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Egypt Cancels Visa Fee for Russians as Tourism Wanes

By The Moscow Times

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Russian tourists traveling to Egypt will not have to pay the standard $25 visa fee.

Russian tourists traveling to Egypt from Jan. 15 to April 30 will not have to pay the standard $25 visa fee, the country's migration authority ruled on Monday, Russian state news agency TASS reported.

Russian tourism is a key source of income for Egypt's tourism-heavy economy, but has been threatened by the ruble's rapid devaluation since last summer. Maya Lomidze, head of Russia's Association of Tour Operators, earlier estimated that outbound tourism from Russia by the end of the year is likely to contract by 40 to 50 percent.

Egypt is second only to Turkey as the top foreign destination for Russian tourists, with 1.2 million Russian visitors just in the first half of 2014. Turkey was visited by 1.4 million Russians in the first half of 2014, according to data from Russian tourism watchdog Rostourism.

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