

TUNISIA LAUNCHES NEW TOURISM TAX



Next month, Tunisia is introducing their new tourism tax. Starting on 1st October, every tourist who comes to the country will be charged a departure tax of 30 dinars (about 13 euros).

Tunisia, unlike Turkey or Egypt has no such a levy. **Tourism income in 2008 was 3.8 billion dollars, but later was affected by the world financial and economic crisis, Arab Spring and fell to around \$ 2.1 billion in the previous year.**

Tunisia's tourism continues to lag far behind the previous numbers of visitors. Although Austrian tour operators for instance saw a stronger demand, the number of tourists to the destination has not come to previous levels. Between January and July 2014 around 2.83 million guests were welcomed from all over the world, a decrease of 1.4 percent compared to the same period of last year and 11.6 percent lower than the first seven months in 2010, the year before the start of the Arab Spring.

More than half (54%) of arrivals come from the Maghreb countries of Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Mauritania and numbers decreased to 1.9 percent from previous year. They lowered by 6.5 percent compared to 2010. Europe tourist rates dropped by 0.8 percent this year. It was encouraging to see growth signs in previous year, with 2013 increase of arrivals by 5.3 percent to 6.27 million, compared to 2012.

The new departure tax is meant to provide money for the budget. The payment of the tax is made through a tax stamp which is available at all Tunisian official outlets, airports, ports and border crossings. It is added to the traveler's passport or on a document delivered by the Treasury and stamped by the departure authority. The exit tax is paid by any traveler regardless of his nationality, except for Tunisians living abroad.

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