

Crime and Tourism in South Africa

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ABSTRACT The trepidation over tourism and crime has emerged as a global issue, gaining prominence in the media and political debates. South Africa is often viewed as the crime capital of the world and while crime rates in specific types of crime are decreasing or stabilising, there continues to be an upward trend in many types of crimes. Examining issues pertaining to crime and tourism is important since effective crime prevention and changing negative perceptions can contribute significantly to economic growth by promoting investments and tourism. Furthermore, this can have a positive impact on residents' quality of life since low crime levels are one of the global indicators of social stability and integration. This article uses relevant literature as well as data from South African Tourism (SAT) on tourists' perceptions and attitudes toward crime and satisfaction with security in the country, the South African Police Services (SAPS) data on crime rates and resident perception findings on crime and tourism. The study underscores that tourists and locals perceive South Africa as having high levels of crime. Crime remains an important consideration in relation to tourism in South Africa and requires an interdisciplinary and critical theoretical and methodological approach to examine multi-faceted and complex economic, social, political and spatial aspects. It is critical that actual as well as perceptions of crime and security are addressed in relation to different stakeholders such as locals, tourists and the tourism industry. This needs to be part of broader strategies that incorporate risk and safety.