

Euromonitor: Travel and Tourism in Jordan



Widening its appeal

According to Euromonitor International, tourism in Jordan had a successful last five years period, and appears to have totally recovered from the bomb attacks of 2005. The country's tourism strategy has focused on developing niche areas of tourism, ranging from archaeological attractions, religious tours, MICE and sports to adventure as well as eco-tourism. These activities have encouraged a wider range of nationalities to visit the country, and as such Jordan is slowly moving away from relying on its neighbours for tourism revenues, although visitors from these countries still remain the most numerous.

Accommodation and transportation boom

The development of the travel and tourism infrastructure in Jordan reflects the success of the National Tourism Strategy. As a result of the increased visitor numbers, over 20 hotels are being built around the country, in an increasingly diverse range of destinations, widening the tourist reach. Transportation options are also improving, with an increasing number of flights to the country, many due to Gulf low-cost carrier airlines. Roads are also being improved, and there is a plan to build a rail link within the country, which would vastly improve some of its traffic problems.

Government incentives

The Jordanian Government has demonstrated a strong commitment to encouraging the growth of tourism. To this end, it has committed in allocating 4% of national tourism receipts for international marketing, and the development of both products and human resources. The National Tourism Strategy of 2004 to 2010 has proven extremely successful, with the goal of doubling the contribution of tourism to GDP having been achieved before the end of the project. A new strategy will be introduced. This will start in 2010 and is expected to build on the success of the current development programme.



Ecotourism paradise

One of the key tourism niches that Jordan is keen to promote is eco-tourism. An increasingly popular activity worldwide, the country has huge potential to develop eco-tourism as a key offering. Despite being thought of as a desert nation, Jordan has an amazingly diverse environment that lends itself to animal and bird watching, adventure tours, trekking, snorkelling and diving in the Red Sea. It is also possible to camp in some of the eight nature reserves in the country, and a number of tour operators offer trips to eco-tourism attractions.

Visitor numbers hold strong

According to Euromonitor International, despite the global economic downturn, Jordan's tourism industry remains strong and has not as yet seen a significant drop in numbers. However, it is predicted that numbers may decrease in 2009, but with resilient growth predicted in future. The country is working hard to attract visitors from a wide range of destinations in order to become less reliant on its traditional visitor base. Asia is becoming an area of focus, with a recent easing of visa restrictions for visitors from China and India.

Jordan's hotels outperform economic crisis

Jordan has reported a positive increase in overnight stays for 2009 despite the global economic downturn. Overnight stays increased 1.5% from January to September compared to the same period in 2008. The Jordan Tourism Board plans to grow its source market base in 2010 and look to alternative or emerging markets such as Scandinavia, India and South America. 50% of the

overnight visitors are from the Arab market. Over the next five years, the country's total room count will hit 30,000 compared to 23,000 at present, while Amman's new international airport will open in 2011 taking capacity from around five to nine million passengers. Hoteliermiddleeast.com

Top 10 Source Countries for Jordan Tourism ('000 people)

2008

Arrivals to Jordan

Syria

795,3

Saudi Arabia

443,0

Iraq

370,9

Egypt

168,0

USA

104,3

Turkey

84,8

Kuwait

81,5

Lebanon

68,9

Bahrain

44,1

Germany

23,9

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(Extract from Euromonitor International's report "Travel and Tourism in Jordan")

Date: 2009-12-28

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-euromonitor-travel-and-tourism-in-jordan-article1073>