

Egypt Travel agents predict seasonal rate reductions

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Egypt's Tourism Minister Zoheir Garana

Egyptian travel agents and hoteliers expect further rate reductions this fall season as European travel agents begin applying a new system whereby hotel rates are set on a monthly basis as opposed to a previous fixed-rate system.

"Egypt is facing fierce competition with other tourist destinations that have reduced their rates due to the global financial crisis," said Magdy el-Menawy, former board member of the Egyptian Chamber of Tourism. Tourism

"But despite the financial crisis and the swine flu, Egypt still has a 90 percent occupancy rate until December," he noted, expecting this figure to decline early next year.

"We began this year with a 17-percent decrease," el-Menawy added. "But the third quarter was as good as last year's, which indicates that we have marketed the country well."

Maged Othman, head of the cabinet's information center, said the number of incoming tourists was "stable" compared to last year. "We received 12.3 million tourists, while a country like France saw a decline of 14 percent," he said.

Egyptian Tourism Minister Zoheir Garana predicted that the local tourism industry would completely recover from the repercussions of the global financial crisis by the third quarter of 2010. He went on to note that tourism revenues had declined by 6.4 percent -- while the number of tourists fell by 5.4 percent -- within the last nine months compared to the same period last year.

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