

TOURISM COMES BACK TO JORDAN



Jordan's tourism industry has continued to recover in the first quarter of 2023, relieving an economy that the Covid-19 pandemic has severely impacted. This positive trend began last year and shows promise for continued improvement.

Between January and early May, more than 500,000 people visited the tombs and temples carved into the pink sandstone cliffs of Petra. Located in southern Jordan, the Nabataean city is both the barometer and the locomotive of tourism in the country. In other words, the increase in attendance, mostly foreign visitors, delights hoteliers, guides, and restaurateurs from the capital, Amman, to the port city of Aqaba, on the Red Sea. In the first quarter of this year, over 1.4 million international tourists were recorded nationwide, indicating a continuation of the positive trend from 2022.

The return of travelers is a positive development for an economy that has been struggling due to various crises for over a decade, including the Syrian war, the effects of the conflict in Ukraine, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Medical tourism, wellness, and adventure in the desert

Jordan suffers from a double deficit current account and budget. The latter has led to increased debt. More debt means less stability, note experts. The recovery of tourism will have a positive impact on the country's economy, including the injection of foreign exchange.

The sector accounts for between 10 and 13% of the country's GDP. In 2022, it brought about \$ 5.3 billion, and the authorities expect an increase in revenues this year. Given the stakes, they have spared no effort to attract visitors: 71 million Jordanian dinars (about \$100 million) have been allocated to promoting tourism in the 2023 budget. Abroad, the advertising campaigns primarily focus on promoting Petra. The "pink city" has been granted permits to boost hotel capacity and organize occasional attractions. Local tourism officials have set a goal to surpass the one million tourist mark in 2019.

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