

EGYPT PUSHES FOR TOURISM GROWTH DESPITE CULTURAL HERITAGE CONCERNS



Egypt, a state whose tourism industry represents approximately 12% of the country's GDP, is set to rely on its resiliency and significant investments in the development of the local infrastructure to make it even more attractive to tourists in 2026. Indeed, despite regional geopolitical tensions, the number of visitors to the country is expected to rise every year from 2026.

According to Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Sherif Fathy, who was also the Minister of Civil Aviation and Egypt Air chief, 4 percent more visitors arrived in Egypt by the end of May. He predicts that the number of tourists will increase by 5 to 7 percent compared to the previous year.

Record Year Followed by Slower Growth

In 2025, Egypt registered a record number of 19 million international visitors. At the same time, **there is an expected slowdown in 2026 as a result of tourists' perceptions of the war in the Middle East, which has affected the demand for business travel to Egypt.** According to Sherif Fathy, the high fuel prices constitute a bigger problem as airlines have been forced to reduce the number of destinations to conserve fuel. He highlighted that normal operations are now being resumed.

Meanwhile, the minister is optimistic about Egypt's tourism sector, which is expected to see an increase in visitors despite challenges. He noted that the government has implemented measures and incentives, including reductions in landing fees, to encourage airlines to operate in the country. He explained that Egypt is focusing on short-haul flights, adding that the government does not have the infrastructure to support long-haul flights to North America, South America, and Asia. "We don't have sufficient connectivity," the minister stated.

Ambitious Infrastructure Push

To meet the target, Egypt is looking to develop its aviation sector while also investing in expanding and developing hotels. The country is set to see significant airport developments, including Sphinx Airport near Giza, to attract more airlines. In parallel, billions of pounds worth of private real estate developments and hotel projects are underway in Egypt's northern coastal region. In Egypt's pyramids area near Cairo, investments are also being made to revitalize the region, including the development of hotels, entertainment venues, and cultural centers. The government targets the creation of at least 20,000 and 25,000 hotel rooms in the country by 2030, respectively.

Balancing Growth and Preservation

Even though the developments will provide an excellent opportunity for the local economy to grow even further, there remain some risks and challenges associated with increased tourism in Egypt, such as over-tourism and damage to cultural heritage sites. Notably, the country's most renowned landmark, the Pyramid of Cheops, better known as the Great Pyramid of Giza, is among the wonders of the Ancient World. The Giza plateau has always been a drawcard for tourists, making it even more surprising that local authorities are eyeing it for development for the third time in a row.

Indeed, in 2024, Egyptologists, as well as ordinary citizens, protested the decision to renovate the Menkaure pyramid. This decision was met with disapproval since it was seen as an attempt to undermine Egypt's rich and diverse history. As a result, there were similar complaints regarding the development plans around Giza Plateau. Minister of Tourism **Sherif Fathy has acknowledged the concerns about over-tourism, noting that the developments will diversify the tourism experience, drawing attention to lesser-known destinations in Egypt, such as resorts.**

With the right investment strategy, increased spending in the sector, and careful balancing, it is possible that not only will Egypt overcome the effects of the regional geopolitical tensions, but it will also continue to be a preferred global tourist destination while being a custodian of its ancient cultural heritage.

Date: 2026-07-06

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/egypt-to-invest-in-tourism-despite-danger-for-cultural-heritage-news15550>