

Kazakhstan Boosts Tourism with Record Growth and Bold Investments

By Aiman Nakispekova -The Astana Times



Kazakhstan's tourism sector continues to grow steadily, with an increase in both domestic and international visitors and rising investments in infrastructure. By the end of 2024, domestic tourists are expected to exceed ten million, while international arrivals are projected to surpass 15 million—a nearly 60% rise compared to 2023, according to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

Revenue from accommodation facilities grew by 27% in the first nine months of 2024, reaching 224 billion tenge (US\$425.6 million). Government-approved funding for tourism infrastructure tripled this year, reflecting robust support for the sector. Over 30 promotional events were held across major Chinese cities during Kazakhstan Tourism Year in China, boosting international interest. The newly introduced Neo Nomad visa, designed to attract remote workers and digital nomads, is also expected to increase foreign visitor numbers.

Tourism plays a significant role in Kazakhstan's economy, creating jobs, attracting investments, and generating tax revenues. Employment in the tourism industry is projected to reach 800,000 by 2029.

"We position Kazakhstan as a country open to the world. Currently, citizens from 83 countries can visit visa-free, with plans to expand this to 100 countries," said Yerzhan Yerkinbayev, the Deputy Minister of Tourism and Sports.

Government initiatives have improved infrastructure, accessibility, and private investment levels.

Key 2024 projects include the Tourism District of Astana, a 194 billion tenge (US\$368.6 million) investment expected to create 2,000 jobs and generate ten billion tenge (US\$19 million) annually in taxes, and the Caspian Riviera Project, a 137.4 billion tenge (US\$261 million) development in the Mangystau Region featuring a beach resort and golf hotel. Upgrades to hotel complexes in cities like Almaty and Turkistan are also underway.

Despite these positive trends, the tourism sector faces challenges, including the need to improve service quality, advance education in tourism, enhance infrastructure, and promote Kazakhstan more effectively on the global stage.

Tourism's contribution to economic growth is undeniable. By creating jobs, attracting investments, and developing infrastructure, it serves as a powerful economic driver. To fully harness its potential, Kazakhstan must adopt a comprehensive strategy that prioritizes service quality, accessibility, and the promotion of its rich cultural and natural resources.

Global success stories demonstrate tourism's potential as a transformative economic engine. By implementing strategic measures and targeted initiatives, Kazakhstan can position tourism as a cornerstone of its economy.