

TENSIONS HIT LEBANESE TOURISM



Estimates by the WTTC suggest that the direct input from the tourism industry to the Lebanese economy would this year reduce by 2.1 percent. Statistics show that there was a thirty percent year on year drop in the rate of hotel occupation during the initial three months of 2013.

Closing down hotel floors completely with an objective of saving energy, laying off employees and suspending various projects are some of the measures that luxury hotels like Le Gray and Hilton have put in place to economize.

As a response to the situation, the ministry of tourism in partnership with a United Kingdom company known as Taste Lebanon which deals with organization of Lebanon's culinary tours has launched a program that should promote Lebanon as an ideal holiday destination.

There are also ten food and hospitality writers from the United States and Great Britain who are making a fam trip to experience the food industry in the country. The writers are visiting HORECA and the various Beirut restaurants.

Bethany Kehdy who is the founder of Taste Lebanon said that many tourists from the US are deterred from visiting Lebanon due to the negative news coverage especially the effects of Syria conflict on Lebanon.

Kehdy acknowledged the fact that Canada and US had in the recent past increased their Lebanon travel restrictions. But she said that the tours are safe since they avoid all places that might pose danger. A renowned US food blogger, David Lebovits, who is also in the Taste Lebanon said that he was surprised to learn of the warning and added that it is safe to visit Lebanon since there is risk in travelling to almost any other place.

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