be taken.

Alaska's Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is at the top of more than one list of superlatives. At 13.2 million acres, Wrangell-St. Elias is the largest U.S. national park and preserve. When combined with Glacier Bay National Park and Canada's Kluane National Park and Tatshenshini-Alsek Park, it is the biggest piece of the largest internationally protected area in the world: 24 million acres – larger than the state of Indiana.

This World Heritage Site provides a crucial refuge for grizzly bear, caribou, and Dall sheep. Nine of the 16 highest peaks in the United States, and some of the largest mountains (by volume) in the world, are located here. The largest concentration of Dall sheep in North America lives here. Enough copper and gold

## Safety

*Backcountry adventurers run the risks of hypothermia, bear encounters, dangerous river crossings, abandoned mine hazards, and more. In the event of an emergency, the chances of rescue and/or evacuation are very limited.*





were found here early in the 20th century to make it one of the area's richest deposits.

The list goes on and on. And so does the land. Everything is vast. There are mountain peaks, glaciers, braided streams, and rivers. Though there is limited flora, a representative sampling of Alaskan land, marine, and airborne wildlife abounds. There is even a good taste of American mining history, preserved in the form of the Kennecott mines, now on the National Register of Historic Places.

The prime time of year for visiting Wrangell-St. Elias is from June 20 to August 20, but don't think that there won't be any backcountry hardships. Wrangell-St. Elias is a mountain wilderness unlike any other. It is almost entirely without roads; there are no maintained trails in the park, and access is only by unpaved road, boat, or plane.

## VISIT KENNECOTT AND OTHER HISTORIC SITES

The historic mining town of Kennecott, now a National Historic Landmark, was purchased by the National Park Service in 1998. One of the finest surviving examples of an early 20th-century copper-mining community, Kennecott is a must-see.

The high-grade copper found in the area resulted in a self-contained company town complete with a hospital, general store, schoolhouse, ballfield, skating rink, tennis courts, recreation hall, and dairy. The historic buildings in Kennecott are in various stages of collapse and disrepair.

There is a local guide company that currently has permission to lead groups through the safer parts of the buildings. Feel free to explore the outside of buildings, but remain aware of the hazards that exist. Beware of debris and unsafe structures as you explore. If early-century ghost towns really are your thing, you should also check out Chisana (pronounced "Shooshana"), where in 1913 a short but intense gold rush built "the largest log cabin town in the world."

## ENJOY THE ABUNDANT WILDLIFE-VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES

If you don't see any wildlife in Wrangell-St. Elias, you are the unluckiest person alive. With approximately 13,000 Dall sheep and



plenty of mountain goats, caribou, moose, brown/grizzly and black bears, transplanted bison, lynx, wolverines, beavers, marten, porcupines, foxes, wolves, marmots, and river otters on the ground, all you have to do is step into the wild and open your eyes. Try to get above treeline in alpine areas for best spec-tating.

Hikes to Goodlata Peak pass through an area with one of the highest concentrations of grizzlies in North America. Make the trip to the Orange Hill and Bond Creek Area for moose and Dall sheep. The Dixie Pass Trail, one of the only road-accessible backcountry walks, is a natural wildlife corridor.

**Source:**  
<http://www.gorp.com>



# NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK – CLOSE TO THE CITY



**Nairobi National Park** is unique by being the only protected area in the world with a variety of animals and birds close to a capital city. The park is a principal attraction for visitors to Nairobi.

The park also serves many residents and citizens living in the city. It has a diversity of environments with characteristic fauna and flora. Open grass plains with scattered acacia bush are predominant. The western side has a highland dry forest and a permanent river with a riverine forest in the south.

In addition, there are stretches of broken bush country and deep, rocky valleys and gorges with scrub and long grass. Man-made dams also attract water dependent herbivores during the dry season. The park has a rich/diverse birdlife with 400 species recorded. However all species are not always present and some are seasonal. Northern migrants pass through the park primarily during late March through April.

Nairobi National Park is one of the most successful of Kenya's rhino sanctuaries that is already generating a stock for reintroduction in the species former range and other upcoming sanctuaries. Due to this success, it is one of the few parks where a visitor can be certain of seeing a black rhino in its natural habitat.

To the south of the park is the Athi-Kapiti Plains and Kitengela Migration and dispersal area. These are vital areas for herbivores dispersal during the rains and concentrate in the park in the dry season.





**Major Attractions:** black rhinoceros; diverse birdlife; large predators – lion, leopard, hyena and cheetah; aggregations of large herbivores – eland, buffalo, zebra and wildebeest; Ivory Burning Site Monument; walking trails at hippo pools; Nairobi Safari Walk and the Orphanage; spacious picnic sites.

**Wildlife:** over 80 recorded species to include rhino, buffalo, lion, leopard, crocodile and hippo (no elephants) and more than 400 species of birds.

**Getting there:** the park is located only about 7 km from the city centre, the Park is easily accessible on tarmac roads, mainly through Lang'ata Road.

**Where to stay:** there is currently no accommodation in the reserve; visitors can stay in Nairobi city which offers various accommodation options.

**Source:**  
<http://www.magicalkenya.com>

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# BAVARIAN FOREST – VAST, UNSPOILT FOREST WILDERNESS



**The Bavarian Forest** is the oldest national park in Germany. Nature has been allowed a free reign in this unspoilt highland region, 95 per cent of which is covered by forest. Together with the Bohemian Forest National Park adjoining it to the east, the Bavarian Forest National Park is the largest unbroken area of protected forest in central Europe.

Visitors are warmly welcomed to experience the fascinating process of an ever-evolving forest wilderness at close hand. A network of clearly marked footpaths, cycle routes and cross-country ski trails offers visitors plenty of opportunity to enjoy the beauties of the national park in summer and winter.

In Bavaria, in south-eastern Germany, the country's first national park was founded in 1970. In 1997, its total surface area was extended to 243 square kilometers. Leaving

nature to its own devices – this is the philosophy of the Bavarian Forest National Park. In fact, here nature can develop freely according to its very own eternal laws on a surface area which, in its size, is unique in Europe. Most people who like Black Forest like the Bavarian Forest too.

Visitors are very much welcome and invited to experience the exciting processes which take place during the redevelopment of a forest wilderness. Besides extensive woodland areas, the national park offers mountain peaks with fascinating vistas of nearly endless forests which cover the mountain range representing the Bavarian-Bohemian border, mysterious bogs, crystal clear mountain streams and Lake Rachelsee, the park's only glacial lake.

The fauna, which is characteristic of this region, is the result of a rather harsh, slightly

continental climate with high snowfall in the winter, increased by large differences in altitude between 600 to 1,453 meters. Besides the eagle-owl, the ural owl and the raven, which have been reintroduced to this area, the otter, the capercaille, the hazel grouse, the Eurasian Pygmy Owl and the Three-toed Woodpecker belong to the indigenous fauna.

A network comprising more than 300 kilometers of well-signposted hiking routes, nearly 200 kilometers of bicycle routes and about 80 kilometers of cross-country ski runs give visitors the opportunity to enjoy the beauties of the national park's characteristic nature, both in summer and in winter.

**Source:**  
<http://www.bavaria.de>



# GONAREZHOU NATIONAL PARK – THE EPICENTER OF JUNGLE LIFE

**Under the blistering heat**, a breeding herd of elephants blocks the way and a cow nudges its calf under a huge baobab tree on the roadside. An irritated bull tells off a wandering calf in a no-nonsense mood, with a shriek but firm voice.

The elephants tolerate our presence for a few moments but as soon as their snorkeling trunks sniff us they retreat in polite disgust. A few meters away, giraffes forage the bush, heads up in indignation above stunted mopane bush shrubbery. The mopane bush shrubbery is level at about two meters high, on a browse line that looks as neatly trimmed as a schoolboy's new haircut.

At sunset, a lion roars, sending shivers down the spines of every living species there, particularly the impala that scamper for dear life and the big baboon that strides to a huge tree in a hunched and swaggering gait. Stubbornly looking back the huge baboon barks a loud "boohoo!" as if shouting obscenities to the king of the jungle, before climbing up a tree.

Thereafter, three lions scramble out of the silhouette mopane shade but immediately melt into the thicket of trees so fast and silently that not all of us are lucky to see their frosty-brown faces or blurs of tails. The impalas, kudu and waterbuck bound swiftly out of sight for, behold, the king of the jungle has spoken.





Then there is the appearance of python-like roots of sausage trees alongside the dry banks of Mwenezi River, the main source of water in the jungle. The Mwenezi River itself turns silver and gold with strips of sand and smoothed rocks between steep banks and quiet deep blue pools.

Once in a while a kingfisher eagle hovers over the pool in aerial acrobatics and shutter

our illusion with a splash on the murky waters. One fish is gone!

This is Gonarezhou, Zimbabwe's gateway to the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park and epicentre of jungle life, where untamed wild animals roam wild and free. Gonarezhou is a perfect theatre of the jungle where those who have not experienced the jungle save for snippets in fiction films must go and experience the real Africa.

The national park is situated in the south-eastern lowveld of Zimbabwe and covers 5,033 square kilometers. Gonarezhou means "the place of elephants" and for real there are so many elephants that for you to spend a day without bumping into a herd of the grey mounds of flesh, you must really be cursed.

The park is extremely scenic and full of rugged and beautiful landscapes. Three major rivers – Save, Runde and Mwenezi – cut their courses through the park forming pools and natural oasis for hundreds of species of birds, wildlife and fish gather to feed and drink.

One of the most prominent and enduring natural features of the park is the beautiful Chilojo Cliffs. The magnificent red sandstone cliffs were formed through eons of erosion and they imposingly overlook the Runde River valley.

Then there are the Tababomvu (red) hills, the buffalo bend, Simuwini (the place of the baobab), Mabalauta (the spear-making tree) and Makokwani (the old person), Samalema Gorge, Matombo Pools, Rose Pools – places where one should never miss for either game or scenic viewing.

*By Isdore Guvamombe*

Source:

<http://www.herald.co.zw>



# TRANSPORT

TRAVEL IN LUXURY WITH SMALL JETS



Small jets may seem as surplus luxury. However many businesses will appreciate the many advantages private charter jets offer.

# PRIVATE JET CHARTER FLIGHTS VS. COMMERCIAL AIRLINES

In recent years there has been much media coverage of the worsening performance and service of commercial airlines. Even more recently there has been a negative public reaction to the increase in TSA screening and security procedures such as full body x-ray scans.

To most, these ever deteriorating airport conditions mean more headaches and less vacation time, but for those who can afford to do so, it becomes just another reason/excuse/justification to spend extra on private jet charter flights.

So why do people spend so much money on private jets? Is a charter flight really that much different than flying commercial? In hopes of answering these questions and clearly illustrating the differences between traveling on a commercial airline and a private jet; we have compiled a list of the top ten reasons why private jet charter flights are better than commercial.

## TIME

It's one of the oldest sayings in every book, "time is money" and whether you have a work deadline or you're on vacation, most people want more of it. When you travel by private jet time is on your side.

The aircraft leaves when you are ready to go and will never depart without you. In most



cases you will be provided with one of the pilot's cell phone numbers that you can call if you are going to be early or late.

Although every airport is different, at most executive or smaller ones you can literally have your ground transportation drive into the hangar or adjacent to the aircraft, unload/load your luggage and be on your way.

There are several other advantages of using smaller airports. Depending on the trip, most often one can find a local or county airport that is nearer to your end destination. In addition, airports that cater to private jets typically have a lot less traffic both on the ground and in the air.

#### COMFORT

Anyone who travels frequently for work knows the value of a window seat or even an upgrade to first class. Being even a little bit more comfortable can make a huge difference over hours and hours of sitting still.

When you charter a private jet you are renting the whole aircraft, many of which have couches and even optional bedding. Although every aircraft is configured different, it is safe to say a majority of private jets available for charter have seating far more comfortable than commercial airlines.

Not to mention you are in complete control of the cabin temperature. If you charter a heavy jet, such as a Gulfstream V, you will most often have a complimentary cabin attendant.

#### FLEXIBILITY

Most top C level executives lead busy lives. Things come up, schedules change, meetings

get pushed back. For the CEO who is always on the go a private jet can be a godsend. As long as you are paying for it you are free to make last minute changes to your itinerary. You are not subject to the airline schedules, delays and cancellations. Bad weather coming in? No problem, leave a day early or change the flight route. When you charter a private jet you make the schedule and you are free to break the schedule.

#### PRIVACY

Although this applies more to celebrities and public figures than to the everyday business

## TRANSPORT Travel in Luxury with Small Jets

man, chartering a private jet offers you the ability to fly without being noticed. These days everyone from little kids to seniors is equipped with at least one digital camera. Using a private aircraft is the only way to travel incognito. The FBOs at executive airports are VIP only and they defiantly do not let the guys from TMZ hang out and loiter.

#### PRESTIGE

Need to impress someone? Maybe you have a potential client or love interest that you want to make feel special. What better way to do it than to rent them a private jet? Remember



your friend from high school who has the really nice car? Remember how cool you felt sitting shotgun driving around in laps? Now imagine how important you could make someone (or yourself) feel flying them on a private jet.

#### PETS

Dogs are known as man's best friend so why not treat them like it? Most times, when you bring a dog with you on a commercial airline, they are treated the same as luggage. Some airlines even transport them in the storage compartment underneath the aircraft which, at high altitudes, can get extremely cold.

When you rent a private jet, as long as you get prior approval your beloved pets can relax in the cabin with you. You may be asked for an additional deposit or cleaning fee, but knowing that the four legged family members will be safe and sound is well worth it.

#### EXTRA LUGGAGE ROOM

Taking the family on a ski vacation? Maybe you and some friends are going on a golf vacation. Imagine the hassle of lugging all that equipment around an airport, praying that your brand new skis or carbon-fiber big Bertha isn't damaged in the process. When you fly private the only restrictions you have with luggage are based on the payload and baggage capacity of the aircraft. You can even have your prized possessions ride safely with you in the cabin, no wondering if they will get left behind and you will be stuck with a rental.



#### COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT IS OLD

The average age of a commercial aircraft is 25 years old. They are run like taxi cabs and just the same, often break down. When chartering a private aircraft you can request only later models to be presented with all the details of the aircraft including year of manufacture (YOM), date of the most recent refurbishment, amount of insurance, and any other important information.

#### SAFETY

Although all aircraft, private and commercial, are subject to FAA regulations they are not all equally safe. Private aircraft operators

## TRANSPORT Travel in Luxury with Small Jets

are audited by several third parties and rated according to a variety of factors including history of incidents, aircraft maintenance and upkeep, crew experience/certifications and more depending on the auditing agency. ARG/US and Wyvern are two of the most recognized third party private aircraft operator auditing agencies.

#### FOOD

Although it may not be your number one concern when traveling, nobody likes bad food. Over the years the quality of the food served on commercial airlines has been increasingly worse. If you are lucky enough to get a meal these days, it is most likely a dry sandwich with a mini bag of chips.

When you charter a private jet, you can request food from your favorite restaurant or even bring your own personal chef along with you. Even the smallest business jets usually have a small oven for heating food. You can choose to eat right away or wait till later and the crew will warm and serve you whatever has been arranged. From your favorite bottle of champagne to pastrami sandwiches from the Carnegie Deli, you can have whatever you desire provided you are willing to pay for it.

*By John Henry Logan*

Source:

<http://www.JetPartners.aero>



# THE ADVANTAGES OF OWNING A SMALL PRIVATE JET

**Traveling is part** of our lives and most of us enjoy it a great deal from the moment we plan it to the time we get back home. However, today traveling has become more of a hassle than pleasure, especially flying; the interminable queues to check your luggage, dealing with some overweight charges which can be ridiculously high and not to mention the security checks where you have to take off your shoes, socks and so on.

A bad start on a trip can easily break the bubble, which you started with especially for those who travel for the very first time, excitement will soon be replaced with tiredness and irritability. These are the times when owning a small private jet is a blessing but not only so, let us explore the other advantages.

## TAKING TRAVEL TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Small private jets are the most affordable jets and yet offer most of the amenities and luxuries the larger ones incorporate. The reason that they are called small private jets is mainly because of the seat capacity that they provide, which is between 2 to 6 at the most. However, small jets are a perfect size for families and/or corporations that need their executives flown in and out in record time.

The most important luxury that you have by owning a jet is that you get to fly when you





want not according to any schedule; this is one of the most important features due to which most business men will give in to acquiring a small private jet. When in business, most times you don't have the luxury of time, you need to

get to a certain place or meeting to close a deal that can bring a small fortune to your company at a few hours notice and that is when the small private jet will yet again come to your rescue.

The small private jets have the possibility to facilitate a meeting on the way to the destination as well as comfortable chair that can easily be turned to beds in case you need to catch some sleep and be refreshed for a big deal. Meal, drinks as well as shower facilities are available and can be modified as desired.

#### OTHER HELPFUL ADVANTAGES

Small private jets don't need huge hangers to store and the maintenance is minimum. You can easily hire pilots on request on a less than 4 hours notice while some other corporations choose to have an all time employed pilot who works on request and when required. Having your private jet does not mean it has to be strictly for business, anytime you can choose to take a small break to almost anywhere you desire for the day, weekend or even a week. Small jets are easy to land and some have incorporated water landing as well.

**Source:**

<http://www.privatejetsbasics.com>

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# MOST POPULAR PRIVATE JETS AND AIRCRAFT FOR 2011

In a year that saw worldwide private jet charter demand make modest but fluctuating gains, U.S. based company New Flight Charters reported the most popular aircraft chosen for charter flights in 2011 along with its strong increase in charter flight business.

Data is from the company's 2011 North America charter activity, including 1,105 separate flights with 587 charters, which showed notable increases of 27.2% and 16.9% respectively over prior year results.

## MOST POPULAR JETS

Light Jets were by far the most popular size chartered, and were almost half (44.6%) of all charters in 2011. In listing the top five most popular light jets, tied for first were the Citation V/Ultra (19.1% of light jets) and the Beechjet 400/Hawker 400XP (19.1%), followed by the Learjet 35 (14.5%), Citation II (11.1%) and Westwind I/II (9.2%).

Midsize Jets accounted for 21.1% of charters during 2011. The top five most popular mid-size jets were the Hawker 800A at 20.2% followed by the Hawker 800XP (18.5%), Learjet 60 (16.1%), Learjet 55 (15.3%) and the Citation Excel (5.5%). As a make overall, Hawker models combined were chosen for almost half (46.8%) of midsize jet charters.

Turboprops were the next most popular category, at 20.1% of all charters. The Beechcraft



King Air, by far the most popular type chosen, accounted for 72.0% of turboprop charters. The Pilatus PC-12 was second at 12.7%.

Rounding out the remaining aircraft chosen for charters in 2011 were luxury Large Cabin Jets at a comparably small 5.8%, Piston aircraft at 5.3%, and Super-Midsize jets at 3.1%.

## RECENT MARKET TRENDS

The popularity of certain aircraft models chosen confirms a trend to more relatively economical aircraft in 2011, a result of the condition of the US economy. Proven legacy models, such as the Learjet 35 and Citation II light jets,

and the Learjet 55 midsize jet, showed high charter demand and availability.

Many who fly privately may not have the same means to fly they did several years ago, but still desire the ease and freedom of private charter, and cost is a greater factor today in making those arrangements. The strength of the light and midsize jet segments, when compared to luxury large cabin jets, serve to further confirm this market trend.

More details, analysis and an in-depth article are posted at [www.newflightcharters.com](http://www.newflightcharters.com).

By **Rick Colson**

Source:

<http://www.newflightcharters.com>



# TIPS TO ENSURE A SAFE FLIGHT WITH PRIVATE JET CHARTER

**When choosing a private jet charter company for your next flight, there are several questions you should ask to ensure you are receiving not only the safest flight, but the best value for your money.**

**What is the experience level of your pilots and how often do they train?**

The most important safety component during your private jet charter flight is the experience level of the pilots. To save money, some operators will hire less experienced pilots that meet FAA minimum standards. More experienced pilots cost more money to employ, while a less experienced pilot is willing to work for a lower salary as they "pay dues" and gain experience.

The FAA requires that the pilots for your private jet charter or fractional flight have between 1000 and 1500 hours of flight experience. Many fractional operators, such as Netjets or Avantair, require 2500 hours of flight experience from their pilots. A few jet charter operators just adopt the FAA minimums and only require 1000 hours of experience from their pilots.

Some jet charter operators might hire an experienced captain, but place a low time pilot in the right seat. What if the captain became incapacitated during the flight and the low-time copilot had to take over? What if the pilots experienced an emergency they were not both equally prepared to deal with?





The higher-end private jet charter operators that are safety-minded recruit pilots that far exceed these minimum requirements. Best practices in aviation demand that both pilots assigned to your flight have at least 5000 hours of flight experience, with both pilots captain-qualified. Additionally, top notch operators mandate their pilots attend simulator-based emergency training, such as provided by FlightSafety International and CAE Simuflite, at least twice per year.

#### **What is your safety record?**

The safety record of an operator is the most important factor in choosing a private jet charter company. An operator who has been accredited by an independent third party places high importance on safety, and has met a higher operational and safety standard than that regulated by the FAA. You can determine the safety record of the operator in several ways:

1) Call the local office of the Federal Aviation Administration, known as the Flight Standards District Office, and ask if the operator has ever had any accidents or incidents.

2) Request a third party report from Wyvern, the industry leader in aircraft charter operator safety reports. This report, known as the PASS (Pilot and Aircraft Safety Survey), covers the experience level of the pilots, their training currency, and safety data regarding the charter operator and aircraft.

3) Ask the operator what their safety rating is, and if they have had a third party audit of their operations. The main industry auditors are ARG/US, Wyvern, IS-BAO and the Air Charter Safety Foundation. A successful completion of an audit by any one of these organizations is critical to ensure the highest level of safety for your flight.

The right answers to these questions will ensure you have chosen the right private jet charter company for your next charter flight.

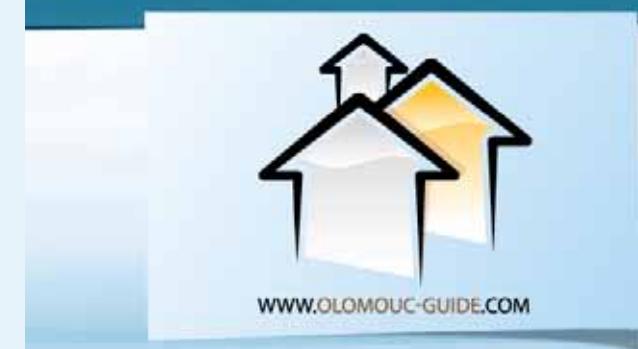
By *Denise Wilson*

Source:

<http://www.palmspringsjetcharter.com>

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# DESTINATION

## KENYA – THE WILDLIFE DESTINATION



Pristine nature, remarkable animal species, UNESCO sites – Kenya has it all. Still, its potential as a travel destination is far from fully used.

# TOURISM IN KENYA DEVELOPING FAST

**Kenya is one of the world's best tourism destinations** attracting millions of tourists over the past years. The country is endowed with attractive tourist sites, rich culture, striking geographical diversity and landscapes ranging from beautiful beaches, to animal parks and archeological sites.

The tourist destinations are well distributed all over the country. Currently, Kenya has six properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. These include cultural properties which are: Fort Jesus Mombasa, Lamu Old Town, Sacred Mijikenda Kaya Forest, and Natural Properties which are Kenya Lake System in the Great Rift Valley, Lake Turkana National Parks and Mount Kenya Natural Forest.

## FORT JESUS MOMBASA

The Fort Jesus is one of the most outstanding historical sites and preservations of the 16th century. It was built and designed of Giovanni Battista Cairati with the aim of protecting the port of Mombasa from external invasion. The fort occupies an area of 2.36 hectares.

## LAMU OLD TOWN

Lamu Old Town is an exclusive tropical island and one of the oldest best preserved Swahili settlements in East Africa. It is one of major centers for the study of Islam and Swahili cultures with many elite visiting for educational purposes. It is built in coral stone and man-



grove timber. Lamu is also characterized by the simplicity of many structural forms enriched by ideal features such as elaborately carved wooden doors, verandas, and inner courtyards.

## SACRED MIJIKENDA KAYA FOREST

The Mijikenda Kaya sacred forests consist of 11 separate forest sites. It is yet another 16th century phenomenon with remains of several fortified villages locally known as Kayas. The land occupies 200 km and is famed for bearing a living cultural tradition.

## THE KENYA LAKE SYSTEM

The Kenya Lake System is located in the Great Rift Valley. It is an outstanding natural beauty consisting of relatively shallow lakes which are, Lake Bogoria, Lake Nakuru, and Lake Elementaita. The region is a home for sizeable animals such as the Black rhinos, Rothschild giraffes, lions and cheetahs. It is also a habitat to 13 globally threatened bird species and the single most important foraging site for the lesser flamingo. The area covers a total of 32,034 hectares.



## LAKE TURKANA NATIONAL PARKS

The Lake Turkana is a serene tourist site serving as a study centre for plant and animal communities and a rich animal habitat. It is a stop-over for the migrant Waterfowl and a breeding area for the Nile crocodile, hippopotamus as well as various venomous snakes. The Lake is the most saline of all Africa's big lakes. Many educationists visit the Koobi Fora deposits, an archeological site, which is rich in mammalian and fossil remains. The site has contributed more to the understanding of paleontology than any other site on the continent.

## MOUNT KENYA NATURAL FOREST

Mount Kenya is an extinct volcano with a very impressive landscape with four secondary peaks and 12 remnant glaciers. The four secondary peaks sit at the head of the u-shaped glacial valleys. It is the second highest mountain in Africa (5,199 m) and has forested middle slopes.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

The Government is working towards fulfilling the 2012 vision of receiving 2 million tourists in Kenya annually. Kenya has experienced a 15% tourist growth since 2009. The country recorded a total of 1,095,945 tourist arrivals in 2010, hitting the highest figure ever. The numbers have since went up during the first six months of 2011, from 549, 083 compared to

## • DESTINATION Kenya – The Wildlife Destination



483,468 in the same period in 2010. These figures exclude cross border tourist arrivals which total 700,000.

Contrary to the past years when Kenyans perceived tourism and holidays as an international affair, local tourism has increased considerably over the years. This has also contributed to the increase of tourism revenues and the impressive performance as well as aggressive marketing in non-traditional

markets and efficient utilization of available resources.

The tremendous growth is posing new opportunities for new investors and for businesses already in the tourism industry that are willing to step up their services to meet current international needs.

**Source:**  
<http://www.ktdc.co.ke>



# MASAI MARA: THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN OF KENYA NATIONAL PARKS

**Masai Mara National Reserve** is without question my family's most memorable holiday spot. We drove down to the park as part of a 3-day safari package which incorporated a Masai Mara lodge accommodation, transport and a professional guide.

The 270 kilometer (169 mile) journey from Nairobi took us 5 and a half hours. Although a stretch of the road was unpaved and extremely bumpy and dusty, there were some welcome distractions that more than canceled out this teeth-rattling experience.

One of these distractions was the spectacular Great Rift Valley. At a viewing point along the Naivasha Road, we found ourselves standing on a steep escarpment with a stunning panoramic view of the gigantic natural trough several hundred meters below.

The other was the herds of zebras, impalas and giraffes dotted on the roadside and which provided a sneak preview of the wildlife experience that awaited us.

## MASAI MARA ANIMALS

We had read that the Masai Mara National Reserve sustains 2 million heads of game. That it boasts the largest-bodied, fiercest and by far the continent's highest concentration of lions (their number is in the thousands by



the way) and other big cats such as cheetahs and leopards.

So naturally, we were filled with a lot of anticipation as we entered the game reserve. Then we began to check off the animals as we sighted them and boy, were we mesmerized!

Picture this... Thousands upon thousands of wildebeest roaming the vast lush savanna. Countless herds of zebras, gazelles and buffaloes and other animals we didn't even know existed such as the duiker, kudu, dik-dik, klipspringer, and oribi grazing on the plains, add-

ing to the surrealism of the Masai Mara escapade.

A herd of elephants ambling across the dirt track in front of us. We drove on in order to get a closer view of these larger than life animals. The matriarch flapped her ears furiously and rumbled. We back off. Fast. A solitary adult elephant. Perhaps all its teeth had fallen out due to old age and it was now wandering off to die? We will never know.

A lion strutting across the savanna – if only he could roar! A pride of lions (lionesses more





like) lazing on an edge of the plains completely unfazed at several dozen tourists scrambling to get a piece of the action.

A cheetah stalking a herd of several hundred wildebeest single-handedly. Another cheetah with her cubs perched on a mound of earth scanning her surroundings for easy prey. A Masai giraffe elegantly browsing on an acacia tree and a herd gracefully galloping across the savanna. A couple of chubby hippos and crocodiles basking on the rocky Mara River banks.

A pack of hyenas attempting to harass some hapless lion cubs off their meal. A dozen vultures getting a bird's eyview from a baobab tree. They then circle a pack of hyenas noisily gobbling a wildebeest carcass, pensively waiting their turn. A myriad of multicolored birds chirping away in the shrubs.

We did not see a leopard though. Although our experienced guide pointed out a leopard crouched on a tree branch, the lush leaves acted as a perfect camouflage and we really could not decipher it – not even with the help of our (admittedly small) binoculars. Therefore, be sure to carry a powerful pair of binoculars for your Masai Mara safari.

### WILDEBEEST MIGRATION – NATURE'S SPECTACULAR PHENOMENON

Ironically though, the Masai Mara National Reserve's fame is attributable, not to any of the "big cats" at the apex of the animal kingdom hierarchy but to the less charismatic wildebeest.

We pitched camp (figuratively of course – it's always best to remain in your vehicle!) by the

Mara River and witnessed "the greatest game show on earth" as the wildebeest literally came in search of greener pastures from the drier Tanzanian Serengeti National Park.

Thousands of wildebeest made it across the river that day. But a good number also perished during the river crossing either because they drowned in the heavy tides, were devoured by the waiting crocodiles or tripped by hippos (maliciously I think because these are herbivores). In a sense then, the wildebeest migration is a kind of a "survival for the fittest" test. The African wildebeest migration is easily one of Kenya's definitive safari experiences and was the icing on the cake that was our safari.

There are several luxurious tented camps in Masai Mara and midrange Masai Mara lodges where you can stay to witness this spectacle. Indeed, the annual wildebeest migration was befittingly voted "one of the New Seven Wonders of the World" by a jury of experts polled by US' ABC Television in 2006.

Just outside the Masai Mara National Reserve, we visited a Masai village where we spoke to and danced with the fascinating Masai people and generally got a feel of the Masai culture we had heard so much about.

As we grudgingly headed back to Nairobi, we were all glad we had swapped the hustle and bustle of Nairobi for the Masai Mara for a while. Indeed, the Masai Mara National Reserve had lived up to its billing as the New York of all wildlife sanctuaries here in Kenya and possibly, the world over.

#### Source:

<http://www.kenya-travel-packages.com>



# KENYA TOURISM: STILL A LONG WAY FROM REACHING ITS TRUE POTENTIAL



**When I first came to Kenya**, in August 1990, I was a backpacker on a shoestring budget.

At midcourse between Cape Town and Cairo, I got accommodation at the New Kenya Lodge in River Road for \$ 2.50 (Sh200). After spending two nights there, I continued to Garissa and Liboi, heading to Somalia.

In 1994, I returned with my wife, and in downtown Nairobi, urban chaos and poverty struck her so much that she was reluctant to come back 15 years later, when I was offered a job.

Today, I enjoy the full beauty of Kenya with my family, and we all agree — my wife

included! — that this is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. If you created an index of “natural beauty per square-kilometer” Kenya would probably come up on top of the list.

Starting from Nairobi, within a few hours of driving, you enjoy the most amazing nature: the Masai Mara, Kilimanjaro, Mt Kenya and Lake Victoria are all within reach. Nairobi is surprisingly pleasant, with one of the best climates in the world: it is one of the few cities where you neither need air-conditioning nor heating — all year long (well, it will soon get “cold” in July but the fireplace will help).

But Kenya’s beauty is not matched by its position in the world of tourism. This should really be one of the top tourist destinations in the World. Instead, Kenya is losing ground to many of its peers. Over the last 15 years, Kenya’s tourism appears to have stagnated cozily in its comfort zone.

In 2007, Kenya attracted some 1.5 million tourists, but arrivals dropped sharply in 2008. By contrast, Thailand and Egypt are attracting respectively 16 and 14 million visitors. Even Singapore, a city with no mountains or animals, attracts more than nine million visitors. Munich, my home-town, attracts almost seven million visitors during the two weeks of the Beer Festival.





Arrivals are not the only meaningful metric. Some visitors come for short trips, others stay longer; some spend a large amount of money, others stick to a tight budget. But the raw numbers still matter, because each of Kenya's 1.5 million visitors go back home with stories to tell, which are ultimately shaping the "Brand Kenya".

Tourism is critical for Kenya's economy. Together with tea and horticulture, it earns the lion's share of the foreign exchange. Without tourism, Kenya's current account deficit would widen by 20 percent, and exceed 15 percent of GDP. And when these visitors exchange their dollars, yen or euros for shillings, the national currency gets a boost. More importantly, tourism is a labor-intensive activity: think of all the jobs created (about 100,000 by some estimates).

But Kenya has much more potential than it currently exploits. This country has an amazing portfolio of attractions to offer: safaris, beaches, and mountains; and something to offer for each "price segment" of the market, from backpackers to business travelers. Airline connections are also good and getting better. Kenya is also benefiting from the economic good fortunes of Asia and Africa.

A growing middle-class in emerging economies is increasingly travelling around the world. So what could Kenya do to "polish its diamonds?" First, Kenya needs to offer the right package for safaris, beaches, mountains, as well as MICE. Some countries have made the mistake of putting all their eggs into the same basket, for instance by shooting exclusively at the high-end of the market.

Having started as a backpacker myself, I am not convinced that Kenya should only court the "premium tourists". Research actually shows that backpackers spend a much larger share of their money on the local economy.

Second, there is still a long way to go before Kenya's facilities can reach the same standards as those in Egypt and Thailand. Land policies appear to be a particular challenge. Walking along Diani beach, you see so many run-down buildings, inhabited not by wealthy visitors, but by rats and birds. This puts a lot of people off, and also discourages investment, as hotels are being replaced by high rise flats. Better governance helps. The recent introduction of e-ticketing at Masai Mara generates much higher revenues which could be rechanneled into upgrading the infrastructure.

Third, transport is a challenge, though it has been improving. Nairobi's JKIA is one of the best in Africa, but it is still not world class. True, you can fly easily to most destinations, but going by road is still a nightmare. My family and I have on many occasions travelled to the Masai Mara, one of the world's greatest wonders. But as I load the car before we leave Nairobi, I always think to myself, "How strange. In order to get to paradise, you first have to go on one of the worst roads in the country!"

**By Wolfgang Fengler**

Wolfgang Fengler is the Lead Economist for the World Bank in Kenya. His blogs can be found in <https://blogs.worldbank.org/african/team/wolfgang-fengler>.

Source:

<http://www.nation.co.ke>



# GEDI RUINS – THE MYSTERIOUS CITY



**Gedi** is one of Kenya's great unknown treasures, a wonderful lost city lying in the depths of the great Arabuko Sokoke forest. It is also a place of great mystery, an archaeological puzzle that continues to engender debate among historians.

To this day, despite extensive research and exploration, nobody is really sure what happened to the town of Gedi and its peoples. This once great civilization was a powerful and complex Swahili settlement with a population of over 2,500 built during the 13th century. The ruins of Gedi include many houses, mansions, mosques and elaborate tombs and cemeteries.

Despite the size and complexity of this large (at least 45 acre) settlement, it is never mentioned in any historic writings or local recorded history. The nearby Portuguese settlement at Malindi seems to have had no contact with, or even known of the existence of Gedi.

The town has all the appearances of a trading outpost, yet its position, deep in a forest and away from the sea makes it an unlikely trading centre. What was Gedi trading, and with whom?

But the greatest of all of Gedi's mysteries was its sudden and inexplicable desertion in the 17th century. The entire town was suddenly abandoned by all of its residents, leaving it to ruination in the forest. There are no signs of battle, plague, disturbance or any cause for this sudden desertion.

One current theory is that the town was threatened by the approach of the Galla, an inland tribe known to be outwardly hostile at that time, and that the townspeople fled ahead





of their arrival. Yet once again, local recorded history fails to mention any such large scale evacuation at this time. No written account of either the rise or sudden fall of Gedi was ever made.

The ghostly ruins of Gedi lay within the forest that has overgrown and consumed the town. They had become a part of local folklore, regarded as a sinister lair of malevolent spirits, until archaeologists began to uncover the site in the 20th century. It was gazetted in 1948.

Today there is an excellent museum and well trained guides on hand to take visitors

through the ruins. Gedi remains a mysterious and atmospheric place to visit. The pillars and stone walls, ruined mosques and tombs now lie among stands of trees. The stone floors are thick with leaves, and giant shrews scuttle through the deserted houses while birds and butterflies drift through the air.

Wandering through Gedi is an ideal way to spend a morning or afternoon, lost among the secrets of the past.

**Source:**  
<http://www.magicalkenya.com>



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# WESTERN EUROPE



## FRÜHJAHRSMESSE

Location	Austria / Dornbirn
Start / End	29 March 2012 / 01 April 2012
Provider	Dornbirner Messe GmbH
Contact	<a href="mailto:armin.maldoner@messedornbirn.at">armin.maldoner@messedornbirn.at</a>

## BMT 2012

Location	Italy / Napoli
Start / End	30 March 2012 / 01 April 2012
Provider	PROGETA SRL
Contact	<a href="mailto:info@progeta.org">info@progeta.org</a>

## VACANZE WEEKEND

Location	Italy / Padova
Start / End	31 March 2012 / 01 April 2012
Provider	Vacanze Weekend
Contact	<a href="mailto:info@vacanzeweekend.it">info@vacanzeweekend.it</a>

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If your event already is in the list you may consider using the enhanced listing. For replacement just click [here](#)



## WORLD CONGRESS ON SNOW AND MOUNTAIN TOURISM

Location	Andorra / Andorra La Vella
Start / End	11 April 2012 / 12 April 2012
Provider	The Principality of Andorra
Contact	<a href="mailto:info@passandorra.com">info@passandorra.com</a>



## TRAVEL DISTRIBUTION SUMMIT EUROPE 2012

Location	United Kingdom / London
Start / End	17 April 2012 / 18 April 2012
Provider	EyeforTravel
Contact	<a href="mailto:tim@eyfortravel.com">tim@eyfortravel.com</a>



## 2012 ERA REGIONAL AIRLINE CONFERENCE

Location	Portugal / Porto
Start / End	18 April 2012 / 19 April 2012
Provider	European Regions Airline Association
Contact	<a href="mailto:paula.bangle@eraa.org">paula.bangle@eraa.org</a>



## PACKAGE TRAVEL REGULATIONS

Location	United Kingdom / London
Start / End	19 April 2012 / 19 April 2012
Provider	Tourism Society
Contact	<a href="mailto:meetings@tourismsociety.org">meetings@tourismsociety.org</a>



## TURISME: INTERNATIONAL TOURISM SALON IN CATALONIA

Location	Spain / Barcelona
Start / End	20 April 2012 / 22 April 2012
Provider	Fira de Barcelona
Contact	<a href="mailto:info@firabcn.es">info@firabcn.es</a>



## EUROPEAN MEDICAL TRAVEL CONFERENCE 2012

Location	Germany / Berlin
Start / End	25 April 2012 / 27 April 2012
Provider	EMTC
Contact	<a href="mailto:chairman@emtc2012.com">chairman@emtc2012.com</a>




**VISITSCOTLAND EXPO 2012**


<b>Location</b>	United Kingdom / Edinburgh
<b>Start / End</b>	25 April 2012 / 26 April 2012
<b>Provider</b>	VisitScotland
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:anne.sykes@visitscotland.com">anne.sykes@visitscotland.com</a>


**THE ADVANTAGE CONFERENCE**


<b>Location</b>	Malta / Malta
<b>Start / End</b>	26 April 2012 / 29 April 2012
<b>Provider</b>	Advantage Travel
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:info@advantage4travel.com">info@advantage4travel.com</a>


**MITM EUROMED, MEETINGS & INCENTIVE TRAVEL  
MARKET**


<b>Location</b>	Spain / Vigo
<b>Start / End</b>	27 April 2012 / 29 April 2012
<b>Provider</b>	G.S.A.R. Marketing
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:gstar@gSAMARK.com">gstar@gSAMARK.com</a>


**VIDA NATURA**


<b>Location</b>	Portugal / Porto
<b>Start / End</b>	29 April 2012 / 01 May 2012
<b>Provider</b>	Exponor (Feira Internacional do Porto)
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:vidanatura@exponor.pt">vidanatura@exponor.pt</a>

- More events related to Travel/Tourism can be found [here](#)
- If you are an event provider you may consider to place your event in the above category, please [click here](#)
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# CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE



## NATURE, HUNTING, FISHING

Location	Bulgaria / Plovdiv
Start / End	18 March 2012 / 01 April 2012
Provider	International Fair Plovdiv
Contact	<a href="mailto:gergov@fair.bg">gergov@fair.bg</a>

## GLOB 2012

Location	Poland / Katowice
Start / End	30 March 2012 / 01 April 2012
Provider	International Katowice Fair Ltd.
Contact	<a href="mailto:info@mtk.katowice.pl">info@mtk.katowice.pl</a>

## RECREATION & SPORT 2012

Location	Latvia / Kipsala
Start / End	30 March 2012 / 01 April 2012
Provider	International Exhibition Company BT 1
Contact	<a href="mailto:martins.refbergs@bt1.lv">martins.refbergs@bt1.lv</a>

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• FAIRS & EXHIBITIONS April, 2012



### SAMARA TOUR EXPO



Location	Russia / Samara
Start / End	04 April 2012 / 05 April 2012
Provider	RTE Group
Contact	<a href="mailto:tour@rte-samara.ru">tour@rte-samara.ru</a>



### CTF - CAUCASUS TOURISM FAIR



Location	Georgia / Tbilisi
Start / End	05 April 2012 / 07 April 2012
Provider	Expo Georgia
Contact	<a href="mailto:gamrekeli@expogeorgia.ge">gamrekeli@expogeorgia.ge</a>



### LEISURE WITHOUT BORDERS



Location	Russia / St. Petersburg
Start / End	05 April 2012 / 08 April 2012
Provider	RESTEC Exhibition Company & Reed
Contact	<a href="mailto:express@restec.ru">express@restec.ru</a>



### TOURISM, LEISURE, HOTELS



Location	Moldova / Chisinau
Start / End	05 April 2012 / 08 April 2012
Provider	Moldexpo
Contact	<a href="mailto:info@moldexpo.md">info@moldexpo.md</a>



### AITF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL & TOURISM FAIR



Location	Azerbaijan / Baku
Start / End	12 April 2012 / 14 April 2012
Provider	Iteca Caspian Ltd ITE Group Plc
Contact	<a href="mailto:pr-assistant@iteca.az">pr-assistant@iteca.az</a>



### TOUR SIB



Location	Russia / Novosibirsk
Start / End	12 April 2012 / 14 April 2012
Provider	ITE Group plc
Contact	<a href="mailto:travel@ite-exhibitions.com">travel@ite-exhibitions.com</a>




**LATO - FAIR OF TOURISM AND RECREATION**


Location	Poland / Warsaw
Start / End	20 April 2012 / 22 April 2012
Provider	MT Polska
Contact	<a href="mailto:recepca@mttargi.pl">recepca@mttargi.pl</a>


**THE MOSCOW GOLF SHOW**


Location	Russia / Moscow
Start / End	20 April 2012 / 21 April 2012
Provider	aiGroup
Contact	<a href="mailto:moscow@aigroup.ru">moscow@aigroup.ru</a>


**PRO REGION 2012**


Location	Slovakia / Banska Bystrica
Start / End	24 April 2012 / 27 April 2012
Provider	BB EXPO s.r.o.
Contact	<a href="mailto:veltrhy@bbexpo.sk">veltrhy@bbexpo.sk</a>



# AFRICA/MIDDLE EAST



## ATB SYRIA

	<b>ATB SYRIA</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<b>Syria / Damascus</b>	
<b>Start / End</b>	<b>04 April 2012 / 06 April 2012</b>	
<b>Provider</b>	<b>Al Sarayri Int Co.</b>	
<b>Contact</b>	<b><a href="mailto:info@atbfair.com">info@atbfair.com</a></b>	

## A'SAMBENI: AFRICA TOUR AND TRAVEL EXPO

	<b>A'SAMBENI: AFRICA TOUR AND TRAVEL EXPO</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<b>Zimbabwe / Bulawayo</b>	
<b>Start / End</b>	<b>24 April 2012 / 28 April 2012</b>	
<b>Provider</b>	<b>Zimbabwe International Trade Fair Company</b>	
<b>Contact</b>	<b><a href="mailto:zitf@zitf.co.zw">zitf@zitf.co.zw</a></b>	

## ARABIAN HOTEL INVESTMENT CONFERENCE

	<b>ARABIAN HOTEL INVESTMENT CONFERENCE</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<b>United Arab Emirates / Dubai</b>	
<b>Start / End</b>	<b>28 April 2012 / 30 April 2012</b>	
<b>Provider</b>	<b>Bench Events / MEED</b>	
<b>Contact</b>	<b><a href="mailto:Jennifer.Pettinger@benchevents.com">Jennifer.Pettinger@benchevents.com</a></b>	

More events related to Travel/Tourism can be found [here](#)

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• FAIRS & EXHIBITIONS April, 2012



### ARABIAN TRAVEL MARKET



<b>Location</b>	<b>United Arab Emirates / Dubai</b>
<b>Start / End</b>	<b>30 April 2012 / 03 May 2012</b>
<b>Provider</b>	<b>Reed Travel Exhibitions</b>
<b>Contact</b>	<b><a href="mailto:arabian.helpline@reedexpo.co.uk">arabian.helpline@reedexpo.co.uk</a></b>



### PROJECT QATAR 2012



<b>Location</b>	<b>Qatar / Doha</b>
<b>Start / End</b>	<b>30 April 2012 / 03 May 2012</b>
<b>Provider</b>	<b>IFP Qatar</b>
<b>Contact</b>	<b><a href="mailto:info@ifpqatar.com">info@ifpqatar.com</a></b>



### WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS - MIDDLE EAST GALA CEREMONY



<b>Location</b>	<b>United Arab Emirates / Dubai</b>
<b>Start / End</b>	<b>30 April 2012 / 30 April 2012</b>
<b>Provider</b>	<b>World Travel Awards</b>
<b>Contact</b>	<b><a href="mailto:awards@worldtravelawards.com">awards@worldtravelawards.com</a></b>



### TRAVEL WORLD EXPO (TWE)



<b>Location</b>	<b>Kuwait / Kuwait City</b>
<b>Start / End</b>	<b>14 May 2012 / 16 April 2012</b>
<b>Provider</b>	<b>Kuwait International Fair Company</b>
<b>Contact</b>	<b><a href="mailto:info@kif.net">info@kif.net</a></b>



# NORTH AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN



## IACP 2012 CONFERENCE

<b>Location</b>	USA / Austin, TX
<b>Start / End</b>	29 March 2012 / 02 April 2012
<b>Provider</b>	International Culinary Tourism Association
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:info@iacp.com">info@iacp.com</a>

## HSMAI'S AFFORDABLE MEETINGS MID-AMERICA

<b>Location</b>	USA / Chicago, IL
<b>Start / End</b>	03 April 2012 / 04 April 2012
<b>Provider</b>	HSMAI's Affordable Meetings
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:arina.kravets@jspargo.com">arina.kravets@jspargo.com</a>

## GBTA CANADA CONFERENCE

<b>Location</b>	Canada / Toronto
<b>Start / End</b>	11 April 2012 / 12 April 2012
<b>Provider</b>	GBTA
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:info@gbta.org">info@gbta.org</a>

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## CEO FORUM

<b>Location</b>	USA / Miami, Florida
<b>Start / End</b>	16 April 2012 / 17 April 2012
<b>Provider</b>	World Travel CEO Forum
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:meetings@destinationmarketing.org">meetings@destinationmarketing.org</a>

## SPORT EVENTS CONGRESS

<b>Location</b>	Canada / Richmond
<b>Start / End</b>	18 April 2012 / 20 April 2012
<b>Provider</b>	Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:sec@canadiansporttourism.com">sec@canadiansporttourism.com</a>

## INTERNATIONAL POW WOW

<b>Location</b>	USA / Los Angeles, CA
<b>Start / End</b>	21 April 2012 / 25 April 2012
<b>Provider</b>	Travel Industry Association
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:meetings@ustravel.org">meetings@ustravel.org</a>

## AIRPORT CITIES 2012

<b>Location</b>	USA / Denver, Colorado
<b>Start / End</b>	25 April 2012 / 27 April 2012
<b>Provider</b>	insight
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:amiee@airportconference.com">amiee@airportconference.com</a>



# ASIA & PACIFIC



## ROUTES ASIA PACIFIC

Location	China / Chengdu
Start / End	15 April 2012 / 17 April 2012
Provider	Route Development Group
Contact	<a href="mailto:adam.smith@routesonline.com">adam.smith@routesonline.com</a>

## FOOD & HOTEL ASIA 2012

Location	Singapore / Singapore
Start / End	17 April 2012 / 20 April 2012
Provider	Singapore Exhibition Services Pte Ltd
Contact	<a href="mailto:cl@sesallworld.com">cl@sesallworld.com</a>

## CHINA HOTEL INVESTMENT CONFERENCE

Location	China / Shanghai
Start / End	18 April 2012 / 20 April 2012
Provider	HVS
Contact	<a href="mailto:registration@chinahotelconference.com">registration@chinahotelconference.com</a>

- More events related to Travel/Tourism can be found [here](#)
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## CHINA OUTBOUND TRAVEL AND TOURISM MARKET (COTTM)

Location	China / Beijing
Start / End	18 April 2012 / 20 April 2012
Provider	COTTM
Contact	<a href="mailto:ssinger@tarsus.co.uk">ssinger@tarsus.co.uk</a>



## HOTEL & RESTAURANT EXPO KAZAKHSTAN

Location	Kazakhstan / Astana
Start / End	18 April 2012 / 20 April 2012
Provider	ITE
Contact	<a href="mailto:food@iteca.kz">food@iteca.kz</a>



## CARAVAN, CAMPING, 4WD & HOLIDAY SUPERSHOW

Location	Australia / Sydney
Start / End	21 April 2012 / 29 April 2012
Provider	CIA (Caravan Industry Australia)
Contact	<a href="mailto:belinda@cciansw.com.au">belinda@cciansw.com.au</a>



## MEETINGS & EVENTS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Location	Australia / Sydney
Start / End	21 April 2012 / 24 April 2012
Provider	MEA
Contact	<a href="mailto:jbeedell@mea.org.au">jbeedell@mea.org.au</a>



## KITF KAZAKHSTAN INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL & TOURISM FAIR

Location	Kazakhstan / Almaty
Start / End	25 April 2012 / 27 April 2012
Provider	Iteca ITE Group Plc
Contact	<a href="mailto:tourism@iteca.kz">tourism@iteca.kz</a>



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