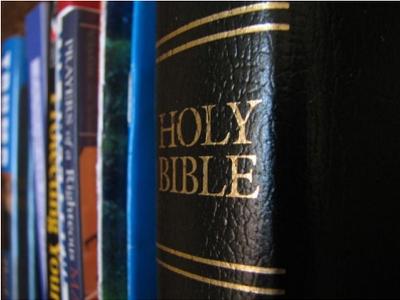


Survey: Faith Based Tourism Is Growing

According to a recent religious travel study carried out by TravelStyles, and commissioned by the Globus family of brands, approximately 35% of all outbound travelers are interested in undertaking a religious vacation or pilgrimage. It is worth pointing out that 17% of them hope to have this kind of vacation in the next 5 years.



What this means is that there are currently 16 million travelers who are interested in international religious vacations. What is more astonishing is that it seems to be growing. The number of people who wished to have religious vacations has grown by 5% since 2007 despite the recession and despite difficult economic constraints.

In addition to the number of people who wish to have religious vacations, it is also worth pointing out that most people who undertake them view such trips as necessary for their continued faith in their religion. According to Globus' new religious travel research, approximately 49% of all people who undertake religious travel do so for religious reasons, while the remaining 51%, on the other hand, view religious vacations as "regular" vacations. Furthermore, the study also indicates that around 25% of all travelers are first time travelers, and use faith based vacations as a means of traveling to other countries for the first time.



Of course, it is not just about traveling around either. Most people who undertake spiritual vacations are also motivated to experience spiritual stories, and are not content to simply see more of the world. Major religious destinations, like Israel for example, also provide people with the means to see some of the world's greatest sights and religious landmarks. In addition to that, religious vacations tend to be more serious when it comes to the history and culture of each destination, while at the same time, exploring the origins of major religions.

However, according to research, although the majority of potential religious travelers are motivated by religious convictions (58%), the opportunity to see religious landmarks (57%) and undergo a type of pilgrimage (53%), 45% are merely motivated to have fun on their journey. To corroborate these findings, TravelStyles found out that 42% of all religious travelers are interested in both religious and non-religious activities when they travel to important religious destinations and countries.



Ultimately, faith based travels are expected to be not only special, they are also meant to be fun and religious. When people visit the Grand Catholic Italy, the Roman Ruins, the Marian Shrines of Iberia, they also expect to savor paella, tapas and rare wines. When people visit Israel or Jordan, visiting the Dead Sea or Petra is not enough. There is also the desire to experience the local culture.

According to Mike Schields, managing director of the Globus family of brands, faith based travel is not just a way to experience religion overseas, it is also a great way to build a strong community by exploring the origins and implications of one's faith with other believers. So it is not a big surprise why nearly 70 percent of those who took this survey opted for a group tour for their religious travel rather than doing it alone.

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