

# MADAGASCAR IMPROVES AIR TRANSPORT OFFERS TO BOOST TOURISM



Although 2022 had its ups and downs, Madagascar tourism looks bright. Reservations for 2023 are at full capacity, air transports and flight frequencies are increasing, and historic companies like Corsair are returning. Several major international airlines, including Qatar Airways and Emirates, are interested in the destination.

The Ministry of Tourism reports that Madagascar received 25,448 international and domestic visitors in the first four months of 2023. This is compared to 11,595 in 2022 during the same period. Specifically, from January 1 to April 30, 2023, **18,657 international tourists visited Madagascar, nearly four times more than last year's figure of 5,044.** However, according to the Ministry of Tourism's data, this number is still lower than the 2019 figure of 24,035.

The Regional Tourist Office of Nosy Be (ORTNB) reports that the island receives 2,000 international visitors weekly. Additionally, hotels operate at full capacity. The ORTNB attributes this growth to increased air transport, precisely Ethiopian Airlines leading the way.

Furthermore, Airlink's recent return and Lot Polish Airlines' resumption of the Warsaw-Nosy Be service have contributed to tourism growth. The Confederation of Tourism recognizes that enhancing air transport options is a critical objective in its plan to promote the destination in the short, medium, and long term.

According to Lova Ratovomalala, the Executive Director of the Confederation of Tourism of Madagascar, it is crucial to consolidate the tourism industry's recovery, particularly regarding air travel. This is because air transport is the main issue that needs urgent attention, alongside improving accessibility to tourist destinations.

**To attract more tourists, Ratovomalala recommends allowing foreign airlines to operate freely in Madagascar and increasing airport access points to meet international standards.** However, the domestic service also needs improvement as it is currently problematic. Ratovomalala warns that if high-ranking officials do not find solutions quickly, the season may be ruined for operators still recovering from the recent health crisis. Ultimately, all efforts to revive the tourism industry would be futile if urgent measures were not taken.

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