

## How sustainable tourism is rising in Africa

Africa is the fastest growing tourist destination. It offers a rich *mélange* of culture, heritage and natural wonders which draw tourists from all over the world. From rich forests to barren deserts and unmatched wildlife, Africa has everything to offer. However, constant tourism can put a huge strain on the resources, leading to its rapid depletion.

 By [Stephen Marshal](#) 3 Jul 2017



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The beautiful continent has already started coming up with new and improved means to counter depletion and make way for sustainable tourism. It has adopted a four-pronged approach to containing the damage caused by some of the major aspects of tourism.

### Sustainable agriculture

With more and more tourists visiting the continent, the need for production of food has been rapidly on a rise. This has resulted in practices which improve production but also lead to depletion of resources. To counter this, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) adopted the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in 2003.

This aims to allot at least 10 percent of the budget to agriculture. This promotes sustainable practices while also causing a growth in production. Crop rotation, use of natural fertilisers, drip cultivation and rainwater harvesting are encouraged. It is estimated that over the next decade, the production of food will increase to the point of solving a majority of the hunger issue of the continent while reducing wastage and damage to the planet.

### Green initiatives by hotels

A number of African hotels are adopting green initiatives to reduce their carbon footprint and conserve the resources. From planting more trees to recycling and harvesting rainwater to convert it into drinking water, the tourism industry of Africa is going the extra mile to conserve the continent and its precious resources. Some hotels have discarded conventional sources of electricity and opted for solar power.

It has been seen that the green initiatives adopted by the hotels have resulted in greater footfall which acts as a huge incentive for more and more hotels to join the movement. Hotels in countries like South Africa, Egypt, Madagascar, etc. have managed to make an actual and substantial contribution towards the protect of their country's resources by adopting sustainable means.

## **Energy efficient tourism**

The recent years have seen a huge rise in eco-tourism. Here travellers are offered all the basic comfort and amenities but there is barely any extravagance. It is true that it offers minimum luxury but maximum experience is what one takes back. This is a very useful model of tourism which minimises the damages that are associated with tourism. Solar energy is the primary source of energy while traditional materials and sustainable practices are implemented in order to conserve. African countries are now actively promoting eco-tourism in a bid to offer tourists an authentic African experience as well as to reduce the energy consumption.

## **Waste management**

It is a known fact that tourism produces quite a lot of waste. Right from food waste to plastic water bottles, the amount of waste that is a direct result of the tourism industry is staggering. To manage the problem of waste, governments have started taking active steps to promote segregation and treatment of wastes to promote a more sustainable model.

There are talks of converting biodegradable waste into biofuel, while on the other hand recycling is given an extra push in order to reduce the quantity of non-biodegradable waste. Segregated waste baskets have been installed at various popular tourist spots and also in cities and hotels. The waste management sector has done a great job in improving sustainable tourism in the continent.

As tourism is increasing, various African governments are gearing up for a greater footfall without causing strain on their resources. They have been taking active steps to build a sustainable model of tourism and their relentless, challenging work that is putting Africa on the road to a completely sustainable development.

## **ABOUT STEPHEN MARSHAL**

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