

Syrian Tourism Analysis



The Syrian Arab Republic is a Middle East country that borders on Lebanon to the west, Israel to the southwest, Jordan to the south, Iraq to the east, and Turkey to the north. Syria occupies 85,180 sq km and the capital of the country is Damascus. The country has a population of some eighteen million. Approximately seventy four percent of the population is made up by Arabic-speaking Sunni Muslims. The country suffers from economic problems and quite high unemployment. Main exports are oil and gas.

The country's government has become more interested in the tourism industry in the recent years. The increasing government involvement is definitely positive for this sector of Syrian economy. Predictions say that the 2007 tourism revenue could reach \$3 billion. The Syrian tourism minister Saadallah Agha Qalaa said: "The growth rate for tourism in Syria reached 15 percent in 2006." Minister Saadallah Agha Qalaa claims that the industry needs the investment of \$7 billion, especially in the capital Damascus, the coastal resort of Latakia, and the ancient city of Palmyra. Syria, as well as other Arab countries, has witnessed a drop in numbers of foreign tourists after the 9/11 attacks in the US. Before that some 4 million people visited the country every year. Nevertheless, people are again coming to Syria these days. In 2006 some 3.6 million tourists visited Syria, and there are hopes that 7 million visitors spending about \$5 billion a year will be coming by 2010. The fact is that the country attracts more Arab tourists as opposed to European ones. Syrian tourism industry faces a serious problem - insufficient accommodation capacities. The country also lacks the appropriate luxury accommodation, although especially Arab tourists seek high-end accommodation. Syria has only 11 five-star hotels. But the situation seems to be improving as there is a continuous development in the tourism infrastructure.

Date: 2007-06-26

Article link: <http://www.tourism-review.com/syrian-tourism-analysis-news387>