

10 YEAR LONG STUDY: MEDITERRANEAN DESTINATIONS GROWING



Five popular travel destinations of the leisure tourists in the eastern Mediterranean area - Egypt, Greece, Tunisia, Turkey and Cyprus - belong to the strongest growing regions of world tourism despite all the difficulties of the past years. According to the statistics of T.A.I., the guest volume of this "Big-Five" rose in the past ten years by two-thirds (66 percent) from 40.5 million to a total of 67.2 million international arrivals.

What is remarkable is that all the five countries, without exception, are on the plus side despite diverse crises and setbacks. On top of that, **this quintet was able to increase their share in world tourism between 2003 and 2012 from 5.9 percent to 6.5 percent** (681 million visitors increased to to 1,035 billion).

The enormous escalations of arrivals are all the more remarkable since the tourism in the eastern Mediterranean area in the past decade has had it anything but easy. 2003 was characterized by SARS, Turkey was handicapped in 2006 by the PKK terror organization, the world financial and economic crisis made an impact in 2009 especially on Cyprus tourism. In 2011, Egypt and Tunisia went under due to political overthrows; in 2012 Greek's tourism was badly affected by the many strikes and demonstrations.

Despite all of these obstacles, every year as of 2003 brought growth to the region, with exception of 2011, which however only showed a decline of -2.9 percent despite the more than 30 percent incursions in Egypt and Tunisia.

The big winner in the "Big-Five" group in this ten year comparison is Turkey, with 31.8 million arrivals in 2012 and a gain in the past ten years of an incredible 138.2 percent. In a matter of growth, Egypt ranks closely behind. 11.5 million international arrivals were booked in the previous year, which in the ten year comparison means that a plus of 100.1 percent or rather a duplication took place. In absolute numbers, Greece was able to gain the third strongest, this position is entitled to Tunisia though, due to the percentage of growth.

Israel was not included in this statistical consideration because it is not a traditional destination for package tourism but rather primarily for round trips and educational trips as well as independent travel. In the previous year, Israel recorded 2.89 million arrivals of international tourists, in 2003 it was 1.06 million.

Growth Rockets 2003-2012

Country

Arrivals (in thousands) Increase 2003-2012

Change in %

Turkey

18 442

138.2 %

Egypt

5 754

100.1 %

Greece

1 531

11 %

Tunisia

836

16.3 %

Cyprus

162

7 %

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