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The Migration Overtourism Buck Stops Here!

Overtourism, as a global issue, is forcing the need for a more mindful approach to travel. Destinations like Spain and Italy heaved under the [crowds of tourists](#) this past year.

This is because an estimated [790 million tourists travelled internationally](#) in the first seven months of 2024 – 11% up from 2023 but 4% less than in 2019. The Middle East remains the strongest-growing region, with international arrivals climbing 26% above 2019 levels. Africa welcomed 7% more tourists than in the same months of 2019.

Overtourism backlash has also been seen in Kenya and Tanzania, specifically with the popularity of the annual Great Migration. Crowds of safari vehicles jostling during peak season to see one of the world's most famous wildlife events have unintentionally diminished the experience in certain regions.

What is the Solution and Why is This Important for Travel in 2025?

Finding a new approach to seasonality and itinerary design will become vital in the year ahead. This will achieve a more evenly distributed tourism model that benefits residents and elevates visitor experiences.

Industry research shared by [luxury travel advisory Virtuoso](#) shows that an estimated 47% of luxury travellers will look to avoid peak season travel, favouring less busy shoulder season trips. A recent survey of 2,000 UK adults further illustrates that Brits are increasingly trading beach holidays for safari adventures, with **45% favouring wildlife trips over traditional breaks**.

Their choices are driven by a desire for unique encounters and "concerns that future generations may [miss out on seeing endangered animals](#) in the wild".

"With rising visitor numbers globally, a more mindful approach to tourism is essential," states Andre Van Kets, Co-Founder of Discover Africa.

"Our unique offering in Africa presents an incredible opportunity to lead the way in promoting slow-haul travel through sustainable safari experiences. It's time to reconsider the checklist approach to oversaturated tourist destinations," adds Van Kets.

Travel companies like Governors' Camp and Singita are heavily focused on educating travellers on Africa's broader natural beauty and wildlife offerings beyond just the migration spectacle so famous in East Africa.

"East African countries will continue to shift towards a 'fewer people, paying more' model to reduce environmental impact," believes Alisa Karstad, Governors' Impact Manager.

Following Botswana and Rwanda's footsteps, [Kenya increased national park fees](#) for the Masai Mara to \$200 per day in 2024, aiming to limit visitor numbers and generate revenue for conservation. Guests are also charged a \$50 per person, per day community fee.

Many believe the high park fees will negatively impact tourism, as they aim to moderate visitor traffic and increase funds available for ecosystem preservation and community development.

While some have called it exclusionary, the stance has been to focus on regenerative tourism as opposed to overtourism.

"The recent fee increases aim to reduce visitor numbers while preserving income generation," says Karstad. "With travellers already having booked holidays this year, the real impact will likely be seen next year."

As a result, tour operators continue to rethink how they market and manage the Great Migration experience. By emphasising lesser-known natural attractions and promoting year-round wildlife experiences, these operators aim to reduce peak-season pressure on critical areas.

Governors' Camp has adjusted its approach to emphasise the Masai Mara's wildlife richness throughout the year.

Singita, as a luxury operator, goes beyond traditional tourism by offering conservation education and active participation opportunities, according to Singita Communications Manager Lisa Carey.

Examples include Singita's Conservation Rooms at properties like [Pamushana](#), Kwitonda, and [Ebony](#) lodges, which immerse guests in the landscapes' cultural and ecological histories, emphasising conservation.

These spaces provide detailed visual journeys with curated maps, archival materials, and artifacts. Interactive elements and accessible scientific information foster guest engagement, making conservation tangible while encouraging reflection and learning about the ecosystems guests are experiencing.

This approach actively involves guests in sustainable tourism, helping them connect deeply with nature while supporting Singita's ongoing conservation missions beyond the Great Migration.

Alternative Destinations and Year-Round Experiences

To alleviate pressure on popular destinations like the Serengeti and Masai Mara, operators are beginning to promote alternative locations across Africa, from Rwanda's mountain gorilla sanctuaries to Madagascar's pristine rainforests.

- **Rwanda:** Gorilla trekking is an immersive experience that contributes to rewilding efforts to expand habitats for endangered species through tourism conservation. This approach demonstrates how meaningful travel experiences can go hand-in-hand with conservation.
- **Diverse Experiences:** Emphasising year-round travel opportunities and non-migration experiences enables travellers to discover unique aspects of Africa without overwhelming single locations. For instance, Kenya's birding season, Tanzania's calving season, and Uganda's primate tours offer equally enchanting wildlife encounters throughout the year.

As the tourism industry evolves, Africa's focus on high-quality, low-impact travel highlights a way forward that balances ecological responsibility with traveller satisfaction. It offers a model that other destinations could follow in addressing the challenges of overtourism.