

TOURISM IN IRAN LOSING AIR CONNECTIONS



European airlines are gradually cancelling direct flights to Iran which is expected to be quite a blow for the tourism in Iran.

Times are hard for Iran. With the return of economic sanctions from the United States, tourism, and in particular air transport, is suffering. Recently, British Airways announced its decision, finally, to suspend its flights between London and Tehran as of 23 September. **According to the British company, this route is not commercially viable' because of the US sanctions.**

Air France is also abandoning its Paris–Tehran route, relaunched in April 2016, operated by Joon since this year. The route has been reduced from three weekly frequencies to one since 4 August and will be suspended on 18 September. Here again, the "low commercial profitability" is singled out. KLM will also abandon its Amsterdam–Tehran flights from 24 September. Etihad, Air Astana and Austrian Airlines are also withdrawing flights to Tehran, Isfahan and Shiraz from their flight schedules.

These announcements could weaken tourism in Iran, in full bloom these last three years. The country had welcomed nearly 5 million tourists in 2016, according to the latest figures available from the World Bank. And the Iranian state hoped to attract more than 20 million of tourists by 2025.

This is one of the most dramatic issue currently affecting Iranian tourism.

Some European airlines, however, are resisting, such as Lufthansa, which for the time being keeps its Frankfurt–Teheran route, or Alitalia, which continues a daily flight between Rome and Tehran. From Paris, the Iranian capital is still accessible via Mahan Air and Iran Air.

Last May, Donald Trump decided the unilateral withdrawal by the United States of the nuclear agreement signed in 2015 between Iran, China, Russia, Great Britain, Germany and the United States. **In essence, this agreement made it possible to lift economic sanctions against Iran in exchange for assurances that the Islamic Republic would not acquire nuclear weapons.**

Companies operating in Iran or doing business with Iran in dollars are now subject to economic sanctions and a ban on doing business with US companies.

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