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DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM IN EASTERN COUNTRIES (USING THE EXAMPLE OF TURKEY).

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Abstract

Turkey is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. Its geographical location, rich cultural heritage, historical monuments, beautiful beaches and cuisine make it one of the most attractive places for tourists. Turkey is one of the leading countries in international tourism and the development of its tourism sector plays an important role in the country's economic growth.

The number of visitors to Turkey in 2024 increased by 9% and reached 49.2 million. During the same period, tourism revenues showed a 7% increase and amounted to 46.9 billion USD. The average daily expenditure of one international visitor in Turkey reaches 107 USD. Which is a record figure for the country.

The relationship between Turkey and Georgia in international tourism is very active and both countries play an important role in each other's tourism market.

Georgia's popularity for Turkish tourists: Georgia is often mentioned as one of the safest and most beautiful destinations. Many Turkish tourists have already appreciated Georgia's mountainous landscape, unique cuisine and traditions .

In general, the relationship between Georgia and Turkey in tourism has great commercial and cultural advantages.

Main aspects contributing to the development of tourist relations between Georgia and Turkey: regional proximity, cultural similarity, variety of tourist destinations, visa-free regime (Katsitadze, N., 2020). .

The future of tourism in Georgia and Turkey depends on close cooperation, implementation of sustainable and innovative tourism programs that will increase tourist interest in both countries. (Bakhtadze L and Oll 2024; Katsitadze, 2018)

Introduction

Turkey is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. Its geographical location, rich cultural heritage, historical monuments, beautiful beaches and cuisine make it one of the most attractive places for tourists. Turkey is one of the leading countries in international tourism and the development of its tourism sector plays an important role in the country's economic growth.

Tourism in Turkey

The history of tourism in Turkey dates back to the early 20th century, when the country began to develop the necessary infrastructure to attract foreign tourists. In the 1950s, and especially in the early 1960s, the Turkish government began to promote the development of tourism, which increased further in the 1980s, when it became more affordable to visit the country.

In the late 1980s, the government of Turkey adopted a special economic policy aimed at supporting tourism as an important sector of the economy. Also, in the mid-1990s, the role of Turkey in the world tourist market became noticeably stronger.

The Importance of the Tourism Sector in the Turkish Economy

Tourism in Turkey is one of the leading sectors of the economy, making a significant contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2024, tourism revenues are estimated at approximately \$56.5 billion. The number of tourists visiting the country is expected to reach 49.2 million by 2024.

Main source of tourists

Most tourists come to Turkey from European countries, especially from Germany, the UK and the Netherlands. In recent years, Türkiye has also been actively attracting tourists from distant countries such as China, the US and the United Arab Emirates.

Current status:

- Popular destinations: Turkish resorts, such as Antalya, Bodrum, Marmaris and others, continue to be popular among foreign tourists. In these cities there are high-class hotels, spa centers and beaches that offer tourists a variety of services.
- Mountain resorts: Turkey is also known for its mountain resorts, such as Uludag, Kartalkai and Erdzhies. These resorts attract both local and foreign tourists interested in skiing.
- Turkey has become one of the leading countries in the field of medical tourism, offering high-quality medical services to tourists from different countries. Turkish hospitals and clinics are distinguished by modern high-tech equipment, highly qualified doctors and high standards. Medical tourism in the country is extremely popular and contributes to the economic situation of the country.

Turkish cuisine:

1. Main products: Turkish cuisine mainly uses meat (beef, lamb, lamb), vegetables and various types of fruits. Based on these products, there is a wide range of dishes that take into account the use of useful products from different regions of the country.
2. Dry dishes and soups: Turkish cuisine offers spicy and rich soups, such as lentil soup and various kebab options.
3. Food and microculture: Turkish food is often associated with local traditions, which develop differently in different regions of Turkey.

Tourism Statistics

In the first half of 2023, the number of tourists to Turkey increased by 13.9% to reach 26.1 million. During the same period, tourism revenue increased by 9.3% to reach \$23.7 billion. The average daily expenditure of one visitor in Turkey was \$98.

In the third quarter of 2024, including September, the number of visitors to Turkey increased by 9% to reach 49.2 million. During the same period, tourism revenue increased by 7% to reach \$46.9 billion. The average daily expenditure of one foreign visitor in Turkey reached \$107.

If we compare the data from previous years, the number of tourists in Turkey exceeded 25 million in 2022, which is a record figure since 2019. Tourism revenues amounted to \$46.3 billion, which is 19% more than in 2019.

In 2023, the number of tourists in Turkey reached 56.7 million, an 11.1% increase compared to 2022. Tourism revenue amounted to \$54.31 billion, an 16.9% increase compared to 2022. (UNWTO. UN Touris World Tourism Barometer|Global Tourism Statistics. 2024. Available online: (accessed on 11 October 2024).

According to these data, Turkish tourism is constantly growing, which is an important factor for the country's economy.

Tourist relations between Turkey and Georgia are very active and multifaceted. Geographical proximity, cultural similarity and historical ties between two countries contribute to the development of tourism.

The main aspects that contribute to the development of tourism relations are:

1. **Regional proximity:** Georgia and Turkey have strong road connections, which makes relations easier and more accessible for tourists.
2. **Cultural similarities:** The cultures of the two countries are very close to each other, which helps tourists easily adapt to the new environment.
3. **Multiple tourist destinations:** Both countries have unique tourist attractions.
4. **Visa-free regime:** Georgian citizens are granted simplified visa rights, which reduces barriers to tourism.
5. **Tourism:** Both countries actively cooperate in holding cultural, sports and educational events. Joint international exhibitions and various cultural and entertainment events are often held.

Türkiye and Georgia closely cooperate in the field of medical tourism. The main reason for such relations is both the geographical proximity of the countries and the high quality of medical services.

Tourism Key Challenges:

- The main challenge may be seasonality. If many tourists visit both countries in the summer, this number may decrease in the winter.
- There is also a need for even more marketing activities to introduce tourists to new tourist destinations that will be interesting for both countries.

Overall, both Georgia and Turkey are trying to promote the development of tourism, which will not only increase the economy, but also deepen cultural ties.

As for Georgia, Turkey remains one of the main partner countries in tourism.

According to Georgia's 2024 statistical data, 7.4 million international visits were made to Georgia. The increase compared to the previous year is 4.2%. Revenue from international travel reached a record high of 4.4 billion USD, which is an increase of 7.3% compared to 2023. As for the number of international visitors, mainly, i.e. 64.4%, are visitors from neighboring countries, dominated by visitors from the Republic of Turkey. The number of visitors from European Union countries has increased by 3.3%. The purpose of travel - 51.2%

is related to rest, recreation, entertainment. (UNWTO. UN Tourism World Tourism Barometer|Global Tourism Statistics. 2024).

In 2024, the largest income from travel to Georgia came from Russia (850 million USD, share 19.2%), followed by Turkey (612 million USD, share 13.5%). As we can see, the Republic of Turkey dominates in income as well. (WTTC. Travel & Tourism Economic Impact|World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC)).

Prospects for the future development of tourism in Turkey and Georgia:

1. International tourism: There is a potential for the growth of international tourism within the borders of the region between Georgia and Turkey. These relations will become more acceptable for tourists through the development of closer air connections and transport.
2. Cultural and historical tourism: Both countries are rich in culture and history. Turkey, as a cultural center, is rich in museums, monuments and historical sites, just as Georgia is rich in its culture and natural monuments. Both countries will be able to deepen their cooperation in this direction.
3. Ecotourism: Both countries have great potential for the development of ecotourism. In the south of Turkey and in Georgia, natural resources such as mountains, rivers and protected areas are a great attraction. This direction can be further developed through the so-called "green" tourism.
4. Visa Regulations: Visa policies and regulations between countries could be further simplified, which would encourage more tourists to visit.
5. Maritime Tourism: The Turkish coast and the Georgian Black Sea are well suited for maritime tourism, which could lead to the development of maritime tourism, cruise tours, and various programs.

conclusion

The future of tourism in Georgia and Turkey depends on close cooperation, implementation of sustainable and innovative tourism programs that will increase tourist interest in both countries.

Between Georgia and Turkey, there are many prospects for the development of tourism, which are based on the historical and cultural heritage of both countries, the efficiency of transport and the use of innovations in the field of tourism. Effective strategies and investments in this direction will contribute to the growth of the tourist flow between the countries and the establishment of deeper cultural ties.

Georgia and Turkey have already started introducing new tourism products, such as health tourism, shopping tourism and medical tourism. In addition, Georgia and Turkey can offer tourists a wide range of taste experiences, such as wine tourism, culinary tourism, and the study of local art and traditions.

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