

# FAITH TOURISM: ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING INDUSTRIES



Faith tourism may seem a minor branch of the industry, yet numbers suggest it is one of the most expansive segments which have significant potential.

Visiting religious sites has long been a priority for believers; no matter what religion, those truly devoted are ready to travel thousands of miles to pay homage to a place or area significant to their faith. In fact, large groups of travelers plan their religious holidays way in advance to make sure their experience is perfect.

**Thus, faith-based tourism has become one of the fastest-growing segments of the industry, being only overcome by adventure tourism.**

There are a number of key religious hotspots which attract the most faith tourists. Tourism agencies worldwide have been monitoring this developing trend and many have already launched special packages which feature many places of interest and deliver a complete deal to potential clients.

Such packages present a challenge for tour operators, considering the number of places which a themed religious tour need to include. Buddhist religion lures visitors to many Asian countries ranging from Nepal, and India to Japan, while Christians are attracted to countries in the Middle East, Europe or the Americas.

Among the most popular religious destinations are the so-called Bible lands or places, which follow the history of Christianity in Egypt, Jordan, Israel, etc. **Visiting Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth is only the very basis of such a religious tour.**

Lourdes in France is perhaps the largest pilgrimage place which annually draws millions of visitors, mainly Catholics. Yet France offers much more to faith travelers including the famous Parisian cathedrals such as Chartres and Notre Dame, or the Mont St. Michel abbey that dates back to 11th century.

Latin America as well as the U.S. present a variety of mission trails and those keen on Christian roots will enjoy travelling through Greece or Italy, and even Scotland and Ireland.

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