



Invest in Tourism in The Gambia

The Gambia is known as the “**smiling coast of Africa**” and has attracted world class companies in the tourism sector



Image Credits: The Gambia Experience

Top 6 Reasons to select the Gambia for Investing in Tourism



1. Strong Demand Outlook

The number of international arrivals in the Gambia have increased by **14% annually** between 2001 & 2019.

Tourism expenditure on leisure tourism increased by **269%** from 2009-2019 and expenditure on business tourism increased by **200%** during the same period.



2. Diverse Tourism Attractions

The Gambia has an international reputation for its **pristine beaches, winter sun, and palm trees**.

While Sun & Sand Tourism is the main driver for tourism, in the recent past, other segments such as **Eco-tourism and Bird-based tourism** have seen **growing popularity**.



3. Ease of Travel

The **Banjul International Airport** in the Gambia has international flight routes with countries across **Europe, the Middle East and Africa**.

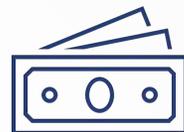
The government of The Gambia has also introduced **tourist-friendly visa policies** making The Gambia an attractive destination.



4. Vibrant Culture & Young Talent

Often referred to as the **“Smiling Coast of Africa”**, Gambians are famed for their **hospitality and laid-back lifestyle**.

The Gambia is also highly regarded for its **high degree of tolerance and respect** for other cultures.



5. Competitive Costs

The Gambia is **up to 81% more cost effective** than other peer locations in tourism professions such as housekeepers.



6. Safety and High Quality of Life

The country is one of the **safest and politically stable countries in Africa** and has attracted over **\$830m** in FDI since 2003.

Reason 1: Strong Demand

The Gambia's tourism sector is among the most important to the Gambian economy and has seen strong growth in recent years

The Gambia is a top destinations for tourism in West Africa and is internationally reputed as **the Smiling Coast of Africa**.

Located on the Western Coast of Africa on the Atlantic Ocean, the country is renowned for its **pristine beaches, winter sun, fishing villages**, and diverse **flora & fauna**.

This makes it an attractive place for international tourists especially during **the European winter season** which is the dry season for the Gambia.

5.8x increase in international arrivals (2010-2019)

~620,000 international arrivals in 2019 with 38% growth since 2015. The Leisure tourism and Business tourism segment grew by 269% and 200% respectively between 2009 and 2019

10k+ hotel beds in The Gambia (2018)

The Gambia presently has an estimated 10k+ hotel beds and earns \$304 per tourist. The \$ income per tourist has grown at 4% annually between 2015-18

\$168mn of travel & tourism exports (2018)

Travel & Tourism receipts account for almost half (48%) of The Gambia's exports

21% contribution to GDP (% of GDP) (2019)

USD ~300mn of tourism & travel value added in 2019

115K+ of jobs created by tourism sector (2019)

Travel & Tourism is one of the key sectors that generate employment

Reason 2: Diverse Tourism Attractions - Primary Opportunities

1

Sun & Sand Tourism

Sun & Sand tourism is the main tourist segment in the Gambia.

The Gambia is known for its **pristine beaches** which have long drawn international tourists especially during the **European winter season**. The short travel time (**5-6 hours**) from Europe and English being the official language – making communication easier - is also a major advantage.



2

Eco-Tourism

Eco-tourism has **growing investment potential**, with strong support from the Gambian government to grow this segment.

The Gambia is well positioned to benefit from **global growth in eco-tourism**, with strong investment opportunities in eco-tourism lodges and tours.

This is complimented by The Gambia's natural assets: the highly navigable **River Gambia** & the country's **diverse flora (Gambia is home to over 250 acres of rainforest) and fauna**.



3

Nature/Bird-Watching Tourism

The Gambia is home to over **600 species of birds**. Sitting in the **transitional zone between tropical forests and semi-arid conditions**, the Gambia plays host to species from both areas along with those native to West Africa.

As a **major hub of migratory birds around the Palearctic realm**, the bird-based tourism segment is expected to rapidly grow in the coming years and with increased demand for eco-tourism lodges and tours.



Reason 2: Diverse Tourism Attractions - Top 5 Places to visit in The Gambia

Abuko Nature Reserve



The Abuko Reserve is Gambia's **first reserve** and is a popular destination for tourists.

The reserve plays host to over **250 species of birds** and **50+ mammals**

Bijilo Forest Park



Located 11kms west of Banjul, the park covers an area of over 126 acres.

The place is host to several species of animals & birds like the **Green Vervet Monkey, Galagos, and the Black-necked Weaver**

River Gambia National Park



Established in 1978, the park is made up of **5 islands** and collectively covers an area of close to **1500 acres**.

The park is host to several categories of flora & fauna such as the chimpanzee and western red colobus

Kotu Beach



As one of the most recognizable beaches in The Gambia, the beach is host to several bars, markets, and high-end hotels for tourists.

The beach is renowned for its **crystal waters, white sand & palm trees**

Kachikally Crocodile Pool



A popular tourist destination in Bakau, the Crocodile Pool is home to an estimated **80+ crocodiles**.

The Pool is also known by locals for its **healing effects** and as a place where people come to pray

Reason 2: Diverse Tourism Segment Offerings – Additional Sector Opportunities

Luxury Tourism/ 5-star hotels

The Gambia offers a range of luxury hotels including:

- **The Sunprime Tamala Hotel**
- **Coco Ocean Resort and Spa**
- **Ngala Lodge**
- **African Princess Beach Hotel** and more



MICE Tourism/ Conference Centers

The Gambia has a range of new Conference and Meeting centers, making it an ideal destination for MICE and Conference retreats.

The **Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Center**, pictured below, is the newest conference center and has a **1,000-person capacity**.



Cultural Tourism

The Gambia offers a range of cultural events and festivals that occur throughout the year.

The **calendar of events can be found through Ministry of Tourism and Culture**.



Halal Tourism

The Gambia offers a variety of Halal tourism opportunities, events and events.

These include the **Sheikh Umar Futi Taal Ziyarah Festival** and the **King Fahad Mosque**, pictured below, among others.



Retirement Tourism/ Developments

The Gambia has become an **ideal year-round retirement location for many Europeans**.

Construction of homes for the retired community are a fast-growing sector that receiving increasing amounts of investment.



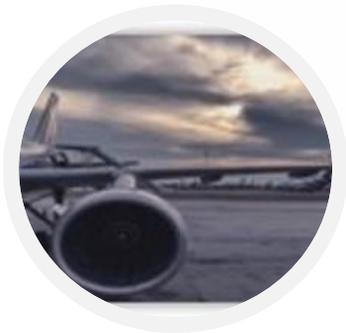
Reason 3: Ease of Travel

The Gambia is widely accessible and has close-proximity to Europe

Flight Connections

The Gambia enjoys international flight connections with a variety of countries from around the world.

These include **Belgium, Netherlands, UK, Spain, Portugal, and several Scandinavian countries.** Other countries include **Senegal, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Turkey.**



Visa Policies

The Gambia follows a **tourist-friendly visa policy** wherein almost all countries in **Africa, Europe, South Asia and select countries in the Americas and South-East Asia** can receive visas on their arrival.



Proximity to Europe

The Gambia is **situated close to Europe** and can be reached within **5-6 hours**. It is also reasonably close to the United States at **8-9 hours**.

Importantly, the **time difference** between The Gambia (UTC +0) and Europe is **minimal**.



Reason 4: Vibrant Culture & Young Talent

The Gambia is widely known for its hospitality, variety of cultural events and young/talented workforce

Unparalleled Hospitality

Known as the **smiling coast of Africa**, the country's reputation for hospitality is second to none.

Gambians live harmoniously in communities, **freely exercising their religious and cultural traditions**.



Variety of Cultural Events

The Gambia hosts a variety of cultural events and celebrations to which all are welcome. Annual events, among many, include:

- The Banjul Cultural Festival, annual
- The Sanyang International Cultural Festival,
- Independence Day Parade and festivities,
- The International Roots Festival,
- The Annual Food and Beverage Festival
- The Nuimi Baadiya Festival
- The Bureng (Koosee) Cultural Festival
- The Kartong Festival and more.

A full schedule of cultural events can be found through the Ministry of Tourism & Culture



Young Talent

The estimated working-age population in The Gambia is 1.2 million.

The working population is very young - **68% are between the ages of 15 and 35.**

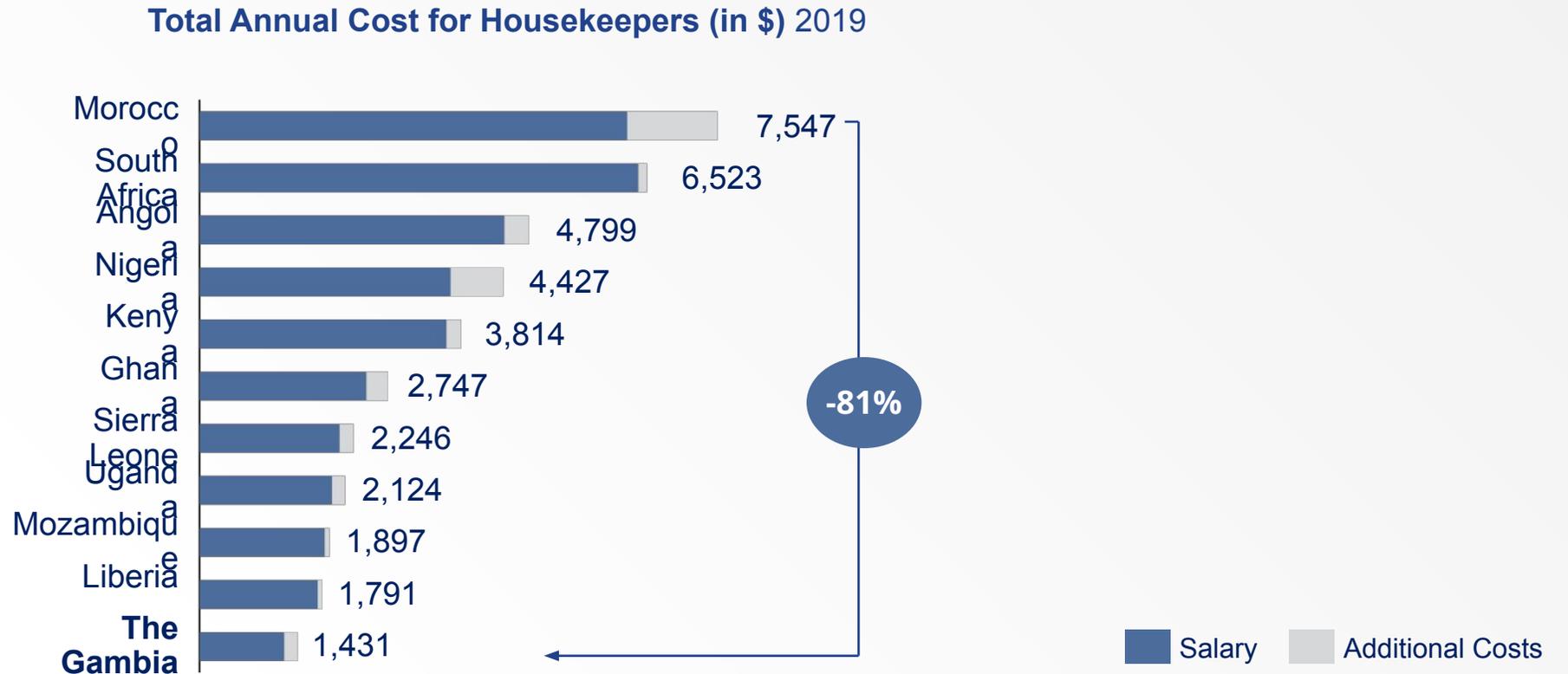
The Gambia also has over **300 thousand students currently in secondary education** and **over 200 thousand students currently in tertiary education**



Reason 5: Competitive Costs

The Gambia is highly competitive in tourism-sector salaries among its African peers

The Gambia is up to **81%** more cost effective than its peers in professions such as housekeepers



Source: fDi Benchmark, a service from fDi Intelligence, Financial Times Limited

Reason 6: Safety and High Quality of Life

The Gambia is known for its safety and high quality of life.

In 2018 The Gambia had the largest positive change in the Global Peace Index, moving up 35 places to rank 76th globally. ¹

8%

7%

Amounts to Government Health Expenditure of The Gambia's total GDP.²

of government budget is spent on education, equating to 2.5% of Gambia's GDP.³



27.5°C

Average annual temperatures

Source: 1 Vision of Humanity - [link](#)

1 World Bank Group, data indicators, 2018 – [link](#)

3 Global Solar Atlas, 2021 - [link](#)



Infrastructure has and is continuously improving



The **Port of Banjul** is gateway to the Gambia and the greater West Africa, and future plans for expansion have been announced.



The **Senegambia Bridge**, also known as the Trans-Gambia Bridge carries the Trans-Gambia Highway connecting northern and southern Gambia.



The Gambian government has recently invested USD \$14m to renovate **Banjul International Airport** and increase its capacity, especially for the busy European winter months.



Overall **road connectivity** in The Gambia has increased considerably in the recent past with the total length of roads increasing from **~1500kms in 2014 to ~1900kms in 2019**.

Stable Business Climate

The Gambia has strong underlying fundamentals which support the growth of all businesses



Peaceful & Politically Stable Country

The Gambia is **one of the safest and most peaceful countries in Africa** with a high degree of political stability.



Liberal Market-Based Economy

The Gambia has a stable, market-oriented economy with a **disciplined approach** to fiscal and monetary issues. It also has a steady regulatory regime with flexible interest rates. The Gambia **ranked 31 out of 137 for Labour Market Efficiency** in the 2016 Global Competitiveness Index



Direct Market Access to West Africa

Driven by its geographical proximity to West African countries, The Gambia offers an excellent opportunity for investors to tap into a growing market with over **300m+ potential consumers**. The Gambia also provides a port with access to shipping from the Atlantic ocean and a variety of preferential trade partners.



\$830m

FDI inflows since 2000

Source: GIEPA, Vision of Humanity, World Bank, fDi Benchmark, a service from fDi Intelligence, Financial Times Limited, UNCTAD, World Economic Forum

Investment Incentives

GIEPA administers various investment incentives as well as an all-inclusive **Sustainable Investor Certificate (SIC)** of incentives to foster business success particularly in selected priority sectors and geographical locations within the country.

There are also incentives for MSMEs and exporting companies. The following priority categories have been established by the **GIEPA Act 2015**:

Priority sectors: Agriculture, Fisheries, Tourism, Forestry, Manufacturing, Energy and Other Services

Priority regions: West Coast, Lower River Region, North Bank, Central River Region, Upper River Region



Attractive Government incentives in tourism

- Depreciation allowances
- Incentives for zone investors
- Import and Export Duty Waivers
- Tariff and sales tax incentives
- Corporate Tac and Value added tax (VAT) waivers



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