

John Smith
Professor Tefel Hall
English Language Arts
25 August 2012
653 Words

Swaziland: A Terrible Vacation Destination

Swaziland, near the southern tip of Africa, might sound like a wonderful place to visit on vacation. Certainly, if you look at a Swazi brochure, the scenery looks beautiful, and the people, dressed in exotic costumes, appear to be quite friendly. But travelers should not be fooled. Swaziland is a poor, disease-ridden country, full of dangers to the unsuspecting traveler. Swaziland is a terrible vacation destination.

First, it must be pointed out that Swaziland is not a good place to see Africa's big game animals. In fact, due to overhunting, there are very few big animals left in Swaziland (Foster). According to Ruth Foster, author of *Fascinating Facts about Geography*, "even the vultures" left Swaziland at the beginning of the 20th century, because there was nothing for them to eat (Foster). And while some efforts have been made to start game parks and reintroduce large animals such as elephants and rhinos, those efforts have largely been a failure (Foster). Thus, any visitor hoping to see big game would most likely be disappointed.

Another problem with Swaziland is the poverty and hunger ("Swaziland Profile"). According to the *CIA's World Factbook*, 69% of the population lives below the poverty line ("Swaziland"). This poverty is one reason why most Swazis do not lead a long or healthy life. Shockingly, the life expectancy in Swaziland is less than 50 years ("Swaziland").

A third problem are the many infectious diseases. The CIA warns that visitors to Swaziland run a “high risk” of catching an infectious disease such as malaria, hepatitis A, or typhoid (“Swaziland”). HIV/AIDS is also a deadly problem. According to *BBC News*, Swaziland has the highest level of HIV in the world, and the disease has created thousands of orphans (“Swaziland Profile”).

Violence is yet another problem, at least according to an American blogger called Jessie, who visited Swaziland in September of 2011. The same day she arrived in Swaziland, she was mugged by an armed man with a ski mask who jumped out of the bushes and stole her money. The following week, when she arrived in the capital, Mbabane, she found that the city was on the verge of a massive transportation strike. Protesters flooded into the city, “shouting and waving branches in the air” (Jessie). In a nearby city, “the protests escalated to the point where police were filling the streets with tear gas and firing rubber bullets” (Jessie). The protests lasted two days, leaving Jessie emotionally exhausted. But her troubles were not yet over:

Unfortunately, my terrible horrible no good very bad week was not quite done with me yet. On Wednesday evening I fell victim to an especially nasty bout of food poisoning. In between trips to the ladies’ room, and lying on my bed moaning, I found myself—like the young protagonist of “Alexander and the Terrible Horrible No Good Very Bad Day”—wishing I was on the other side of the world. (Jessie)

Poverty, hunger, disease, and violence—these are the things that a visitor to Swaziland can expect to see. And while it is true that he or she may also see a magnificent sunset or two, it is far less likely that that an elephant or giraffe will appear silhouetted against the darkening sky. Swaziland is not a country that fulfills one’s romantic expectations of southern Africa. Swaziland is a poor and disease-ridden land—and a terrible destination for a vacation.

Works Cited

Foster, Ruth. "Take Five Minutes: Fascinating Facts about Geography." *Teacher Created*

Resources. 4 Nov. 2004. Web. 22 June 2012.

<<http://tefelhall.com/geography/fascinatingfacts/pg0035.pdf>>.

Jessie. "The Terrible Horrible No Good Very Bad." *Jessie in Swaziland*. 28 Sept. 2011. Web. 28

June 2012. <<http://jessieinswaziland.wordpress.com/page/6/>>.

"Swaziland." *Central Intelligence Agency: The World Factbook*. 20 June 2012. Web. 28 June

2012. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/wz.html>>.

"Swaziland Profile." *BBC News Africa*. 16 Nov. 2011. Web. 28 June 2012.

<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14095303>>.