



## Religious Tourism: Basic Concepts And Types

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**Abstract:** This article presents the main concepts and directions of pilgrimage tourism.

**Keywords:** Visiting tourism, tourist facilities, infrastructure, industry of visiting tourism, travelers.



### Introduction

Religious tourism, also known as faith-based tourism or pilgrimage tourism, is one of the oldest and most significant forms of travel, deeply rooted in human history and spiritual traditions. It involves journeys made by individuals or groups to sacred sites, religious festivals, and spiritual retreats with the primary purpose of religious devotion, personal enlightenment, or cultural exploration. As a key segment of the global tourism industry, religious tourism attracts millions of travelers annually, contributing to both spiritual enrichment and economic development in various destinations. The concept of religious tourism encompasses diverse travel experiences, ranging from traditional pilgrimages to modern faith-inspired cultural tours. Major world religions, including Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism, have historically shaped travel patterns through pilgrimages to Mecca, the Vatican, Varanasi, Jerusalem, and Lumbini, among other sacred locations. In addition to individual pilgrimages, religious tourism includes heritage tourism, missionary travel, festival tourism, and spiritual retreats, each serving different purposes and visitor motivations. The purpose of this study is to explore the basic concepts and types of religious tourism, analyzing its historical significance, contemporary trends, and socio-economic impacts. By examining different categories of religious tourism and their role in cultural exchange and sustainable tourism development,

this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how faith-based travel continues to evolve in the modern world.

## Methodology

Tourists traveling for religious purposes are a person who travels outside the country of permanent residence for a period of no more than six months to visit holy places and religious centers. Religious tourism should be understood as activities related to the provision of services and meeting the needs of tourists traveling to holy sites and religious centers located outside their usual environment. Religious tourism is divided into two main types: - pilgrimage tourism; - religious tourism of an excursion and educational orientation. Pilgrimage tourism is a combination of trips by representatives of various faiths for pilgrimage purposes.

Pilgrimage is the desire of believers to worship holy places. Among the reasons for making a pilgrimage are the following:

- the desire to heal from mental and physical ailments;
- to pray for relatives and friends;
- find grace;
- to atone for sins;
- to find the meaning of life, etc.

Pilgrimage presupposes a certain attitude of a person to reality. The idea of pilgrimage implies actions in conditions of special difficulties, voluntary commitments to be in these conditions. This symbolizes a person's willingness to sacrifice transitory material values in the name of eternal spiritual ones. People go on pilgrimages when they don't have enough ritual activities in places of their usual habitat. According to the WTO, more than 200 million people make pilgrimages every year. In science, there are usually several types of pilgrimage, classified according to various criteria.:

- 1) according to the number of participants and family affiliation - individual, family and group pilgrimages;
- 2) in terms of duration - long and short-term pilgrimages
- 3) seasonally - year-round pilgrimages, as well as those dedicated to religious holidays;
- 4) by objects of visit - visits to religious places of worship (churches, monasteries), as well as natural places of worship (mountains, lakes, springs,);
- 5) according to the location of the pilgrimage site - domestic (within state borders) and foreign pilgrimage tours;
- 6) on the basis of commitment - voluntary and obligatory pilgrimage tours

## Results and discussion

Spiritual pilgrimage tourism has a narrow socio-psychological base and geographical orientation. Spiritual pilgrimage tourism refers to trips by tourists from North and South America, Europe and Russia to various centers of spiritual practice in the countries of the East, primarily to India, Tibet, China, Nepal, Japan. Spiritually, pilgrimage tourism is closely related to medical and wellness

tourism.

Religious tourism of an excursion and educational orientation involves visiting religious centers where tourists can see religious sites - active religious monuments, museums, attend divine services, take part in religious processions, etc. This type of tourism is closely interrelated with scientific tourism of a religious orientation. Scientists visit centers of existing religions, countries and regions with rich religious traditions. Such trips are few in number, but they expand the geography of tourist trips. Scientists are interested in religious heritage - manuscripts, various religious objects, architectural forms of both modern and bygone religions, and much more. Researchers are sent to the centers of existing religions, countries and regions with rich religious traditions. In the West and in Russia, there is interest in the countries of the East - China, India, Japan. Places of disappeared religions are visited - Egypt, Greece, Italy and Central America. Pilgrimage and religious tourism, as a rule, have the same routes, places of visit and objects of display. The pilgrims agree in advance to endure inconveniences on the trip, which are unusual for them at home. This is the tradition of pilgrimage. When they arrive at the place of visit, they pray most of the time, because that's what they came for. For tourists, the expected level of comfort during a trip should not be lower, and even higher, than their usual home. The composition of groups in pilgrimage and religious tourism is also different. Pilgrims of more mature and advanced age, seeking repentance and healing, tend to pilgrimage more often. Religious tourism is designed for both children and adults. Religious tourism also includes healing and wellness tourism, which is based on visiting natural or cultural resources that, according to believers, have special supernatural properties (natural resources - holy springs, caves, mountains, reservoirs, etc.; cultural - temples, holy relics, miraculous icons, statues, etc.). It is possible to apply standard classifications to religious tourism - by duration, number of participants, means of transportation, accommodation, etc. One of the classifications is the classification according to the degree of mobility: – residential (stationary), which assumes that tourists stay on the territory of a religious site for more than 3 days, but less than six months. Tourists can live on the territory of the spiritual centers for free or for a donation for three days. For a longer stay, a tourist must become a worker and must do the necessary work for housing and food; - mobile religious tourism consists in constantly changing the objects of the visit, but no more than three days of stay at each of them. Thus, it can be concluded that the concepts of "pilgrimage" and "religious tourism" are similar, but differ in goals, motives, goals, etc. And the difference is fundamental.

## Conclusion

Pilgrimage is the worship of shrines, and religious tourism is the acquaintance with them, and precisely as with shrines, and not just as with art (architecture or icon painting). That is, religious tourism, being tourism after all, is closer to pilgrimage. This is a pilgrimage for those people who have not yet "grown up" to a real pilgrimage, but educational tourism is no longer enough for them. It is for them that religious tourism exists, visiting holy places for educational purposes. The religious tourism industry is an integral part of the tourism industry as a whole. The results of the analysis of the quantitative composition of potential consumers of religious tourism and pilgrimage services show that this tourist product is in increasing demand and has great prospects. Religious tourism has a rich history and continues to occupy an important place in the modern system of international and domestic tourism. Religious tourism of an excursion and educational orientation involves visiting religious centers where tourists can see religious sites - active religious monuments, museums, attend divine services, take part in religious processions, etc. This type of tourism is closely interrelated with scientific tourism of a religious orientation. Scientists visit centers of existing religions, countries and

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