

MOROCCO'S "POSITIVE OUTLOOK" FOR THE SUMMER TOURISM SEASON



The Moroccan government said they have a "positive outlook" for the tourism sector with a rebound in activity this summer, after the strong negative impact of the COVID-19 health crisis.

Executive Spokesman Minister Mustafa Baitas said that the occupancy rate in accommodation in the country's coastal cities is expected to reach 80% during the summer tourism season.

Baitas stressed that the Ministry of Tourism **has registered 2 million overnight stays booked online and that 360,000 tourists who book through traditional channels will be received during this high season.**

The minister also mentioned the mobilization of 4.25 million air travel seats this summer.

Baitas also highlighted the positive impact that the Marhaba (Strait Crossing) operation will have on tourism, which will resume after two years, interrupting more than three million people to travel by sea in a period of three months between June and August.

The government allocated 2 billion dirhams (188 million euros) to mitigate the effects of the health crisis on tourism.

Since May 17, visitors don't have to present a negative PCR test on arrival any more. This move is expected to attract even more tourists.

In 2019 - the reference year before the pandemic, Morocco welcomed 12.9 million tourists; revenue generated by non-residents amounted to 79 billion DH. This sector contributed 7% to GDP and 20% to exports of goods and services; it employs more than 550,000 people or 5% of the working population.

For the time being, **the assessment of the first quarter of 2022 drawn up by the Minister of Tourism, Handicrafts and the Social and Solidarity Economy reveals that the kingdom has welcomed 80% more visitors.**

Today there are 30,000 tourism businesses in Morocco including hotels, guest houses, restaurants and transport agencies. The government had to devote two billion DH to its support: one billion for specific measures (lump sum monthly allowance of 2,000 DH for all employees, transporters and classified restaurants but not for the 1,400 travel agencies, deferral of charges due to the CNSS, moratorium on bank maturities, payment of business tax due by hoteliers in 2020 and 2021, etc.). Another billion DH, in the form of a subsidy to the hotel sector: investment support (maintenance, renovation, training).

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