

Opportunities for the Development of Halal Tourism in Uzbekistan

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Abstract: Halal tourism is a type of tourism that complies with the principles and laws of Islam. It provides Muslims with the opportunity to travel and relax without violating their religious beliefs and includes access to halal food, places of prayer, appropriate clothing, entertainment and services that do not conflict with the principles of Islam. Halal tourism is becoming increasingly popular among Muslim travelers, and many countries and hotel companies are starting to offer specially tailored services for them.

Keywords: Uzbekistan, halal tourism, popular destinations for halal tourism, halal service standards, halal food products, specialized services for Muslim tourists.

Introduction. Halal services, or halal services, are provided in accordance with the principles and rules of Islam. These services may include the production and sale of food and goods that meet halal standards, as well as services that do not violate Islamic principles, such as financial or tourism services. Such services may be offered by both Muslim organizations and general companies that seek to attract a Muslim audience.

Statistics. The global market for halal products and services is booming today. Experts are confident that in the short term, business under the crescent sign will only grow. Thus, according to research, the volume of the global halal market will reach \$8 trillion from the current \$7 trillion. This growth is expected primarily due to increased demand and increased funding for projects in this area from Islamic financial organizations and banks.¹

In particular, it is predicted that the global halal tourism market in the coming years will reach a volume of \$400 billion from the current \$100 billion. Countries such as Malaysia, Turkey, the UAE and Singapore will remain centers of halal tourism.

At the same time, research has shown that in the short term, countries such as Russia, China and France may also become "rising stars" of Halal tourism, which is intended for Muslims practicing Islamic customs and beliefs, is developed in many countries around the world. Some of the most popular destinations for halal tourism include:

- United Arab Emirates (UAE) - Dubai and Abu Dhabi in particular offer many halal hotels, restaurants and special services for Muslims.
- Turkey, a country with a long Islamic history, offers a variety of services for halal tourists, especially in regions such as Istanbul and Antalya.
- Malaysia is one of the most popular countries for Muslim tourists, with many halal hotels, restaurants and cities such as Kuala Lumpur and Penang.

¹ <https://az.sputniknews.ru>

- Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, offers many halal hotels and services for halal tourists on islands such as Bali and Java.
- Saudi Arabia - With several of the holiest and Muslim sites such as Mecca and Medina, the country attracts many halal tourists on pilgrimage trips.

This is just a small list of countries where halal tourism is developed. There are many other countries around the world that offer specialized services for Muslim tourists.

Websites of tour operators that pay attention to the development of this type of service offer hotels and resorts that serve appropriate food (halal), where alcohol and pork are excluded. Hotels that offer this type of recreation do not provide permission to their clients to drink alcohol, so travelers who cannot imagine a vacation without alcohol are best advised to avoid such places.

Hotels and resorts offering halal tourism have separate swimming pools and spa rooms for men and women, and special facilities for women.

Some hotels and resorts have closed private beaches, where only women can be present, and on these beaches there are special areas for them for swimming or sunbathing; some have closed family beaches, with an appropriate dress code (men cannot expose the body below the navel and above the knees; women must wear a burkini).

The buildings of such hotels are equipped with special prayer rooms or mosques; visitors are also offered special types of entertainment that are designed specifically for families with children.

For those interested in halal tourism, luxury villas with private swimming pools are also offered - in such places for relaxation, the family will feel completely protected and secluded from prying eyes, both in the pool and on the sunbathing area.

Standard services also can be ordered: when booking, you can request transfer from and to the airport, rental of a yacht or car. Tourists can order a calculation of rooms based on capacity, calculate the cost of a vacation for the whole family, as well as calculate the exact cost - this service is most in demand for families with many children, which is not uncommon for Muslim families.

A destination such as Turkey is very popular. Turkey is the heir of the great Ottoman Empire, it is located at the intersection of West and East, Europe and Asia, and for many centuries it was Turkey that attracted Muslim tourists from all over the world. The tourism sector in Turkey is one of the best, providing quality tourism services at affordable prices.

Turkish resorts have extensive experience in organizing halal holidays. Outwardly, it is not particularly different from ordinary forms of recreation - the service for such tourists is focused on comfort and convenience, organizing varied and interesting animation for children, and entertainment on the beach. If this is an organization of a halal beach holiday, then the inviting party makes sure that it is not associated with the open bodies of women and the consumption of alcohol.

Nowadays, a country like Turkey, popular among tourists, can offer ample opportunities for organizing a comfortable holiday for representatives of the Islamic religion, and among the resorts offering this are the most respected and high-profile names and brands.

One of the popular holiday destinations for Arab and Iranian tourists in Turkey are regions such as Antalya, Yalovo and Istanbul. There are several large halal hotels in Antalya. Yalovo attracts tourists with its thermal springs, and Istanbul with its rich historical architecture, mosques, and shopping.

Another popular destination is the United Arab Emirates, and Dubai and Abu Dhabi also have high tourist traffic. The UAE is taking very serious steps to organize halal tourism.

Uzbekistan, whose population is 96% Muslim, is a very friendly Muslim country where halal food is easy to find. In addition, there are many mosques throughout the country where you can perform daily prayers. Since Uzbekistan is a country with a Muslim majority, halal food is widespread here, and is controlled by the State Standard of the Republic of Uzbekistan “General Guidelines for Halal Food Products” (SST RUz 3286:2018), developed and published by order of the Uzstandard Agency No. 05- 915 dated 01/04/2018.

Uzbek cuisine is distinguished by its rich use of herbs, vegetables and meat, especially lamb and beef, and is one of the most delicious in the world.

Many hotels in Uzbekistan serve only halal food, and most have at least a few halal dishes on the menu. Some hotels have non-alcoholic restaurants that serve only halal food. Here is a list of some of these hotels: Central Palace Halal Hotel, ABIS Palace Hotel, Marwa Hotel, Oscar Boutique Hotel, Ramada by Wyndham Hotel in Tashkent, Arkanchi Hotel in Khiva, Savitsky Plaza Hotel, Ishonch, Argamak, Emirkhan, Marokand Spa Hotel, Grand Samarkand Superior B, Hilton Samarkand Regency in Samarkand, and hotels Boutique Hotel Kukaldosh, Grand Emir Residence, Bukhara Baraka, Wyndham in Bukhara.²

The Republic of Uzbekistan has a standard “Tourist services. Muslim Hospitality” (SST RUz 3334:2018), which contains recommendations and requirements for the management of tourist facilities, products and services when providing accommodation facilities, tourist packages and tourist guide services to Muslim travelers. The standard will create favorable conditions for religious tourists, taking into account ethical and cultural norms.

In June 2023, in the international ranking of pilgrimage tourism “World Muslim Travel Index” (GMTI-2023), Uzbekistan took 13th place out of 140 countries. Khiva received the "Islamic Heritage Tourism Destination of the Year" award at the Halal In Travel Awards 2023 event.

This year, on March 5, an international event was held in the Ichan-Kala complex in the city of Khiva under the motto “Khiva - a tourist city of the Islamic world.” Such recognition will make it possible to develop domestic and foreign tourism, build new infrastructure facilities, museums and exhibitions, and increase the volume of exports of tourism services. The event was attended by representatives of the secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The assignment of Khiva to the status of a tourist city of the Islamic world by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation will make Khiva more famous in the international tourism market as a tourist destination. In May 2024, the XII session of the ministers of tourism of the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation will be held in Khiva.

Conclusions. In Uzbekistan, halal tourism has great potential for development, since the country is the historical and cultural center of Islam and has a rich heritage of Muslim civilization.

Prospects for the development of halal tourism in Uzbekistan include:

- development of infrastructure for Muslim tourists, such as the construction of halal hotels, restaurants, mosques and cultural centers.
- development of tourist routes aimed at Muslim audiences, such as visiting sacred places and historical monuments.
- organization of special events and festivals dedicated to Islamic culture and traditions.
- promoting Uzbek cuisine and culture within the framework of halal tourism, offering tourists local dishes and introducing them to local customs.
- cooperation with international organizations and travel agencies to attract Muslim tourists from different countries.

² <https://ru.halalbooking.com/>

Given Uzbekistan's rich heritage and growing demand for halal tourism, the development of this industry could bring significant economic and cultural benefits to the country.

References:

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