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## 2010 FIFA World Cup attracts 400,000 visitors to Africa and changes perceptions

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The 2010 World Cup finally arrived in South Africa last Friday. This is more than a landmark in the country's history; it is also an opportunity to change perceptions about South Africa and Africa in the United States. *"All over the U.S., we can see how excited everyone is about the World Cup,"* said **Edward Bergman**, Executive Director of the **Africa Travel Association (ATA)**. *"We have already seen a surge in interest about South Africa in major American cities, where the country's flag, culture, cuisine and wines are on full display. We've also seen a huge amount of media coverage about a 'positive' event taking place on the continent rather than the usual politics or a humanitarian crisis."* According to reports from South Africa, the month-long tournament is expected to boost tourist arrivals by almost 400,000 visitors. While an event of this scope was unimaginable in Africa until now, the World Cup puts South Africa center stage, showing the world that "Destination Africa" can compete. It also puts a focus on Africa, providing other nations with an opportunity to attract tourists and investment to their countries. All this builds on the idea that sports tourism can boost economic growth. *"At the same time, American tourists have something tangible to offer Africa: tourism creates jobs, fights unemployment and boosts the economy,"* said Bergman. *"Every tourist needs a flight, accommodation, and meals. They also want to enjoy the nightlife, explore the local culture and do some shopping."* The United States is the top source market for Tanzania, Ghana, Rwanda, Ethiopia and South Africa, as noted in a report recently



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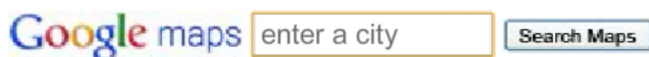
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published by ATA, New York University's Africa House and the World Bank. The U.S. is also the top source market for the largest number of ticket holders, outnumbering all other nationalities except South Africa, the host country. The link between sports tourism, economics and South Africa will be demonstrated on Friday, June 11, 2010, when South African Tourism (SAT) and Consul General Fikile Magubane of South Africa will visit NASDAQ MarketSite in New York and preside over the NASDAQ opening bell in celebration of the World Cup. ATA will be represented by Executive Director, Edward Bergman. A live webcast of the NASDAQ Opening Bell will be available at: [nasdaq.com/about/marketsitetowervideo.aspx](http://nasdaq.com/about/marketsitetowervideo.aspx) *"As the world's largest global exchange company, we are excited about the world's greatest sporting event, the 2010 FIFA World Cup, kicking off this week from South Africa,"* commented **Bruce Aust**, Executive Vice President of NASDAQ OMX. *"We are delighted to host the South African Tourism and Consul General Fikile Magubane of South Africa for a celebratory NASDAQ Opening Bell from the cross roads of the world in the heart of Times Square as all eyes turn to South Africa for a series of exciting world cup games,"* he added. Bergman is confident the World Cup will leave a lasting legacy on South Africa and Africa. *"The World Cup will show the world that Africa has the infrastructure and the ability to host events of all sizes. The new roads, railways and bus networks, as well technology development will also help further position South Africa as a premier destination."* Source (Travel Daily News)

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