

MODERN TRENDS IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN JORDAN

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Abstract

The article examines the dynamics of tourism industry development in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, analyzing key trends and factors influencing its growth. The role of government measures to stimulate the industry is emphasized, including infrastructure development and promotion of the national tourism product at the international level. Analysis of statistical data from the Central Bank of Jordan allows us to conclude that there is a gradual stabilization of the sector and positive prospects despite persistent external risks.

Keywords. Tourism infrastructure, UNESCO World Heritage Site, Hashemite dynasty, passenger traffic, hotel market, digital nomads, corporate tourism, medical tourism, religious tourism, tourist flow.

Introduction

Jordan is one of the most attractive destinations in the Middle East, where ancient history, stunning natural landscapes, and modern tourism infrastructure create a unique experience for travelers.

Jordan's economy relies on tourism, financial services, transportation, manufacturing, and remittances from migrant workers. Due to the scarcity of arable land and water resources, agriculture plays a minor role, forcing the country to actively develop water treatment technologies. Although the economy has traditionally depended on government regulation, in recent years, authorities have taken steps to reduce barriers for businesses.

In 1946, Jordan gained independence from Great Britain, becoming the Hashemite Kingdom. The first decades were marked by weak economic development. Unlike neighboring countries, Jordan does not possess significant oil reserves, and its industry remains underdeveloped.

By the 1950s, healthcare reforms began: combating malaria, improving water supply, and constructing hospitals. However, until the 1970s, the country's budget depended on foreign aid, including loans from the US and UK, revenue from Saudi oil transit, and support from Arab states that viewed Jordan as an ally against Israel.

Since the 1970s, Jordan has focused on tourism, investing in hotels, roads, and craft

development. In the 1980s, this strategy intensified: Petra and Quseir Amra received UNESCO World Heritage status, and Royal Jordanian Airlines expanded its route network. In 1987, a law was passed to encourage investment in tourism and healthcare, and a year later, the Ministry of Tourism was established.

The reign of King Hussein (1952-1999) brought the country out of crisis through the development of the service sector. In the 1990s and 2000s, Jordan implemented liberal reforms: signing a peace treaty with Israel (1994), joining the WTO (1999), and establishing a special economic zone in Aqaba (2001).

From 1979, with the founding of the Royal Society of Fine Arts, a cultural revival began. Museums and galleries emerged, and in 2002, Amman was named the capital of Arab culture. Foundations like Darat al-Funun support local art.

Despite its stability, Jordan has faced terrorism. In 2005, a series of hotel bombings occurred in Amman, killing 67 people. Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility, which temporarily impacted the tourism sector.

The Arab Spring also affected the country, but not as severely as its neighbors. Thanks to the authority of the Hashemite dynasty and balanced policies, Jordan remained an island of calm. Nevertheless, the number of tourists decreased by 600,000 compared to 2010.

Today, Jordan ranks among the top 4 Arab countries in terms of tourist arrivals, behind only the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Morocco. More than 5 million tourists visit the country annually, contributing about 7% to the GDP.

Queen Alia International Airport in Amman continues to serve as the main gateway to Jordan. Passenger traffic in 2024 exceeded 8.8 million people¹, and the modernization of terminal facilities, digital services, and waiting areas has improved the arrival experience for international travelers.

Jordan's hotel market is quietly but steadily expanding. In 2024, the country added over 1,500 new rooms, primarily in Amman, Petra, the Dead Sea, and Wadi Rum, according to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

Several high-end projects have been opened or announced, including Hyatt Regency Aqaba Ayla Resort, Fairmont Amman, and new eco-lodges near Wadi Musa and Dana Biosphere Reserve. Mid-range hotels and boutique hotels are also becoming increasingly popular, catering to adventure travelers, digital nomads, and those seeking authentic local experiences. Hotel occupancy rates at the beginning of 2025 reached over 70 percent in Petra and the Dead Sea during peak season, while Amman experienced stable weekday occupancy driven by corporate and medical tourism.

Religious tourism also plays a central role. Sites such as Mount Nebo, Bethany Beyond the Jordan, and the Ancient Mosaics of Madaba attract spiritual travelers and religious groups from around the world.

It should also be noted that Red Sea diving in Aqaba, spa resorts on the Dead Sea, and hiking adventures in Ajloun and Dana are gaining popularity as the country expands its offerings in

¹ <https://www.travelandtourworld.ru/>



soft adventure tourism and wellness retreats.

Additionally, King Hussein International Airport in Aqaba is becoming increasingly important for Red Sea tourism. Its seasonal charter traffic and new low-cost European routes have played a significant role in growing visitor numbers during the winter and spring months.

New hotels, including Marriott chain properties, are being built in Amman, Aqaba, and Petra. Plans include the Red Sea Astrarium Resort theme park featuring Paramount attractions.

Jordan is also investing in sustainable development and community-based tourism, implementing programs to train local guides, support women-led hospitality businesses, and promote eco-friendly tourism - all while preserving the country's natural and cultural heritage. Despite regional instability, Jordan continues to attract visitors with its rich heritage, safety, and hospitality, remaining a jewel of the Middle East.

According to preliminary data from the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), the country recorded significant growth in tourism revenue in January-February 2025. Compared to the same period in 2024, figures increased by 16.3% to \$1.28 billion. This trend is due to an 18.5% increase in tourist arrivals, indicating the sector's recovery from previous crises.

In 2024, the industry faced serious challenges, with tourism revenue decreasing by 2.3% and tourist arrivals falling by 3.9%, particularly affecting European (-54%) and American (-35.2%) segments. However, in the first two months of 2025, the situation changed dramatically: revenues increased by 16.3% (to \$1.28 billion), tourist numbers grew by 18.5%, with the largest increase coming from long-haul markets (+42.5%).

Experts note that this situation arose due to steady demand from Arab tourists and the Jordanian diaspora, the effectiveness of government measures to support the industry, diversification of tourism markets, and the gradual restoration of confidence after geopolitical crises.

The record growth in the "other nationalities" category deserves special attention, as it indicates an expansion in the geographic range of tourist demand and Jordan's successful positioning in the global market.

Despite ongoing external risks, current indicators allow for an optimistic outlook on the prospects for the development of the kingdom's tourism industry in 2025.

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