

EGYPTIAN TOURISM GROWING THANKS TO EUROPEAN AND ARABIAN VISITORS



Egyptian tourism industry has a reason to rejoice. The authorities announced the positive numbers of the first trimester of 2017. 1.7 million tourists visited Egypt over that period which represents a 51% increase compared to the first three months of 2016.

Germany is the most important source market for Egyptian tourism industry. The number of **German visitors has risen this year and now represents 35% of the total - some 227 000 tourists.** Ukrainians reached the second position, followed by the UK, Italian and French markets which hold the third, fourth and fifth positions, respectively.

According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), in the month of March alone, Egypt welcomed around 654 900 tourists. This figure represents an increase of 48.4% relative to March 2016.

Experts predict that this upward trend will continue, especially during the winter season which will start at the beginning of October.

The number of arrivals in March exceeded the number of tourists in February (539 100 tourists). The number of nights spent in local hotels was 5.4 million in March 2017 compared to only 2.4 million in March 2016.

Adel Al-Masry, Vice-President of the Egyptian Tourism Promotion Agency was pleased by the data: "These promising numbers are the result of the work of various Egyptian tourism professionals who endeavor to revive the industry". He also asserted that the indicators of the number of future reservations were equally promising, especially with the increase in the number of charter flights to Egyptian attractions by large travel agencies such as FTI and Kuoni.

The top source markets for Egypt currently are Europe, which constitutes 70% of its tourism traffic, followed by the Arab nations constituting 26%.

India is one of the markets growing in importance for Egyptian tourism industry. During 2016, Egypt received 80,000 visitors from India, according to data from the Egyptian Tourism Authority. Egyptian ministry expects more than a 50% growth in arrivals from India this year reaching 1,200,000 visitors. Egypt is being promoted as a premium and exotic destination in India.

The Arab segment of the Egyptian tourism industry recorded a 38% increase for the first trimester of this year - relative to last year's performance during the same period. **Saudi tourists were the most numerous with some 507 000 entries into Egypt in 2016, followed by Jordan, Kuwait, and Lebanon.**

According to Yéhia Rached, Egyptian Minister of Tourism, the inflow from Arab countries represents 36.3% of the total Egyptian tourist traffic. In 2016, nearly 2 million tourists from Arab countries visited the country, whereas only 1.7 did so in 2015. This translates into an increase of 13.2%, according to the data provided by the Egyptian tourism ministry.

The Minister also declared that Egypt is contemplating the possibility of facilitating the visa process for groups of travelers from Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. "Egypt is always ready to take steps to encourage and to attract more visitors from Arab countries, be it by facilitating entry visa procedures or by encouraging the airlines of Arab countries to schedule regular flights," the minister explained.

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