

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM IN SOUTH UZBEKISTAN

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Annotation: This article explores the recent developments in the tourism sector in South Uzbekistan, highlighting key projects, infrastructural improvements, and cultural initiatives aimed at attracting both domestic and international tourists. The region, known for its rich historical heritage and natural beauty, has become a focal point for tourism development in Uzbekistan. The article examines the growing interest in the region's ancient cities, such as Samarkand and Bukhara, alongside emerging destinations. It also discusses government policies, investments, and local community involvement in shaping the future of tourism. Additionally, the article touches on the challenges faced in terms of sustainability, preservation, and managing the influx of visitors. The overall aim is to present a comprehensive picture of how South Uzbekistan is positioning itself as a major tourism hub in Central Asia.

Keywords: South Uzbekistan, Tourism development, Historical heritage, Sustainable tourism, Infrastructure, Cultural tourism, Uzbekistan tourism policies, Regional tourism growth

Introduction. Uzbekistan is attracting the attention of the whole world with its numerous historical and architectural monuments, diverse climate, and rapid development. For centuries, Uzbekistan was located on the trade route of the Great Silk Road, a route for merchants and travelers, geographers and missionaries, conquerors and conquerors. At present, Uzbekistan is becoming one of the most attractive tourist destinations for enterprising people, interested in culture, history, traditions and exotic countries. Although the tourism industry is relatively new in Uzbekistan, it has outpaced many other sectors in development.

Our country has great potential for the development of international tourism. Twenty years ago, no one knew Uzbekistan as a promising tourism region. After gaining independence, the state developed new principles in the field of tourism. On July 27, 1992, by the decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the national company "Uzbektourism" was established. The main task of "Uzbektourism" is to implement state policy in the field of tourism and create a national model of tourism development. In addition, the national company coordinates the activities of all tourist organizations in the republic, promotes the development of all areas of tourism, deals with personnel issues, and attracts investment flows to form the material and technical base and develop the industry's infrastructure.

Our country has been a member of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) since 1993. Since 2004, a UNWTO office has been operating in Samarkand - in the "heart" of the Great Silk Road - to coordinate tourism on the transcontinental highway. The government is undertaking

significant work to modernize the tourism sector, improve the country's transport and hotel infrastructure, and improve the regulatory framework for tourism. In order to promote tourism products abroad, the "Mega-info-tour" - a marketing project of familiarization trips is being implemented for foreign tourism companies and media representatives. Such trips play an important role in expanding the tourist season, optimizing the duration of tourist flows to our country, and demonstrating that each season in Uzbekistan has its own charm for tourists.

In addition, the international fair "Tourism on the Silk Road" in Tashkent, which is held under the auspices of UNWTO, is of great importance in supporting the tourism potential of Uzbekistan. The main goal of this fair is to unite Uzbek and foreign specialists in the field of tourism and further expand professional cooperation between them. To date, this international fair has become one of the largest exhibitions in Central Asia.

Uzbekistan, which amazes, fascinates, and delights tourists with its legendary past, the historical and engineering heritage of the Silk Road, magnificent natural landscapes, local crafts passed down from generation to generation, the hospitality of the people, and human values, attracts people from all corners of the world.

Visa regime simplified. Currently, visa-free entry has been established for citizens of 93 foreign countries, electronic entry visas for 56 countries, five-day transit visa-free entry for 47 countries, as well as a simplified procedure for issuing tourist visas for 76 countries. A visa-free entry regime has been introduced for citizens of China, the United States, and Vietnam who are 55 years of age or older and who are visiting Uzbekistan for tourism purposes for a period of no more than 30 days. In addition, new types of entry visas have been established, such as "Vatandosh", "Student visa", "Academic visa", "Medical visa", and "Pilgrim visa". The 24th session of the UNWTO in Madrid, Spain, announced that the 25th General Assembly of the UN member states will be held in ancient Samarkand in 2023 for the first time. UNWTO recognized Uzbekistan as the 4th among the 20 countries with the fastest growing tourism sector. It rose from 32nd to 22nd place in the "World Muslim Tourist Index" ranking, entering the top 10 countries with "high levels of safety and tolerance" and "most attractive".

Foreign tourism inflow to Surkhandarya region in 2024 is planned to be 700 900 638,000 people in practice person visited by foreign tourists. As a result, the volume of tourism exports amounted to \$ 63 million. Tourism fairs were held 5 times in 2024. As a result, the Republic of Tajikistan Agreements were signed with 10 tour operators. As a result, 2,500 tourists visited the region. A number of entertainment programs and concerts were organized for visiting international tourists. In particular, in the Boysun district, the international folklore festival "Boysun Bahori" , the "Air Balloons" festival, the "Tandir Fest" festival, the "Uloq Köpkari" festival festival, the "Uloq köpkari" festival and the "Termez RALLY" festival in the Termez district,

the "Bahodirlar o'yini" and "Sumalak sayli" dedicated to the memory of Pahlavon Mahmud were held, in the Sherabad district the "Aron" fair, in the Boysun district the "Alma" fair, and in the Altinsoy district the "Uzum" fair were held. Currently, 3 tourism villages have been established in our region.

Of these; the village of "Sangardak" in Sariosiyo district , the village of "Sina" in Denov district,

and the village of "Omonkhona" in Boysun district .

At the same time, a "Youth Park" was established in the city of Termez and a "Buddha Town" was established in the Termez district.

24 during 2024 (877 seats) accommodation vehicles have been organized, and as of today, a total of 220 accommodation vehicles (4,395 seats) have been delivered.

From this:

52 units hotels (*2,388 beds*) , 24 hostels (*738 places*) , 1 motel (*4 rooms, 8 beds*), 144 family guest houses (*ranked 1,269*), 3 one cottages (*30 places*) was established. Today, there are 51 in our region. tour operators, 11 pieces travel agents, 15 tour guides is carrying out its activities.

These projects and related sub-projects have provided employment to 3,476 people (of which 300 were members of low-income households).

In 2024, 5 meetings were held with enterprising entrepreneurs in the tourism sector. At the same time, 153 tourist attractions visited by tourists objects exist .

The Surkhandarya regional administration signed 23 project agreements worth a total of \$ 510 million within the framework of the Global Investment Forum held in Samarkand on October 17-18 at the 25th session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Conclusion. South Uzbekistan is witnessing significant strides in the development of its tourism sector. By leveraging its historical landmarks, vibrant culture, and scenic landscapes, the region is positioning itself as a key destination within Central Asia. Government initiatives, coupled with infrastructural improvements and private sector investments, have paved the way for increased tourist arrivals. However, the region must balance growth with sustainable practices to preserve its cultural and environmental heritage. If the current momentum continues, South Uzbekistan has the potential to become a leading tourist destination in the region, offering a rich experience for visitors while benefiting local communities economically. The future of tourism in South Uzbekistan looks promising, but careful planning and responsible management will be essential to ensure long-term success.

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