

Tourist information on Nigeria

Nigeria offers a wide variety of tourist attractions such as extended and roomy river and ocean beaches ideal for swimming and other water sports, unique wildlife, vast tracts of unspoiled nature ranging from tropical forest, magnificent waterfalls, some new rapidly growing cities and climatic conditions in some parts particularly conducive to holidaying. Other attractions include traditional ways of life preserved in local customs; rich and varied handicrafts and other colourful products depicting or illustrative of native arts and lifestyle, and the authentic unsophisticated but friendly attitude of many in the Nigerian population.

However, many of these attractions are still largely untapped and even at their raw states, they are still being enjoyed by few outsiders, either very rich visitors in quest of exoticism or adventurous people in search of new challenges and experiences.

The lack of required modern infrastructural facilities and in some parts of the country acute conditions of underdevelopment and poverty can be seen which many potential Nigeria bound tourist may not like to be confronted with.

These are impediments to tourism, which the new administration has been tackling since assumption of office. Investors, both foreign and local are therefore called upon to come and invest in the abundant tourism potentials in the country. The richness and diversity of Nigeria's tourism resources coupled with economic liberalisation policies will provide investment opportunities in various areas as follows:

- Heritage/Cultural Tourism Resources Development of slave trade relics
- Establishment of museums and preservation of monuments
- Wildlife Tourism Resources
- Development of hiking trails and Jeep tracks in the national parks
- Development of picnic and camping sites at strategic locations within the trail circuit system in the national parks
- Building of tourist lodges
- Building of reception centres at Natural/Physical Attractions
- Provision of cable bus system to take tourist through the very rugged but scenic terrain of the mountains especially in Kanyang, Obudu and Mambilla Plateau Construction of lodge cabins for expedition tourist and rangers.
- Establishment of hotels and resorts near waterfalls, springs, caves and temperate climate areas such as Obudu, jos and Mambila Plateau.
- Beach Tourism potentials Establishment of boating and sport fishing facilities

- Development of water transportation Provision of educational facilities for water skiing and swimming
- Establishment of holiday resorts along the coasts.
- Development of Amusement parks, entertainment facilities and shopping services
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- Development of arts and crafts which constitute symbol of the people's cultural values and love for nature.

Some Business Opportunities

Transportation Nigeria has attained a high level of good transportation system especially Airline and Road Transportation, investment opportunities are still needed in water recreation transportation and rail services.

Hospitality The hospitality sector of the tourism industry seems to be the most competitive area with the presence of starwood Hotel Groups, owners of Sheratons, Hilton, Le Meridien, Shangra Lai the Asian Hotel giant in restaurants and many

Beach

Meanwhile, most of Nigeria's beautiful beaches locations are still largely without accommodation facilities, which are targets for investors in most tourism destinations across the globe.

Tour Operations

Like the Europeans and Americas tour companies invaded the North, South and East Africa by having tour offices in these regions which enable them to market destinations in their home countries is lacking in the case of Nigeria.

Any Company willing to do so for Nigeria will be highly welcome.local hotel and restaurant groups battling for a better share of the market.

Investment Climate

Apart from the enormous potentials and investment opportunities in the Nigerian tourism sector, the country's investment climate at present is one of the most favourable in Africa for a number of reasons: Political Stability.

The enthronement of a viable democratic system, which guarantees political stability, improves international relation and respect for human rights would in various ways enhance investment opportunities in the country.

Tourism Incentives

The provision of incentives in the 1990 National Tourism Policy were also to enhance private sector participation. These are in the following areas:

Conclusion

Tourism investment atmosphere in Nigeria is now conducive given the abundant resources available, large market, entronement of enduring democracy, and a package of incentive put together by government. Foreign investors and other interested individuals should take these advantages to invest in the Nigerian tourism industry for sustainability and profitable returns.

Tourism Investment Opportunities In Nigeria

A Tourism policy was produced in 1990 with the basic objectives to make Nigeria the ultimate tourism destination in Africa.

The main thrust of government policy on tourism, is to generate foreign exchange, encourage even development, promote tourism based rural enterprises, generate employment and accelerate rural urban integration and cultural exchange.

Due to the importance the Nigerian government attaches to the tourism industry, the following strategies were adopted:

Infrastructure

Government would ensure that the provision of basic infrastructural facilities, namely, good roads, water, electricity, communications and hotels, to centres of attraction, in order to accelerate their development for the purpose of exploiting fully their touristic value. In furtherance of this goal, the appropriate government agency responsible for tourism promotion and development, shall establish and maintain close liaison with other government agencies responsible for the provision of the infrastructure.

Concession of Land

State governments will provide land without any hindrance for tourism development at concessional rates and conditions favourable to investment and the realisation of investment thereon. This will necessarily include the abolition of annual ground rent within the period of construction and development of tourism. For orderly development of tourism and tourism product, it is mandatory for all state governments to demarcate potential Tourism Zones and their products from other usage, to avoid undue pollution. 100% equity ownership of companies in Nigeria and repatriation of profits and dividends etc.

Fiscal and Other Incentives

In order to boost the level of private sector investment in tourism, it is treated by government as a preferred sector, like agriculture. Government has also introduced such incentives as, tax holidays, tax rebate and soft loans, with long period of grace to potential investors in tourism.

Patrol and Regulation of the Industry

The government has enacted laws and regulations, which govern the activities of the categories of people involved in the industry, like hoteliers, travel agents, tour-operators, car hire services. This is to ensure that their conduct, is not detrimental to objectives of the industry and the security of the nation, as well as tourists.

Beach and Coastal Resort development (Nigeria has over 700km of unpolluted sandy beaches). Conservation and Protection of 8 national parks and over 10 game reserves. Development of hotels and standard restaurants Transportation: water recreation, package tour services, air and rail services. Development of caves, tunnels, waterfalls and spring waters. Youth hostels, camps and centres Lake and River sport fishing. Scenic and Mountain Holiday resorts Theme/Amusement parks Conference/Congress Services Conservation and protection of endangered wildlife especially drill monkey, manatec, white throated monkey and pigmy hippo. Heritage, cultural and archaeological sites.

YANKARI GAME RESERVE

The Yankari National Park is the premier game reserve in Nigeria. Yankari Park and Wikki Warm Springs are located around the Gagi River, approximately 1 1/2 hours by road, southeast of Bauchi Town. The beauty and size of The Yankari Game Reserve make it the most popular reserve in Nigeria.

Set up in 1956 and opened to the public in 1962, the main game-viewing areas of the reserve are open all year round. Japanese, Western Europeans, Americans and Southeast Asian tourists visit this park in abundance.

The reserve covers 2,058 sq. km. of savanna woodland and is well-stocked with elephants, baboons, waterbucks, bushbucks, oribi, crocodile, hippopotamus, roan antelope, buffalo and various types of monkeys. Lions are occasionally spotted as well, despite their natural camouflage. The best time to visit is between November and May, when tourists are likely to see more game since the dense vegetation has dried out and the animals congregate around the rivers.

The Wikki Warm Springs is one of the best features of the game reserves. Flood-lit at night, it is wonderful after a hot day's game-viewing to relax in the warm water. The spring gushes out from under a cliff, where the water is at least 6 ft. deep, with a bathing area that extends for 600 ft. to an open area. The park is inhabited by a variety of birds, including the huge saddlebill stork, goliath heron, bateleur eagle, vultures, kingfishers, bee-eaters and more. It is excellent for serious bird-watchers.

Other facilities include: Tennis courts, squash courts, a small museum in the reception area plus gas stations with convenience stores at Wikki Camp and Bauchi.

Reservations: It is advisable to make reservation during the holidays and weekends with Easter a particularly busy season. Reservations can be made at Durbar Hotel in Kaduna, Bauchi State House in Lagos and at the Zaranda Hotel in Bauchi. Or call Yankari Game Reserve at (069) 43-656.

Route: You can travel by road from Lagos to Abuja, where you make an overnight stop, then on to Jos and Bauchi, as it is a 2-day journey by car over well-maintained roads.

Hotels: Basic accommodations are available in chalets or rondavels. Also available are suites, double rooms and family chalets that include small kitchens. There are many other National Parks besides Yankari, as illustrated on the map. Notable ones include Mambilla, Gumti National Park, Cross River National Park, and Kainji Lake National Park.

Mambilla Plateau

The Mambilla Plateau, in the southeast corner of Taraba State, shares a border with Cameroon. A high grassland plateau averaging about 1800 meters, it is scenic, cool and a pleasant change from the heat and humidity of Lagos. Because the roads are still under construction, a sport utility vehicle or jeep is recommended and visitors should pack essentials, camping equipment and food. As an option, there are a few hotels on the plateau.

The Park provides an attractive setting, well worth a visit. Mambilla has cattle ranches, tea plantations and rolling, grassy hills. It is different from the rest of Nigeria with regard to flora and fauna and is home to some rare species of birds and animals, especially at the

Gashaka-Gumti National Park.

Route: There is a major road to Mambilla from Lagos, Benin City, Onitsha, Enugu, Otukpo, Yandev, Katsina Ala, Wukari, Mutum Biyu, Bali, Serti and Gembu. You can also fly into Yola Airport, then drive a few miles south to Mambilla.

Gashaka-Gumti National Park

This is a vast land of spectacular wilderness (6,000 sq. km) in the southeast corner of Taraba State, adjoining the Mambilla Plateau. Mostly mountainous, from 457 to 2407 meters, it contains Nigeria's highest mountain, Chapal Waddi (2409m). It is the most ecologically diverse conservation area in the country and contains swaths of guinea savanna, gallery forest, moist forest, mountain forest and grassland. Many rivers flow through the park, including the Taraba, a major tributary of the River Benue.

A wide variety of animal life can be found, including buffalo, roan antelope, chimpanzee, colobus monkey, hippopotamus, hyena, giant forest hog, lion and leopard. The park is a birdwatcher's paradise with a wide variety of species, and there is excellent fishing in the River Kam. The reserve headquarters is in the Forest Rest Houses at Serti, on the main road between Bali and Mambilla Plateau.

These rest houses provide self-catering accommodation at a small fee. The entrance to the park is about 15 km south of Serti. In the dry season, it is possible to drive to the former headquarters at Gashaka village, some 30 km from the entrance gate, where more self-catering accommodation is available. The park is best explored on foot and it is possible to hire game guards; guides and porters are available at Serti or in Gashaka village.

Cross River National Park

The Cross River National Park was created from two existing forest reserves of Bashi-Okwango and Oban Forest Reserves. It is famous for its unique rain forest vegetation which, according to conservation experts, is some of the richest in Africa. This park contains the last remaining rain forest in Nigeria, which is being preserved with the help of the Nigerian Conservation Foundation. It has a herd of forest elephants, the white-faced monkey (indigenous to Nigeria only), buffalo, leopards and lowland gorillas, besides over a thousand other animal species. The park has a tropical climate characterized by a rainy season between April and October and a dry season between November and April. The moist green vegetation cover makes the forest an excellent place to see birds and butterflies.

The Kainji National Park

This Park, in Kwara State, was established in 1979 and incorporates the Borgu Game Reserve and Zugurma Game Reserve to the southeast in Niger State. The Borgu sector of the park alone covers an area of about of 3,929 sq. km. of savanna woodland, and Zugurma cover an area of about 1,370 sq. km.

The Kainji National Park also contains the Kainji Dam, an artificial lake which covers the town of Old Bussa. Here Mungo Park, the explorer, was said to have come to grief in 1805. Now the lake hides the scene of the accident. The lake is 136 km long and tours of the dam are available on request from the Nigeria Electric Power Authority. Boat trips on the lake can be arranged by the Borgu Game Reserve office at Wawa. To reduce the expense, it is better for several visitors to share the cost. Fishing is allowed on the lake.

Tourist Sites:

The Borgu Sector of Lake Kainji National Park was set up as a Federal Game Reserve and is one of the largest in West Africa. The area was uninhabited and the idea for the park was conceived in 1960. It is in the northern guinea vegetation zone which is characterized by tall grasses and

savanna woodland. The park retains a robust animal population including antelope, lion, hippopotamus, buffalo, roan antelope, jackal, baboon, monkey and crocodile.

The park is usually open from December to June, with the best time to visit towards the end of the dry season, when the grass has dried out and the animals move closer to the water. Tourist should expect Harmattan (dry wind) from December to mid-February.

The best times for game viewing are in the early morning or evening, and trips can be arranged from 6:00 am, either in park vehicles or visitor's own vehicle. Bird life is abundant, especially near the river. Visitors should call the Wawa Game Warden's office (11 miles from New Bussa) for a briefing and to also reserve a game guide. The entrance to the reserve is approximately 19 miles from Wawa along a laterite road, and the oil river camp is a further 32 miles from the entrance. Many Nigerians and foreigners make day trips to

Kainji or pass by it on their way to other parts of the country. Despite the provisions at Kainji and New Bussa, hotel accommodation is insufficient to encourage many people to stay for long periods

Coconut Beach

Coconut Beach is a beautiful beach in the coastal town of Badagry, west of Lagos. The beach is attractively set in an area surrounded by coconut trees. About 20 miles towards the border of Nigeria and the Republic of Benin, Coconut Beach is accessible through the Lagos-Badagry expressway. Visitors will find a friendly relaxed atmosphere.

Bar Beach

Bar Beach, also known as Victoria Beach, is the most popular beach among Nigerians. The main beach on Victoria Island is located along Ahmadu Bello Way opposite the Federal Guest House. It is usually crowded with Nigerians on public holidays.

Tarkwa Bay

Tarkwa Bay is a sheltered beach along the Lagos harbor. It is accessible by a 'trazan' boa from Maroko or 'fiki' boat from under Falu Bridge on Victoria Island.

This beach provides a pleasant outing with safe swimming conditions, even for small children. Tourist may obtain deck chairs and an awning on the beach, for relaxed, casual comfort. Local vendors sell delicious pineapples, coconuts and variety of other

delightful treats.

Calabar Beach

This superb beach, at the mouth of the new Calabar River, is about 2 miles long and 500 feet wide, uninhabited save for a solitary fisherman's hut. The beach is virtually isolated and lends visitors the luxury of privacy in a beautiful setting off the beaten path. Since the beach is flanked by a swamp and can only be reached by boat or canoe, getting there is half the fun and enhances one's fascination with this enchanted locale.

Lekki Beach

There are several beaches along the Lekki Peninsula, the foremost being Lekki Beach, located a few miles from the city center. Lekki Beach is another of Lagos' attractive beaches and remains popular with foreign tourists. Beach shelters made of palm fronds and umbrellas, available for rent, keep the sun at bay, as well as provide a place to enjoy snacks or refreshments sold by local traders.

Eleko Beach

Opened in 1989, Eleko is the newest of Lagos' Beaches, down the Lekki Peninsula about 30 miles from Lagos. There are no traders and no distractions on Eleko Beach, just peace and tranquillity, ideal for those seeking privacy.

The Obudu Ranch

The Obudu Ranch is a popular holiday destination for adventurous tourists wishing to explore the remote corners of Nigeria. Situated in the northeast corner of Cross River State, only 45 miles from the Cameroon border, a tourist can enjoy the countryside of both Nigeria and Cameroon at the same time.

The Obudu Plateau is spread over an area of 40 sq. miles. It is 5,200 feet above sea level. The climate is cool and pleasant with no mosquitoes.

The landscape is spectacular, with rolling grasslands, deep-wooded valleys and waterfalls. It is best to visit Obudu in the dry season since during the rainy season much of the ranch may be covered in mist and low clouds and there are thunderstorms. Between Dec. and Feb. the harmattan is heavy; therefore, the best times for a visit are the end of Oct. to Dec. and March to May before the rainy season.

Attractions:

Gorilla Camp, 13 km from the hotel, is accessible either by vehicle or on foot, where one can take a long, picturesque walk to the camp, and observe gorillas in their natural habitat. Guests may also ride horses or embark on hiking trips into the wild (comfortable shoes and a guide are recommended). Birdwatching here is unparalleled and there is a pleasantly shaded natural

swimming pool near the Ranch House. If visitors accept the challenge of a three-hour hike, they'll be rewarded with a stop at the waterfall, nestled amid captivating scenery. In spite of the altitude, it can get quite hot in the day, with five sunshine hours in the dry season (Oct. - April) and roughly two during rainy season (July to Aug.). Other activities include: golf, badminton, lawn tennis, squash and horseback riding.

Accommodations:

The Ranch Hotel maintains 33 chalets and boasts a friendly staff, superb restaurant and bar, and laundry/dry cleaning services. Chalets provide exquisite comfort with a large sitting room, color TV, VCR, cocktail bar, kitchen & spacious bedroom with double bed. The Ranch Hotel operates 24-hours during peak periods, Sept.-Dec., reservations should be made at the Cross River State House in Lagos. Or, by mail to: **Hotel Manager, Obudu Cattle Ranch, P.O. Box 87, Obudu, Cross River State, Nigeria.**

Route:

The sights are spectacular on the drive east, through rolling mountains and the dense forest with trees so high their branches form a canopy, shading out the sun entirely. This phenomenon has led to the area being called "Nigeria's Amazon," and is not to be missed. However, should one prefer to fly, they can do so from any major city to Calabar then proceed by car over the five hour route via Ikom.

Some tourist places :

Freedom Park , Lagos



[Mambilla Plateau, Taraba State](#)



Matsirga Waterfalls



Abuja



