

# Kenya - Why tourists prefer Tanzania

Kenya has admitted that it has been losing tourists to Tanzania in recent years.



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Speaking on Kenya's Citizen television, the country's Tourism and Wildlife minister, Najib Balala, voiced concern about the state of hotels in the country, saying that lack of adequate world-class hotels in Kenya had made Tanzania a better proposition for tourists in East Africa. "The reason why Tanzania did better than us in 2017 is that their hotels are brand new and modern while our hotels are 40 years old," he said.

Balala noted that while the number of tourist arrivals in Kenya increased from 1,342,899 in 2016 to 1,474,671 in 2017, the country had the potential of attracting many more tourists if hotel infrastructure and customer service were improved.

"The biggest challenge that we have as an industry is security. Our porous border with Somalia is also a concern for our visitors. However the situation is normalising," he said.

"People are not just coming because they want a hotel bed around them. They want activities around their vacation. They want to feel the experience. They don't want to come to the airport and be harassed by an immigration officer or a taxi driver or go to a hotel with substandard service."

Balala said Kenya targeted to attract 2.5 million tourists annually by 2022, adding that the government had engaged

hoteliers and agreed on the standards needed to attain the goal.

## **Growing number of foreign tourists**

The number of foreign tourists visiting Tanzania has been increasing steadily since breaking the once-elusive one million-mark for the first time in 2012. According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, there were 1,137,182 tourist arrivals in 2015, and the number rose to 1,284,279 in 2016, which translated into a 12.9% jump.

Tourism earned Tanzania \$2.3bn (Sh5 trillion) last year, up from \$2bn (Sh4.4 trillion) in 2016. Earnings in 2015 were \$1.9bn (Sh4.18 trillion).

International tourist arrivals worldwide grew by 6% in the first four months of 2017 compared to the same period the previous year, with business confidence reaching its highest levels in a decade, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). Sustained growth in most major destinations and a steady rebound in others drove results. Destinations worldwide received 369 million international tourists (overnight visitors) in the first four months of 2017, 21 million more than in the same months of 2016, according to the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.

International arrivals reported by destinations around the world were positive overall, with very few exceptions. Most of 2016's strong performers maintained momentum, while destinations that struggled in previous years continued to rebound in the first part of 2017.

Read the [original article](#) on [The Citizen](#).

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