

EGYPT'S TOURISM IN REVIVAL WITH A NEW E-VISA ON THE WAY



Over the last five years, Egypt's tourism industry has been stagnating due to a series of misfortunes ranging from fierce competition between locals to major airline disasters to terrorist attacks, and a failed revolution that saw a violent reassertion of military power. According to Reuters, the tourism industry was bleeding out almost four-hundred million in monthly revenues due to the political upheaval in 2013 and went from about fourteen million tourists to only nine million in a span of a year. Nevertheless, last year's performance is in and Egypt is happy to note that the tourism industry's revenues are skyrocketing, up 123.5 percent to \$7.6bn in 2017 with the number of tourists jumping to almost 8.3 million. This is a huge upswing as the tourism sector is the main source of income for the country. Egypt's government hopes to bolster this upswing by introducing a new online Egypt visa system - e-Visa, which will provide electronic travel authorization for citizens in over forty-five countries including Japan, Canada, Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

Tourist Demographics Are Changing

Another encouraging aspect of Egypt's tourism recovery is the fact that the travel market demographics are changing. Prior to the 2011 overthrow of Hosni Mubarak, the tourism market in Egypt was made up primarily of Europeans and Russians. According to the head of Egyptian Tourist Authority, Indian and Chinese tourists are replacing the European demographic which is now down to 52 percent while Egypt's neighbours have doubled their share by 15-30 percent. The reason this is important is that Egypt is now widening the diversity of their tourists, which means that the new e-visa should be beneficial to tourists who are now wanting to visit Egypt.

In order to apply for an Egypt Visa, an applicant must have a valid passport from one of the listed eligible countries and have access to the internet. The applicant must also be able to pay online for their electronic Egypt visa and be able to receive it via e-mail. The e-Visa allows tourists to stay within the country for no more than thirty days but is valid for up to ninety days. Children who are under the age of sixteen are eligible to travel for free on their parent's visa. It is important to note that travel documents may be required, so having copies of insurance policies, travel destination and return destination, accommodation reservation receipt and photocopies of all documents is a good idea.

For those who are interested in the e-Visa system, it won't be fully launched until the end of 2019, but will include fingerprint recognition at airports and will allow tourists to bypass having to go to the embassies for registration. Overall, the new e-Visa should bolster and attract more tourists who may be reluctant to travel to Egypt either because their country does not provide travel Visas or because they cannot obtain one quickly enough. Getting an e-Visa takes a few minutes through the online application form and only requires basic personal information. Local travel professionals hope that the newly introduced Egypt visa system will help enhance the influx and flow of foreign tourists, ultimately ensuring that Egypt's tourism industry continues to recover.

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