

American Tourism to Egypt Increases

(News Source: Hotel News Now / Smith Travel Research)



Cairo, Egypt--American Tourism to Egypt showed a dramatic increase of arrivals in 2008 over the previous year according to an announcement made by the Hon. Zoheir Garranah, Egypt's Minister of Tourism. "We had 319,000 thousand visitors from the US last year, representing a 17% increase."

According to Hon. Garranah, "Egypt is optimistic that despite the challenging economic climate, this growth will continue because we have an excellent, diverse, high quality tourism product that offers Americans great value for the dollar." The Minister added, "we are confident that the travel industry will bounce back and we will be ready. We have modernized our airports, ports, roads and we are now working on our railway networks. Regarding hotel investment, Egypt has been very successful in attracting international investment in tourism. It is interesting to note that the US has the largest market share among foreign hotel management companies. By the end of 2008, we had 211,000 rooms with 156,000 under construction, 70% of which are at Egypt's coastal resorts."

The fact that Egypt is hosting four major US-based travel industry organizations within an eight month period is another indicator of the popularity of that destination in America. Mr. Sayed Khalifa, Director, Egyptian Tourist Office in New York, noted that "the American Tourism Society (ATS) held a conference in Cairo in October, 2008. This spring we are hosting the Society of American Travel Writers (SATW) Freelance Council February 2-10, 2009, the United States Tour Operator Association (USTOA) Executive Council in March 2-11, 2009 and the Annual Africa Travel Association International Congress, May 17-21, 2009." Egypt Air, now a partner in the Star Alliance, has been offering special rates for delegates to these industry conferences.

Much of this optimism is supported by US-based tour operators. Robert Whitley, President, USTOA, said "In these times when many Americans are cutting back on travel, the real bright spot is Egypt which has enjoyed growth while other destinations have had declines. USTOA is excited about going to Egypt with the hope that more tour operators will include Egypt in their programs and tour operators who currently have Egypt programs will expand their product."

Phil Otterson, Sr. VP External Affairs, Tauck World Discovery and President, the American Tourism Society (ATS), said "Exotic destinations that offer value for the dollar, such as Egypt, are doing quite well in 2009. We are very pleased that as a result of the ATS conference, some of our members who had never been to Egypt before, were so impressed with the quality of the tourism experience there, that they are now including Egypt in their tour programs."

"One of the strengths of our destination," added Mr. Khalifa, "is that it has such a diverse range of activities and accommodation, that there are tours that appeal to the high end luxury client as well as for those on more limited budgets."

Mohamed Anwar, President, Lotus International Tours, said "we expect an increase in traffic in 2009 despite the economic climate. At Lotus there is a demand for lower cost trips and we can offer quality Egyptian programs for limited budgets. In fact the demand for Egypt is so high for this coming summer, that Lotus is adding one more student package to its Egyptian programs."

"2008 was an excellent year for US tourism to Egypt and we expect that 2009 will be equally as good," said, Ronen Paldi, President, Ya'lla Tours USA. "Egypt is what we call an 'emotional' destination. Our clients want to go to fulfill their once-in-a-lifetime dream, to see the world famous Pyramids, take a Nile cruise stopping Luxor and Aswan. For this reason, Egypt has proven to be almost 'recession' proof. Ya'lla has experienced a steady flow of bookings since the New Year and we have not had to compromise our high standard or quality of our large selection of tour options."

Adam Leavitt, Vice President Marketing at Trafalgar said "Egypt tours have been growing steadily in popularity over the past few years. Our passenger numbers for 2007 Egypt tours were up 35% over 2006, with 2008 up 44% over 2007. 2009 is looking strong as well, and we are over 35% ahead with our 2009 bookings year to date. Given the current state of outbound international travel in general, these numbers are incredibly encouraging and speak well to another successful year for Trafalgar's tours to this region. We see this increase in popularity as a result of both the incredible value that escorted touring provides in visiting exotic destinations as well as the desire on the part of our passenger to visit Egypt knowing that all of the details and any of their concerns are being handled by experts."

Egypt Tourist Authority/Africa Travel Association Road Show Promotes Congress

The Egyptian Tourist Authority, in the midst of a US road show with the Africa Travel Association to promote the Africa Travel Association 34th International Congress in May, has generated great interest among travel agents to participate in this event. "We have had two successful Destination Egypt evenings, one in Chicago and one in Atlanta, that attracted more than 200 travel agents," said Edward Bergman, ATA Executive Director. "ATA members say that Egypt is one of the most requested destinations. They are excited about coming to Egypt to update themselves on the Country's latest tourism developments and offerings. Post tour options will include visits to some of Egypt's new archaeological discoveries, a cruise on one of the new state-of-the-art luxury boats on the Nile, and visits to the coastal City of Alexandria and the resort of Sharm El Sheikh, a favorite spot for scuba divers and underwater sports on the Red Sea." The next ATA /Egypt promotion will be in Los Angeles on February 16, 2009.

Direct Link: <http://www.realestatechannel.com/international-markets/vacation-leisure-real-estate/american-tourism-to-egypt-increases-399.php>