

## Marketing Egypt as a Dark Tourism Destination

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### ABSTRACT

Egypt with its rich Pharaonic-, Greco-Roman-, Coptic- as well as Islamic history has left uncountable heritage and cultural treasures. It has been undergoing many great wars and revolutions since the Pharaonic period till the last Egyptian revolution of 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2011. This study aims to explore Egypt's existing attractions and potentials of marketing it as a Destination for "Dark / War tourism" in order to enlarge its share in the world tourism market. Consequently, it proposes tours for dark tourists as well as a touristic map for visiting the sights in Egypt that witnessed wars and revolutions.

**Keywords:** Dark Tourism- Egypt- Egypt's Dark Tourism Map

### INTRODUCTION

Sites of death, disaster, suffering and violence have become more and more important stops on the international tourism itinerary. These have long been considered within a broader heritage tourism context (Stone & Sharply, 2008). People have long been attracted to such sites and should not feel guilty when enjoying touring former places of suffering. For example, sites such as the Roman catacombs have been respectable tourism spots for centuries. These sites also provide opportunities for spiritual and political reflection where we learn to cherish freedom (Strange & Kampa, 2003).

Dark tourism can also be called "War tourism, "Thana tourism," "Black Spot" "Tourism , Atrocity heritage", "Prison tourism or Slavery-heritage tourism" (Stone, 2006) and also catastrophic tourism (Molokacova & Molokac, 2011). It may be referred to as the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre. It is also identified as 'visitations to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred and that continue to impact our lives (Stone, 2006). Therefore, these terms are usually used to express battle sites, death camps as well as death of famous individuals; e.g. death of Mother Teresa or President Kennedy, and extraordinary disasters; e.g. plane crash of Lukirbi, destruction of World Trade Center, or natural disasters; e.g. Tsunami. Many historical prisons have been turned to new uses including museums, hotels and condominiums (Strange & Kampa, 2003). People like to visit these sites where they can pay their respects and enjoy history.

### RESEARCH AIM

- 1- To explore the possibility of marketing Egypt as a dark tourism destination
- 2- To explore some of the heritage sites in Egypt that can be used as dark tourism attractions
- 3- To suggest possible routes that dark tourists can take during their visit to Egypt

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted with the descriptive-evaluative method. A tourist survey was undertaken by interviewing about 30 tourists at famous touristic sites in Cairo and Alexandria in order to record their impression upon the idea about marketing Egypt as a dark tourism destination. The interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed and analyzed for their content. These data were used to supplement and extend the existing archival record of documents.

In addition, two tracks are suggested for dark tourists visiting Egypt that are developed according to two considerations:

- 1- Geographical considerations to develop a logical routing on Egypt's map
- 2- Historical background of each stop that is related to one of the dark tourism motives

### UNDERSTANDING DARK TOURISM

In order to be able to categorize a diverse range of sites, attractions and exhibitions that are associated with death and the macabre as 'dark tourism' it is necessary to understand the motives of so-called dark tourists (Stone, 2006). As a result it is recommended to first better understand the phenomenon of dark tourism.

According to Stone (2006:149) "people have always held a fascination of death through a combination of respect and reverence or morbid curiosity and superstition which is apparently driving the dark tourism phenomenon. Indeed death has been an element of tourism longer than any other form of tourism supply, often through religious or pilgrimage purposes". Early examples of dark tourism attractions is the Roman Colosseum where the gladiatorial games took place accompanied with death and suffering. Also, in 1838 was the first guided tour in England, whereby a railway excursion in Cornwall took in the hanging of two convicted murderers. And over the last century, dark tourism has become more widespread and varied. Some researchers assume that the sites or destinations associated with war probably constitute the largest single category of tourist attractions in the world.

According to Seaton and Lennon (2004) the concept of dark tourism can be discussed through the following activities:

- 1-travel to witness public enactments of death (though public executions rarely occur anymore)
- 2-travel to see the sites of individual or mass deaths after they have occurred
- 3-travel to memorial sites, including graveyards and war memorials
- 4-travel to see evidence of death at unconnected sites, e.g., museums containing weapons of death
- 5-travel to re-enactments of death, e.g., plays or festivals with a religious theme

In addition, dark tourists may have personal affiliation with the event or someone who was involved in it. For example, Ghana invested her dark history of slavery through focusing its marketing efforts on the United States in order to attract Americans to search for their African roots (Yuill, 2003). This can be applied in Egypt where Europeans can visit the cemeteries of their relatives that died during the World War II in Alamein.

Consequently, dark tourism destinations can attract visitors mostly for the reasons of education and remembrance (Yuill, 2003). Therefore, it is believed that dark tourism in Egypt can be presented through the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> activity mentioned above as well as taking advantage of the archeological sites that stand as a witness for previous wars or revolutions that took place in Egypt through its rich Pharaonic, Coptic, Greek and Roman, Islamic and modern history.

### ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

After analyzing the content of recorded interviews, the following comments were recognized:

- Most of the tourists were not familiar with the term "dark tourism".
- After explaining the idea of dark tourism to the interviewees, many were pleased and showed their interest to experience it.
- Most of them agreed to re-visit Egypt once again to experience the suggested dark tourism routes
- There was no age restrictions as the interested tourists did not feel any threat caused by the suggested routes
- When the interviewees were asked to evaluate the suggested routes, most of them stated that it will give an overall better knowledge of the Egyptian history and treasures in a more interesting way.
- All interested interviewees were ready to extend the duration of their stay in Egypt for this purpose.

### SUGGESTED DARK TOURISM TRACKS

**First suggested track and its historical background:**

**Luxor (Thebes)- Deir ElBallas – Elqusiyah - Baharia Oasis - Memphis - Tal El Deba'a-Tel Hebuna and Tel Farma (at Qantara)**

**First worker's strike:** During the reign of Rameses III (1184-1153 B.C.), a successful labor strike took place. Historians wrote: It began "at rear temple of Menkheper in the outer road" and passed "near the causeway of king Mentuhtep". On the next day "they reached the gate of the southern temenos wall of the temple of Wesermaatre-setepenre" (Ramasseum) and "spent the night there quarrelling in its entrance until a ration was issued to them on this day (Montet, 1982:196; Gardiner, 1984:35)

All Egyptian temples usually show the ancient Egyptian King smiting his traditional enemies, Libyan Nubian and Asiatic. For example, Seti I at outside wall of the hypostyle hall of Karnak depicted his war against Nubian, Lybian and Asiatics. Ramses II depicted his war against the Hittite more than one temple like Luxor, Karnak, Abu Simbel and also Ramses III his war against the sea people in Medinet Habu.

Suggested route in the western **Thebes (now Luxor)** is to pass by these three temples showing the road they took from their town at Deir el Medineh towards the Ramasseum where they went down to get a ration as hunger and thirst were everywhere. Afterwards they can visit temple of Habu then crossing the Nile to visit Luxor and Karnak temple (optional tour to *Abu Simbel* temple in **Aswan**)

**War against Hyksos (Asiatics):** Lower Egypt was taken over with little fighting due to internal weakness. Their capital was Avaris (**Tell el Dab'a**). The war must have lasted at least thirty years. Seqenenra Taa (1560 B.C.) fought the Hyksos but was only taken under the reign of his son Ahmose (1532-1528 B.C.) between regnal years 18 and 22. The war was not continuously fought. The first engagement as mentioned on papyrus named as the quarrel between Seqenenra and Apepi (Hyksos king, 1555 B.C.), where latter is complaining that the roaring of the hippos at Thebes was keeping him from sleep (Wente & Simpson, 1973:77; Shaw, 2000:210; Crimal, 1987: 187). Evidence shows that there was military engagement at **Deir el Ballas** (Labib, 1963). It lies about 40 km north of Thebes and was the campaign palace of the Theban kings (Eggebrecht, 1975; Lacovara, 1990; Hein et al, 2006).

The mummy of Seqenenra Taa in the Egyptian Museum indicate that he died by violence. His follower Kamose (1555-1550 B.C.) sent an expedition to Avaris (Tell el Deba'a) and to Buhen. Kamose moved from Thebes with his army and battle fleet, sending scouts to position the enemy garrisons. He continued moving till Sako (now **El-Qusiya**, located on the west bank of the Nile). This city marked the southern border of the part of Egypt controlled by the Hyksos. A messenger was send from Apepi to the king of Kush (now Upper Egypt), thus Ahmose sent soldiers to Bahariya Oasis to cut communication. Eleven years later Ahmose bypassed **Memphis** (now Mit Rahina) to take Heliopolis and three month later, after the inundation began to fall, took over Tell el Habua and forced the Hyksos to move across northern Sinai to Palestine. Avaris was sieged till it was overtaken. Several wars were led afterwards in order to reunite the country and to secure the borders of Egypt (Shaw 2000).

**Pelusium (Tell Farma**, located about 30 km west of Suez Canal), was both a departure point for Egyptian expeditions to Asia and an entry point for foreign invaders attempting to conquer Egypt. The king of Assyria, Sennacherib (720-715 B.C.), who was planning to invade Egypt, approached Pelusium. According to Herodotus and Strabo, he withdrew without a fight. In 525 B.C., a decisive battle took place near Pelusium, which ultimately resulted in the Persians invasion (Shaw, 2000; [www.archeology.com](http://www.archeology.com)). Traces of destruction by fire are still visible and may have been caused during the Persian invasion. ([www.archeology.com](http://www.archeology.com))

In 331 B.C., after several years of war, the Persian Empire was conquered by Alexander the Great, who was seen by Pelusians as a liberator of Egypt. In 48 B.C., the civil war between Caesar and Pompey was consuming Rome. Losing at Pharsalos, Pompey fled to Pelusium to seek refuge with the pharaoh. But on September 28 Ptolemy had Pompey murdered and decapitated, then sent the embalmed head to Julius Caesar, who landed at Alexandria in October.

In 619 Pelusium was attacked and conquered by a Persian army under Khuzran, and in 640 it fell into the hands of Amr Ibn al-As, an Arab. In the twelfth century the city was attacked by Crusaders, first by King Baldwin of Flanders who died at or near Pelusium in 1118, and later by King Amalric of Jerusalem who led an invasion against Saladin in 1169. After that the city sank into obscurity.

This would lead us to the old "Horus way" which is from Isthmus at Qantara and the borders forts Sile, Tell Abu es-Seifa, Tell Habwe (Tell Semut), Tell Heir. According to Gardiner (Bietek, 1980) this was "Great Horus" rout which was used for expedition against Asiatics. According to a scene in the Karnak from time of Seti I, there were almost 11 forts on this road. Outside the town of eastern Qantara is located Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery and Memorial. The cemetery was begun in February 1916 and was in use

until late 1920. After the war, the cemetery was doubled in size to accommodate graves brought from other cemeteries and desert battlefields, notably those from Qatia, Rumani, Magdhaba, El Arish and Rafa. The cemetery contains 1,562 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and 110 from the Second World War. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qantara>; Bietek, 1980)

Crossing **the Suez Canal**, that witnessed the war between Egypt and Israel, there is a Pharaonic fortress at **El-Arish** that was rebuilt by the Ottomans in 1560, restored by Bonaparte's troops in 1799, and destroyed by British bombers during World War I. In 1967 (6 days war) Israel seized Sinai from Egypt. Between year 1968 till 1970 there were limited border wars. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 1973 (10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan) and on the Qubon Jewish festival the Egyptian attacked the "Parlif line" by crossing the Suez Canal and destroyed it (Campanini, 2005)

#### Second suggested track:

#### Memphis - Cairo (Pyramid side) – Rashid – Alexandria - El Alamein, Marsa Matrouh – Siwa

**Cairo**, with its long history, is an important stop in the 2<sup>nd</sup> track. The Egyptian Museum in Cairo shows the mummy of the main warrior kings who fought enemies of Egypt like "Hyksos", Sea people and others. Also some of the weapon and warfare are depicted in the Coptic and Islamic Museum

The Citadel: established in 1176 in order to maintain power over Cairo and Egypt. Mohamed Ali, who was appointed by Egyptian on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 1805, invited the Mamluks in 1811 to the citadel with the intention of assassinating them, known as the Massacre of citadel (Shiha, 2001; Parker et al, 1988).

The Military Museum in Citadel of Cairo is famous for its rich collection and historical building which was originally a palace during the reign of Mohamed Ali, the founder of the royal family that ruled Egypt from 1805 till 1952. The museum records the history of the Egyptian army since the Pharaonic times till now. It exhibits the development in weaponry and military equipment and uniforms, besides 220 paintings of famous battles, as well as the most important military decorations, orders and medals. (<http://www.sis.gov.eg/VR/october/english/5.htm>)

Sultan Hassan Mosque and mausoleum, built from 1356-1363, is placed near the Citadel. In 1517 the scholastic part "Madrasa" was bombarded by cannonball when it was served as refuge for the fugitive "Tumanbay", the last Mamluk Sultan (Parker et al, 1988).

*The Battle of the Pyramids*, also known as the *Battle of Embabeh*, was on July 21, 1798 between the French army in Egypt under Napoleon Bonaparte, and local Mamluk forces. It occurred during France's Egyptian Campaign and was the battle where Napoleon put into use one of his significant contributions to tactics, the massive divisional square. It ended with the victory of Bonaparte and entering Cairo (Chandler, 1966)

Revolutions: Cairo witnessed two revolutions during the French expedition. The first, 1798, began from "Azhar" while the second, 1800, from "Bulak" (Herold, 1962).

In 1881, the national hero "Ahmad 'Orabi ['Urabi] Pasha", an Egyptian Army officer, led a revolt against the Khedive Tewfiq. This revolt was eventually quelled by British intervention. He was arrested but some military troops responded by setting him and his associates free. They went to "Abdeen Palace" and demanded the dismissal of the minister of war. Urabi gave order to units to come to Abdeen Square to present newly formulated demands not only for the army but for the whole nation. 'Urabi and his supporters stood in front of Abdin Palace and read their demands, with 'Orabi proclaiming that free men had been turned into slaves.

The "1919 Revolution": More than 10,000 teachers, students, workers, lawyers, and government employees started marching from Al Azhar all the way to Abdin Palace where they were joined by other thousands of people ignoring British roadblocks and bans. Soon, similar demonstrations broke out in Alexandria, Tanta, Damanhur, Al Mansurah, and Al Fayyum. By the summer of 1919, more than 800 Egyptians had been killed, as well as 31 Europeans and 29 British soldiers (El Rafei, 1964).

"6<sup>th</sup> of October Panorama" Museum: exhibits the weapons, tanks and history of Egypt's wars from 1967 till 1973.

Revolution of 25<sup>th</sup> of January: started as campaign of non violent civil resistance at famous "Tahrir Square" with request of overthrow of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarek and its regime. Despite being

predominantly peaceful in nature, the revolution was not without violent clashes between security forces and protesters, with at least 846 people killed and 6,000 injured. The uprising took place in **Cairo, Alexandria, Suez** and many other Egyptian cities as well (Tanta, Beni Suef, Luxor, Dairut, Shebin el-Kom, El-Arish, Sohag, Minya, Ismailia, Kafr El Sheikh, Zagazig, and Sinai Peninsula). On 11 February, following weeks of determined popular protest and pressure, Mubarak resigned from office.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/25\\_January\\_Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/25_January_Revolution)

**Suggested Cairo route: Egyptian Museum, Tahrir Square, Islamic Museum, Kasr el Nil, Abdin Square and Palace, ElAzhar, Sultan Hassan, Citadel, , Old Cairo: Coptic Museum and Babylonian fortress, Pyramids of Giza, Panorama of 6<sup>th</sup> October**

Figure 1: Map of Cairo



**Rosetta** (Rashid) is famous by the discovery of Rosetta stone; the key of hieroglyphics. It lies on the western side of Nile about 65km northeast Alexandria. “Qaitbay” has built a fortress for protection of the city. The suffering of the people from the French and British occupation is shown in a museum inside house of ‘Arab Keli’ who was governor of Rashid (18<sup>th</sup> century). In the year 1807 the people of city stood against the British occupation (Abaza, 2002).

**Alexandria:** found by Alexander the Great 332 BC. In AD 115, large parts of Alexandria were destroyed during the Kitois War, which gave Hadrian and his architect, Decriannus, an opportunity to rebuild it. In 215, the emperor Caracalla visited the city and, because of some insulting satires that the inhabitants had directed at him. Caracalla savagely responded to this insult by slaughtering the deputation of leading citizens, who had unsuspectingly assembled before the city to greet his arrival, and then unleashed his troops for several days of looting and plunders in Alexandria. According to historian Cassius Dio, over 20,000 people were killed. (Dio 78.2.2; Herodian 4.9.8) <http://www.ancient.eu.com/article/237/>

Christians were persecuted during the reign of “Septimius Severus”. Christian martyrs were numerous in Alexandria like the famous Catherina until 324 Christianity became the empire's preferred religion under its first Christian emperor, Constantine.

The pombey's pillar was surrounded with 400 columns which the governor of Alexandria under Saladin throw it at eastern harbor to protect the city in 1167 and which parts of these columns were found by Goddio in year 1997 (Goddio & Darwish, 1998).

Battle of Aboukir, 1798, known as the Battle of the Nile: England and France were fighting for the control over Egypt. The French navy was anchored at Aboukir, close to Alexandria. No attack was expected and most of the crew was on land. Meanwhile, the English navy under Lord Nelson managed to reach Aboukir unnoticed and attacked the anchored fleet by surprise. Underwater archaeologists in the team of Franck Goddio are (1999) investigating the remains that are hidden under the bottom sand. From the 120 gun admiral ship l'Orient the entire copper clad rudder has been found as well as plenty of intact glass and ceramics (<http://www.abc.se/~pa/uwa/projects.htm#Aboukir>). In 1882 the city was bombarded by British Mediterranean Fleet and was greatly destroyed.

In Alexandria, the recent Egyptian 25<sup>th</sup> of January revolution 2011, started from Ibrahim Pasha Mosque at Raml station against Mubarak's regime.

**El Alamein** lies about 106 km west of Alexandria. The World War II battles were fought in the area. At the First Battle of El Alamein (1-27 July, 1942) the advance of Axis troops on Alexandria was blunted by the Allies, when the German Panzers tried to outflank the allied position. At the Second Battle of El Alamein (October 23 – November 11, 1942) Allied forces broke the Axis line and forced them all the way back to Tunisia. Winston Churchill said of this victory: "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end, but it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning." After the war, he wrote: "Before Alamein we never had a victory. After Alamein, we never had a defeat."

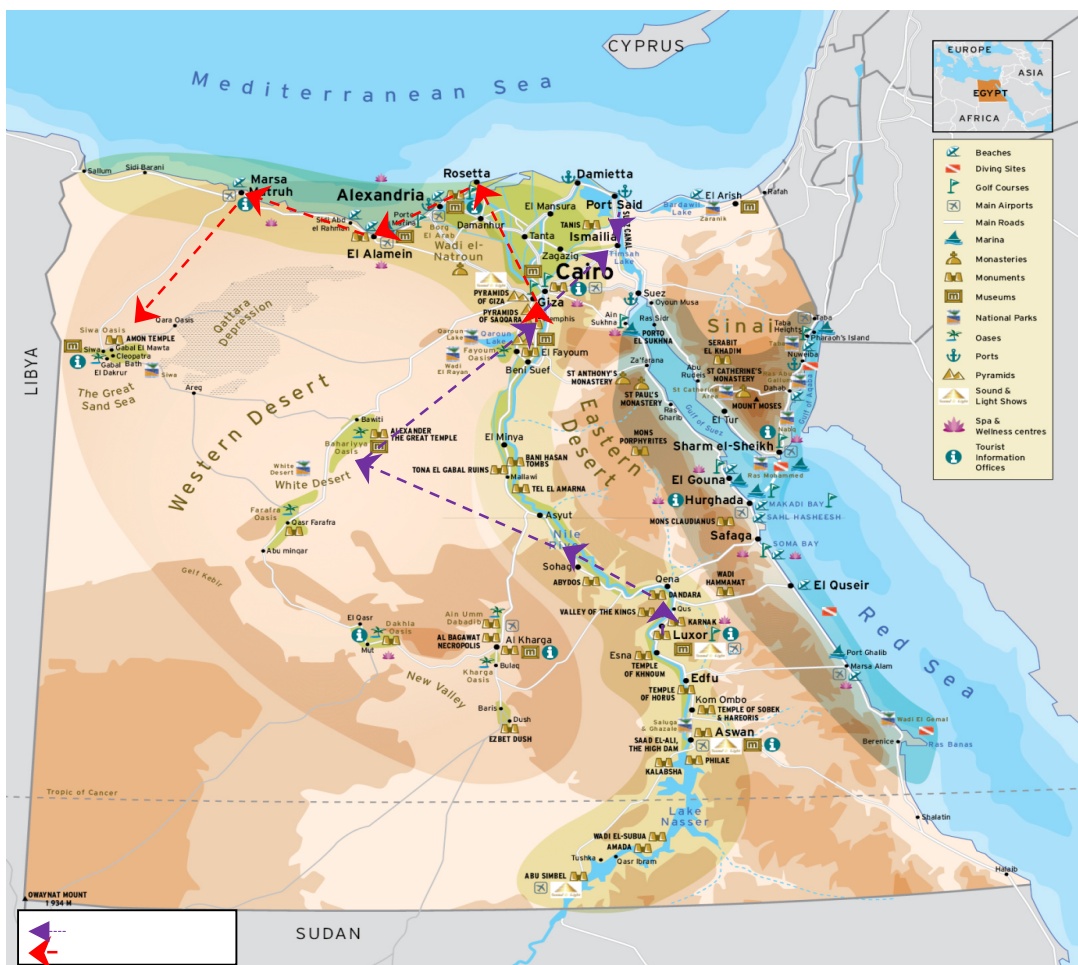
El Alamein has a war museum with collectibles from "the civil war" and other North African battles. Visitors can also go to the Italian and German Military Cemetery on Tel el-Eisa Hill just outside the town. The German cemetery is an ossuary with the remains of 4,200 German soldiers, built in the style of a medieval fortress. The Italian cemetery is a mausoleum containing many galleries of tombs. Many tombs bear the soldier's name; many are simply marked "IGNOTO", unknown.

There is also a Commonwealth war cemetery with graves of soldiers from various countries who fought on the British side. This has monuments commemorating Greek, New Zealand, Australia, South African, Indian and Canadian forces. The names of 213 Canadian airmen appear on the El Alamein Memorial in Egypt. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/monuments-of-the-first-and-second-world-wars>

**Marsah Matruh** witnessed the World War II as well as the Libyan war of 1977, where Egyptian President Sadat and destroyed most of their equipment and bombed Libyan military bases (www.nae.org).

**Siwa:** In 1820 Mohamed Ali planned to take over all Oases in order to secure his campaign towards Sudan. When his army arrived to the city, the inhabitants surrendered after three hours because they were afraid that their city will be completely destroyed. In 1940 the allied stayed in the city for two years; so did the Italian army in 1942 (Abou Elfadl, 1999).

Figure 2: Touristic Map of Egypt



## CONCLUSION

Future research suggestions include finding out other dark tourism tracks in Egypt. For example, Cairo - Mansoura-Ismailia -Port Said-along the northern Sinai from Qantara, through Tell al Heer, to Qatia and Al Areesh, Sheikh Zowayyed till Rafah. This is due to the fact that in **Mansoura** Egyptians defeated the Crusaders during the Seventh Crusade, witnessed an air battle during 6<sup>th</sup> of October war. **Ismailia** and **Port Said** are famous with their fight against the British as well as Israeli occupation. These cities witnessed protests against Mubarak regime during the revolution of 25th January.

Accordingly, tourists can rediscover Egypt through marketing it as a dark tourism destination. It can reuse its famous historical sites and add other neglected places on its touristic map. Relying on Egypt's valuable history that witnessed so many wars and revolutions since the Pharaonic civilization till its recent 25<sup>th</sup> January revolution, interesting dark tourism routes can be offered to tourists. In return, tourists are willing to return to Egypt and extend the length of their trip (tourist nights) and hence, gaining the loyalty of tourists. Moreover, Egypt can enlarge its share in the world tourism markets by opening new ones worldwide. Hence, the total number of tourist nights as well as tourist expenditure will significantly increase.

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