



## #2 Film-Inspired Future Boom for Tourism: From Idris Elba's Zollywood to the Lion King's Mufasa

The global growth of film-inspired tourism is reframing destinations worldwide, with estimates suggesting the cinema and filming market could reach [\\$110 billion by 2028](#).

Disney's [Mufasa](#) is set to roar into theatres this December, with African tour operators bracing for a surge in bookings to echo well into 2025.

The anticipation follows the success model noted with Disney's 2019 *The Lion King*, which tour operators say reignited interest in African safari destinations, especially Kenya and Tanzania, where travellers sought to experience the film's settings firsthand.

Similarly, Marvel's [Black Panther](#) cast a futurist spotlight on Africa, reinvigorating its cultural design and heritage with an uptick in tourism interest, particularly in [South Africa, where parts of the movie were filmed](#).

### The Rise of “Setcations”

The spread of digital media and streaming services, and the globalisation of film distribution, continues to fuel the popularity of travel tied to movies and shows. Globally, destinations like Italy continue to teem with tourists after the filming of the second season of *White Lotus*. Thailand, as the latest filming location, is also anticipating a flurry of interest next year with the release of the third season.

This trend has the power to inspire global audiences, presenting an exciting opportunity to bring more visibility to Africa's unique destinations, explains Discover Africa Co-Founder, Andre Van Kets.

"For African travel companies, capitalising on this wave requires a proactive approach," he says. "[Londolozzi's cheeky play](#) on the original *Lion King* remains memorable. But travel operators can take it

a step further and develop tailored tours that let travellers experience film locations firsthand, adding cultural narratives that connect the destination's heritage with the film's story.”

Furthermore, he explains that by prioritising partnerships with local communities, travel companies can help preserve the landscapes that make Africa such a sought-after film destination.

“Together, we can foster increased tourism and pride in African heritage and storytelling that will resonate for years to come.”

## Africa: A Creative Hub for Global Filmmakers

Celebrated British actor Idris Elba's recent “Zollywood” initiative has generated a lot of interest. The actor has secured land and government approval for his proposed plan to build film studios in Tanzania and Ghana.

This highlights another emerging model that has the potential to share the appeal of Africa's destinations through incredible storytelling. Elba's blueprint envisions film studios built on Tanzania's Zanzibar islands and in Ghana's capital, Accra, to catapult the growth of Africa's film industry, turning it into a global powerhouse.

Combined with Tanzania's natural beauty and cultural richness, this project further positions the East African nation as a compelling destination for tourists eager to explore African landscapes seen on screen.

Elba's initiative aims to support local film talent, provide infrastructure, and draw in foreign investment, similar to South Africa's film industry. For example, the South African government has supported several productions, establishing the country as a hub for global filmmakers.

Offering [location subsidies](#) and building the necessary post-production infrastructure has helped attract international projects like *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *The Kissing Booth*, increased South Africa's visibility, and driven tourism to filming locations.

Nigeria's film industry, commonly known as Nollywood, also cannot be overlooked, with an estimated contribution of around US \$2.56 billion to Nigeria's GDP in 2023 alone. Increased investment from streaming giants like Netflix and Amazon Prime has further fuelled this growth, with Netflix contributing over US \$23 million over seven years, creating thousands of jobs and elevating the reach of Nigerian films internationally.

In Kenya, Mombasa is actively using film festivals to attract tourism, as seen in the inaugural [Mombasa International Film Festival \(MIFF\)](#), which drew attention to local talent and helped position the coastal city as a film destination. This approach not only boosts tourism but also creates opportunities for cultural exchange and local talent development.

For countries like Rwanda and Morocco, which have also opened doors to international productions, the benefits of hosting filmmakers are evident as tourism to these regions continues to rise. Morocco, for instance, saw [tourism gains](#) following the production of *Game of Thrones* in Ait Benhaddou and *Gladiator* in Ouarzazate.

## Putting Africa's Destinations on the Red Carpet

This trend of film tourism not only boosts local economies but also fosters cultural pride and strengthens the continent's global visibility. If supported with strategic partnerships and infrastructure, Africa could become a global leader in film-inspired travel, enriching local communities and offering immersive experiences for travellers worldwide.

It's clear that a combined and continued focus on film tourism in Africa holds promise, leveraging cinematic storytelling to promote diverse destinations across the continent.