

2021: TOURISM REVENUES IN MOROCCO WILL DROP BY 30 TO 40%



Since the beginning of the crisis in March 2020, Moroccan tourism revenues have been constantly dropping. According to an expert, the 42.8% decline in the first seven months of 2021, compared to the same period in 2020, will result in a 30 to 40% drop in total travel receipts at the end of the year. These will cap at about 21 to 25 billion DH against 36.4 billion DH last year and nearly 80 billion DH in 2019.

The figures of foreign currency travel receipts collected between January and the end of July 2021, published by the Office of Foreign Exchange, have highlighted **the continued deterioration of this number, which fell to 13.046 billion DH at the end of July (MMDH) against 22.807 MMDH for the same period a year earlier.**

When invited to explain the persistence of this 46% drop despite a summer that looked promising with the arrival of several million Moroccans living abroad, an informed observer of the tourism sector told us that we would have to wait for the official figures for the month of August. For the time being, everything suggests that the arrivals have not been very high, since the reopening of the borders which took place on June 15.

This impression is confirmed by the fact that remittances by Moroccans living abroad have exploded and reached 54 billion DH at the end of July 2021 against 37 billion DH at the end of July 2020.

If there is reason to be concerned about the continued decline in tourism revenues, we must still welcome the significant increase in remittances from Moroccans living abroad, which have jumped 45.6%. Indeed, the 16.9 billion DH increase in transfers from Moroccans living abroad largely offsets the 9.761 billion DH drop in travel receipts over the past seven months.

That said, the publication of revenue figures for the first seven months of the year shows that there will be no great improvement by the end of the current year and that the fall in revenue will worsen.

It is necessary to wait for the figures of the travel receipts of August to know if the Moroccans living abroad have come in great numbers to visit their homeland.

In the absence of foreign tourists who constitute the bulk of travel receipts, and whose return date is still unknown, **tourism receipts for the year 2021 should not exceed 21 to 25 billion dirhams, a drop of 30 to 40% compared to 2020.** In 2019, tourism revenues had been 78.7 billion DH.

"This is explained by the fact that the crisis only really began after the first quarter of 2020, which had already achieved a good figure of 19.2 billion dirhams against 19.61 billion dirhams for the first three months of 2019 before the arrival of the crisis," concludes the expert, for whom the decline in spending on travel abroad by Moroccans (-18% or 1 billion dirhams) will not change much to the surplus balance of revenues that fell at the end of July by 51.9%, or minus 8.662 billion dirhams.

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