

Johannesburg only sub-Saharan Africa city in Top 100 City Destinations Ranking 2017

Euromonitor International has released the 2017 edition of the [Top 100 City Destinations Ranking](#) at the World Travel Market (WTM) London. The report incorporates WTM Global Travel Trends to provide insight on how cities are at the forefront of tourism growth and innovation and how travel trends are borne out of the opportunities and challenges that cities face.

According to the report, Hong Kong holds the title of most visited city in the world for the eighth consecutive year, followed by Bangkok and London, which represents the most visited city in Europe and the only European city in the top ten ranking, along with Paris.

Top 10 Cities in the World



Source: Euromonitor International

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The top ten most visited cities in Middle and Africa

Johannesburg is the only sub-Saharan Africa city in the top 100, with tourism considered a pillar of its economic growth strategy. The city's Smart Access Programme aims to give free Wi-Fi to all in the city by 2020. 300MB of free Wi-Fi per day is already available at bus stations and theatres.

Dubai is by far the largest destination in the MEA region, but Saudi Arabia has three cities in the top ranking.

The Top Ten Middle East and African Cities are:

1. Dubai
2. Mecca
3. Johannesburg
4. Riyadh
5. Dammam City
6. Cairo
7. Doha
8. Jerusalem
9. Tel Aviv
10. Marrakech

Report highlights:

- While the Middle East continues to face wars and border disputes, Africa is looking to do the reverse: opening borders and enhancing collaboration.
- Lodging performs well in the region, mainly driven by the United Arab Emirates. Budget hotels are the standout performers, although South Africa and Kenya are expected to register strong growth in luxury hotels as sub-Saharan Africa continues to be popular with luxury travellers.
- South Africa has been identified by short-term rentals platform Airbnb as a key market to enter Africa, and the country is expected to see growth of 32% in 2017.
- Ghana is one of the countries giving its full backing to the Agenda 2063 aims. Ghana started to offer visas upon arrival for all African Union member states in 2016, and visa-free travel for 17 countries.



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Africa looking beyond borders to shape travel

The key African emerging trend highlighted by the report is *Looking Beyond Borders: Opening borders when others close theirs*.

African leaders are seeing travel and tourism as a way to boost the economic prosperity of the continent. The African Union outlines its plans towards seamless borders in the Agenda 2063 policy document. To this end, the African passport was launched in July 2016, allowing holders to travel visa-free to all 53 member states.

Dr Wouter Geerts, Senior Travel Analyst at Euromonitor International, comments: “While there is a very long and hard road ahead, the intention of making travel easier for Africans is a very positive one. **With strong increases in population numbers and disposable incomes expected over the coming decades, it is important for African governments and tourism boards to stop focusing solely on attracting long-haul travellers from the US and Europe and instead look at their closer neighbours.** In stark contrast to the US and Europe, where there are increasing calls for stronger border controls and barring certain travellers from entry, African leaders are seeing travel and tourism as a way to boost the economic prosperity of the continent.”

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