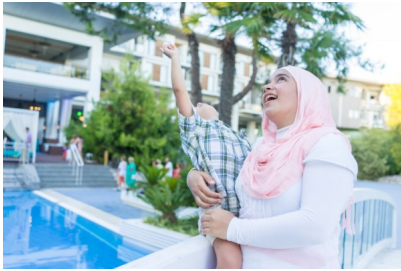


HALAL TOURISM ON THE RISE IN TURKEY



Waves of attacks, coup attempts and much more. Travelers have been avoiding Turkey as a destination in the past years. One sector, however, resisted the crisis: halal tourism.

Turkey is a very popular destination for halal tourism. It is the fourth in the global ranking of the Global Muslim Travel Index, just behind Malaysia, Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates.

It takes a little more than two hour drive from Antalya Airport to reach the seaside resort of Alanya. Among the local hotels there are some that are Muslim friendly. There are about 50 club or resort hotels in Turkey. Antalya is the number one halal destination in the country.

Personalized services

Many Muslim friendly hotels obtain the halal certificate issued by the Diyanet. According to what criteria is it issued? For example, no alcohol sold in the property and food and all the products are halal. Moreover, there are prayer rooms, an imam comes to the hotel every Friday and also there are separated bathing areas for men and women.

Almost all the “Muslim friendly” hotels in the region have four or five stars. To meet the standard displayed, personalized services are offered. Hotels offer training to its staff to meet the needs of customers. Such hotels provide training on hygiene and food for cooks, one on services and behavior for customer managers.

Travelers will also find Koran in each room, a prayer rug and an arrow on the wall indicating the orientation of Mecca. But the most important is the single-sex pools, confirm the specialists of the sector.

Business profit

In Turkey, the tourism sector has been heavily affected by political instability in the last two years. After the waves of attacks in 2015 and attempted coup in 2016 tourists have been avoiding the country.

Today, the sector seems to be reviving. In the first five months of 2018, the country welcomed more than eleven million tourists. This is an increase of 30% compared to the same period in 2017.

But the arrival of tourists from abroad brought in only 15 million dollars in 2016. This is a fall of 37% compared to the 25 million dollars in 2015. Experts think that another three to four years will be necessary for tourism to fully revive in Turkey.

Since its appearance in late 2000s, halal tourism has continued to grow. Experts consider the sector immune to the crisis. In its latest report on the global Islamic economy, Thomson Reuters estimates that the halal tourism sector will represent \$283 billion by 2022. This would be about 14% of the global tourism market.

European customers

The “Muslim friendly hotels” offer full board options. The price of 200 euros per night would be rather usual, however these rates can double, depending on hotels and services.

According to Halal Booking website data, **23% of tourists come from Germany, 16% from England, 11% from Belgium and 8% from France.** 14% of the bookings are made by Turkey’s population.

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