

# MOROCCO ZAPS RELIGION AND MAKES A SHOCK DECISION ON TOURISM, UNLIKE ALGERIA



Morocco recently made a surprising decision on tourism by considering lifting the ban on unmarried couples sharing the same hotel room. This decision contrasts with Algeria's policy of not snubbing religious principles to promote tourism.

The Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts in Morocco is discussing with the Ministries of Interior and Justice to remove a sensitive restriction. The Minister of Tourism, Fatim-Zahra Ammor, emphasized the importance of lifting restrictions prohibiting unmarried couples from sharing a hotel room. Morocco is a nation of freedom, and such regulations have caused some tourists to opt for alternative destinations like Turkey or Europe.

This Morocco tourism decision shows a willingness to adapt its tourism policies to attract a more significant number of visitors. By making it easier for unmarried couples to accommodate, the country seeks to broaden its tourist base and compete with other popular destinations. This is done by offering more flexible services and experiences.

Tourism is an essential pillar of the Moroccan economy: in the first months of 2023. Morocco welcomed 6.5 million tourists, an increase of 20% compared to the same period in 2019. In addition, tourism receipts reached 41 billion dirhams, a rise of 42% compared to the same period in 2019. These figures testify to Morocco's growing tourist attraction.

The Ministry of Tourism expects this positive trend to continue, with the anticipated arrival of 13.5 to 14 million tourists by the end of the year. This growth acts as the country's efforts to diversify its tourism offering and attract a wider international audience.

By reviewing its policy on accommodation for unmarried couples, Morocco is showing an open mind and a willingness to meet the needs and expectations of travelers. This could enhance its attractiveness in the tourism market and allow it to compete with other destinations by adopting a more flexible and liberal approach.

## **Tourism, Morocco: Algeria is faithful to its values and principles**

On the other hand, Algeria has chosen to maintain strict religious tenets at the end of tourism. While Morocco is taking steps to facilitate travel for unmarried couples, Algeria continues to focus on other aspects of its tourism sector.

Each country must consider its cultural-specific cities and social values when promoting its tourism sector. As Morocco seeks to attract a wider audience by adapting its policies, Algeria may choose to focus on other aspects of its cultural and historical heritage to appeal to travelers.

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