

# EGYPT: NEW TOURISM CAMPAIGN AIMED AT EUROPEAN TRAVELERS



Last week, Egypt announced the launch of a new tourism campaign, which will cost 63 million euros over the span of three years. The aim is to give new impetus to the suffering industry. Egyptian tourism recorded a fall of 45% since the beginning of the year.

The time when Egypt flourished as a popular holiday destination is now gone. Since the beginning of the year, only 3.5 million tourists have visited the country of the Pharaohs; there were 14.7 million tourists in 2010, a record year that preceded the Arab Spring.

In an attempt to revive the sector, which is highly important for the Egyptian economy (11.3 percent of Egypt's GDP), **the country will spend 70 million dollars (63 million euros) over three years for a new international tourism campaign.**

"While all is going well in the Arab region, in North America, and in Asia, then things are at a standstill in Europe," said Minister of Egyptian Tourism, Yehia Rashed. "Unfortunately, Europe is our largest market, and the goal of 11 million visitors that we had hoped for will not be met this year."

The year 2015 had raised hopes for a revival. However, the attack in November on a Russian flight of Metrojet (224 deceased) halted most of the tourist activity. Attendance fell immediately, but the decline was limited to 4%, or 9 million tourists, for the year 2015. The effects were mainly felt in the first quarter of 2016 with a fall of 75% in attendance. This caused a drop of 45% between January and August.

One of the groups of tourists who deserted the country are French travelers. While there were nearly 600,000 French tourists during the best years, only 68,000 visited Egypt between January and August. The crash (66 deceased) of the EgyptAir flight last May, once again, deterred many French travelers from coming.

In an attempt to curb this decrease, Egypt will step up its promotional efforts in France and boost the available flights to Luxor (or other touristy areas) from the provincial airports. To accommodate the airlines, airport taxes could be lowered or temporarily removed. **The aim of the new tourism campaign is to attract more visitors from Europe but according to the minister, French customers are particularly appreciated.**

"The French spend more than the Russians, for example, between 75 and 80 dollars per night, and they stay longer, for 7-8 days." Another difference is that they not only enjoy the resorts, they also travel around the country.

New hope comes from the Russian market as well. After assessing the safety of Egyptian airports, the director of the Russian tourist association Turpomoshch Alexander Osaulenko announced that flights from Russia to Egypt could be resumed at the end of October.

As soon as the Russian A321 plane crashed after the terrorist attack on October 31, 2015, Russia suspended all flights to and from Egypt. Moreover, the government also requested all tour operators

to stop selling holiday packages to the country. As a result, the number of Russian visitors dramatically declined. Before that, around 3 million Russians visited the country annually.

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