

Destinations showcases African holidays

North and sub-Saharan African holidays were promoted at Destinations: The Holiday and Travel Show 2011 held in association with the Times at West London's Earl's Court Exhibition Centre at the beginning of February.



Ahmed Hamdy from the Egyptian Tourism Promotion Board 'The Red Sea is still welcoming visitors'

There are very few tourists in popular revolutions but this did not Tunisia and Egypt due to the deter both countries from exhibiting

at Destinations.

All the tourists have left Tunisia but Sami Tounsi of the Tunisian National Tourist Office emphasised that no tourist was harmed or injured by the Tunisian people.

"I spent ten days in Tunisia last week [at the end of January] and the situation was very stable. There were no tourists in Tunisia at all and the major operators like Thomas Cook and Thompson's have stopped all flights for the winter season. We are monitoring

the situation in conjunction with the Foreign Office and the Tunisian government and waiting for the government to lift the curfew from 10pm to 4am. When the curfew is lifted it means stability has returned", Tounsi said.

Ahmed Hamdy from the Egyptian Tourism Promotion Authority who manned the Egyptian stand at Destinations told Islamic Tourism that tourists were still coming to the Red Sea which is 500 miles

Destinations
venue at
Earls Court
Exhibition
Centre in
West London





from Cairo. "Desert tourism is also fine."

Clare Mucklow, marketing manager of the Camel Dive Club and Resort said: «It is very quiet and people are worried about how long the political problems will go on for. The local dive and hotel staff are worried about their jobs. Dive centers have cut freelance staff and hotels hav sent employees off on holiday. We've cut staff

numbers by about 50 per cent.» Nearly one million tourists left in the first nine days of the revolution, costing the country more than £650 million in lost revenues. Tourism accounts for more than 11 per cent of gross domestic profit. Tourism in Libya has been dealt a serious blow by the people's revolution. The industry was growing from strength to strength during the past decade.

Sheraton Four Points and J W

Mariot have just opened new five star hotels in Libya. The Hilton chain is also planning to open a new hotel.

The Sheraton's Four Points has a beachfront location near to the downtown area of Tripoli, where guests can explore traditional bazaars, ancient Turkish baths and the atmospheric Medina (old town), a labyrinth of alleys and Ottoman monuments. The hotel is an ideal base for exploring Libya, which is one of the biggest countries on the African continent, with spectacular desert landscapes.

The hotel has 204 guest rooms including 18 suites, two restaurants and a bar, five meeting rooms, outdoor pool, and a fitness center. It is six stories tall, and located at the coast of Tripoli, as part of the Hi Elandalous Village with its own marina, 'souk' and shopping center.

The JW Marriott Hotel Tripoli is located just 30 minutes from Tripoli International Airport offering 370 guest rooms with a sea view, stylish lounges and restaurants, meeting rooms, ballroom, fitness center and Saray Spa. It is conveniently located at the



Erg Chigaga Morocco

Sheraton Four Points Tripoli



The elusive cheetah



Idris Alla, one of the team
at Authentic Morocco



comiche overlooking the Mediterranean Sea with easy access to the city's main attractions - the Assaraya al-Hamra, the Medina, Ottoman classical statues and fountains, the Gurgi and Karamanli Mosques, the Arch of Marcus Aurelius, the bazaar, local markets and souks and the Libyan National Museum. This luxury hotel is the ideal wedding, conference and meeting venue with 1200 square meters of flexible event space on one floor. All

meeting rooms in this downtown Tripoli hotel are equipped with the newest technology including high speed internet access and audio visual equipment.

A new interactive museum has opened in Tripoli in the old king's palace. It provides an excellent introduction to Libya and is equipped with touch screens and the latest technology.

Hopefully the revolutionaries will ensure no damage is done to Libya's main attractions - the

Roman and Greek ruins. The desert will always be there but it may be a long time before desert safaris and cultural tours resume.

Morocco is stable and welcoming tourists. Liz Williams, director of Authentic Journey's Morocco, introduced the country with a luxurious Moroccan tent. Idris Alla clad in traditional blue Berber robes and Abdoullah Ala also provided visitors with insights into Moroccan life and culture.

Kenyan-born Williams, director of Authentic Journey's Morocco, specialises in tailor-made trips as

well as standard itineraries. She fell in love with Morocco during a holiday in (which year). On subsequent holidays she used to stay with a family in Merzouga on the Moroccan-Tunisian border and eventually bought them a piece of land. The camels and the tents were in place but it took some time to build up a network of contacts and get clients.

Authentic Journey's Morocco was set up last year. Williams previously worked for a number of travel companies which organised tours to Morocco but since branching

Leptis Magna one of Libya's most popular sights Sheraton Four Points in Tripoli The elusive cheethas Erg Chigaga Morocco





Mini van fair travels to the beach

out on her own she has never looked back. The company, with offices in Marrakesh, offers a variety of tours among them The Imperial Cities, Cultural and Heritage Tours, Route of the Southern Oases, Sahara Tours with Erg Chebbi camel treks, Camel trekking in Erg Chigaga, Short City Breaks in Marrakech and Fez, Morocco Day Tours from Marrakech and Trekking with mules (to carry the kit) in the High or Middle Atlas.

Photography tours are also

possible. Williams was a photographer before going into the travel business and is expanding her horizons to Libya where she will run a photography tour for a British-based company Light & Sound later this year.

Safari holidays dominated the sub-Saharan, East and South African stands at Destinations. Cheetahs, plentiful in cardboard cut outs but scarce on the ground, were used to promote safaris in Kenya and Tanzania.

A total of 450 travel companies,

promoting holidays on the world's five continents, took part in Destinations. There was an impressive line up of speakers who are passionate about both travel and wildlife, including TV presenters Michaela Strachan and Richard Terry who spoke about their most exciting wildlife encounters, broadcaster and

birdwatcher Bill Oddie as well as BBC Zoologist Mark Carwadine and the McClements family from Channel 4's 'My Family's Crazy Gap Year'. The show also provided entertainment from around the world including salsa dancers and Caribbean Steel Drums.



Sami Tounsi, Tunisian National Tourist Office
«No tourist was harmed by the Tunisian people»