

# TOURISM IN MOROCCO: BUSINESSES OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE WINTER SEASON



While until recently the local and international operators complained about the restrictions put in place by the Moroccan authorities which prevented foreigners from coming to the Kingdom, the recent decisions of the usual source countries to re-confine or restrict the international flows of movement of their population has put an almost general halt to travel to Morocco.

The local experts on tourism in Morocco agreed that after a short hope that went up over the summer the situation of Moroccan operators worsened.

**Following the permission granted to foreigners to come to Morocco with a hotel reservation, the sector has begun a real beginning of recovery which was announced under the best auspices.** As soon as this milestone was crossed, the recovery was activated by the tour operators by organizing fan-trips and welcoming the first tourists in Marrakech, Agadir and Essaouira. Everything was going well with the reopening of Club Med and the resumption of Ryan Air flights to Morocco and finally the tripling of its connections to several cities.

Unfortunately, with the worsening of the health situation in Europe, this recovery has been stopped almost dead in its tracks for two weeks.

Several major hotels in Marrakech have reopened their doors and are betting on the end of the year - the Christmas and New Year's Holiday. Many businesses are still optimistic that everything can change for the better in the next 2 or 3 weeks.

The worst-case scenario for tourism in Morocco would be that the health situation does not improve in the affected source markets and that Morocco would be forced to remain somewhat on standby for the next two months. Indeed, if planes still serve Morocco, then clearly they have emptied out and Club Med, which receives mostly French people, closed its doors last week after the recent announcement of measures restricting traffic in France.

In fact, the worsening health situation in Europe has put all traditional source markets, including the UK and Germany, under stress. So, the desire to travel has been put on stand-by.

Excluding the elaboration of a new adaptation plan for the ONMT (Tourism Authority), it should be reminded that with this crisis, the world of certainty and 5-year strategic plans was over.

Today, the ONMT Managing Director and his teams continue working with Ryan Air, Transavia, Easy Jet, RAM ... to be ready for the recovery, as well as with the tour operators who must activate their programming plan for the Morocco brand for December and January.

The objective is to restore, eventually, the 3 million airline seats that existed before the crisis and to push the TO to continue to program and sell Moroccan destinations.

Regarding the retention of the PCR test onboarding to Morocco, experts hope that the authorities will eventually opt for a test carried out on arrival at the airports in the Kingdom.

Many experts believe that the best way to simplify the testing and make Morocco more attractive is to carry out the test on arrival.

In fact, the royal announcement of an imminent campaign to vaccinate the Moroccan population is the first real good news since the beginning of the crisis. It is the beginning of a solution with timing that finally lets us see the end of the tunnel, even if it will still take time.

**Indeed, if the campaign starts next December, the summer should be saved if a PCR test to foreign visitors who have not been vaccinated will be added to the arrival of Moroccan airports.**

It will not only allow Morocco to regain the reputation of a world tourist destination, but also be able to bounce the inbound tourism back more strongly in certain markets.

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