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Preface

This monthly statistical release provides information on South African residents and foreign travellers who entered or left South Africa in May 2021. Specific focus is on foreign tourists who entered the country during this month. The tourists are classified by region and country of residence. Details of their mode of travel; purpose of visit; age and sex distribution are also provided.



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Notice of data anomalies observed in the May 2021 data set

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) receives data collected by Department of Home Affairs (DHA) immigration officers at ports of entry. Upon analysis of the May dataset, it was noted that tourism data for 17, 18 and 19 May 2021 were not complete. There was no data available for 18 May, while there were shortages for the other dates (17 & 19 May).

This data is used by a number of businesses for planning purposes, and not releasing the data could impact them negatively. A decision was therefore taken to release the available data while awaiting the full dataset.

1. Key findings

1.1 Travellers

1.1.1 Number of travellers

The routine data collected by the Department of Home Affairs' (DHA) immigration officers at the ports of entry into and out of South Africa shows that a total of 735 165 travellers (arrivals, departures and transits) passed through South African ports of entry/exit in May 2021. As presented in Table 1 on page 9, these travellers were made up of 239 831 South African residents and 495 334 foreign travellers. A further breakdown of the figures for South African residents indicates that there were 117 782 arrivals, 121 937 departures and 112 travellers in transit. The corresponding volume for foreign arrivals, departures and travellers in transit was 258 521, 230 012 and 6 801 respectively.

A comparison between the movements in May 2020 and May 2021 is not included as there was a hard lockdown in May 2020 and only essential services providers were allowed to travel.

A comparison between the movements in April 2021 and May 2021 indicates that the volume of arrivals increased for both groups of travellers and departures decreased for South African residents but increased for foreign travellers. Travellers in transits increased for both groups of travellers. For South African residents, the volume of arrivals increased by 0,2% (from 117 557 in April 2021 to 117 782 in May 2021), departures decreased by 3,5% (from 126 417 in April 2021 to 121 937 in May 2021) and transits increased by 89,8% (from 59 in April 2021 to 112 in May 2021). For foreign travellers, arrivals increased by 4,1% (from 248 314 in April 2021 to 258 521 in May 2021), departures increased by 5,3% (from 218 493 in April 2021 to 230 012 in May 2021) and transits increased by 12,7% (from 6 035 in April 2021 to 6 801 in May 2021).

Detailed information on the departure of travellers is not available in the movement control system. Data on the purpose of travel and the number of days South African residents intend to spend or spent abroad are not collected by the DHA. It is therefore not possible to categorise South African residents as tourists or non-tourists. However, some data are available on foreign arrivals for this categorisation.

As presented in Table 1 on page 9, in May 2021, 39 128 (15,1%) of foreign arrivals were classified as non-visitors while 219 393 (84,9%) were classified as visitors. The visitors were categorised into three groups:

- i. Arrivals only – comprising visitors who entered the country in May 2021 but did not depart in May 2021 [75 167 (34,3%)];
- ii. Single trips – visitors who came to South Africa once in May 2021 and left in May 2021 [65 451 (29,8%)];
and
- iii. Multiple trips – visitors who came to and left South Africa more than once in May 2021 [78 775 (35,9%)].

Visitors were further grouped as same-day visitors and overnight visitors (tourists). In May 2021, there were 36 046 (16,4%) same-day visitors and 183 347 (83,6%) tourists. Between April 2021 and May 2021, the volume of same-day visitors increased by 18,6% (from 30 386 in April 2021 to 36 046 in May 2021) and that of tourists increased by 3,4% (from 177 251 in April 2021 to 183 347 in May 2021).

1.1.2 Mode of travel of travellers

Information presented in Table 2 on page 10, shows that in May 2021, road transport was the most common mode of travel used by 554 592 (75,4%) of the 735 165 travellers. The total number of travellers who used air transport was 176 285 (24,0%). Compared to the use of air and land transport, a smaller number of travellers, 4 288 (0,6%) used sea transport. Information on arrivals of South African residents shows that 32 888 (27,9%) came by air, 84 716 (71,9%) came by road and 178 (0,2%) arrived by sea transport. For departures, 38 491 (31,6%) used air, 83 242 (68,3%) used road and 204 (0,2%) left by sea transport. All travellers in transit, 112 (100,0%) used air transport.

In the case of foreign travellers, 49 167 (19,0%) arrived by air, 207 387 (80,2%) came by road and 1 967 (0,8%) arrived by sea transport. When departing South Africa, 48 826 (21,2%) foreign travellers left by air, 179 247 (77,9%) left by road and 1 939 (0,8%) left by sea transport. All travellers in transit, 6 801 (100,0%) used air transport. Table 2 further shows that of the 36 046 same-day visitors, a majority, 32 305 (89,6%) arrived in the country by road, 3 721 (10,3%) flew into the country; and 20 (0,1%) arrived by sea transport. Information on tourists shows that 143 996 (78,5%) used road transport, 39 339 (21,5%) came by air transport and 12 (less than 0,1%) arrived by sea transport.

1.2 Tourists

1.2.1 Mode of travel of tourists

The country of residence of tourists is used to categorise them according to their respective countries and regions. Information on the specific region and country of residence of tourists and the mode of travel used to enter South Africa is provided in Table 3 on pages 11 to 14. In May 2021, 18 181 (87,6%) of the 20 762 overseas tourists arrived in the country by air transport, whilst 2 571 (12,4%) came in by road transport and 10 (less than 0,1%) arrived by sea transport. Tourists from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, on the other hand, came predominantly by road, 140 874 (89,1%), 17 310 (10,9%) came by air and one tourist (less than 0,1%) came by sea transport. The number of tourists who came into South Africa by air from 'other' African countries was 3 647 (90,5%), with 384 (6,5%) using road transport.

1.2.2 Regional and national distribution

In May 2021, the distribution of overseas tourists was as follows: Europe, 9 499 (45,8%); North America, 6 514 (31,4%); Asia, 3 190 (15,4%); The Middle East, 658 (3,2%); Central and South America, 608 (2,9%) and Australasia, 293 (1,4%).

Figure 1 on page 7 and Table 3 on pages 11 to 12, indicate that the ten leading overseas countries in terms of the number of tourists visiting South Africa in May 2021 were: United States of America (USA), 6 175 (29,7%); United Kingdom (UK), 1 709 (8,2%); Germany, 1 304 (6,3%); France, 1 153 (5,6%); India, 986 (4,7%); The Netherlands, 848 (4,1%); Russian Federation, 833 (4,0%); China, 747 (3,6%); Portugal, 431 (2,1%) and Pakistan, 422 (2,0%). Tourists from these ten countries constituted 70,4% of all tourists from overseas countries.

Virtually, most tourists from Africa, 158 185 (97,5%), came from the SADC countries. The distribution of the remaining tourists from Africa is as follows: West Africa, 2 007 (1,2%); East and Central Africa, 1 679 (1,0%) and North Africa 346 (0,2%). The ten leading SADC countries in terms of the number of tourists visiting South Africa in May 2021 were: Mozambique 46 653 (29,5%); Zimbabwe, 33 343 (21,1%); Lesotho, 32 702 (20,7%); Eswatini, 16 225 (10,3%); Namibia, 8 489 (5,4%); Botswana, 8 075 (5,1%); Zambia, 5 714 (3,6%); Malawi, 4 122 (2,6%); Tanzania, 1 131 (0,7%) and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 984 (0,6%) (see Figure 2 on page 7 and Table 3 on pages 12). Tourists from these ten countries constituted 99,5% of all tourists from the SADC countries.

The ten leading countries in terms of the number of tourists visiting South Africa in May 2021 from 'other' African countries, as shown in Figure 3 on page 8 and Table 3 on pages 13 to 14, were: Nigeria, 1 009 (25,0%); Ghana, 711 (17,6%); Kenya, 582 (14,4%); Uganda 379 (9,4%); Ethiopia, 248 (6,2%); Egypt, 152 (3,8%); Cameroon, 148 (3,7%); Gabon, 129 (3,2%); Congo, 74 (2,1%) and Morocco, 52 (1,3%). Tourists from these ten countries constituted 86,4% of all tourists from 'other' African countries.

1.2.3 Purpose of visit

As observed in Table 4 on pages 15 to 18, in May 2021, the majority of tourists, 168 051 (91,7%), were in South Africa for holiday¹ compared to 12 299 (6,7%); 2 638 (1,4%) and 359 (0,2%) who were in South Africa for business, study and for medical treatment respectively.

Within the overseas regions, Australasia had the highest proportion of its tourists who came for holiday, 98,3% (288) followed by North America, 98,2% (6 395); Central and South America, 97,2% (591); Europe, 95,1% (9 038); Asia, 91,8% (2 930) and The Middle East, 89,4% (588).

Asia, 3,0% (95) had the highest proportion of its tourists who came to South Africa for business, followed by Europe, 2,9% (275); Australasia, 1,4% (4); North America, 1,1% (71); The Middle East, 1,1% (7) and Central and South America, 0,8% (5).

The Middle East, 9,4% (62) had the highest proportion of tourists who came to study, followed by Asia, 4,8% (154); Central and South America, 1,6% (10); Europe, 1,5% (146) and North America, 0,6% (41). Australasia had no tourists who came to South Africa for study purposes.

Europe had 0,4% (40) of its tourists who came for medical treatment, followed by Asia, 0,3% (11); Australasia, 0,3% (1); Central and South America, 0,3% (2); The Middle East, 0,2% (1) and North America, 0,1% (7).

The majority of African tourists, 147 875 (91,2%) came to South Africa for holiday. However, the following differences in terms of reasons for travel were observed between tourists from the SADC countries and 'other' African countries, namely:

- Holiday makers constituted 91,2% (144 245) of tourists from SADC countries compared to 90,0% (3 630) from 'other' African countries. Information on the regions of 'other' African countries shows that 91,9% (1 845) of tourists from West Africa were on holiday, followed by tourists from East and Central Africa, 88,3% (1 483) and North Africa 87,3% (302).
- Business persons constituted 7,4% (11 695) of tourists from SADC countries compared to 3,1% (126) from 'other' African countries. East and Central Africa, 4,1% (68) had the highest proportion of its tourists who came to South Africa for business purposes, followed by West Africa, 2,5% (50) and North Africa, 2,3% (8).
- Students constituted 6,0% (243) of tourists from 'other' African countries compared with 1,3% (1 982) from SADC countries. North Africa, 10,1% (35) had the highest proportion of its tourists who came to South Africa for study purposes, followed by East and Central Africa, 6,4% (108) and West Africa, 5,0% (100).
- Medical treatment tourists constituted 0,8% (33) of tourists from 'other' African countries, while those from SADC constituted 0,2% (263) of its tourists. East and Central Africa, 1,2% (20) had the highest proportion of its tourists who came for medical treatment, followed by West Africa, 0,6% (12) and North Africa, 0,3% (1).

1.2.4 Sex and age distribution

Table 5 on page 19 shows that in May 2021, there were 121 375 (66,2%) male and 61 972 (33,8%) female tourists. Overseas tourists were made up of 12 758 (61,4%) male tourists and 8 004 (38,6%) female tourists. There were 105 721 (66,8%) male and 52 464 (33,2%) female tourists from SADC countries. Tourists from 'other' African countries were made up of 2 642 (65,5%) male and 1 390 (34,5%) female tourists.

The ages of the tourists were categorised into seven broad groups (see Table 5 for a detailed classification). The results presented in Table 5 further show that the majority of tourists were aged between 35 and 44 years [63 706 (34,7%)].

Taking the regions of residence into consideration, the results show that the highest proportion of tourists from 'other' African countries [1 279 (31,7%)] and those from overseas countries [4 589 (22,1%)] were aged between 25 and 34 years, whereas those from SADC countries [58 078 (36,7%)] were aged between 35 and 44 years.

¹ The holiday category includes tourists who came for vacation, visiting friends and relatives, shopping and other personal reasons. See section 4.5.2 on page 21 for a more detailed discussion.

The second highest proportion of tourists from 'other' African countries [1 269 (31,5%)] and overseas countries [4 247 (20,5%)] were aged between 35 and 44 years, whereas those from SADC countries [36 989 (23,4%)] were aged between 25 and 34 years. The median ages of tourists from overseas, SADC and 'other' African countries were 39, 39 and 36 years respectively. The proportion of tourists younger than 15 years was higher among tourists from overseas countries, 5,8% (1 196) compared to those from 'other' African countries, 3,8% (152) and SADC countries, 3,0% (4 673).

A comparison of the three regions shows higher proportions of the elderly among both male and female tourists from overseas. This comprised of 8,0% (1 026) males and 8,2% (654) females from overseas countries. However, tourists aged 65 years and older from the other two regions comprised of less than 3,5% of both male and female tourists: from SADC countries, elderly tourists were made up of 1,9% (2 006) males and 3,4% (1 774) females; while in 'other' African countries elderly tourists made up 2,4% (64) and 3,0% (42) of male and female tourists respectively.

2. Figures

Figure 1 – Number of tourists from the ten leading overseas countries in May 2021

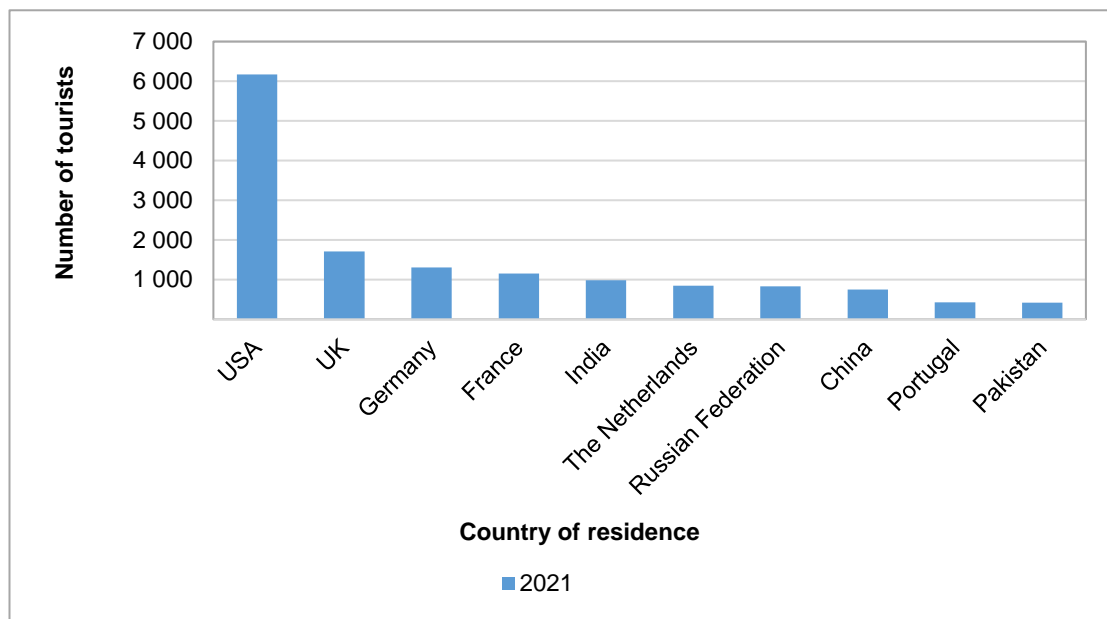


Figure 2 – Number of tourists from the ten leading Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries in May 2021

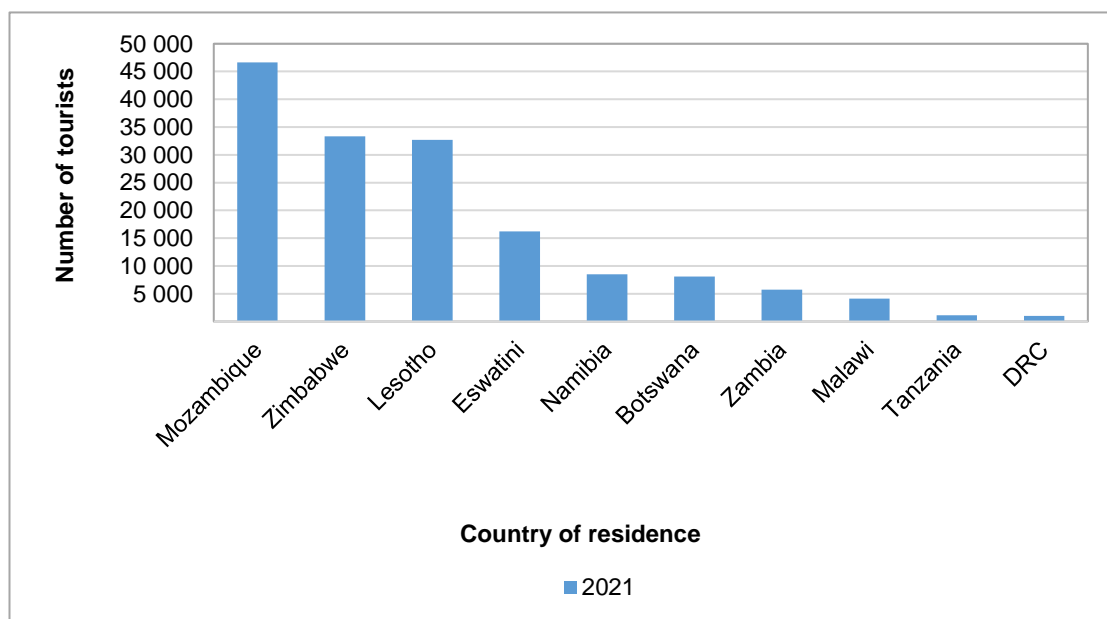
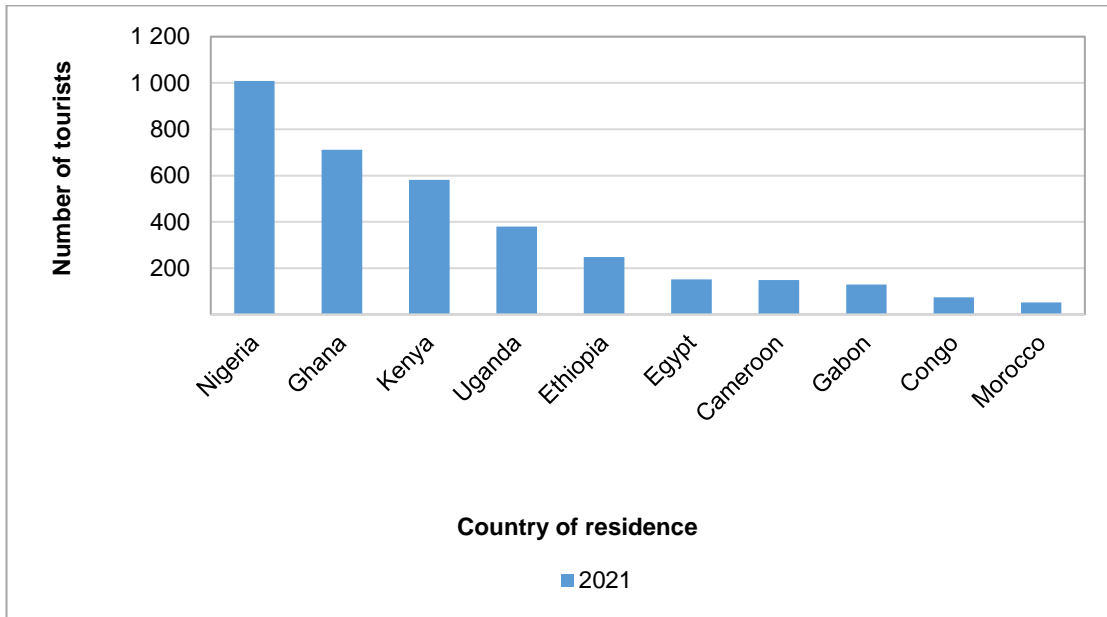


Figure 3 – Number of tourists from the ten leading 'other' African countries in May 2021



3. Tables

Table 1 – Number of South African residents and foreign travellers by travel direction

Travel Direction	April 2021	May 2021	% Change April 2021 – May 2021
Total	716 875	735 165	2,6%
South African residents	244 033	239 831	-1,7%
Arrivals	117 557	117 782	0,2%
Departures	126 417	121 937	-3,5%
Transits	59	112	89,8%
Foreign travellers	472 842	495 334	4,8%
Arrivals	248 314	258 521	4,1%
Departures	218 493	230 012	5,3%
Transits	6 035	6 801	12,7%
Foreign arrivals	248 314	258 521	4,1%
Non-visitors	40 677	39 128	-3,8%
Visitors	207 637	219 393	5,7%
Visitors	207 637	219 393	5,7%
Arrivals only	77 232	75 167	-2,7%
Single trips	57 219	65 451	14,4%
Multiple trips	73 186	78 775	7,6%
Visitors	207 637	219 393	5,7%
Same-day	30 386	36 046	18,6%
Overnight (Tourists)	177 251	183 347	3,4%

Table 2 – Number of South African residents and foreign travellers by travel direction and mode of travel

Travel direction	Total	Air					Road	Sea
		Cape Town	King Shaka	OR Tambo	Other	Total		
Total	735 165	28 343	1 886	143 947	2 109	176 285	554 592	4 288
South African residents	239 831	10 706	753	58 452	1 580	71 491	167 958	382
Arrivals	117 782	4 220	338	27 564	766	32 888	84 716	178
Departures	121 937	6 479	415	30 783	814	38 491	83 242	204
Transit	112	7	-	105	-	112	-	-
Foreign travellers	495 334	17 637	1 133	85 495	529	104 794	386 634	3 906
Arrivals	258 521	8 421	659	39 838	249	49 167	207 387	1 967
Departures	230 012	9 164	474	38 908	280	48 826	179 247	1 939
Transit	6 801	52	-	6 749	-	6 801	-	-
Visitors	219 393	7 048	211	35 638	163	43 060	176 301	32
Same-day	36 046	98	4	3 607	12	3 721	32 305	20
Tourist	183 347	6 950	207	32 031	151	39 339	143 996	12

Table 3 – Number of tourists by country of residence and mode of travel, May 2021

Country of residence	May 2021	Air					Road	Sea
		Cape Town	King Shaka	OR Tambo	Other	Total		
Total	183 347	6 950	207	32 031	151	39 339	143 996	12
Overseas	20 762	4 821	179	13 089	92	18 181	2 571	10
Europe	9 499	2 689	25	5 564	37	8 315	1 180	4
Belgium	389	108	1	239	2	350	39	-
France	1 153	255	1	752	3	1 011	142	-
Germany	1 304	536	4	660	4	1 204	100	-
Ireland	154	30	-	107	1	138	16	-
Italy	377	83	-	219	1	303	74	-
Poland	174	70	1	96	-	167	7	-
Portugal	431	27	-	144	1	172	259	-
Russian Federation	833	392	2	382	-	776	57	-
Spain	298	75	1	195	-	271	27	-
Sweden	166	64	1	75	-	140	26	-
Switzerland	354	107	-	225	1	333	21	-
The Netherlands	848	288	-	500	-	788	60	-
UK	1 709	333	14	1 140	17	1 504	201	4
Ukraine	157	74	-	83	-	157	-	-
Other	1 152	247	-	747	7	1 001	151	-
North America	6 514	1 501	48	4 586	34	6 169	345	-
Canada	339	57	-	255	-	312	27	-
USA	6 175	1 444	48	4 331	34	5 857	318	-
Central and South America	608	124	3	349	1	477	131	-
Brazil	303	74	-	150	-	224	79	-
Cuba	31	-	-	30	-	30	1	-
Mexico	104	21	-	81	-	102	2	-
Other	170	29	3	88	1	121	49	-
Australasia	293	44	4	217	3	268	25	-
Australia	243	34	2	188	1	225	18	-
New Zealand	50	10	2	29	2	43	7	-

Table 3 – Number of tourists by country of residence and mode of travel, May 2021 (continued)

Country of residence	May 2021	Air					Road	Sea
		Cape Town	King Shaka	OR Tambo	Other	Total		
Middle East	658	281	4	320	7	612	46	-
Israel	110	9	-	84	2	95	15	-
Qatar	62	30	-	32	-	62	-	-
Saudi Arabia	291	205	1	85	-	291	-	-
Other	195	37	3	119	5	164	31	-
Asia	3 190	182	95	2 053	10	2 340	844	6
Bangladesh	63	3	1	21	-	25	38	-
China	747	26	-	503	-	529	218	-
India	986	53	27	625	5	710	273	3
Indonesia	54	18	-	30	-	48	6	-
Japan	89	10	2	73	-	85	4	-
Malaysia	122	7	14	87	-	108	14	-
Pakistan	422	12	38	214	-	264	158	-
Philippines	382	22	2	325	3	352	27	3
South Korea	65	7	3	38	-	48	17	-
Thailand	114	13	7	81	1	102	12	-
Other	146	11	1	56	1	69	77	-
Africa	162 217	2 120	28	18 751	58	20 957	141 258	2
SADC	158 185	1 655	22	15 584	49	17 310	140 874	1
Angola	672	34	-	527	4	565	107	-
Botswana	8 075	10	15	692	7	724	7 351	-
DRC	984	93	-	782	3	878	106	-
Eswatini	16 225	-	-	142	2	144	16 081	-
Lesotho	32 702	3	-	119	-	122	32 580	-
Madagascar	7	1	-	3	2	6	1	-
Malawi	4 122	5	-	935	1	941	3 181	-
Mauritius	52	3	1	14	1	19	32	1
Mozambique	46 653	-	-	1 150	5	1 155	45 498	-
Namibia	8 489	885	1	916	3	1 805	6 684	-
Seychelles	16	1	-	10	-	11	5	-
Tanzania	1 131	52	-	616	1	669	462	-
Zambia	5 714	10	-	1 092	2	1 104	4 610	-
Zimbabwe	33 343	558	5	8 586	18	9 167	24 176	-

Table 3 – Number of tourists by country of residence and mode of travel, May 2021 (continued)

Country of residence	May 2021	Air					Road	Sea
		Cape Town	King Shaka	OR Tambo	Other	Total		
'Other' African	4 032	465	6	3 167	9	3 647	384	1
East and Central Africa	1 679	185	2	1 320	6	1 513	166	-
Burundi	29	4	2	21	-	27	2	-
Cameroon	148	11	-	126	3	140	8	-
Central African Republic	9	-	-	9	-	9	-	-
Chad	7	-	-	7	-	7	-	-
Comoros	14	-	-	14	-	14	-	-
Congo	74	18	-	52	-	70	4	-
Djibouti	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
Equatorial Guinea	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
Eritrea	12	-	-	11	-	11	1	-
Ethiopia	248	8	-	205	-	213	35	-
Gabon	129	19	-	107	-	126	3	-
Kenya	582	72	-	463	2	537	45	-
Rwanda	26	2	-	16	-	18	8	-
São Tomé and Príncipe	5	-	-	5	-	5	-	-
Somalia	15	1	-	13	-	14	1	-
Uganda	379	49	-	270	1	320	59	-
West Africa	2 007	230	1	1 603	2	1 836	170	1
Benin	33	5	-	26	-	31	2	-
Burkina Faso	6	-	-	6	-	6	-	-
Cape Verde Island	6	1	-	3	-	4	2	-
Côte d'Ivoire	37	8	-	24	-	32	5	-
Gambia	4	-	-	4	-	4	-	-
Ghana	711	82	-	605	-	687	23	1
Guinea	44	5	-	22	-	27	17	-
Guinea-Bissau	8	-	-	8	-	8	-	-
Liberia	18	-	-	16	-	16	2	-
Mali	42	1	-	16	-	17	25	-
Mauritania	4	-	-	4	-	4	-	-
Niger	8	3	-	5	-	8	-	-
Nigeria	1 009	117	1	801	1	920	89	-
Saint Helena	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Senegal	42	3	-	37	-	40	2	-

Table 3 – Number of tourists by country of residence and mode of travel, May 2021 (concluded)

Country of residence	May 2021	Air					Road	Sea
		Cape Town	King Shaka	OR Tambo	Other	Total		
Sierra Leone	30	4	-	23	-	27	3	-
Togo	4	1	-	3	-	4	-	-
North Africa	346	50	3	244	1	298	48	-
Algeria	12	-	-	11	-	11	1	-
Egypt	152	20	3	114	-	137	15	-
Libya	42	2	-	18	-	20	22	-
Morocco	52	2	-	49	-	51	1	-
South Sudan	27	13	-	13	-	26	1	-
The Sudan	36	7	-	20	1	28	8	-
Tunisia	23	6	-	17	-	23	-	-
Western Sahara	2	-	-	2	-	2	-	-
Unspecified	368	9	-	191	1	201	167	-

Table 4 – Number of tourists by country of residence and purpose of visit

Country of residence	May 2021	Purpose of visit			
		Business	Holiday	Study	Medical treatment
Total	183 347	12 299	168 051	2 638	359
Overseas	20 762	457	19 830	413	62
Europe	9 499	275	9 038	146	40
Belgium	389	17	362	8	2
France	1 153	30	1 057	65	1
Germany	1 304	48	1 235	19	2
Ireland	154	5	148	1	-
Italy	377	19	348	7	3
Poland	174	6	168	-	-
Portugal	431	4	425	1	1
Russian Federation	833	7	825	1	-
Spain	298	21	276	1	-
Sweden	166	12	153	1	-
Switzerland	354	9	340	5	-
The Netherlands	848	21	813	4	10
UK	1 709	39	1 629	20	21
Ukraine	157	6	151	-	-
Other	1 152	31	1 108	13	-
North America	6 514	71	6 395	41	7
Canada	339	3	331	5	-
USA	6 175	68	6 064	36	7
Central and South America	608	5	591	10	2
Brazil	303	4	295	4	-
Cuba	31	-	30	1	-
Mexico	104	-	103	-	1
Other	170	1	163	5	1
Australasia	293	4	288	-	1
Australia	243	4	238	-	1
New Zealand	50	-	50	-	-

Table 4 – Number of tourists by country of residence and purpose of visit (continued)

Country of residence	May 2021	Purpose of visit			
		Business	Holiday	Study	Medical treatment
Middle East	658	7	588	62	1
Israel	110	2	101	6	1
Qatar	62	-	47	15	-
Saudi Arabia	291	-	264	27	-
Other	195	5	176	14	-
Asia	3 190	95	2 930	154	11
Bangladesh	63	-	62	1	-
China	747	39	687	21	-
India	986	38	899	43	6
Indonesia	54	-	47	7	-
Japan	89	5	82	2	-
Malaysia	122	1	68	53	-
Pakistan	422	4	412	6	-
Philippines	382	-	373	6	3
South Korea	65	2	61	2	-
Thailand	114	-	109	4	1
Other	146	6	130	9	1
Africa	162 217	11 821	147 875	2 225	296
SADC	158 185	11 695	144 245	1 982	263
Angola	672	11	615	40	6
Botswana	8 075	806	7 024	148	97
DRC	984	35	845	85	19
Eswatini	16 225	1 054	15 023	137	11
Lesotho	32 702	287	31 626	750	39
Madagascar	7	-	4	1	2
Malawi	4 122	200	3 880	33	9
Mauritius	52	-	46	5	1
Mozambique	46 653	837	45 779	32	5
Namibia	8 489	3 388	4 789	293	19
Seychelles	16	-	16	-	-
Tanzania	1 131	103	980	41	7
Zambia	5 714	1 929	3 735	44	6
Zimbabwe	33 343	3 045	29 883	373	42

Table 4 – Number of tourists by country of residence and purpose of visit (continued)

Country of residence	May 2021	Purpose of visit			
		Business	Holiday	Study	Medical treatment
'Other' African	4 032	126	3 630	243	33
East and Central Africa	1 679	68	1 483	108	20
Burundi	29	2	24	1	2
Cameroon	148	5	122	15	6
Central African Republic	9	1	8	-	-
Chad	7	-	5	2	-
Comoros	14	-	11	3	-
Congo	74	1	64	8	1
Djibouti	1	-	1	-	-
Equatorial Guinea	1	-	1	-	-
Eritrea	12	-	11	-	1
Ethiopia	248	3	239	4	2
Gabon	129	-	114	12	3
Kenya	582	39	507	35	1
Rwanda	26	2	21	3	-
São Tomé and Príncipe	5	-	5	-	-
Somalia	15	1	12	2	-
Uganda	379	14	338	23	4
West Africa	2 007	50	1 845	100	12
Benin	33	-	30	3	-
Burkina Faso	6	1	5	-	-
Cape Verde Island	6	-	6	-	-
Côte d'Ivoire	37	6	31	-	-
Gambia	4	-	4	-	-
Ghana	711	14	684	11	2
Guinea	44	1	38	5	-
Guinea-Bissau	8	-	8	-	-
Liberia	18	1	15	-	2
Mali	42	-	40	2	-
Mauritania	4	-	4	-	-
Niger	8	-	7	-	1
Nigeria	1 009	20	906	77	6
Saint Helena	1	-	-	-	1
Senegal	42	3	38	1	-

Table 4 – Number of tourists by country of residence and purpose of visit (concluded)

Country of residence	May 2021	Purpose of visit			
		Business	Holiday	Study	Medical treatment
Sierra Leone	30	2	27	1	-
Togo	4	2	2	-	-
North Africa	346	8	302	35	1
Algeria	12	-	12	-	-
Egypt	152	2	140	9	1
Libya	42	-	40	2	-
Morocco	52	-	50	2	-
South Sudan	27	6	16	5	-
The Sudan	36	-	20	16	-
Tunisia	23	-	22	1	-
Western Sahara	2	-	2	-	-
Unspecified	368	21	346	-	1

Table 5 – Number of tourists from overseas, SADC and ‘other’ African regions by sex and age group

Sex	Age group	May 2021	Region			
			Overseas	SADC	‘Other’ African	Unspecified
All	Total	183 347	20 762	158 185	4 032	368
	0-14	6 027	1 196	4 673	152	6
	15-24	12 294	2 340	9 557	386	11
	25-34	42 918	4 589	36 989	1 279	61
	35-44	63 706	4 247	58 078	1 269	112
	45-54	37 441	3 722	33 039	583	97
	55-64	15 387	2 988	12 069	257	73
	65+	5 574	1 680	3 780	106	8
Male	Total	121 375	12 758	105 721	2 642	254
	0-14	3 018	607	2 329	79	3
	15-24	6 384	1 175	4 992	209	8
	25-34	26 929	2 703	23 389	789	48
	35-44	45 353	2 872	41 482	925	74
	45-54	26 554	2 443	23 634	413	64
	55-64	10 037	1 932	7 889	163	53
	65+	3 100	1 026	2 006	64	4
Female	Total	61 972	8 004	52 464	1 390	114
	0-14	3 009	589	2 344	73	3
	15-24	5 910	1 165	4 565	177	3
	25-34	15 989	1 886	13 600	490	13
	35-44	18 353	1 375	16 596	344	38
	45-54	10 887	1 279	9 405	170	33
	55-64	5 350	1 056	4 180	94	20
	65+	2 474	654	1 774	42	4

4. Explanatory notes

4.1 Introduction

Legal movements across South African borders, as well as legal immigration into South Africa, fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). Stats SA then processes, analyses and publishes this information.

Administrative data sources from the DHA, that is, information from all the country's ports of entry and applications for permanent residence, constitute the only comprehensive source of information on foreign arrivals and departures, documented immigrants and emigrants. The information from this source of data provides the best national coverage (both in terms of space and time) of the population movements of South African residents and foreign travellers. The data can be used for the following:

- To estimate, monitor and understand salient characteristics of foreign travellers and volumes of South African residents travelling outside South Africa.
- To provide information that can be used to (a) assess the extent of government's progress in strengthening bilateral political and economic relations by assessing the number of international tourist arrivals, and (b) benchmark surveys focusing on the demand for local tourism services by foreign travellers.

4.2 Purpose of the statistical release

This release reports on arrivals, departures and transit travellers of South African residents and foreign travellers. Detailed information on the age and sex distribution; mode of travel; national and regional distribution; and purpose of travel of overnight visitors or tourists are also provided.

4.3 Scope and coverage

The release covers data collected by DHA officials on travellers who departed from or entered the Republic of South Africa (RSA).

4.4 Data

Information published in this release is based on data obtained from the following data sources within the DHA:

- Data routinely collected by immigration officers at all road, air and sea entry ports on all travellers (South African residents and foreign travellers) arriving into or departing from South Africa are captured into the DHA's population Movement Control System (MCS). The counts/statistics relate to the number of individual movements, rather than to the number of people. Hence, the multiple movements of individual people during the calendar month are each counted separately. Generally, the data are collected directly from travel documents either by scanning or capturing onto the ports' electronic database. No forms or cards are used (except on rare occasions when the capturing system is down) to collect information from travellers. Individual ports regularly transmit data onto the national database at the head office of the DHA.
- Stats SA receives downloaded data covering a particular calendar month from the DHA.
- As part of data interrogation, data from O.R. Tambo International Airport, which has the highest volume of travellers, are compared with passenger statistics from the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA). As expected, in any specific month, an increase in the volume of passengers reported by ACSA is also reflected in an increase in the volume of travellers recorded by DHA. A similar pattern has also been observed when the volume of travellers decreased. In May 2021, the DHA data was 1,3% lower than that of ACSA.

4.5 Limitations

4.5.1 Outbound tourists

The information on the total number of arrivals and departures of South African residents is collected from the scanning of passports. However, data on the country visited are not collected from passengers; country of final destination; intended duration of stay and purpose of visit. With this limitation, it is impossible to identify the number of tourists from the data on South African residents.

4.5.2 Purpose of visit

The holiday category includes tourists who came for vacation, visiting friends and relatives, shopping and other personal reasons such as attending weddings. While it's possible to separate 'visiting friends and relatives' from the broad category of Holiday, shopping and other reasons for visiting South Africa are all combined with vacation in the DHA movement control system. Discussions are in progress with the Department of Home Affairs to capture vacation and shopping as separate categories for a clearer breakdown of tourists by purpose of visit.

4.6 Definition of terms

4.6.1 Definitions used by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)

Traveller is someone who moves between different geographical locations for any purpose and any duration.

Visitor refers to any person travelling to a place other than that of his/her usual environment for less than 12 months and whose main purpose of the trip is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.

Same-Day visitor is a visitor who visits a place for less than one night.

Tourist (overnight visitor) is a visitor who stays at least one night in collective or private accommodation in the place visited.

Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to, and staying in places outside their usual environment, for not more than one consecutive year, for leisure, business and other purposes. The usual environment of a person consists of a certain area around his/her place of residence, plus all the other places he/she frequently visits.

4.6.2 Definitions used specifically in this release

South African resident refers to either a South African citizen or a non-South African citizen with a South African permanent residence permit.

Foreign traveller refers to a traveller who is not a South African citizen or permanent resident.

Region refers to the following country classification:

- Overseas: Europe, North America, Central and South America, Australasia, the Middle East and Asia.
- Africa: SADC and 'other' Africa (East and Central Africa, West Africa and North Africa).

Country refers to individual countries within a region. The country of residence is used. The country of residence should not be confused with the country from which the visitor travelled.

Africa refers to all the countries in Africa (both mainland and island countries).

SADC refers to the fourteen countries, excluding South Africa, which belong to the Southern African Development Community.

'Other' African refers to all non-SADC African countries.

Overseas refers to all countries outside Africa.

Trip refers to the arrival and departure of a visitor in a specified month.

4.7 Symbols used

- = nil

< = less than

4.8 Rounding off

Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

5. General information

Stats SA publishes approximately 300 different statistical releases each year. It is not economically viable to produce them in more than one of South Africa's eleven official languages, since the releases are used extensively, not only locally but also by international economic and social-scientific communities. Stats SA releases are published in English.

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