

## Spanish - Uzbek Relationships in the Face of Tourism

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### ABSTRACT

This article studies the peculiarities of the Spanish-Uzbek relationships in the sphere of tourism, having made a comparative analysis of the tours available either in Uzbekistan from Spain or from Spain to Uzbekistan. The affordability of such tours was also discussed.

**KEYWORDS:** tourism in Spain, tourism in Uzbekistan, Schengen visa, financial side of tourism.

### INTRODUCTION

It may give the impression of being surprising, but Spain, located in southwestern Europe and Uzbekistan in Central Asia were once connected by people living in the territory of Uzbekistan. Their name was Alans. Alans (Latin: Alani) are ancient ancestors of the Ossetians, currently inhabiting the Republic of North Ossetia, being at the same time ancient ancestors of the Spanish people. [1]

It is also interesting to mention, that the unification of the two countries continued even further with the help of one religion – Islam. Both countries started constructing the same mosques, madrasahs, minarets and mausoleums, with only differences according to local culture and environment.

Spanish-Uzbek relations are diplomatic relations between Spain and Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has an embassy in Madrid and honorary consulates in Madrid and Barcelona. The Spanish Embassy in Russia represents the country's interests in Uzbekistan, along with Belarus, Armenia and Turkmenistan. The honorary consulate of Spain is located in Tashkent.

The aim of this study was to determine the importance of the Spanish-Uzbek relationships in tourism using a comparative analysis of the tours available in both countries. The findings of this study should contribute to a better understanding of the reasons why Uzbek and Spanish tourists choose to visit these countries as well as how it looks like from the financial point of view.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Overall, the research was done on the basis of the information available from a row of tour agencies providing tours to Uzbekistan and Spain. Grouping the given data, it became possible to analyze and compare each part of the created tour package.

#### Days

Concerning tours to Spain from Uzbekistan, the average length of tours was 8 days and 7 nights. That amount fluctuated a little to 9 days and 8 nights, with a majority of 8/7 length. There were also tours with a special meaning such as New Year's packages for 4 days.

Speaking of tours to Uzbekistan from Spain, the number of days to spend varied from 2 days to 20 days, with an average of 9 days and 8 nights.

### Price

Taking into account a family of three people (parents and a child under 18 years old), the average amount of a tour for Uzbek tourists was 2,000 USD, while for tourists from Spain, it is twofold more – 4,000 USD.

The longest and therefore the most expensive tour from Uzbekistan was a combined tour to Spain, Italy and France with 12 days and 11 nights, and prices from about 1,400 USD up to 4,200 USD (depending on the type of tour by the level of comfort). Spanish tourists can afford to spend 20 days in four Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) for 8,900-26,600 USD.

### Visa

Spain is a country under the Schengen agreement; thus, it is obligatory to get a Schengen visa before entering. Commonly, it is not a big challenge, for Uzbekistan citizens. To get Schengen people need:

- ID (International as well as ordinary passport);
- Plan of a trip (tour agencies can do a big favor at this stage);
- Prove the booking of the flights and the booking at the hotel;
- Bring a bank account statement at the rate of 50-60 euros per each day of a trip (if the tour lasts for 8 days, then at least 400 euros must be on the statement);
- Bring medical insurance for at least 30,000 euros (it ought to be for 15 days more than the trip lasts);

It is also important to mention, that Uzbekistan does not have Spanish Embassy to get visas to Spain. As a rule, it is done in the Embassy of Germany in Uzbekistan or with the Official representatives in Moscow (Russia Federation); The fee is approximately 25 USD.

In the case of tours with more than one country in Europe, Schengen is done to the country where a tourist is planning to spend more days. However, if the length of the stay is the same for all countries, the visa is done to the first country of entry.

What is more interesting, Spanish tourists can travel to Uzbekistan with no visa if the period they are entering a country does not exceed 30 days as well as their purpose of visiting is actually tourism. However, if they plan to stay in a country for more than the maximum allowed period, they can easily get an e-visa on the website with a fee of 20 USD (single time), 35 USD (for a two-time visit) and 50 USD (with an endless period). [2]

### Medical insurance

Medical insurance is one of the obligatory steps to get a Schengen visa and Uzbek tourists can do it for the price of not more than 5,5 USD. What is more, insurances like that are done for 60,000 euros which is a real advantage, based on the minimum amount of 30,000 euros at the list of documents required to get Schengen.

To get medical insurance in Spain tourists ought to spend at least 50 euros (approximately 52 USD).

## Flights

When moving to Spain from Uzbekistan there is no possibility (by now) of having a direct flight therefore tourists willing to travel to Spain, usually it is Barcelona or Madrid, have to choose a transit through Turkey (Istanbul). The same concerns Spanish tourists traveling to Uzbekistan. Prices are not stable due to various factors such as the day of the flight, the number of people traveling and even the company which tourists are flying with.

## RESULTS

### Comparative analysis of tours in Uzbekistan and Spain

Having mentioned the New Year's 4-day tour to Spain from Uzbekistan, which costs about 1,200 USD per family, there is a possibility to compare it to the same purpose tour to Uzbekistan. One of the differences is that the cost of the Spanish tour is likely to be 400 USD more, at about 1,600 USD per family. For this amount, tourists in Spain visit Barcelona and Gala evening, followed by the next day in Figueres and Girona. In Uzbekistan, tourists also visit three cities: Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara as well as have an opportunity to take part in a festive dinner.

The longest 12-day tour to Spain, Italy and France can be compared to a 12-day tour to Uzbekistan. However, if the tour in Spain takes only several main cities in each country, the tour provided by Uzbekistan offers to explore the whole republic (figure 1.). Thus, starting at the capital (Tashkent), tourists will move to Nukus – the capital of the Karakalpakstan Republic (which is considered to be a part of Uzbekistan). There they explore Muynak, a small city 3 hours away from Nukus; go to Khiva and Bukhara; stop at the Gijduvan, Nurata and arrive at the Yurt Camp, which is really close to the Aydar Lake (tourists visit it a bit later). It is interesting to mention, that besides all these destinations, foreigners also visit Samarkand city and after finally arriving at Tashkent even have a chance to go to the Chimgan Mountains and go back.



**Figure 1: A 12-day tour in Uzbekistan [3]**

### Extra expenditures

Tours are different: some provide tourists with only breakfast and no other meals during the day; others give the whole specter of service including a variety of excursions and even the price of the flight is included in the tour. Sometimes tour agencies offer help with visas, taking extra money apart from the price of the tour they sell.

It is quite common to sell tours without flight tickets, so tourists have to think about it in advance. Flights Barcelona-Tashkent-Barcelona seem more expensive than Madrid-Tashkent-Madrid (a family would spend about 4,900 USD to the first city and 3,000 USD to the second). Prices do not change if the flights are from Uzbekistan to Spain (Tashkent-Barcelona-Tashkent; Tashkent-Madrid-Tashkent).

And finally, the tourist fee. Either in Spain or Uzbekistan, there is an allowance for the main tourist attractions: monuments, museums – places that are not free to enter. That is done based on the commonly known fact that the tourism industry is a business and it must bring a sort of benefit to the welcoming country. What is more, it is widely used abroad and is not accounted as another way to cheat on money.

## DISCUSSION

### Correlation of the prices for Uzbek tourists

If to lean on the average testimonies an overall price of the tours can be expected. Thus, a tour for 8 days, 7 nights from Uzbekistan to Barcelona will cost an Uzbek tourist 2,000 USD (a tour itself, with a 3-star hotel and a breakfast) + 4,900 USD (round trip ticket, the amount is not stable) = 6,900 USD as not concerning extra expenditures; price of the flight is in the economy-class;

However, if to travel from Tashkent to Madrid it is likely to cost 1,900 USD less: 2,000 USD (a tour) + 3,000 USD (tickets) = 5,000 USD.

Tourists, especially from Uzbekistan, find Spain a better alternative not only because of the historical importance of many Spanish cities but also attracted of its beach and coastline potential. And there is no surprise that out of the 10 most visited destinations in Spain; half of them have access to the big water. Barcelona and Madrid, the two most visited cities, are surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea; Mallorca's and Marbella's main aspect of living is resort tourism, which serves its product all year round; ending up with Valencia. [4]

According to different sources, the average salary in Uzbekistan accounts for about 4 million Uzbek sums (less than 400 USD) per month, with differentiating by regions: salary in Tashkent is far higher – up to 6-7 million Uzbek sums (approximately 600 USD). With some straightforward calculations, an ordinary family with a monthly income of 500-600 USD (if both parents are working and saving half of the earned money) can afford to have a holiday in Spain for 10 months. However, it is far too uncertain, due to some unexpected expenditures, such as illnesses, fines or simple food and household.

### Correlation of the prices for Spanish tourists

Uzbekistan is particularly appealing when it comes to historical and educational tourism. Spanish tourists are expected to spend around 8,900 USD (4,000 USD for an average tour of 9 days and 8 nights + 4,900 for a round trip ticket from Barcelona) and about 7,000 USD if to travel from Madrid. Exactly the same, as for the Uzbek tourists, rarely do the tour agencies

include the price of the tickets in the tour package.

Concerning the purpose of visiting, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva are in high popularity. Two of them (Samarkand and Bukhara) even have an international airport, however, it is more common to arrive in Tashkent first and then move to other regions.

The average salary in Spain can fluctuate, so we can take it as 1750 up to 2250 euros (1850-2400 USD) per month. It is almost five times more than that of Uzbekistan. Making the same calculations as for Uzbek tourists, we get that an ordinary family in Spain can afford a visit to Uzbekistan for about 3 months. It is hard not to notice the huge difference between 10 and 3 months. Logically, while an Uzbek tourist can only visit Spain ones in a year, a Spanish counterpart can do it every three months (about 4 times a year).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Overall, our data provide a more comprehensive view of the Spanish-Uzbek relationships with a special emphasis on the financial side of the issue. The results of the comparative analysis can serve as the basis for further studies of the tourism sector in Uzbekistan as well as in Spain, taking into account its affordability and profits.

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