

# TOURISM IN AZERBAIJAN REPORTED 1.5 MILLION ARRIVALS



The “Dubalization” of Baku, transformation of the Khrushchev into Empire style buildings, the extension of the boulevard, the “London taxis” and many other things that were adapted for tourism have proved to be the right policy for tourism in Azerbaijan.

The statistics of the summer season reveal that Russia was Azerbaijan’s main source market. This is surprising, considering the fact that the streets of Baku and the provinces are dominated by Arabs.

**Russian inflow is followed by Georgians, who are also almost invisible and are not so rich to have a high expenditure in Baku.** After that there are countries such as Iran, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, and Iraq. The smallest groups of visitors came from Italy, China, France, Qatar and the Netherlands.

In January–July this year, 1.5 million tourists visited Azerbaijan. This is 24% more than in the same period last year. Only in July, 330 thousand visitors arrived to the country. The revenues from tourism in Azerbaijan make up 4.1 percent of the country’s GDP.

These are positive numbers, given that almost the rest of the GDP is covered by oil. Tourism, as an economic sector, takes more effort and needs more workforce. If tourism continues to grow and can account for 10% of the GDP next year, it will be a reason to rejoice. Moreover, agriculture is growing as well, as is the export of agricultural products. Together with tourism it will account for about 30% of the GDP.

The average length of stay of tourists in the country is 5–7 days. Tourists spend 3–4 days in the capital and travel to resort regions for the remaining days. The average expenditure is USD 700–1000 per trip.

The fact that tourists visit other regions as well is very positive for the job opportunities in these places. **Tourists travel to Sheki, Gabala, Gobustan and return to Baku.** This represents a big development for tourism in Azerbaijan. In Soviet times, tourists came only to Baku and walked around the city in large groups.

There are still some opponents of Baku’s “Dubalization” but firstly, Baku did not become Dubai. There are still a lot of ancient and religious buildings in the city and country. And secondly – Dubai, despite its lack of antiquity and historical heritage, is one of the most popular places of world tourism.

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