

EGYPT RECORDED 18% DROP IN TOURIST ARRIVALS IN 2013



Egypt's tourism industry is back on track. Figures released by the Egyptian tourism authority indicate that approximately 9.5 million tourists arrived in Egypt in 2013 (-18% on 2012). The figures also show that 71% of these arrivals came to the Red Sea and South Sinai.

The Egyptian tourism authority's data indicate that the Emirati tourism arrivals reached 21,000 compared to the 27,000 Emiratis that visited Egypt in 2012. The Saudi tourists in 2013 reached the amount of 208,000, compared to 242,000 Saudis that came for holiday in 2012. The tourist arrivals from Kuwait were 83,000 compared to the 96,000 arrivals that were recorded in the previous year.

According to the Egyptian Tourism minister Hisham Zaazou, **30 million tourist arrivals were recorded in the last 3 years with over 20% being from the Arab world.** Indeed, this has repositioned Egypt as an ideal tourist destination in the Arab world.

According to Mr. Zaazou, Egypt continues to make huge strides in order to maintain the country's name as a tourist power house in the world. Even though there was a decline in the tourist arrivals in 2013, they want to ensure that the country remains a safe tourist destination like it has always been. The minister further affirmed that Egypt still remains the favorite destination for tourists coming from Arab countries and beyond despite the myriad challenges that have recently faced the country.

The statistics have also shown that the governorates of the **Red Sea and South Sinai have recorded positive numbers for 2013 and this has been attributed to the fact that they are not near the key city of Cairo.** The two governorates did not suffer a major impact during the political unrest that rocked the country. This has consequently translated to a higher number of visitors because of good security and safety.

Over 2 million tourists came to the Red Sea and South Sinai in the first quarter of 2013. In the second quarter, the number of visiting tourists increased by 4%. In the third quarter, 1.1 million tourists visited the country but this was a decrease of 45% compared to the 2.12 million tourists that came in the second quarter. The fourth quarter recorded 1.3 million visitors, representing an 18% increase.

Mr. Zaazou said that the increase in tourist arrivals towards the end of the year is a clear indication that recovery is eminent. Despite the political situation in Egypt, the minister believes that tourists still have confidence to tour the country.

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