

Current state and prospects of development of children's tourism in Uzbekistan

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Annotation: Tourists of young generation are showing great interest and enthusiasm to our tourism. And nowadays it is time to focus on children's share in the age of tourist categories and children tourism development in the country. In this study there are shown decrees of the President of Uzbekistan that makes it possible to improve tourism in the country. Also there are demonstrated statistics about country's tourism. This study also states about the today's tourism condition and the potentials for next years in the country.

Key words: children's tourism, historical monuments, safety, gastronomy, camps, ecotourism

Introduction: Tourism is developing in our country with historical objects, many cultural artifacts and a rich history. Earlier, older tourists often came to our country in groups, but today this tradition has become differentiated in terms of age, and it is not difficult to see that individual tours have also increased. In addition, the number of local travelers in our country is increasing and domestic tourism is developing. So what factors caused this?

First of all, there are legal documents adopted by our government to support tourism. In 2016, the Decree of our President "On measures to ensure the rapid development of the tourism sector of the Republic of Uzbekistan" served as an incentive to pay special attention to tourism in our country. By 2017, legislation related to the most visited popular tourist cities of Uzbekistan was adopted.

As a result of this, measures to establish the "Old City" tourism zone in Tashkent, many activities aimed at developing the tourism potential of the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara, Samarkand and Bukhara regions in 2017-2019, comprehensive development of the tourism potential of Khorezm city and Khorezm region in 2017-2021 Laws on development programs were signed, and based on them, efforts were made to develop tourism in our country.

In 2018, the first international investment forum in the field of tourism was held in Tashkent. In the same year, the International University of Tourism "Silk Road" was established. At the same time, in 2018, Presidential decrees aimed at the development of domestic and inbound tourism were also developed. By 2019, work on the organization of the annual "Tourism on the Silk Road Tashkent International Tourism Fair" has been launched. According to the Decree of the President "On Measures for the Further Development of the Tourism Sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan", from November 1, 2019, the State Committee for Tourism Development has established the highest tourism potential of citizens' gatherings (towns, villages, yards and neighborhoods of cities), started forming the list. In the event that no less than 20 family guest houses are created in the areas of citizens' gatherings and at least five different types of services are provided for tourists (except accommodation and/or catering services), they will be granted the status of "Tourism Neighborhood", "Tourism Village" or "Tourism Yard".

In order to develop the tourism industry after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, "On measures to create favorable conditions for the restoration and development of the tourism industry in the Republic of Uzbekistan", "Adjusting the tourism industry to the requirements of the enhanced sanitary-epidemiological safety regime" "On additional measures to develop in accordance with accepted.

By 2021, in order to increase the number of types of tourism in our country, decisions were signed on the creation of tourist infrastructure in the vicinity of the mountains, water areas, seas and lakes of our incomparable country. Along with the establishment of the Ministry of "Tourism and Cultural Heritage" in 2022, legal documents on holding the "International Pilgrimage Tourism Week" were also developed.

More than 10 reputable foreign publications have recognized Uzbekistan as one of the most attractive tourist destinations. In recent years, Uzbekistan has been recognized as the best travel destination in the world by The Guardian, the fastest growing country in the eyes of Wanderlust and the best growing tourism destination according to Grand voyage. As a result of consistently implemented measures, Uzbekistan has climbed 10 positions (22 places) in the Global Muslim Tourism Index, compiled by Crescent Rating. In addition, the World Tourism Organization ranked Uzbekistan 4th in the list of the fastest growing countries in the tourism sector.

In 2019 State Committee for Tourism Development held a briefing about reforms, their roles for tourism improvement and new tasks for coming years. In the event detailed statistics of tourism was presented.

According to the statistics, the followings are the Top 10 countries travelling to Uzbekistan:



Nationality	2019	2018	2017	2016
Kazakhstan 	2.261.094	2.456.866	1.783.815	1.412.161
Tajikistan 	1.473.684	1.700.658	261.861	231.692
Kyrgyzstan 	1.454.907	1.101.477	375.017	174.845
Turkmenistan 	574.795	245.756	62.483	49.526
Russia 	455.470	460.166	143.900	119.049
Turkey 	63.539	74.802	55.238	46.069
Afghanistan 	62.580	71.067	32.130	24.365
China 	54.293	37.083	19.749	16.765
South Korea 	35.524	32.700	37.357	31.936
India 	27.898	22.198	15.829	18.746

Table 1. Top 10 countries visiting Uzbekistan.

	2019	2018
Total number of tourists	6 748 500	5 346 200



0-18 years	614 113 (9.1%)	433 042 (8.1%)
19-30 years	1 315 957 (19.5%)	1 090 624 (20.4%)
31-55 years	3 455 232 (51.2%)	2 785 370 (52.1%)
55 years and older	1 363 197 (20.2%)	1 037 162 (19.4%)

Table 2. Age categories of tourists visiting Uzbekistan.

As statistics shows, children and youth above 18 are the least of visitors. Even though we have many opportunities for children tourism, the percentage is increasing in small portions. That is for our new mission for future should include reforms on children tourism and its perspectives.

According to the data of 2019, the number of tourists who visited Uzbekistan reached 6,748 million people, which is 125% more than the statistics of 2018 (5,346 million people). 488,400 tourists from CIS countries and abroad visited Uzbekistan. At the same time, in 2019, the export of tourist services amounted to 1.313 billion dollars, while in 2018, this figure was 1.041 billion dollars (an increase of 126%). More than half of this amount was spent by tourists from CIS countries (\$966,559 million), and \$346,472 million was spent by tourists from other countries. By 2022, the number of foreigners visiting Uzbekistan will reach 4,700,000.

The most popular types of tourism in Uzbekistan are sightseeing tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, religious tourism, and gastronomic tourism. In order to increase the number of foreign tourists visiting our country and to increase the share of tourism in the economy of Uzbekistan, work is being done to introduce and develop a number of types of tourism. In particular, recommendations are being made for the organization and development of rural tourism, festival tourism, pilgrimage tourism, medical tourism, shopping tourism and children's tourism in our country and implementation of measures based on them.

Uzbekistan's cities rich in ancient cultural heritage, its location on the Great Silk Road, the country's climate, and scenic landscapes attract international tourists. If we use the existing conditions in Uzbekistan wisely, there is an opportunity to develop family and children's tourism in our country. Children are the main subject of both tourism directions.

Their wishes, their characteristics, facilities created for them, their level of satisfaction in the future, their safety are the objective factors that should be studied in children's tourism. In order to develop children's tourism in our country, it is first necessary to do it through domestic tourism.

Here, 2021 has been announced by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, the Ministry of Public Education, the Youth Work Agency, the Ministry of Pre-School Education, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education, the Ministry of Transport and the National Olympic Committee, as well as A meeting on the development of children's tourism in Uzbekistan was organized with the participation of youth organizations, representatives of the public council for the development of tourism, travel companies and experts in the field of tourism in cooperation with the Federation of Extreme Tourism. At the meeting, it was emphasized the need to create a system of mass involvement of children in the field of tourism, to increase the level of knowledge of children in tourism and local history. During the meeting, a decision was made on the need for a systematic approach to the organization of education for children in tourism, local history, travel culture, including in pre-school educational institutions. It was noted the importance of creating children's and local history clubs, rental points for tourist equipment of different ages in each region for travelers from different directions.

In order to accelerate the formation of the national movement of children's tourism, the work on the development of the "State concept for the development of children's and teenagers' tourism until 2030", as well as the road map for its implementation, has begun. In addition, there was a discussion about the possibility of creating the "Republic Center for Children's Tourism, Local Studies and Excursions" as an important methodical and coordinating center for the development of children's and teenagers' tourism in the country.

One of the most interesting, memorable, and therefore most difficult types of travel is traveling with children. I would like to remind families visiting Uzbekistan that they should familiarize themselves with the following information before traveling with their children.



1. The season. The best seasons for traveling in Uzbekistan are mostly spring (March to June) and autumn (September to October). But it is also necessary to take into account that the temperature becomes too hot in the summer months with children, which reduces the possibility of going to the historical objects or other interesting places in the ancient cities. In winter, children can be brought to Uzbekistan and travel to our pristine mountains, where they can go skiing, sledding, snowboarding and flying on ropeways.
2. Children's health. This is one of the most important factors during the entire journey. Therefore, before going to another country, it is necessary to conduct medical examinations of children and determine whether they have allergies or not. At the same time, you should always carry first aid with you: antipyretic drugs, antiseptics, antibiotics, alcohol and other necessary medical supplies. The development of the medical field in Uzbekistan can calm foreign tourists. Qualified doctors with international certificates, trained in famous family educational institutions abroad and qualified abroad can easily provide services to tourists.
3. Documents. It is also necessary to pay special attention to the documents. To travel abroad, the child must have a foreign and universal children's passport. This document shows the names of the person's parents or companions during the trip. If there is such a stamp, then it is not necessary to bring the notarized consent of the parents to take the child abroad. When it comes to documents, visas should not be forgotten. As of March 5, 2021, citizens of 90 countries can visit our country without a visa. At the same time, Uzbekistan established a bilateral visa-free regime with 10 countries. According to Presidential Decree No. 5326 of 2018, 7 countries can be visited without a visa for a period of 30 days. Presidential decree No. 5611 dated January 5, 2019 announced the possibility for citizens of 45 countries to visit Uzbekistan for a period of 30 days through the visa-free regime. As of March 15, 2021, citizens of 57 countries have been given the opportunity to obtain an electronic visa to visit Uzbekistan.
4. Flying. To visit the country, you must first go through security checks at the airport. When traveling with children, it is important that you adjust the seats on the plane for yourself and book as far in advance as possible. If you buy airline tickets in Uzbekistan



online through the official website of Uzairways, they will offer you discounts. Children can be transported on airline flights both accompanied by other persons and unaccompanied by adult passengers based on the notarized consent of their parents, guardians, parents or guardians.

The child's age is determined on the day of the beginning of transportation at the point of initial departure indicated in the air ticket. After the start of transportation, children who have reached the age of 12 and 2 years old will continue the trip according to the tariffs applicable to them at the time of transportation. At the same time, the airline offers the following discounts for children:

- For children under 2 years of age - 90% of all economic and business class fares without a separate seat;
- For children under 2 years of age with a separate seat and for accompanied children from 2 to 12 years of age - 25% of the applicable economy class fare type.

5. Accommodation. If you are on a family trip, it is better to choose guest houses. The fact that guest houses are usually located in the suburbs or otherwise in areas with a lot of city life will help you to adapt more quickly to the local people and the national environment. Observing the way of life of the local population, participating in their customs and ceremonies, and testing family values for yourself, will ensure the better development of children's worldview, as well as a more interesting trip.

If in 2018 there were 886 hotels in Uzbekistan and their number of rooms was 19,832, as of January 1, 2021, their number reached 1,156. The number of hotels by region is as follows: in the city of Tashkent—243; Bukhara region — 193; Samarkand region - 149; Tashkent region — 109; Fergana region — 98; Khorezm region — 82; Republic of Karakalpakstan - 60; Kashkadarya region — 45; Jizzakh region — 43; Namangan region — 36; Navoi region — 34; Surkhandarya region — 29; Andijan region — 21; Syrdarya region — 14.

According to statistics, as of November 2022, 4,879 accommodation facilities are operating in our country, of which 3,384 have received a certificate of compliance as guest houses and hostels, and 66 as recreation centers. The following international brands are

operating in the field of hotel services in Tashkent (as of the end of 2022): Hilton-3 hotels, Wyndham-3, Radisson-1, Lotte-1, Marriot-1, ATECA hotel-1, Accor-1, Reikartz-9 .

6. Recreation and education. Each of your trips should not only be a place for the child to spend time, but should also teach him a lesson. Trips should improve a child's outlook, learn foreign languages, and fill his memory with the necessary information. In order to create good memories about each country, it is important for parents to choose an alternative attraction and a good guide to describe it. These factors determine whether or not the child will return to the country of travel.

Today, 4 architectural complexes are included in the UNESCO Representative List of World Heritage Sites - the Ichan Castle Museum-Reserve in Khiva (1990), the historical center of Bukhara (1993), the historical center of Samarkand "Samarkand - the crossroads of cultures" (2001), the historical center of Shahrisabz, as well as Ugam-Chotkal National Park (2016) and 9 intangible heritage sites.

Also, more than seven thousand monuments, including 2,500 architectural monuments, and more than 2,700 monumental works of art are under state protection in our country. There are 103 madrasas, 360 mosques and 83 pools in Bukhara. In Samarkand, the number of historically significant objects has reached 600.

7. Eating. Gastronomic tourism is also considered as an important factor in sector of tourism. The reason for this is the desire of every visitor that wants to try to eat local food and to see national cuisine. Gastronomy of the country also plays a vital role in children tourism sphere. Uzbekistan national dishes and Uzbek cuisine have already been liked by most visitors from all over the world. Uzbek cuisine is most known national and well-developed aspect of the Uzbekistan culture and Uzbekistan people. It is one of the most savory and various in tastes cuisine in Central Asia. Situated on the caravan routes of the Great Silk Road, Uzbekistan has been assimilating the most interesting and original receipts of food from various countries. Each meal of Uzbekistan has its own traditional way of cooking, and one dish has a lot of methods of preparing throughout the country. The main items of Uzbek cuisine which attract lots of tourists are plov, soup,

kazan kabab, khanum, samsa, lagman, manti, dolma, beshbarmak, yakhna, shashlik and others.

On February 3rd 2017 in Tashkent took place the ceremony to certify the inclusion of plov in the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The Association of Cooks of Uzbekistan declared plov as the curator of traditions of national pride. On 8 September 2017, within the frames of the "Uzbeqim" festival of traditional culture, the world record on cooking the biggest plov was set and this plov entered the Guinness World Records' Book. The event was held on the Sayilgoh Street, Tashkent. Plov for this purpose was prepared in a special pot (called kazan). Its diameter was 4, 2 meters and could hold up to 8000 liters. The pot weighs 7070 kilos and is 1 meter deep. The record aiming dish was around 8 tonnes. To prepare this plov 1, 5 tonnes beef, 400 kilos mutton, 1, 9 tonnes rice, 2, 7 tonnes carrot, 220 kilo onion, 440 litres oil, 57 kilo salt put on the pot. Over 50 well-known cooks got together from across the entire country to prepare the record dish. Ready plov was distributed to guests of the event and residents of Tashkent.

8. Safety. Be sure to check the safety level of the country you are visiting before traveling with children. When determining the level of safety, several directions should be checked and evaluated.

It should be noted that in 2020, Uzbekistan ranked 46th most safe country among 180 countries in the ranking with 73.3 points. Insurers rated Uzbekistan's healthcare system at 81 points, transport risk at 67 points, natural disaster risk at 25 points, violence at 79 points, and terrorist attack risk at 0 points.

It is worth noting that Uzbekistan showed the best result among the CIS countries. The following places were taken by Belarus (48th place), Azerbaijan (52nd), Turkmenistan (60th), Moldova (66th), Georgia (68th), Kazakhstan (71st), Armenia (72nd), Ukraine (83rd), Russia (86th), Tajikistan (93rd), Kyrgyzstan (106th).

9. Nature. At the same time, there are opportunities to develop children's tourism in Uzbekistan through ecotourism. More than 30 protected areas (reserves, national parks,



natural monuments) and 60 forestry enterprises are operating in Uzbekistan. In addition, there are more than 400 unique monuments of nature on the territory of our country.

At the moment, there are more than 500 caves in Uzbekistan, and according to information, eco-tours are not organized in any of them due to lack of sufficient tourist infrastructure. In the deserts and plains of Uzbekistan, there are great opportunities to organize a camel ride aimed at viewing barkhans, dunes, forests, shorkhoks, barrens, wells, as well as grasses that show the way of life of local shepherds.

Eco-tours conducted by tour operator companies on such routes as "Tashkent-Chorvoq-Tashkent", "Tashkent-Bildirsoy-Chimyon-Tashkent", "Tashkent-Zomin-Tashkent", "Tashkent-Aydarkol-Tashkent", camel rides in desert areas walk is receiving great attention and recognition not only from Uzbekistan, but also from tourists from all over the world.

Camps for children have been established in various regions of Uzbekistan. Most of the camps accept children during the summer vacation. Such camps, which show seasonal activity, can be used as infrastructure for children's tourism in the off-season. In 2019, during the health season, 1067 children's camps were launched across the country. 224 of them are stationary children's health centers, and 843 are health centers. These indicators indicate that the number of stationary camps operating this year has increased by almost 20 compared to last year. During the summer season, about 310,000 children will be treated at the camps. About 171,000 of them will be in stationary camps, and more than 138,000 will be attracted to health centers. A total of more than 91 billion soums is planned to spend for these purposes.

The attraction of these places as infrastructure for children's tourism requires off-season employment in the camps. In addition, during the off-season, the resort will have the opportunity to provide work for its responsible employees.

Most of the sanatoriums in Uzbekistan are located in the regions of the country with a wonderful view and mountain landscape. The use of such camps as a means of placement in children's tourism strengthens children's noble concepts such as respect for the

environment, preservation of nature, enjoying the peaceful nature of our country, making friends with nature.

Without moving away from ecotourism, it is possible to develop children's tourism using rivers and seas, and through water-related activities. Today, 509 lakes and reservoirs are registered in the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The total area of all lakes in Uzbekistan reaches 9673.20 km².

It is possible to organize beaches and recreation areas around lakes, seas and rivers. In particular, we can give an example of a project created for tourists on the shore of the Tashkent Sea in Chirchik District in 2020. 4 guest houses, a restaurant, a beach, and a swimming pool were put into use from this infrastructure for 500 places.

Also, a similar tourist facility is being built in the village of Aktash, Bostanliq district. It is planned to build a recreation area for 330 people, consisting of 130 rooms, in this destination, the total cost of which is estimated at 30 billion soums. At the same time, this object has the potential to employ 100 people in the field of tourism.

In addition, a similar facility is being built in Todakol reservoir located in Bukhara region. An ecotourism beach is about to be established on a 15-hectare area. The beauty of this place is that it looks like a sea even though it is a lake in the middle of the desert. Todakol attracts tourists not only with its wonderful lake nature, but also with its animal world. Children and their parents who visit here can watch eagles, gazelles, foxes, wild cats, rabbits and prairie birds. If you visit here during the seasonal migration of birds, you can also meet geese, swans, pelicans and fishing birds.

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