

# Enchanting Nigeria beckons

Tourism as an industry has been considered to be a vital part of the world economy. Everyday people move from one location to the other. Tourism is therefore, considered as the world's largest industry. There has been steady increase of tourists throughout the world. Despite the depressed nature of international economy, over US\$464 billion (excluding international airfare payments) were generated in the international tourist receipts in 2001.

However, Africa recorded only 2.5 percent of the market; out of which, Nigeria received only 3 percent in spite of its huge resource endowments, rich cultural heritage and excellent tourist destinations. Tourism in Nigeria has been compared to a gold mine in view of the fact that the economic power house of Western Africa possesses enormous resources along with natural attractions, wonderful vacation sites and colourful festivals round the year. Some of them are highlighted below.

## Natural Tourist Attractions in Nigeria:

**Ikogosi Warm Springs** – Located in Ekiti State, this is a natural warm spring that flows and mixes with cold water issuing from another spring. This place attracts tourists from all over the world.

**Owu Falls** – located in Kwara State of Nigeria, it is the steepest natural waterfall in West Africa and is surrounded by a tropical rainforest in which can be found a wide range of animals and plants not seen in other parts of the world.

**Niger-Benue Confluence** – This is where the Rivers Niger and Benue join at Lokoja. It can be toured on available boats, on canoes or viewed from a close by hill giving a panoramic view of the confluence.

**Assop Falls** – located about 40 miles from Jos city, it is a lovely place for picnicking, swimming and enjoying the grand view of the scenic landscape.

**Wikki Warm Springs** – Deep inside the Yankari Game Reserve is this warm water spring that stays the same

warm temperature throughout day and night.

**Olumo Rock** – located in Abeokuta, the capital of Ogun State. This rock is very popular because the way it is naturally formed upon each other in layers and the warriors lived under it over 200 years ago.

## Other Tourist/ Vacationing Sites

**Kainji Lake Game Reserve:** The sanctuary consists of elephants, lions, hippos and crocodiles in their natural habitats. This game reserve is located in Niger and Kwara states of Nigeria.

**Esie Museum:** This museum displays terracotta artifacts and figurines dating from the 13th to the 16th century and shown to be doing various things from dancing to weaving.

The Esie Museum is located in Esie town, about 100km from Ilorin in Kwara State.

**Rock Paintings of Birnin Kudu:** Reputed to be thousands of years old, these

people include the following which tourists will find remarkable and interesting:

**Eyo Festival:** This annual festival of the people of the Eko people of Lagos holds annually and usually culminates in the display of masquerades adorned resplendently in white flowing dresses and hats to match.

**Kwa-Ghir Festival:** A festival of the Tiv people in Benue state of Nigeria, it is a display of traditional masquerades, puppet theatre, some forms of acrobatics, dancing, music and sartorial display. A colourful festival indeed, it attracts many people and is accentuated by the friendliness and warm welcome of the Tiv people of Nigeria.

**The Durbar:** This is usually a festival culminating in a horse race at the behest of an Emir, a traditional ruler. With roots in the Islamic way of life, the Durbar is colorful, exciting and open to all to watch.

**Argungu Fishing Festival:** Argungu is located in Sokoto

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painting depict the lifestyle of the people that inhabited that area of Jigawa State in times gone by.

**Obudu Cattle Ranch:** The ranch is located in Cross River state of Nigeria and has a moderate climate owing to its location on high hills. As a tourist attraction, it has a waterfall, a gorilla habitat and opportunities to see a variety of birds.

## Festivals to see in Nigeria

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state in the North Western part of Nigeria. It is famous for its fishing festival in which a lake is stocked with fish and which are fed until the time of the festival. Individuals go into the lake without the aid of boats and the competition prize goes to the one with the largest catch. This festival is international and attracts visitors from all over the world.

**Boat Regatta:** The Izons and other peoples of the Niger Delta area have festivals that include extremely colorful boat regattas and water races. Canoe races are also a feature and visitors are attracted to these from various parts of the world.