

Kenya

Kenya was one of the first African countries to develop its tourist industry. From the 1930s onwards people came for big game hunting and on safari holidays, attracted by the warm and comfortable climate (figure F). After independence from the United Kingdom in 1963, tourism was seen as one of the main ways to improve Kenya's economy. The coast was developed around resorts like Mombasa, and National Parks established to protect animals for tourists (figure C). Kenya became Africa's number one tourist destination.

Terrorist attacks in the capital Nairobi in 1998 changed that. Western tourists now felt that Tanzania, Namibia and South Africa were safer places to visit. Riots followed elections in Kenya in 2007. This led to a 36 per cent drop in tourist numbers and £500 million of lost revenue.

With more stability in the past few years, visitors have started to return to Kenya. There has been a 20 per cent increase in numbers year-on-year leading to 1.75 million visitors adding US\$926 million to the economy in 2011 (and making it the country's biggest foreign exchange earner). This recovery is good news for the quarter of a million people directly employed in tourism and for all the associated industries, including farming and transport companies, that provide services to the tourist industry.

The management of tourism in Kenya has proved highly problematic for successive governments. Tourists have a huge number of countries they can visit, all offering similar experiences and it is up to entrepreneurs and businessmen to offer something different (see figures D and E). The government can help by providing decent infrastructure, including roads and airports, to help tourists get around and by implementing laws which will protect the environment that tourists come to visit. When riots or terrorist activities occur all the hard work can be undone overnight and, as with Kenya, it can take many years to restore public trust.



C National Parks of Kenya (dark green)

Now Investigate

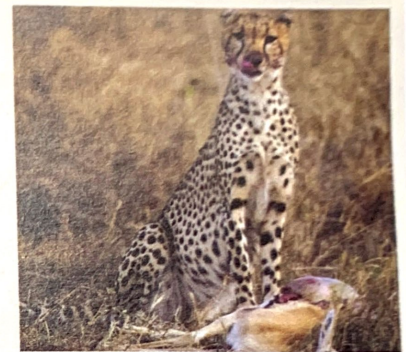
- 1 Describe the climate of Mombasa referring to graph F.
- 2 Outline the advantages and disadvantages to a LEDC of developing a tourist industry. Explain why it still makes a lot of sense for such development to take place.
- 3 Explain why Kenya has become so popular with tourists, especially those from MEDCs like Jean-Claude and his family from France.

Case study



'For our big holiday last year we went on safari to Kenya. It was amazing seeing all the animals you normally only see on the television. At the end we spent a few days relaxing and snorkelling on the beach. It was one of the best holidays ever.'

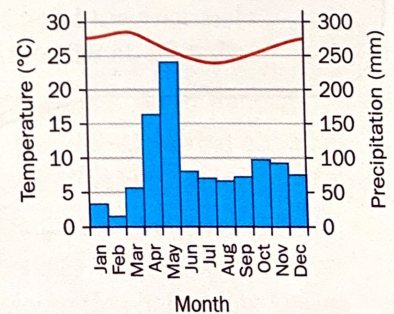
Jean-Claude Benoix



D Safari holidays are very popular in Kenya



E The coastal resort of Mombasa



F Climate graph for Mombasa