

RAPID TOURISM GROWTH IN MOROCCO



The summer season in Morocco will be fantastic, with the tourism sector recovering significantly. The Ministry of Tourism, Handicrafts, and Social and Solidarity Economy recently released a statement confirming that the latest data show substantial tourism growth.

In June alone, there was a significant increase in the number of foreign tourists crossing the border, with almost 1.4 million visitors recorded. **This represents a tourism growth of 25% compared to the base year of 2019.**

The impressive performance can be attributed to the surge in visitors from strategic markets such as Israel (96% increase), Spain (79% increase), the United Kingdom (23% increase), and Portugal (16% increase). These figures demonstrate international visitors' increasing trust and interest in Moroccan travel destinations.

Over the first six months of the year, Morocco welcomed 6.5 million tourists, recording tourism growth of 21% compared to 2019. This sustained recovery has also boosted sector productivity. This generated 41 billion dirhams in foreign currency travel revenue at the end of May 2023, a substantial increase of 42% compared to 2019.

The Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with tour operators and online travel agencies, has taken aggressive promotional measures to boost tourism growth in Morocco. Through strategic partnerships, they have secured 2.8 million customers for the 2023 summer season, twice the number of tourists recorded in the summer of 2019. This approach aims to provide visitors an unforgettable experience and solidify Morocco's status as a top tourist destination. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted Morocco's tourism industry. The country has set a target to receive 17.5 million tourists by 2026, generating approximately 120 billion dirhams (about US\$ 12.5 billion) in revenue.

The Minister of Tourism, Handicrafts, and Social and Solidarity Economy, Fatim-Zahra Ammor, expressed her satisfaction with these promising results. She stressed that the Moroccan tourism sector is doing very well and has even higher ambitions. As part of the ministry's roadmap, efforts will continue collaborating with the industry to achieve quantitative and qualitative objectives.

Morocco has been making significant strides in promoting and investing in tourism. The successful launch of the "Morocco, Land of Light" campaign, targeting 20 key markets, is an evidence of this. Furthermore, in 2022, 109 new hotel properties were opened, adding 9,541 more beds to the already impressive accommodation options to support the Kingdom's tourism growth. Morocco is becoming an increasingly popular destination for travelers seeking cultural exploration, one-of-a-kind experiences, and diverse landscapes.

Morocco's national airline, Royal Air Maroc (RAM), plans to expand its fleet significantly by 2037. **In partnership with the government, RAM has agreed to increase its fleet of 50 Boeing planes to 200 within the next 15 years.** This ambitious plan aims to achieve the country's tourism development goal of attracting 65 million visitors by 2037, six times more than the current number of visitors.

In addition to launching new international flights, RAM intends to include 46 domestic routes to enhance domestic tourism. The company will prioritize the African, US, and Asian markets for its international destinations. Casablanca airport will serve as a crucial international hub.

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