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STATISTICAL RELEASE

P0351

Tourism and Migration

May 2023

Embargoed until:
27 June 2023
10:00

ENQUIRIES:
User Information Services
(012) 310 8600/4892/8390

FORTHCOMING ISSUE:
June 2023

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE:
July 2023

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Preface

The release is compiled and published by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) according to a framework of International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008 (IRTS 2008) developed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The IRTS is one element of a System of Tourism Statistics (STS) that provides information for understanding and monitoring the impact of tourism over time and the other element of the STS for South Africa includes use of border statistics from National Department of Home Affairs.

This monthly statistical release provides information on South African residents and foreign travellers who entered or left South Africa in May 2023. Specific focus is on foreign tourists who entered the country in the month of May 2023. 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.

This release comes at the backdrop of nearly three unprecedented and challenging years for the tourism economy. South African tourism was hit hard during the first and the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Though the recovery of the sector has begun, it is highly uncertain. The shock has been a reminder of tourism's vital role as an economic and social force for change in the country.

The March, June, September and December releases include summaries of number of tourists for the current quarter and comparisons with previous periods.



Risenga Maluleke
Statistician-General

1. Highlights of the results

There were 2 378 670 (arrivals, departures and transits) travellers that entered and exited South Africa in May 2023. They were made up of 659 639 South African residents and 1 719 031 foreign travellers. Foreign arrivals, 895 463 were made up of 28 300 non-visitors and 867 163 visitors. The visitors consisted of 237 063 same-day visitors and 630 100 overnight visitors (tourists).

Tourists

Overseas tourists were 132 443 or 21,0% of all tourists. USA (32 472), UK (17 989) and India (10 876) contributed 46,3% to overseas tourists. SADC tourists were 485 608 or 77,1% of all tourists. Zimbabwe (161 912), Mozambique (107 160) and Lesotho (94 585) contributed 74,9% to SADC tourists. 'Other' African countries (non-SADC) tourists were 10 885 or 1,7% of all tourists. Kenya (3 346), Nigeria (1 539) and Ghana (1 063) contributed 54,6% to 'other' African tourists. The country of residence of 1 164 (0,2%) tourists was classified as unspecified.

Purpose of visit

'Holiday'¹ continues to be the main purpose of visit. About 95,7% of all the tourists were in South Africa for holiday purposes.

¹ The holiday category includes tourists who came for vacation, visiting friends and relatives, shopping and other personal reasons.

2. Key findings

2.1 Travellers

2.1.1 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 2 378 670 travellers (arrivals, departures and transits) passed through South African ports of entry/exit in May 2023. As presented in Table 1 below, these travellers were made up of 659 639 South African residents and 1 719 031 foreign travellers. A further breakdown of the figures for South African residents indicates that there were 327 811 arrivals, 331 346 departures and 482 travellers in transit. The corresponding volume for foreign arrivals, departures and travellers in transit was 895 463, 789 789 and 33 779 respectively.

A comparison between the movements in April 2023 and May 2023 indicates that the volume of arrivals and departures decreased for both South African residents and foreign travellers but the volume of travellers in transit increased for both groups of travellers. For South African residents, the volume of arrivals decreased by 13,7% (from 379 707 in April 2023 to 327 811 in May 2023) and departures decreased by 17,8% (from 403 131 in April 2023 to 331 346 in May 2023). Transits increased by 20,2% (from 401 in April 2023 to 482 in May 2023). For foreign travellers, arrivals decreased by 8,5% (from 979 032 in April 2023 to 895 463 in May 2023), departures decreased by 10,6% (from 883 708 in April 2023 to 789 789 in May 2023), and transits increased by 10,5% (from 30 561 in April 2023 to 33 779 in May 2023).

A comparison between the movements in May 2022 and May 2023 indicates that the volume of arrivals, departures and travellers in transit increased for both South African residents and foreign travellers. For South African residents, the volume of arrivals increased by 20,7% (from 271 518 in May 2022 to 327 811 in May 2023), departures increased by 18,4% (from 279 966 in May 2022 to 331 346 in May 2023) and transits increased by 19,3% (from 404 in May 2022 to 482 in May 2023). For foreign travellers, arrivals increased by 56,3% (from 572 870 in May 2022 to 895 463 in May 2023), departures increased by 55,6% (from 507 739 in May 2022 to 789 789 in May 2023) and transits increased by 26,7% (from 26 666 in May 2022 to 33 779 in May 2023).

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

Travel Direction	May 2022	April 2023	May 2023	% Change Apr 2023 – May 2023	% Change May 2022 – May 2023
Total	1 659 163	2 676 540	2 378 670	-11,1%	43,4%
South African residents	551 888	783 239	659 639	-15,8%	19,5%
Arrivals	271 518	379 707	327 811	-13,7%	20,7%
Departures	279 966	403 131	331 346	-17,8%	18,4%
Transits	404	401	482	20,2%	19,3%
Foreign travellers	1 107 275	1 893 301	1 719 031	-9,2%	55,2%
Arrivals	572 870	979 032	895 463	-8,5%	56,3%
Departures	507 739	883 708	789 789	-10,6%	55,6%
Transits	26 666	30 561	33 779	10,5%	26,7%

2.1.2 Mode of travel of travellers

Information presented in Table 2 below shows the number of South African residents and foreign travellers by travel direction and mode of travel. In May 2023, road was the most common mode of travel used by 1 624 832 (68,3%) of the 2 378 670 travellers. Total number of travellers who used air was 746 645 (31,4%). Compared to air and land, a smaller number of travellers, 7 193 (0,3%) used sea into and out of South Africa. Information on arrivals of South African residents shows that 145 375 (44,3%) came by air, 182 227 (55,6%) came by road and 209 (0,1%) arrived by sea. For departures, 156 361 (47,2%) used air, 174 907 (52,8%) used road and 78 (less than 0,1%) left by sea. All travellers in transit, 482 (100,0%) used air.

In the case of foreign travellers, 196 526 (21,9%) arrived by air, 695 770 (77,7%) came by road and 3 167 (0,4%) arrived by sea. When departing South Africa, 214 122 (27,1%) foreign travellers left by air, 571 928 (72,4%) left by road and 3 739 (0,5%) left by sea. All travellers in transit, 33 779 (100,0%) used air.

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	2 378 670	170 171	22 558	548 912	5 004	746 645	1 624 832	7 193
South African residents	659 639	61 036	14 516	224 631	2 035	302 218	357 134	287
Arrivals	327 811	26 775	7 109	110 477	1 014	145 375	182 227	209
Departures	331 346	34 261	7 407	113 672	1 021	156 361	174 907	78
Transit	482	-	-	482	-	482	-	-
Foreign travellers	1 719 031	109 135	8 042	324 281	2 969	444 427	1 267 698	6 906
Arrivals	895 463	49 745	3 832	141 890	1 059	196 526	695 770	3 167
Departures	789 789	59 188	4 210	148 814	1 910	214 122	571 928	3 739
Transit	33 779	202	-	33 577	-	33 779	-	-
Visitors	867 163	47 759	3 174	136 645	893	188 471	678 458	234
Same-day	237 063	793	59	18 223	84	19 159	217 840	64
Tourist	630 100	46 966	3 115	118 422	809	169 312	460 618	170

2.2 Visitors

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 3 on page 4, in May 2023, 28 300 (3,2%) of foreign arrivals were classified as non-visitors, while 867 163 (96,8%) were classified as visitors. Visitors were categorised into three groups:

- i. Arrivals only – comprising visitors who entered the country in May 2023 but did not depart in May 2023 [274 324 (31,6%)];
- ii. Single trips – visitors who came to South Africa once in May 2023 and left in May 2023 [276 380 (31,9%)];
and
- iii. Multiple trips – visitors who came to and left South Africa more than once in May 2023 [316 459 (36,5%)].

Visitors were further grouped as same-day visitors and overnight visitors (tourists). In May 2023, there were 237 063 (27,3%) same-day visitors and 630 100 (72,7%) tourists. Between April 2023 and May 2023, the volume of same-day visitors increased by 2,0% (from 232 458 in April 2023 to 237 063 in May 2023) whereas that of tourists decreased by 11,7% (from 713 470 in April 2023 to 630 100 in May 2023). Between May 2022 and May 2023, the volume of same-day visitors increased by 102,1% (from 117 290 in May 2022 to 237 063 in May 2023) and that of tourists increased by 54,7% (from 407 262 in May 2022 to 630 100 in May 2023).

Table 2 on page 3 further shows that of the 237 063 same-day visitors, a majority, 217 840 (91,9%) arrived in the country by road, 19 159 (8,1%) flew into the country and 64 (less than 0,1%) arrived by sea. Information on tourists shows that 460 618 (73,1%) used road, 169 312 (26,9%) came by air and 170 (less than 0,1%) arrived by sea.

Table 3 – Number of visitors by type of visitor

Travel Direction	May 2022	April 2023	May 2023	% Change Apr 2023 – May 2023	% Change May 2022 – May 2023
Foreign arrivals	572 870	979 032	895 463	-8,5%	56,3%
Non-visitors	48 318	33 104	28 300	-14,5%	-41,4%
Visitors	524 552	945 928	867 163	-8,3%	65,3%
Visitors	524 552	945 928	867 163	-8,3%	65,3%
Arrivals only	158 798	317 984	274 324	-13,7%	72,8%
Single trips	180 506	314 819	276 380	-12,2%	53,1%
Multiple trips	185 248	313 125	316 459	1,1%	70,8%
Visitors	524 552	945 928	867 163	-8,3%	65,3%
Same-day	117 290	232 458	237 063	2,0%	102,1%
Overnight (Tourists)	407 262	713 470	630 100	-11,7%	54,7%

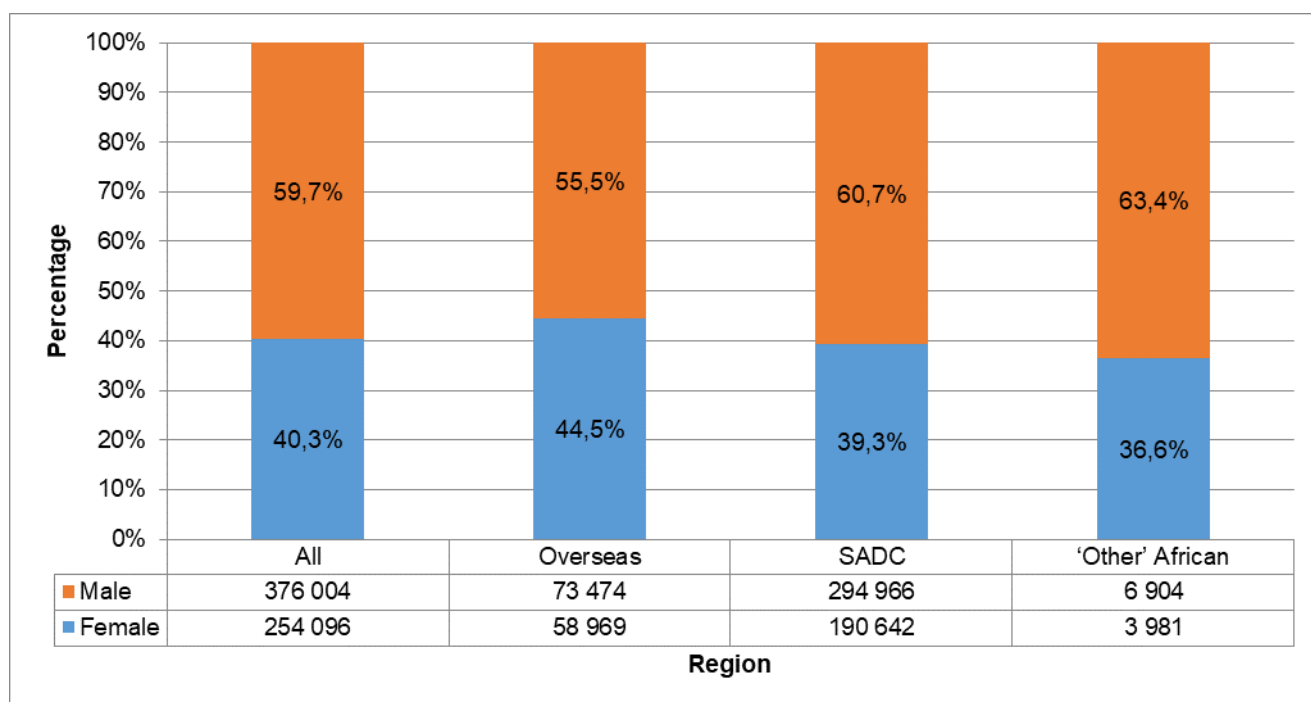
2.3 Tourists

2.3.1 Sex and age distribution of tourists

Sex

Figure 1 on page 5 shows that there were more male [376 004 (59,7%)] than female [254 096 (40,3%)] tourists. Male tourists constituted the majority of tourists for all three regions, SADC countries [294 966 (60,7%)], overseas countries [73 474 (55,5%)] and 'other' African countries [6 904 (63,4%)]. Similarly, the largest portion of female tourists was from SADC countries [190 642 (39,3%)], followed by overseas countries [58 969 (44,5%)] and 'other' African countries [3 981 (36,6%)].

Figure 1 – Percentage distribution of tourists by region of residence and sex, May 2023

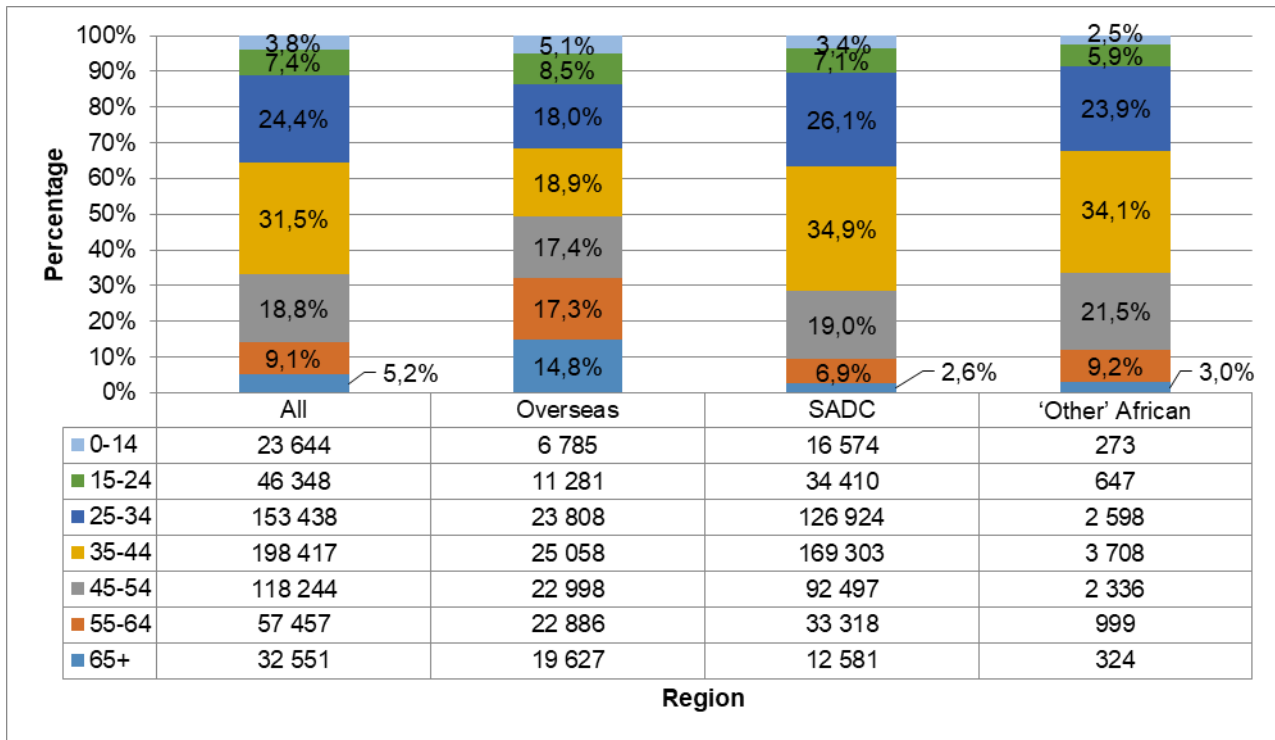


Age

The age distribution indicates that out of all tourists, [23 644 (3,8%)] were aged less than 15 years; [46 348 (7,4%)] were aged between 15 and 24 years; [153 438 (24,4%)] were aged between 25 and 34 years; [198 417 (31,5%)] were aged between 35 and 44 years; [118 244 (18,8%)] were aged between 45 and 54 years; [57 457 (9,1%)] were aged between 55 and 64 years; [32 551 (5,2%)] were aged 65 years and above. (see Figure 2 on page 6).

Taking the region of residence into consideration, the results show that the highest proportion of tourists from SADC countries [169 303 (34,9%)] and those from 'other' African countries [3 708 (34,1%)] were aged between 35 and 44 years. The second highest proportion of tourists from SADC countries [126 924 (26,1%)] and those from 'other' African countries [2 598 (23,9%)] were aged between 25 and 34 years. The median ages of tourists from overseas, SADC and 'other' African countries were 44, 38 and 39 years, respectively. The proportion of tourists aged less than 15 years was higher among tourists from overseas countries, 5,1% (6 785) compared to those from SADC countries, 3,4% (16 574) and those from 'other' African countries, 2,5% (273).

Figure 2 – Percentage distribution of tourists by region of residence and age, May 2023

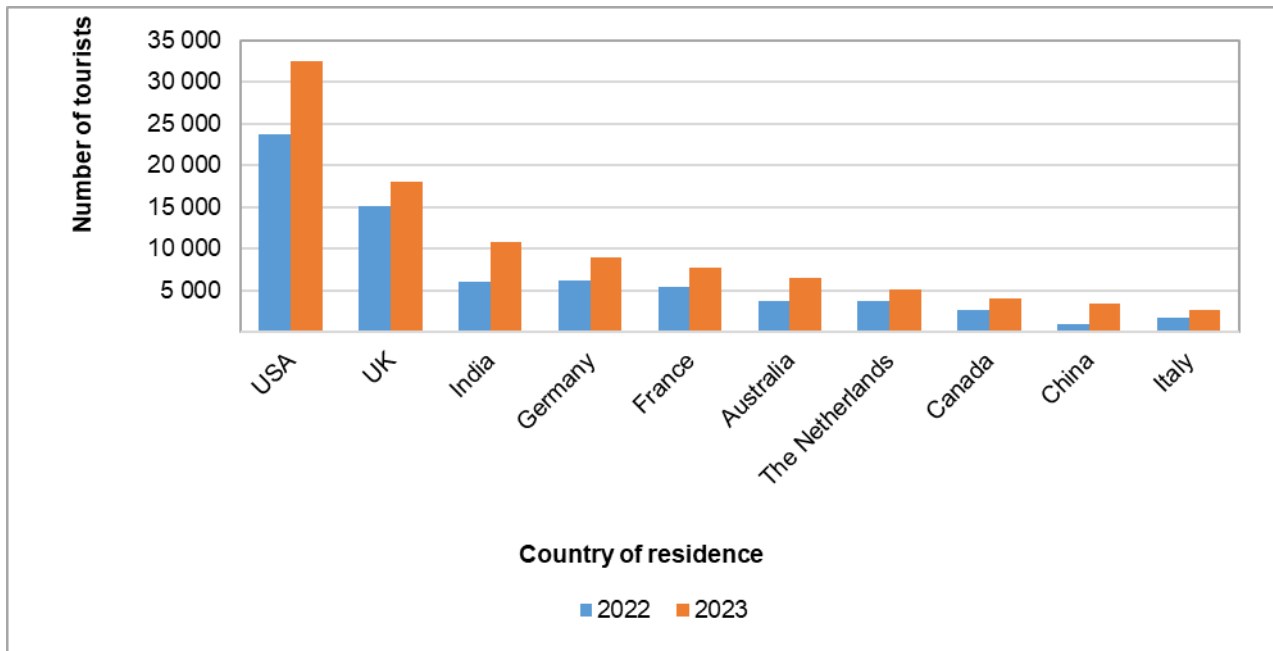


2.3.2 Regional and national distribution of tourists

In May 2023, the distribution of overseas tourists was as follows: Europe, 60 955 (46,0%); North America, 36 461 (27,5%); Asia, 21 603 (16,3%); Australasia, 7 878 (5,9%); Central and South America, 2 830 (2,1%) and The Middle East, 2 716 (2,1%).

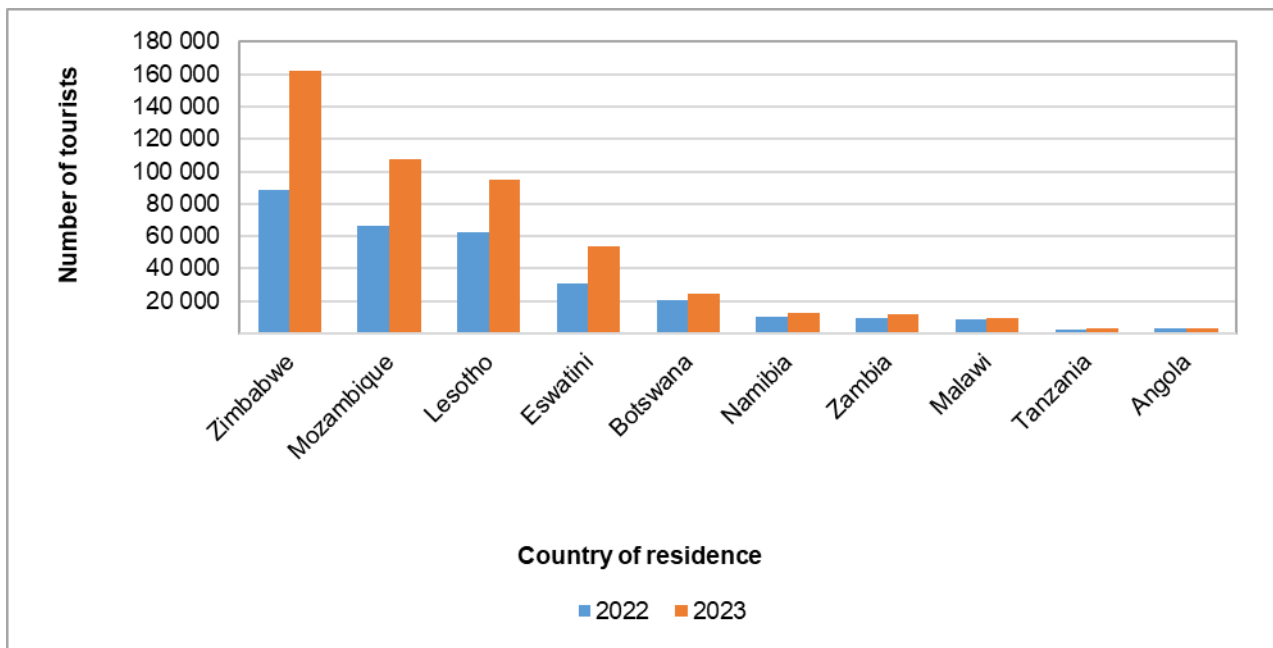
Figure 3 on page 7 indicates that the ten leading overseas countries in terms of the number of tourists visiting South Africa in May 2023 were: United States of America (USA), 32 472 (24,5%); United Kingdom (UK), 17 989 (13,6%); India, 10 876 (8,2%); Germany, 9 019 (6,8%); France, 7 748 (5,9%); Australia, 6 435 (4,9%); The Netherlands, 5 176 (3,9%); Canada, 3 989 (3,0%); China, 3 389 (2,6%) and Italy, 2 625 (2,0%). Tourists from these ten countries constituted 75,3% of all tourists from overseas countries. A comparison of movements in the ten leading countries between May 2022 and May 2023 shows that the number of tourists increased for all ten leading countries. China had the highest increase of 274,1% (from 906 tourists in May 2022 to 3 389 tourists in May 2023).

Figure 3 – Number of tourists from the ten leading overseas countries in May 2022 and May 2023



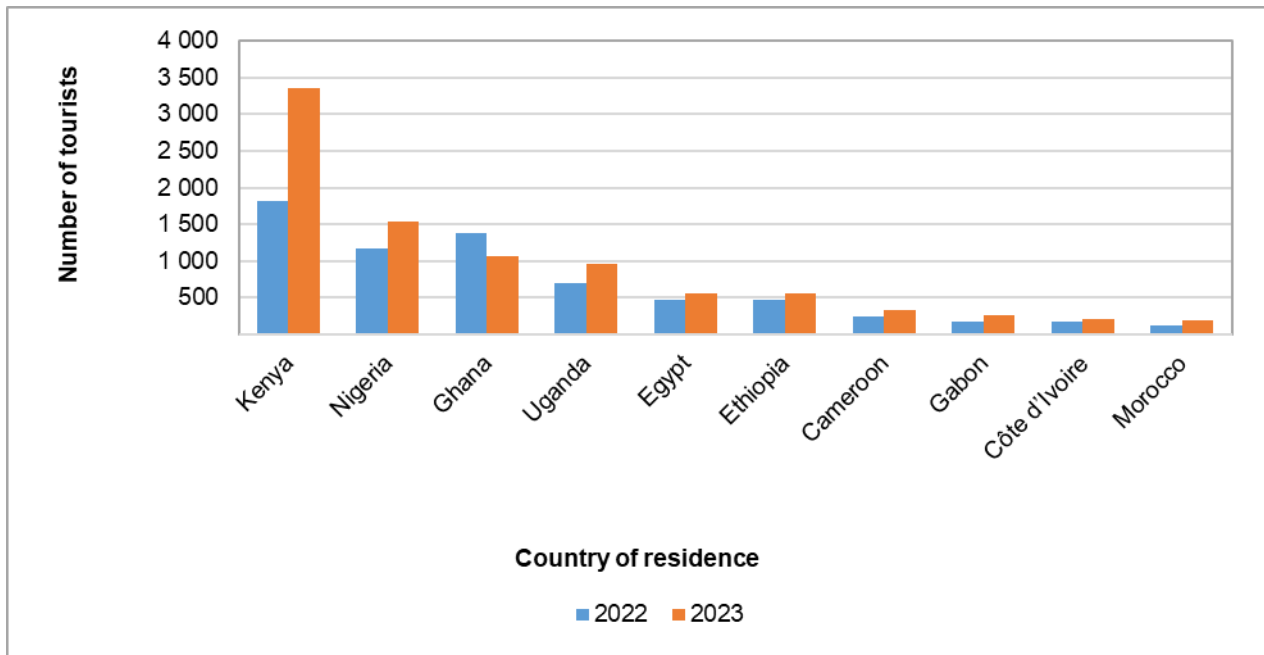
Virtually, most tourists from Africa, 485 608 (97,8%), came from SADC countries. The distribution of the remaining tourists from Africa was as follows: East and Central Africa, 6 019 (1,2%); West Africa, 3 664 (0,7%) and North Africa 1 202 (0,2%). Ten leading SADC countries in terms of the number of tourists visiting South Africa in May 2023 were: Zimbabwe, 161 912 (33,3%); Mozambique, 107 160 (22,1%); Lesotho, 94 585 (19,5%); Eswatini, 53 876 (11,1%); Botswana, 24 640 (5,1%); Namibia, 12 419 (2,6%); Zambia, 11 821 (2,4%); Malawi, 9 717 (2,0%); Tanzania, 3 042 (0,6%) and Angola, 2 842 (0,6%) (see Figure 4 below). Tourists from these ten countries constituted 99,3% of all tourists from the SADC countries. A comparison of movements in the ten leading countries between May 2022 and May 2023 shows that the number of tourists increased for all ten leading countries. Zimbabwe showed the highest increase of 82,3% (from 88 831 tourists in May 2022 to 161 912 tourists in May 2023)

Figure 4 – Number of tourists from the ten leading Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries in May 2022 and May 2023



The ten leading countries in terms of the number of tourists visiting South Africa in May 2023 from 'other' African countries, as shown in Figure 5 below, were: Kenya, 3 346 (30,7%); Nigeria, 1 539 (14,1%); Ghana, 1 063 (9,8%); Uganda, 954 (8,8%); Egypt, 569 (5,2%); Ethiopia, 554 (5,1%); Cameroon, 340 (3,1%); Gabon, 269 (2,5%); Côte d'Ivoire, 217 (2,0%) and Morocco, 202 (1,9%). Tourists from these ten countries constituted 83,2% of all tourists from 'other' African countries. A comparison between movements in May 2022 and May 2023 shows that the number of tourists increased for nine of ten leading countries. Kenya showed the highest increase of 83,6% (from 1 822 tourists in May 2022 to 3 346 tourists in May 2023).

Figure 5 – Number of tourists from the ten leading 'other' African countries in May 2022 and May 2023



2.3.3 Purpose of visit of tourists

Table 4 on page 9, shows the number of tourists by region and sub-region. Detailed data on country of residence and purpose of visit is presented in Annexure C on pages 17 to 19. It is observed that in May 2023, the majority of tourists, 603 219 (95,7%), were in South Africa for holiday compared to 22 640 (3,6%); 3 904 (0,6%) and 337 (0,1%) who were in South Africa for business, study and medical treatment respectively.

Within the overseas regions, Australasia, 98,7% (7 776) had the highest proportion of tourists who came for holiday followed by North America, 98,0% (35 731); Europe, 96,2% (58 647); Central and South America, 94,7% (2 680); The Middle East, 94,7% (2 571) and Asia, 92,2% (19 925).

Asia, 6,7% (1 439) had the highest proportion of tourists who came to South Africa for business, followed by Central and South America, 4,7% (132); The Middle East, 4,2% (113); Europe, 3,3% (2 018); North America, 1,7% (620) and Australasia, 1,1% (90).

The Middle East, 1,2% (32) had the highest proportion of tourists who came to study, followed by Asia, 1,1% (233); Central and South America, 0,6% (16); Europe, 0,4% (232); North America, 0,3% (106) and Australasia, 0,1% (9).

Europe (58) and Central and South America (2) had 0,1% of tourists who came for medical treatment. Australasia (3), Asia (6) and North America (4) had less than 0,1% of medical treatment tourists. The Middle East had no tourists coming to South Africa for medical treatment.

Majority of African tourists, 474 826 (95,6%) 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 95,8% (465 348) of tourists from SADC countries compared to 87,1% (9 478) from 'other' African countries. Information on the regions of 'other' African countries shows that 87,9% (5 292) of tourists from East and Central Africa were on holiday, followed by tourists from West Africa, 86,4% (3 165) and those from North Africa, 84,9% (1 021).
- Business persons constituted 3,5% (17 148) of tourists from SADC countries compared to 9,0% (983) from 'other' African countries. North Africa, 10,5% (126) had the highest proportion of tourists who came to South Africa for business purposes, followed by East and Central Africa, 9,0% (544) and West Africa, 8,5% (313).
- Students constituted 0,6% (2 894) of tourists from SADC countries compared with 3,5% (380) from 'other' African countries. West Africa, 4,8% (177) had the highest proportion of tourists who came to South Africa for study purposes, followed by North Africa, 4,5% (54) and East and Central Africa, 2,5% (149).
- Tourists who came for medical treatment constituted less than 0,1% (218) of tourists from SADC countries, while those from 'other' African countries constituted 0,4% (44). East and Central Africa, 0,6% (34) had the highest proportion of tourists who came for medical treatment followed by West Africa, 0,2% (9) and North Africa, 0,1% (1).

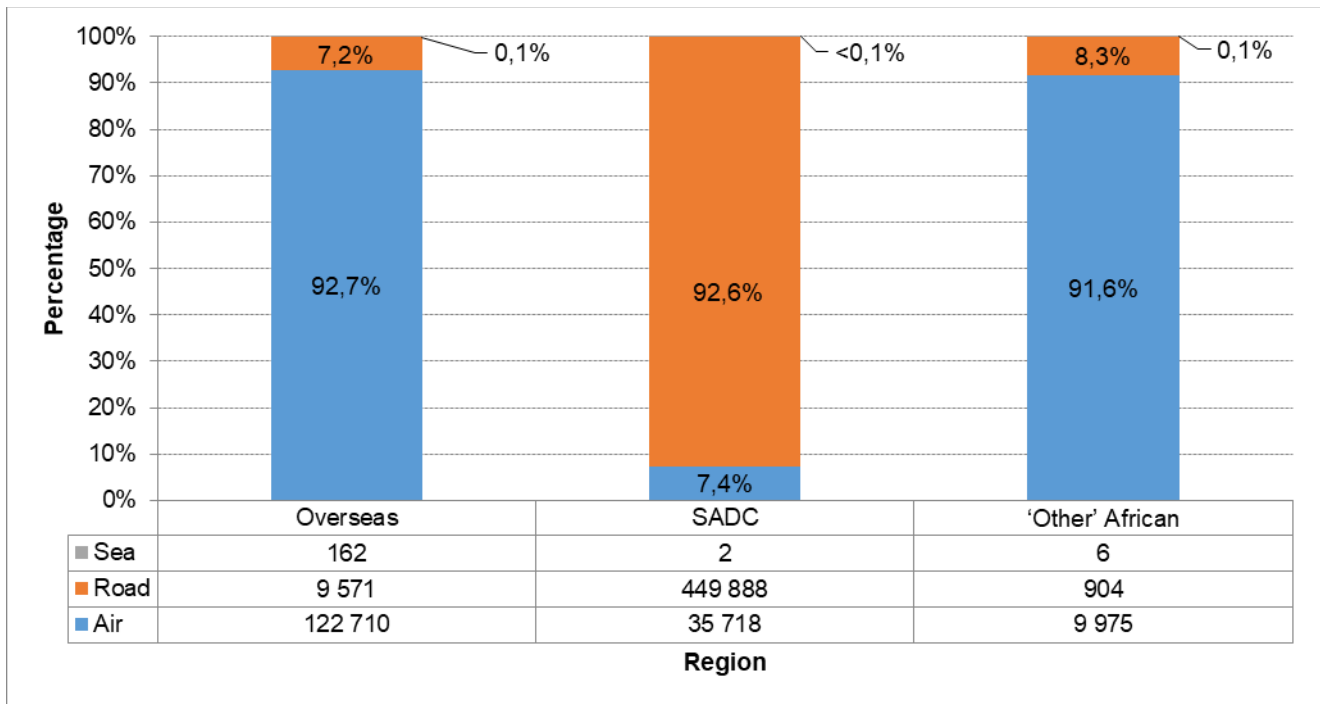
Table 4 – Number of tourists by region of residence and purpose of visit

Region of residence	May 2023	Business	Holiday	Study	Medical treatment
Total	630 100	22 640	603 219	3 904	337
Overseas	132 443	4 412	127 330	628	73
Europe	60 955	2 018	58 647	232	58
North America	36 461	620	35 731	106	4
Central and South America	2 830	132	2 680	16	2
Australasia	7 878	90	7 776	9	3
Middle East	2 716	113	2 571	32	-
Asia	21 603	1 439	19 925	233	6
Africa	496 493	18 131	474 826	3 274	262
SADC	485 608	17 148	465 348	2 894	218
'Other' African	10 885	983	9 478	380	44
East and Central Africa	6 019	544	5 292	149	34
West Africa	3 664	313	3 165	177	9
North Africa	1 202	126	1 021	54	1
Unspecified	1 164	97	1 063	2	2

2.3.4 Mode of travel of tourists

Tourists are categorised by their countries of residence 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 Annexure B on pages 14 to 16. As shown in Figure 6 below, 122 710 (92,7%) overseas tourists arrived in the country by air, whilst 9 571 (7,2%) came in by road and 162 (0,1%) arrived by sea. Tourists from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, on the other hand, came predominantly by road, 449 888 (92,6%), whilst 35 718 (7,4%) came by air and two (less than 0,1%) arrived by sea. The number of tourists who came into South Africa by air from 'other' African countries was 9 975 (91,6%); while 904 (8,3%) used road transport and six (0,1%) used sea.

Figure 6 – Percentage distribution of tourists by region of residence and mode of travel, May 2023



3. Annexures

3.1 Annexure A – Number of tourists' difference between May 2022 and May 2023 by country of residence

Country of residence	May 2022	May 2023	Difference between May 2022 and May 2023	% change between May 2022 and May 2023
Total	407 262	630 100	222 838	54,7%
Overseas	92 368	132 443	40 075	43,4%
Europe	45 131	60 955	15 824	35,1%
Austria	576	830	254	44,1%
Belgium	1 417	2 048	631	44,5%
France	5 459	7 748	2 289	41,9%
Germany	6 269	9 019	2 750	43,9%
Ireland	1 066	2 031	965	90,5%
Italy	1 753	2 625	872	49,7%
Portugal	1 207	1 390	183	15,2%
Russian Federation	737	1 721	984	133,5%
Spain	1 311	1 882	571	43,6%
Sweden	865	1 049	184	21,3%
Switzerland	1 409	1 838	429	30,4%
The Netherlands	3 789	5 176	1 387	36,6%
Turkey	924	1 068	144	15,6%
UK	15 115	17 989	2 874	19,0%
Other	3 234	4 541	1 307	40,4%
North America	26 516	36 461	9 945	37,5%
Canada	2 727	3 989	1 262	46,3%
USA	23 789	32 472	8 683	36,5%
Central and South America	2 376	2 830	454	19,1%
Argentina	184	173	-11	-6,0%
Brazil	1 278	1 255	-23	-1,8%
Mexico	281	356	75	26,7%
Other	633	1 046	413	65,2%
Australasia	4 369	7 878	3 509	80,3%
Australia	3 741	6 435	2 694	72,0%
New Zealand	620	1 434	814	131,3%
Other	8	9	1	12,5%
Middle East	2 508	2 716	208	8,3%
Israel	793	971	178	22,4%
Saudi Arabia	873	652	-221	-25,3%
United Arab Emirates	183	316	133	72,7%
Other	659	777	118	17,9%
Asia	11 468	21 603	10 135	88,4%
Bangladesh	664	812	148	22,3%
China	906	3 389	2 483	274,1%
India	5 993	10 876	4 883	81,5%
Japan	516	1 060	544	105,4%
Malaysia	348	579	231	66,4%
Pakistan	1 427	1 351	-76	-5,3%
Philippines	406	556	150	36,9%
Singapore	236	797	561	237,7%

Annexure A – Number of tourists' difference between May 2022 and May 2023 by country of residence (continued)

Country of residence	May 2022	May 2023	Difference between May 2022 and May 2023	% change between May 2022 and May 2023
South Korea	285	683	398	139,6%
Thailand	211	487	276	130,8%
Other	476	1 013	537	112,8%
Africa	314 070	496 493	182 423	58,1%
SADC	305 900	485 608	179 708	58,7%
Angola	2 833	2 842	9	0,3%
Botswana	20 265	24 640	4 375	21,6%
DRC	1 738	1 516	-222	-12,8%
Eswatini	31 201	53 876	22 675	72,7%
Lesotho	62 830	94 585	31 755	50,5%
Madagascar	202	329	127	62,9%
Malawi	8 383	9 717	1 334	15,9%
Mauritius	946	1 410	464	49,0%
Mozambique	66 391	107 160	40 769	61,4%
Namibia	10 379	12 419	2 040	19,7%
Seychelles	136	339	203	149,3%
Tanzania	2 191	3 042	851	38,8%
Zambia	9 574	11 821	2 247	23,5%
Zimbabwe	88 831	161 912	73 081	82,3%
'Other' African	8 170	10 885	2 715	33,2%
East and Central Africa	3 873	6 019	2 146	55,4%
Burundi	52	98	46	88,5%
Cameroon	246	340	94	38,2%
Central African Republic	10	30	20	200,0%
Chad	23	42	19	82,6%
Comoros	21	29	8	38,1%
Congo	116	125	9	7,8%
Djibouti	8	18	10	125,0%
Equatorial Guinea	19	24	5	26,3%
Eritrea	34	30	-4	-11,8%
Ethiopia	465	554	89	19,1%
Gabon	175	269	94	53,7%
Kenya	1 822	3 346	1 524	83,6%
Rwanda	95	80	-15	-15,8%
São Tomé and Príncipe	7	4	-3	-42,9%
Somalia	81	76	-5	-6,2%
Uganda	699	954	255	36,5%
West Africa	3 327	3 664	337	10,1%
Benin	82	151	69	84,1%
Burkina Faso	66	67	1	1,5%
Cape Verde Island	16	33	17	106,3%
Côte d'Ivoire	174	217	43	24,7%
Gambia	18	36	18	100,0%
Ghana	1 377	1 063	-314	-22,8%
Guinea	85	102	17	20,0%
Guinea-Bissau	6	1	-5	-83,3%
Liberia	31	70	39	125,8%
Mali	100	108	8	8,0%

Annexure A – Number of tourists' difference between May 2022 and May 2023 by country of residence (concluded)

Country of residence	May 2022	May 2023	Difference between May 2022 and May 2023	% change between May 2022 and May 2023
Mauritania	9	18	9	100,0%
Niger	19	36	17	89,5%
Nigeria	1 164	1 539	375	32,2%
Saint Helena	1	5	4	400,0%
Senegal	98	149	51	52,0%
Sierra Leone	48	42	-6	-12,5%
Togo	33	27	-6	-18,2%
North Africa	970	1 202	232	23,9%
Algeria	76	88	12	15,8%
Egypt	475	569	94	19,8%
Libya	73	52	-21	-28,8%
Morocco	116	202	86	74,1%
South Sudan	44	89	45	102,3%
The Sudan	95	57	-38	-40,0%
Tunisia	91	141	50	54,9%
Western Sahara	-	4	4	-
Unspecified	824	1 164	340	41,3%

3.2 Annexure B – Number of tourists by country of residence and mode of travel, May 2023

Country of residence	May 2023	Air					Road	Sea
		Cape Town	King Shaka	OR Tambo	Other	Total		
Total	630 100	46 966	3 115	118 422	809	169 312	460 618	170
Overseas	132 443	40 239	2 668	79 084	719	122 710	9 571	162
Europe	60 955	18 360	1 276	35 531	165	55 332	5 579	44
Austria	830	300	51	414	1	766	64	-
Belgium	2 048	473	30	1 300	4	1 807	241	-
France	7 748	1 493	14	5 241	12	6 760	988	-
Germany	9 019	3 368	109	4 505	21	8 003	1 015	1
Ireland	2 031	1 039	72	856	3	1 970	61	-
Italy	2 625	938	62	1 468	1	2 469	155	1
Portugal	1 390	212	33	700	4	949	441	-
Russian Federation	1 721	690	28	829	37	1 584	127	10
Spain	1 882	466	62	1 253	8	1 789	92	1
Sweden	1 049	292	25	675	-	992	57	-
Switzerland	1 838	495	17	1 093	8	1 613	223	2
The Netherlands	5 176	1 755	67	2 498	3	4 323	853	-
Turkey	1 068	442	41	493	2	978	90	-
UK	17 989	5 328	429	11 334	48	17 139	836	14
Other	4 541	1 069	236	2 872	13	4 190	336	15
North America	36 461	12 961	155	21 417	383	34 916	1 541	4
Canada	3 989	1 357	25	2 313	35	3 730	258	1
USA	32 472	11 604	130	19 104	348	31 186	1 283	3
Central and South America	2 830	863	41	1 620	47	2 571	245	14
Brazil	1 255	381	23	696	8	1 108	147	-
Mexico	356	117	2	229	2	350	6	-
Argentina	173	44	4	109	-	157	16	-
Other	1 046	321	12	586	37	956	76	14
Australasia	7 878	1 426	176	5 909	60	7 571	307	-
Australia	6 435	1 105	107	4 923	57	6 192	243	-
New Zealand	1 434	317	69	982	3	1 371	63	-
Other	9	4	-	4	-	8	1	-
Middle East	2 716	1 136	43	1 380	-	2 559	82	75
Israel	971	312	12	599	-	923	48	-
Saudi Arabia	652	429	8	213	-	650	2	-
United Arab Emirates	316	144	2	95	-	241	-	75
Other	777	251	21	473	-	745	32	-
Asia	21 603	5 493	977	13 227	64	19 761	1 817	25
Bangladesh	812	111	64	513	-	688	123	1
China	3 389	636	176	2 368	-	3 180	209	-
India	10 876	3 228	208	6 659	17	10 112	751	13
Japan	1 060	192	187	629	7	1 015	45	-
Malaysia	579	179	25	357	1	562	17	-
Pakistan	1 351	110	112	790	-	1 012	339	-
Philippines	556	148	19	332	1	500	49	7
Singapore	797	294	28	420	34	776	21	-

Annexure B – Number of tourists by country of residence and mode of travel, May 2023 (continued)

Country of residence	May 2023	Air					Road	Sea
		Cape Town	King Shaka	OR Tambo	Other	Total		
South Korea	683	177	45	360	-	582	101	-
Thailand	487	161	36	278	4	479	6	2
Other	1 013	257	77	521	-	855	156	2
Africa	496 493	6 595	445	38 565	88	45 693	450 792	8
SADC	485 608	4 483	392	30 760	83	35 718	449 888	2
Angola	2 842	952	1	1 496	8	2 457	385	-
Botswana	24 640	228	-	2 360	7	2 595	22 045	-
DRC	1 516	62	-	1 274	4	1 340	176	-
Eswatini	53 876	3	77	809	2	891	52 985	-
Lesotho	94 585	6	7	600	-	613	93 972	-
Madagascar	329	22	-	305	-	327	2	-
Malawi	9 717	19	1	2 051	3	2 074	7 642	1
Mauritius	1 410	307	1	1 030	-	1 338	72	-
Mozambique	107 160	180	10	2 743	6	2 939	104 221	-
Namibia	12 419	1 287	4	2 245	5	3 541	8 878	-
Seychelles	339	22	2	292	-	316	22	1
Tanzania	3 042	266	2	1 570	8	1 846	1 196	-
Zambia	11 821	32	72	3 428	13	3 545	8 276	-
Zimbabwe	161 912	1 097	215	10 557	27	11 896	150 016	-
'Other' African	10 885	2 112	53	7 805	5	9 975	904	6
East and Central Africa	6 019	1 356	8	4 153	4	5 521	497	1
Burundi	98	25	-	67	-	92	6	-
Cameroon	340	63	-	262	-	325	15	-
Central African Republic	30	3	-	27	-	30	-	-
Chad	42	3	-	37	1	41	1	-
Comoros	29	2	-	27	-	29	-	-
Congo	125	33	-	88	-	121	4	-
Djibouti	18	7	-	10	-	17	1	-
Equatorial Guinea	24	7	-	15	-	22	2	-
Eritrea	30	5	-	20	-	25	5	-
Ethiopia	554	131	-	377	-	508	46	-
Gabon	269	34	-	229	2	265	4	-
Kenya	3 346	790	7	2 215	1	3 013	333	-
Rwanda	80	19	-	48	-	67	13	-
São Tomé and Príncipe	4	1	-	3	-	4	-	-
Somalia	76	9	-	44	-	53	22	1
Uganda	954	224	1	684	-	909	45	-
West Africa	3 664	543	13	2 725	1	3 282	382	-
Benin	151	20	-	124	-	144	7	-
Burkina Faso	67	15	-	50	-	65	2	-
Cape Verde Island	33	5	-	23	-	28	5	-
Côte d'Ivoire	217	58	1	154	-	213	4	-
Gambia	36	6	2	24	-	32	4	-
Ghana	1 063	93	1	924	1	1 019	44	-
Guinea	102	9	1	30	-	40	62	-
Guinea-Bissau	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Liberia	70	18	-	51	-	69	1	-

Annexure B – Number of tourists by country of residence and mode of travel, May 2023 (concluded)

Country of residence	May 2023	Air					Road	Sea
		Cape Town	King Shaka	OR Tambo	Other	Total		
Mali	108	23	-	55	-	78	30	-
Mauritania	18	3	-	15	-	18	-	-
Niger	36	10	-	26	-	36	-	-
Nigeria	1 539	245	6	1 073	-	1 324	215	-
Saint Helena	5	1	-	4	-	5	-	-
Senegal	149	29	2	117	-	148	1	-
Sierra Leone	42	6	-	30	-	36	6	-
Togo	27	2	-	25	-	27	-	-
North Africa	1 202	213	32	927	-	1 172	25	5
Algeria	88	3	7	73	-	83	5	-
Egypt	569	94	19	449	-	562	7	-
Libya	52	8	1	42	-	51	1	-
Morocco	202	24	2	167	-	193	5	4
South Sudan	89	26	-	63	-	89	-	-
The Sudan	57	22	-	31	-	53	3	1
Tunisia	141	36	3	98	-	137	4	-
Western Sahara	4	-	-	4	-	4	-	-
Unspecified	1 164	132	2	773	2	909	255	-

3.3 Annexure C – Number of tourists by country of residence and purpose of visit, May 2023

Country of residence	May 2023	Purpose of visit			
		Business	Holiday	Study	Medical Treatment
Total	630 100	22 640	603 219	3 904	337
Overseas	132 443	4 412	127 330	628	73
Europe	60 955	2 018	58 647	232	58
Austria	830	39	788	3	-
Belgium	2 048	71	1 969	5	3
France	7 748	160	7 518	70	-
Germany	9 019	227	8 746	45	1
Ireland	2 031	66	1 956	9	-
Italy	2 625	114	2 501	8	2
Portugal	1 390	41	1 345	1	3
Russian Federation	1 721	37	1 682	2	-
Spain	1 882	82	1 799	1	-
Sweden	1 049	71	973	5	-
Switzerland	1 838	38	1 793	6	1
The Netherlands	5 176	159	5 000	4	13
Turkey	1 068	52	1 004	10	2
UK	17 989	581	17 339	39	30
Other	4 541	280	4 234	24	3
North America	36 461	620	35 731	106	4
Canada	3 989	86	3 897	5	1
USA	32 472	534	31 834	101	3
Central and South America	2 830	132	2 680	16	2
Argentina	173	11	160	2	-
Brazil	1 255	66	1 183	6	-
Mexico	356	7	347	1	1
Other	1 046	48	990	7	1
Australasia	7 878	90	7 776	9	3
Australia	6 435	76	6 348	8	3
New Zealand	1 434	14	1 419	1	-
Other	9	-	9	-	-
Middle East	2 716	113	2 571	32	-
Israel	971	17	953	1	-
Saudi Arabia	652	16	628	8	-
United Arab Emirates	316	17	298	1	-
Other	777	63	692	22	-
Asia	21 603	1 439	19 925	233	6
Bangladesh	812	17	791	4	-
China	3 389	467	2 881	41	-
India	10 876	504	10 304	67	1
Japan	1 060	90	964	5	1
Malaysia	579	36	518	25	-
Pakistan	1 351	65	1 261	24	1
Philippines	556	21	520	13	2
Singapore	797	23	773	1	-

Annexure C – Number of tourists by country of residence and purpose of visit, May 2023 (continued)

Country of residence	May 2023	Purpose of visit			
		Business	Holiday	Study	Medical Treatment
South Korea	683	40	640	3	-
Thailand	487	15	456	16	-
Other	1 013	161	817	34	1
Africa	496 493	18 131	474 826	3 274	262
SADC	485 608	17 148	465 348	2 894	218
Angola	2 842	77	2 680	57	28
Botswana	24 640	776	23 529	299	36
DRC	1 516	46	1 397	47	26
Eswatini	53 876	1 685	51 981	202	8
Lesotho	94 585	372	92 670	1 512	31
Madagascar	329	9	314	5	1
Malawi	9 717	282	9 394	34	7
Mauritius	1 410	18	1 380	11	1
Mozambique	107 160	2 797	104 246	111	6
Namibia	12 419	4 146	8 038	218	17
Seychelles	339	12	325	1	1
Tanzania	3 042	128	2 874	37	3
Zambia	11 821	3 390	8 355	50	26
Zimbabwe	161 912	3 410	158 165	310	27
'Other' African	10 885	983	9 478	380	44
East and Central Africa	6 019	544	5 292	149	34
Burundi	98	14	82	-	2
Cameroon	340	29	288	17	6
Central African Republic	30	2	28	-	-
Chad	42	1	34	5	2
Comoros	29	-	25	4	-
Congo	125	9	100	9	7
Djibouti	18	1	17	-	-
Equatorial Guinea	24	5	19	-	-
Eritrea	30	5	25	-	-
Ethiopia	554	82	459	10	3
Gabon	269	6	244	17	2
Kenya	3 346	239	3 050	50	7
Rwanda	80	12	65	3	-
São Tomé and Príncipe	4	1	3	-	-
Somalia	76	15	59	1	1
Uganda	954	123	794	33	4
West Africa	3 664	313	3 165	177	9
Benin	151	9	129	12	1
Burkina Faso	67	11	53	3	-
Cape Verde Island	33	3	30	-	-
Côte d'Ivoire	217	23	172	22	-
Gambia	36	10	25	1	-
Ghana	1 063	72	956	30	5
Guinea	102	4	97	1	-
Guinea-Bissau	1	-	1	-	-
Liberia	70	6	62	2	-

Annexure C – Number of tourists by country of residence and purpose of visit, May 2023 (concluded)

Country of residence	May 2023	Purpose of visit			
		Business	Holiday	Study	Medical Treatment
Mali	108	18	90	-	-
Mauritania	18	1	15	2	-
Niger	36	8	28	-	-
Nigeria	1 539	119	1 315	102	3
Saint Helena	5	-	5	-	-
Senegal	149	23	125	1	-
Sierra Leone	42	4	37	1	-
Togo	27	2	25	-	-
North Africa	1 202	126	1 021	54	1
Algeria	88	8	78	2	-
Egypt	569	74	475	20	-
Libya	52	2	33	16	1
Morocco	202	17	184	1	-
South Sudan	89	15	72	2	-
The Sudan	57	4	45	8	-
Tunisia	141	6	130	5	-
Western Sahara	4	-	4	-	-
Unspecified	1 164	97	1 063	2	2

3.4 Annexure D – Number of tourists' difference between Jan–May 2022 and Jan–May 2023 by country of residence

Country of residence	Jan – May 2022	Jan – May 2023	Difference between Jan – May 2022 and Jan – May 2023	% change between Jan – May 2022 and Jan – May 2023
Country of residence	1 886 196	3 465 381	1 579 185	83,7%
Overseas	479 473	860 745	381 272	79,5%
Europe	319 045	545 494	226 449	71,0%
Austria	5 124	9 620	4 496	87,7%
Belgium	10 719	17 606	6 887	64,3%
Denmark	5 790	9 050	3 260	56,3%
France	25 901	50 963	25 062	96,8%
Germany	63 048	116 902	53 854	85,4%
Ireland	7 612	12 599	4 987	65,5%
Italy	7 341	15 724	8 383	114,2%
Portugal	6 145	8 856	2 711	44,1%
Russian Federation	4 919	12 337	7 418	150,8%
Spain	5 776	9 705	3 929	68,0%
Sweden	6 037	11 854	5 817	96,4%
Switzerland	12 574	18 674	6 100	48,5%
The Netherlands	28 823	50 052	21 229	73,7%
UK	109 372	164 232	54 860	50,2%
Other	19 864	37 320	17 456	87,9%
North America	87 671	162 285	74 614	85,1%
Canada	10 677	23 914	13 237	124,0%
USA	76 994	138 371	61 377	79,7%
Central and South America	8 862	16 213	7 351	82,9%
Argentina	783	1 626	843	107,7%
Brazil	4 586	7 685	3 099	67,6%
Mexico	939	1 857	918	97,8%
Other	2 554	5 045	2 491	97,5%
Australasia	16 656	42 460	25 804	154,9%
Australia	14 403	34 694	20 291	140,9%
New Zealand	2 225	7 666	5 441	244,5%
Other	28	100	72	257,1%
Middle East	9 934	17 109	7 175	72,2%
Iran	608	1 178	570	93,8%
Israel	5 180	8 997	3 817	73,7%
Saudi Arabia	1 812	2 938	1 126	62,1%
Other	2 334	3 996	1 662	71,2%
Asia	37 305	77 184	39 879	106,9%
Bangladesh	2 884	3 464	580	20,1%
China	3 630	12 934	9 304	256,3%
India	17 267	33 173	15 906	92,1%
Japan	1 471	4 323	2 852	193,9%
Malaysia	769	1 918	1 149	149,4%
Pakistan	4 974	5 357	383	7,7%
Philippines	1 486	2 196	710	47,8%

Annexure D – Number of tourists' difference between Jan–May 2022 and Jan–May 2023 by country of residence (continued)

Country of residence	Jan – May 2022	Jan – May 2023	Difference between Jan – May 2022 and Jan – May 2023	% change between Jan – May 2022 and Jan – May 2023
Singapore	509	2 447	1 938	380,7%
South Korea	1 458	3 984	2 526	173,3%
Thailand	943	1 960	1 017	107,8%
Other	1 914	5 428	3 514	183,6%
Africa	1 403 470	2 599 277	1 195 807	85,2%
SADC	1 368 949	2 548 592	1 179 643	86,2%
Angola	11 363	17 146	5 783	50,9%
Botswana	80 479	131 121	50 642	62,9%
DRC	7 056	7 811	755	10,7%
Eswatini	129 345	277 132	147 787	114,3%
Lesotho	299 019	521 518	222 499	74,4%
Madagascar	432	1 369	937	216,9%
Malawi	37 416	47 739	10 323	27,6%
Mauritius	3 506	6 711	3 205	91,4%
Mozambique	348 928	553 678	204 750	58,7%
Namibia	50 743	62 676	11 933	23,5%
Seychelles	801	2 012	1 211	151,2%
Tanzania	9 313	13 469	4 156	44,6%
Zambia	42 111	54 141	12 030	28,6%
Zimbabwe	348 437	852 069	503 632	144,5%
'Other' African	34 521	50 685	16 164	46,8%
East and Central Africa	16 213	29 363	13 150	81,1%
Burundi	223	395	172	77,1%
Cameroon	1 239	1 747	508	41,0%
Central African Republic	31	94	63	203,2%
Chad	115	168	53	46,1%
Comoros	69	120	51	73,9%
Congo	534	629	95	17,8%
Djibouti	24	45	21	87,5%
Equatorial Guinea	68	87	19	27,9%
Eritrea	156	148	-8	-5,1%
Ethiopia	1 880	2 386	506	26,9%
Gabon	806	1 399	593	73,6%
Kenya	7 372	16 251	8 879	120,4%
Réunion	-	8	8	-
Rwanda	263	392	129	49,0%
São Tomé and Príncipe	17	35	18	105,9%
Somalia	293	259	-34	-11,6%
Uganda	3 123	5 200	2 077	66,5%
West Africa	14 830	16 097	1 267	8,5%
Benin	379	652	273	72,0%
Burkina Faso	157	315	158	100,6%
Cape Verde Island	69	155	86	124,6%
Côte d'Ivoire	495	887	392	79,2%

Annexure D – Number of tourists' difference between Jan–May 2022 and Jan–May 2023 by country of residence (concluded)

Country of residence	Jan – May 2022	Jan – May 2023	Difference between Jan – May 2022 and Jan – May 2023	% change between Jan – May 2022 and Jan – May 2023
Gambia	75	184	109	145,3%
Ghana	5 250	4 097	-1 153	-22,0%
Guinea	275	565	290	105,5%
Guinea-Bissau	19	37	18	94,7%
Liberia	122	260	138	113,1%
Mali	248	480	232	93,5%
Mauritania	50	88	38	76,0%
Niger	50	154	104	208,0%
Nigeria	7 012	7 211	199	2,8%
Saint Helena	22	23	1	4,5%
Senegal	380	616	236	62,1%
Sierra Leone	153	214	61	39,9%
Togo	74	159	85	114,9%
North Africa	3 478	5 225	1 747	50,2%
Algeria	357	473	116	32,5%
Egypt	1 631	2 414	783	48,0%
Libya	256	266	10	3,9%
Morocco	344	608	264	76,7%
South Sudan	209	333	124	59,3%
The Sudan	366	584	218	59,6%
Tunisia	315	540	225	71,4%
Western Sahara	-	7	7	-
Unspecified	3 253	5 359	2 106	64,7%

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 (in terms of both 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 2023, the DHA data was 0,02% 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's 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 Organization (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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