

News Release

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New routes boost Africa arrivals 13.3%
Fading security and health concerns aid recovery

New routes and fresh optimism have prompted robust growth in Africa’s international flight arrivals this year according to the latest data from ForwardKeys, which predicts future global travel patterns by analysing more than 17 million booking transactions a day.

The figures were released today at AviaDev and AHIF in Kigali, the premier aviation route development and hotel investment conferences in Africa, organised by Bench Global Business Events.

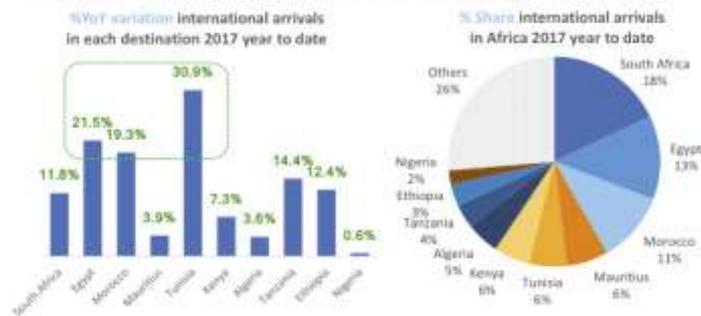
The ForwardKeys data reveal a 13.3% increase in arrivals in 2017, compared to the equivalent period last year. This was driven by a net increase of 82 routes and strong growth from the Americas, up 17.8%, Europe, up 12.7%, Africa, up 12.5% and Asia Pacific, up 16.4%.

Int'l arrivals in Africa by origin regions, January 1st to September 20th 2017



Egypt and Tunisia are leading the recovery after the health and security concerns of 2014-16 have begun to fade. Among the top ten destinations, visitor numbers to Morocco and Tunisia were further boosted by visa exemptions for Chinese travellers.

Int'l arrivals in Africa, Top 10 destination countries, January 1st to September 20th 2017



Jon Howell, managing director of AviaDev, Africa’s leading airline route development conference, said: “I am very pleased to see such strong growth in air travel to Africa. However, it is notable that consumer demand and airline investment has been greater in travel to African countries from outside the continent than it is between African countries. I would like to think that the discussions taking place at AviaDev will encourage airlines to open more routes within the Continent too.”

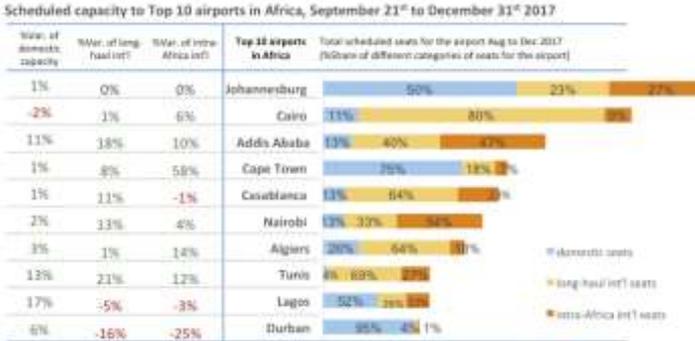
Looking in to the future, bookings for travel to Africa for the rest of 2017 (from September 21st to the end of the year) are 15.2% ahead of last year, thanks to early bookings from the Americas, ahead 20.6%, and Europe, ahead 16.4%. Asia Pacific is also sustaining its growth, ahead 16.1%.

The relatively lower number for growth in bookings from the Middle East is unduly pessimistic because the Islamic New Year fell during the equivalent period last year, artificially lifting the benchmark.



In Africa as a whole, airlines’ scheduled capacity* is up, led by international long-haul, up 9%. Intra-African international capacity is up 4% and domestic capacity up 5%.

Among the top ten African airports, ranked by scheduled capacity* from September 21st to the end of the year, nine airports show growth for domestic capacity and seven for international. Durban suffered the biggest decrease in international capacity, down 19%, mainly due to Ethiopian Airlines ceasing routes from Addis Ababa, while strengthening its capacity to Cape Town. (*Source: Innovata)



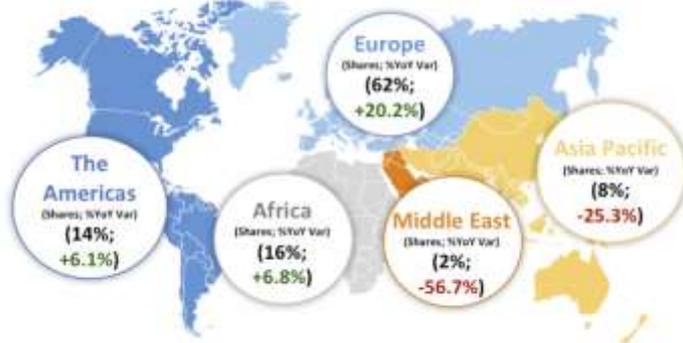
Focussing specifically on the East African Community (EAC), destinations have seen strong growth of 12.2% this year, particularly from European visitors, up 16.3%. Arrivals from the Americas and Asia Pacific grew less than those travelling within Africa.

Int'l arrivals in EAC by origin regions, January 1st to September 20th 2017



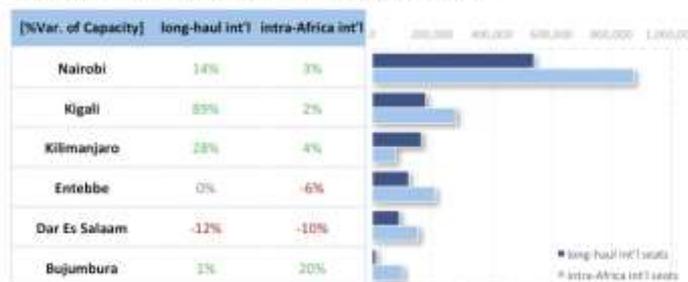
Looking forward, there's overall growth in bookings for international arrivals in the EAC, from September 21st to the end of the year, ahead 8%. The outlook for travel from the Middle East and Asia Pacific is deceptively weak and is due to the timing of Islamic New Year and a later mid-Autumn festival in India. Those events fell within the equivalent period last year, boosting the bookings benchmark so this year's outlook appears worse by comparison for that reason rather than any inherent weakness in the market.

Int'l arrivals in EAC on the book by origin regions, September to December 2017



Total scheduled capacity* for international flights going to the EAC, to the end of the year, is up 9% with Kigali leading the growth, up 89%, due to seven new routes, three of them originating in Brussels. Dar Es Salaam's was the only destination showing a decline in long-haul capacity, due to Oman Air dropping its route from Muscat.

* Scheduled capacity to EAC main airports, September to December 2017



ForwardKeys co-founder and CEO, Olivier Jager, concluded: "African aviation is showing extremely healthy growth. As an international executive who has travelled around Africa for many years, I am longing for the day when it is easier to fly directly between African cities, as is possible on other continents. I am sure I'm not alone in that desire and I'm equally sure, if the strong growth continues, it will happen eventually."

Ends

About ForwardKeys

ForwardKeys analyses more than 17m flight booking transactions a day, drawing data from all the major global air reservation systems and selected airlines and tour operators. This information is enhanced with further independent data sets, including flight search and official government statistics, plus data science to paint a picture of who is travelling where and when. ForwardKeys' analytics are used by travel marketers, retailers, hotels, destination marketing organisations (DMOs), financial institutions, car rental companies, tour operators, online travel agents (OTAs) and other traveller-focussed businesses worldwide to monitor and anticipate traveller arrivals from a particular origin market at a specific time. This analysis enables parties to anticipate the impact of events, better manage their staffing levels, fine tune supply requirements, adjust and measure the effectiveness of their marketing efforts and anticipate future market trends.

About the Africa Hotel Investment Forum (AHIF)

AHIF is the premier hotel investment conference in Africa, attracting many prominent international hotel owners, investors, financiers, management companies and their advisers. It is organised by Bench Events (www.benchevents.com), who has a long track record of delivering multiple premium hotel investment conferences and forums across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America. Bench Events' mission is enabling prosperity by facilitating growth, networking, and thought leadership in the hospitality industry worldwide.
www.benchevents.com.

Sponsors of AHIF are: Host Sponsors: Rwanda Development Board; Platinum Sponsors: AccorHotels, Hilton, Marriott International and The Rezidor Hotel Group; Gold Sponsors: Areen Design, Best Western, Cabo International Partners B.V., Colliers International, Grant Thornton, Horwath HTL, Hotel Partners Africa, Insignia, JLL, Kempinski, Minor Hotels, Mövenpick, Profica, STR, Swiss Education Group and Wyndham Worldwide.

About AviaDev

AviaDev Africa is the only dedicated air service development event for Africa, taking place on the African continent in 2017. It is organised by Bench Events (www.benchevents.com), which is known for producing the Africa Hotel Investment Forum (AHIF) and several other top-level hotel conferences around the world.

Sponsors of AviaDev are: Host Partners: Rwanda Development Board, Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority, RwandAir, Akagera Aviation, Rwanda Convention Bureau, Remarkable Rwanda; Sponsors: Bugesera Airport Company, Embraer, Honeywell, NACO, Rolls Royce, Travelport and Travel Commerce Solutions.

Further Information

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact: Sophie Luis +44 (0) 7961 145 787, sophie.luis@tarsh.com or David Tarsh +44 (0) 20 7602 5262, david@tarsh.com