

# IMPACT OF COVID-19 VIRUS ON TOURISM IN UZBEKISTAN

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**Abstract:** *this article is about the global crises caused by the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic around the world, in particular, the negative impact of this pandemic on the tourism industry in Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan is one of the developing countries in the field of tourism. Many cities in Central Asia were major trading points on the Great Silk Road, which connected Eastern and Western civilizations. Today, the museums of Uzbekistan contain more than two million works that testify to the unique historical, cultural and spiritual life of the peoples of Central Asia living in this region.*

**Keywords:** *pandemic, online tourism, startup, State Committee for Tourism Development, Safe Tourism Service.*

## ВЛИЯНИЕ ВИРУСА COVID-19 НА ТУРИЗМ В УЗБЕКИСТАНЕ

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**Аннотация:** *данная статья посвящена глобальным кризисам, вызванным распространением пандемии Covid-19 по миру, в частности, негативному влиянию этой пандемии на туристическую отрасль в Узбекистане. Узбекистан - одна из развивающихся стран в сфере туризма. Многие города в Центральной Азии были крупными торговыми точками на Великом шелковом пути, соединявшем восточную и западную цивилизации. Сегодня в музеях Узбекистана хранится более двух миллионов произведений, свидетельствующих об уникальной исторической, культурной и духовной жизни народов Центральной Азии, проживающих в этом регионе.*

**Ключевые слова:** *пандемия, онлайн-туризм, стартап, Государственный комитет по развитию туризма, Служба безопасного туризма.*

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Uzbekistan attracts tourists with its historical, archeological, architectural and natural resources. Uzbekistan is also a member of the Regional Initiative (TRI), a regional umbrella for tourism-related organizations. Samarkand has its own Registan, Bibi- Khanim Mosque, Gur-Amir and Shah-i Zinda, Bukhara has its own Po-i Kalyan complex, Ark Fortress, Samanid mausoleum and Labi House ensemble, and of course Khiva has its own Ichan city. Castles, mosques, madrasas, minarets, walls and gates are tourist attractions. Various exhibitions, conferences and international competitions have been held in these historical places. Many tourists visit Uzbekistan because of their religious beliefs, and dozens of historical sites of Islam are located in this country, such as the mausoleum of Sheikh Zaynuddin Baba, the mausoleum of Shaykhantaur and Zangiota in Tashkent, or the Bahovuddin ensemble in Bukhara, Bayan-Kuli. Khan Mausoleum, Sayfiddin Din Bokarzi Mausoleum and many other monuments.

These historical sites were visited by many tourists. Every year the flow of foreign tourists to Samarkand, Bukhara, Karshi, Khiva, Kokand and Tashkent was growing. In particular, if we look at the statistics for 2019, in 6,748,500 tourists visited Uzbekistan, and in 2018 this figure was 5,346,200. 51.3% of them are people aged 31-55 (52.1% in 2018), 20.2% - 55 years and older (19.4% in 2018), 19.5% - 19-30 years. Years (20.4% in 2018) and 9.1% - individuals aged 0-18 (8.1% in 2018). The largest number of tourists is from the Central Asian region - 5,764,500 people. 495.6 thousand Tourists came from the CIS countries. The number of immigrants amounted to 488.4 thousand people. Most of the tourists came from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Afghanistan, China, the Republic of Korea and India. 81.8% of them came to Uzbekistan to visit their relatives and friends, and 15.5% - for leisure. For other reasons, attendance for treatment, shopping, business meetings, and study was 2.7%. These indicators show that the tourism industry in Uzbekistan has been developing over the years.

The first industry to suffer from the COVID-19 pandemic is tourism. Due to this pandemic, the demand for tourism among the population has sharply decreased. While the tourism industry used to generate around \$ 1.7 trillion a year, the decline in the sector is now 70%, and this decline continues day by day. Many countries around the world have been forced to close their borders to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and to protect the population. Various airlines, including rail and air, have canceled their flights. At the same time, many countries today face problems in the activities of tourism entities.

According to exporters, tourist flows are expected to suffer huge losses. The coronavirus pandemic has completely transformed the tourism sector, causing many people to stop traveling abroad. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has also been detected in Uzbekistan, and now the number of registered cases exceeds 1,300 people. This is the first time our country is facing such a challenge, so it is natural that there will be unknown fears. But there is no need to panic. Only by paying attention to our health and hygiene can we protect ourselves and our loved ones.

Unfortunately, this disease is causing great damage to the economy and tourism of Uzbekistan. When the Covid-19 pandemic entered the Republic, it took all measures to prevent the spread of the virus in our country. On March 16, it was declared Quarantine in Uzbekistan. Governmental and non-governmental institutions (kindergartens, schools and universities) have announced a holiday and they are still conducting online classes. "Restaurants, cafes and a number of other organizations have closed down and they have started accepting orders online," he said. The entry and exit borders to the provinces have been closed since March 23. Fines have been imposed on those who took to the streets without masks on March 26.

- As well as permits for cars. Individuals who do not comply with quarantine regulations are punished in accordance with the law. According to experts, the spread of the virus will decrease in two to three months. Kevin, and citizens will be able to organize trips, travel again. According to preliminary estimates, Uzbekistan has lost about a thousand Chinese tourists since regular flights to Beijing, Urumqi, Xi'an and Chengdu were suspended.

According to Aziz Abdulkhakov the State Committee for Tourism Development is currently working on the development of "online tourism", support for entrepreneurs and startups. "Currently, the State Committee for Tourism Development and its national PR center are working on launching a new website that will allow people to organize virtual tours in Uzbekistan. It will be the first platform to offer virtual tours throughout Uzbekistan. According to him, the site covers three main routes, which allows people to make virtual trips throughout Uzbekistan. Today, we are working in partnership with museums and other tourist attractions to launch virtual tours. Taking the opportunity, we want to attract talented professionals working in this field, with whom we can set up an online business. For representatives of the tourism industry. Cooperation with hotel owners and managers, tour operators, guest houses, guides, etc. is being strengthened, and work is underway to further develop the industry. Webinars on news and online observations, online guides are provided.

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