

Tourism Development Trends in Shahi Zinda Complex

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Abstract: This article presents general descriptions of Samarkand region. Also, the most historical Shahi Zinda complex existing in this city has been specially mentioned. The touristic potential and touristic aspects of the complex are described in detail.

Keywords: tourism, domestic tourism, tourism research, tourism services, tourist flow, Shahi Zinda, tourism law.

Tourists who have seen Afrosiyab, the ancient place of Samarkand, walk to its south side and come across the Shahi Zinda ensemble, which is located on a slope and whose blue domes shine in the sunlight. This great monument, which has become a sacred place of pilgrimage for the people of Samarkand, is always a favorite place of pilgrimage for tourists from far and near. The Shahizinda ensemble, which was named "Pearl of Samarkand", is not only a historical-architectural monument, but also the eternal resting place of famous scholars, saints, queens, and military commanders. Despite the fact that each mausoleum here is covered with unique decorations, they all form a single composition, a complete architectural work. Another valuable aspect of Shahizinda is that almost three thousand years of Samarkand's history is embodied here. After all, the area where the Shahizinda ensemble is located belongs to the southern regions of Afrosiyab, and if this land is excavated, archaeological materials from the 6th-1st centuries BC will be found. The meaning of the word Shahizinda is "living king", and this name has been living among the people for over a thousand years. When tourists reach the middle of the stairs, their eyes fall on the magnificent mausoleum on the left. Until recently, most scientists believed that the Turkish astronomer Qazizada Rumi, who lived in Samarkand during the reign of Mirzo Ulugbek, was buried in this mausoleum. But when the graves here were opened, it was found that women were buried in them. This situation shows that the secrets of the Shahizinda ensemble have not yet been fully explored. Going up the stairs, tourists will come across the mausoleum of Amir Husayn, the son of Togluq Tekin, on the right side of the corridor. On the opposite side of this mausoleum is the grave of Amirzada, whose identity is still unknown. Tourists passing by these tombs enter the tomb of Shirinbeka Aga, the owner's sister. A number of architectural monuments located at the entrance to the Shahi Zinda necropolis complex of tombs in Samarkand include: a monumental entrance, a gatehouse, a winter mosque, a summer mosque, and the Davlat koshbegi madrasa of the early 19th century. In this monument, mausoleums from different eras are located along a narrow medieval street [see Figure 1].

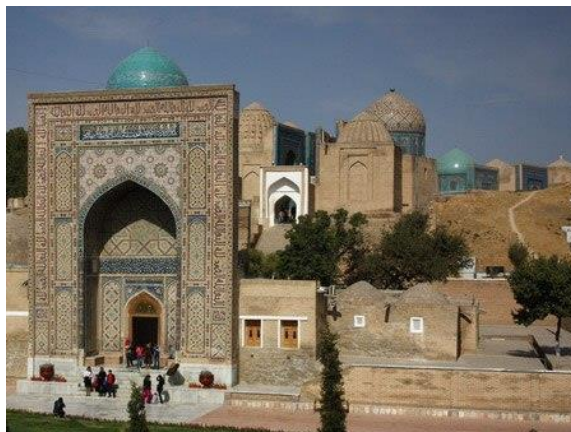


Figure 1. Shahi Zinda Complex.

Under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, a video selector meeting was held to discuss the issues of increasing the tourism potential of our country. This was reported by the press service of the head of state. It is noted that this field is developing consistently in our country. On December 22 of this year, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, in his Address to the Parliament, made the following comments about the tourism industry among all other sectors:

"Today, tourism is one of the promising sectors that bring high income to the national economy. Uzbekistan is a country with great potential in the field of tourism. There are more than 7,300 objects of cultural heritage in our country, and about 200 of them are included in the UNESCO list. At the same time, it is possible to open new tourist destinations using the opportunities of our country's unique nature and beautiful resorts. Actively involving world brands in this field, we need to pay special attention to the development of pilgrimage tourism, ecological, educational, ethnographic, gastronomic tourism and other branches of this field. In this regard, we should take into account that the use of public-private partnerships opens wide opportunities for the development of the sector. It is necessary to develop and accelerate the program of visiting holy places and monuments in the cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, and Tashkent. It is necessary to fully utilize the great opportunities in the field of domestic tourism."

In particular, the number of foreign tourists who visited our country in 2022 increased by 3 times compared to 2021. The export of the industry amounted to 1 billion 600 million dollars. More than 11 million people traveled as part of domestic tourism programs. As a result of the establishment of a new tourism center in Samarkand, an additional 2 million tourists came there. In fact, the potential in this field is much higher in our country. There are many tourists who want to come to our country. However, there is little content about places of interest to them, and there is a lack of programs that will keep tourists busy for 4-5 days. The airport is the gateway to Uzbekistan for foreigners. In recent years, 5 new private airlines have been established, and our aviation fleet has reached 44. Last year, the number of weekly flights increased from 46 to 78, and the number of passengers increased from 6,500 to 10,000. However, the shortage of domestic flights is 20 per week to Nukus and Urganch, 15 to Samarkand, 11 to Bukhara and Termiz. Similarly, there is a demand for 68 additional weekly trains and 350 new wagons. Also, 8 electric trains will be delivered this year. Tour operators, hotels and transporters are granted customs privileges when importing motor vehicles with 10 or more seats. Tourist buses and minibuses are allowed in Kamchik Pass, Jizzakh Pass, Chimyon and Chorvok. Another important factor in tourism is the hotel. Due to the wide opportunities created in this regard, the number of hotel beds has doubled to 60,000 in the last five years. The head of our state emphasized the need to attract foreign consulting companies and bring the conditions in hotels to the level of international standards, to allocate additional credit resources for them. The content of tourism programs was also discussed at the meeting. As mentioned, foreign tourists staying in Uzbekistan for one more day will increase the annual tourism export by 300 million dollars. For

example, foreign tourists visit Khorezm 2 times less than Bukhara and Samarkand. But Khorezm has every opportunity to keep tourists for 3-4 days. What is missing to keep tourists longer is interesting programs and promotion. Therefore, at the meeting, 11 higher educational institutions were attached to help in this regard. They create a collection of information about the history, monuments and attractions of 31 districts and 143 tourism districts. Based on them, tourist packages are developed in 12 languages. Employees of tourism and service facilities are trained. Officials were given tasks to organize tourism clusters connecting hotel, culture, nature, ethno and gastronomic centers, to introduce "certificate of hospitable environment for tourists". Tourism programs in our country are mainly adapted to April-May and September-October. But there is enough opportunity to extend this season. For example, it is possible to add two more months to the tourist season by organizing skiing in Tashkent and Jizzakh regions in winter, and bathing places in summer in other places. You can also visit 22 nature reserves, 24 national nature parks and natural monuments in the summer. On the basis of such sources, the task was set to develop projects for summer and winter seasons, to organize interesting festivals and cultural events for tourists on non-tourist season days. Another issue is that there are more than 8,000 objects of cultural heritage and 122 museums in our country. The expediency of organizing subjects such as literature, history, geography, visual arts for young people in these places was mentioned. Samarkand will be the capital of world tourism in 2023. The head of our state emphasized that this year should be the year of promoting the rich culture and tourism potential of our country to the world. For this purpose, 100 billion soums have been allocated to attract tourists with marketing and advertising. It was noted the importance of developing the "Uzbekistan business card", updating the tourism brand, and increasing advertisements about Uzbekistan on international TV channels and Internet platforms. Today, a number of reforms related to the development of the tourism sector are being carried out in our country. Examples of this are government decisions, benefits, and conditions. In particular, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated July 18, 2019 "On Tourism" No. ORQ-549 was adopted. The law specifies the modern programs to be created in the field of tourism, as well as the procedure for its monitoring and development. The sustainable development of the regional economy is often determined by the development of the social sphere and the tourism network. Accordingly, currently tourism as a leading branch of national economies has its significant share in the sustainable development of certain countries. The field of tourism is becoming an important factor in the development of human potential. Therefore, this is reflected in the creation of new jobs, attraction of additional investments, increase in tax revenues, preservation and rational use of cultural, historical and natural resources in a particular country or region. This makes it necessary to develop proposals and recommendations on the directions of its development, while researching the scientific-methodical and practical aspects of the elements and functions of the regional tourism infrastructure. Unfortunately, it can be seen that Uzbekistan is still far behind in this field. In particular, according to the assessment given by the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTC), Uzbekistan ranks 150th among the countries of the world in terms of tourist visits.

The interests of the Motherland and the people are at the basis of all the reforms implemented for the development of our country. Reforms are being implemented in all areas. In order to bring such positive changes and development to a new level, all of us must fulfill our duties wholeheartedly and be selfless.

As a specialist in the field of tourism development and increasing the number of tourists, it is permissible to make the following suggestions:

- Giving concessional loans to entrepreneurs who want to work in the field of tourism and simplifying land transactions, increasing the number of hotels that meet world standards, thereby increasing competition, lowering hotel prices. Because as the price of tour packages increases, the number of tourists coming to our country decreases. As a result, they prefer to go to other countries with much lower prices.

- In agreement with "Uzbekiston Havo Yollari", the proposal to establish a transparent online service system by starting the online purchase of air tickets is also a very urgent issue. In developed countries, the concept of an airline is a word that is never used in everyday life. In a country with developed tourism, no one goes to the air ticket office and buys a plane ticket. A person who wants to go to a country does all his work from a computer without leaving his home. Many Europeans ask me: "Why can't you buy tickets online from the official website of Uzbekistan Airways?" If the flight is canceled, no information will be provided on the airline's website. I think that if reforms are carried out in this direction, the number of tourists visiting our country will increase dramatically.
- It would be great if the system of buying tickets online at Uzbekistan Railways was further improved. In addition, it is quite difficult to buy tickets for the high-speed train "Afrosiyob" for large tourist groups. It will be possible to buy tickets in the system in 40 days. But if you go to the box office, the number of tickets is already limited.
- All measures have been taken in this regard in our country. However, despite this, it would be appropriate if a separate system was created for tourists visiting our country when crossing the border from one country to our country. That is, to pass them through the border with a little more courtesy, without scaring them. - In cooperation with specialists in the field of Uzbekistan as a tourist country, one compact "guide for tourists" about Uzbekistan will be prepared, translated into all languages, at a low price or, if possible, free distribution to foreign travel firms. (Every time I'm in Europe, I definitely spend hours in bookstores, unfortunately, there is not a single quality photo album about Uzbekistan. There are books about the countries of the whole world (no exaggeration). Of course, there are 3-4 guidebooks for tourists about Uzbekistan, but they are not written by Uzbeks, but by tourists who have come to our country or representatives of the field from abroad.
- Preparing a photo album with interesting information about Uzbekistan in cooperation with tourism experts (with their ideas) and printing it in high quality in different languages. Its price should not be expensive, and it should be sold in all bookstores and shops visited by tourists in Uzbekistan. I am currently working on this project with my creative team.
- If we announce a competition for documentary and feature films about our country, customs and traditions, national value and rich historical heritage, and if we encourage the best ones, dubbing their films into English, German and other languages, and participate in international competitions, The number of tourists is expected to increase.
- If contests for the most beautiful and orderly house, street, neighborhood, village, district, city, region of the year are announced and incentives are established every year, our tanti and It is certain that our diligent compatriots will turn their place of residence into a "paradise" in the coming years. It is very well established in developed European countries. In particular, many places in Germany are beautified by the initiative of local residents in the annual competition. Therefore, wherever you go to any village or city in Germany, it is decorated to the extent that your eyes are happy. This, in turn, is bound to attract tourists.

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