

International arrivals on a steady increase

Data released by Statistics South Africa's (Stats SA) has shown a 122% year-on-year increase in international travel, when compared with April 2021.

During the month of May, South Africa received 407,262 international visitors, which brings the year-to-date arrivals to 1.9 million. This was followed by Europe, collectively accounting for 319,045 arrivals; a 608.5% increase from the same period, in 2021 when many countries in Europe still had travel restrictions and others had placed South Africa on red lists.



Source: ©P&A?Äter Gudell via [123RF](#)

Africa Land markets have also been a driver of arrivals into South Africa for the period January-May 2022, contributing 1,336,478 arrivals. Over 96,533 travellers arrived from the Americas, with 66,992 arrivals coming from African air markets. Asia, Australasia and the Middle East contributed to 63,895 of arrivals during this period.

South African Tourism acting CEO, Themba Khumalo says that although May arrivals dipped slightly from April, South Africa continues to show a steady recovery. "In the latter part of 2021, the world started to open a little more and we started to see an increase in arrivals. As things stand, arrivals in 2022 have more than doubled from the same period in 2021 and the outlook is positive for the rest of the year," says Khumalo.

According to Forward Keys, global arrivals in 2022, based on the forward bookings, are expected to grow 87% from 2021.

The increase in numbers can be attributed to the following:

- Pent up demand due to travel restrictions during the pandemic
- Tourists are looking for value for money and thanks to the exchange rate SA is seen as value for money by some markets
- South Africa's commendable management of the pandemic illustrates the country's ability to take care of our citizens, visitors and tourists alike
- On 30 March 2022, the country scrapped PCR testing as a requirement for vaccinated travellers arriving in SA
- South Africa was finally taken off various countries' red lists and many travel restrictions relaxed

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Zimbabwe was South Africa's largest arrivals market followed by Mozambique and Lesotho. However, in 2021, Mozambique overtook Zimbabwe to become the largest arrivals market. During this period, the UK, Germany, and the USA have remained the top three overseas markets and the only non-African markets in the top 10 arrivals markets.

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