UZBEKISTAN AS AN AFFORDABLE DESTINATION: ANALYSING PRICE COMPETITIVENESS AND TOURISM POTENTIAL

Sitora Siroch qizi Nosirova
Student of the "Silk Road" International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage Samarkand

Abstract. In this paper, the author will explore the potential for combining the affordability of on-the-ground tickets and unique cultural attractions to improve Uzbekistan's international tourism offering. A desk-based assessment is based on the tourism statistics of the Republic of Uzbekistan, data from the Travel & Tourism Development Index of the World Economic Forum, data on the World Heritage sites and published indicative visitor costs. The numbers of inbound trips recorded for 2025 were 11.68 million, of which 1.92 million were classified as L&Rs,

distinguishing these categories will prevent overstating the demand for holidays. Based on published travel-budget estimates, relatively low cost travel is possible to provide value-based travel experiences, though access to air, service gaps in some regions and the lack of adequate pricing transparency remain key constraints. The paper calls for rethinking the concept of affordability as low prices and emphasizing it as value for money. It suggests a standardized monitoring of visitors costs, combined visitor and accommodation packages, diversified regional itineraries and quality safeguards. The results are not to be interpreted as a demonstration of the causal relationship that lower prices alone lead to more arrivals.

Key words: Uzbekistan, affordable tourism, competitiveness of the destination, transparency of prices, inbound tourism, Silk road, sustainable tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

The dynamics between spend and travelling and the perceived quality of travel experiences is becoming a growing influence on international travel demand. The price-conscious tourist isn't always the person who chooses the least expensive place to visit; they consider the overall expense of travel to the location, as well as the cost of lodging and activities. This is also a strategic differentiator for emerging destinations, as providing low-cost local service can be a real competitive edge only if connectivity, convenience, safety and service reliability are also good.

In Uzbekistan, there is a remarkable foundation for value oriented cultural tourism. It can be used as a series of short city visits or multi-city trips to its Silk Road cities, Islamic scholarly heritage, traditional crafts and food culture. The city of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva are the key heritage nodes, and the city of Tashkent is an important gateway city. Today, UNESCO has inscribed eight World Heritage properties in Uzbekistan, such as the historic centres of Bukhara and Shakhrisyabz, Itchan Kala and Samarkand, as well as transnational natural and Silk Road properties [4].

However, the country's global reputation is even more linked to history and architecture than a clearly measured, transparent value proposition. The following questions are posed in this paper: (1) What does the existing evidence tell us about the degree of afforadability and growth of tourism in Uzbekistan? (2) What structural factors constrain the ability to reduce the local cost of services and monuments to a competitive overall cost of the trip in Uzbekistan? and (3) What practical policies would make it possible for Uzbekistan to become a high-value, low-cost country for visitors without compromising the quality of the services and monuments provided?

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research method used in the study is descriptive analytical data driven with desk study method. It contains quantitative part based on public data regarding the indicators of inbound-travel in 2024-2025 from the National Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan [1-3]. The interpretive part was based on the World Economic Forum (WEF) Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024 [5], the official inventory of the UNESCO [4] as well as an independent published traveler guidance for budget-travel [6] and an official guide for travelers from Uzbekistan

[7]. It triangulates evidence over three dimensions; market demand, indicative in-destination prices and the wider conditions needed for visitor value.

Operationalization of price competitiveness is in terms of costs for a whole tour, not just a hotel or meal. The concept of total trip expenditure is seen as a sum of international access expenditures, entry expenditures, and the sum of the expenditures for accommodation, food, and internal travel and activities. The following prices published are not a systematic price survey but are indicative prices as estimated by the editor. No original visitor questionnaire was conducted, nor was there an econometric impact model or a price panel to look at prices in the countries.No original visitor questionnaire was carried out and neither was there an econometric impact model nor a price panel to compare prices in the countries concerned, so the findings do not identify cause-and-effect relationships.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The volume and nature of pilgrimages. The size and type of pilgrimages.

The number of foreign citizens who visited Uzbekistan in inbound trips in 2025 is approximately 11.68 million, or 46.8% more than in 2024 (7.96 million) [1]. The large, catch-all category of inbound travel is the headline figure however. Among the total, 7.86 million (67.3%) trips were made for visiting relatives and 1.92 million (16.5%) were for leisure and recreation [2–3]. The number of visits for leisure and recreation increased by 62.3%, from an estimated 1.18 million in 2024 to 1.92 million in 2025.

Table 1.

Inbound trips by purpose: selected indicators (million trips)

Indicator	2024	2025
All inbound trips of foreign citizens	7.96	11.68
Leisure and recreation	1.18	1.92
Visiting relatives	6.11	7.86

Source: National Statistics Committee SIAT indicators [1–3]; figures rounded. Categories are purpose-of-trip classifications, not unique persons.

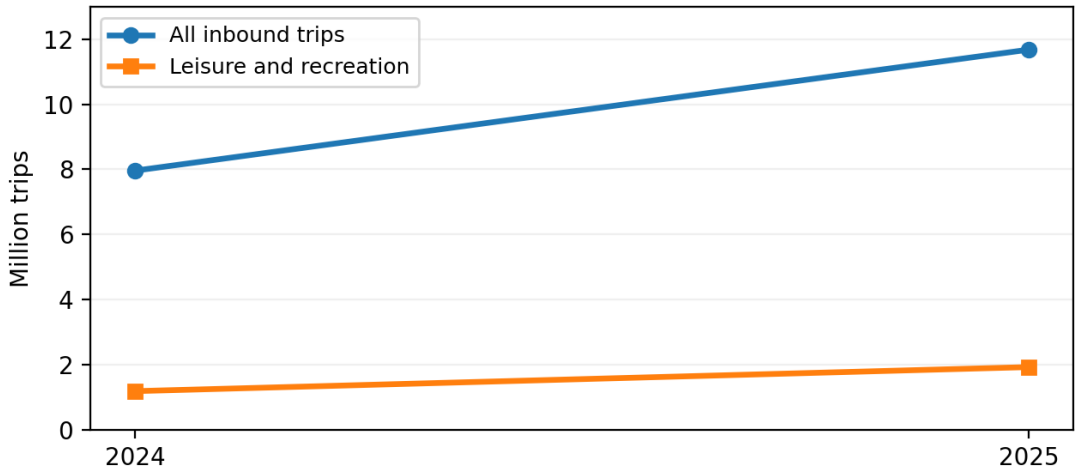


Figure 1. Inbound trips to Uzbekistan by selected travel purpose, 2024–2025 (million trips)

Source: National Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan, SIAT indicators [1–2]; rounded figures.

This difference is important when determining policy evaluation. An uptick in visits to family and other cross-border travel does not necessarily indicate the effectiveness of destination advertising or holiday-product pricing. However, the growth of the leisure market suggests a viable market for heritage circuits, independent travel and short-stay products in the commercial market. In addition to aggregate border entries, the combination of tracking leisure arrivals and length of stay and average visitor spending would give a more balanced assessment of the performance of a destination.

3.2. The cost of the essential tourism services is a major factor.

Uzbekistan is rated as accessible to budget travelers in Lonely Planet's independent travel guide, and an average daily budget guide of $25-40 is supplied. It states that the price for a dormitory bed is about US$8-10, a basic double room is about US$20-40, a Tashkent Metro ride is about US$0.15 and a high speed train ticket from Tashkent to Samarkand is about US$11 [6]. These figures are estimates at a specific date and the fares, seasonality, booking conditions and exchange rates are all subject to change; they are not necessarily accurate 2026 market averages.

Table 2.

Indicative visitor costs in Uzbekistan (US dollars)

Expense category	Indicative cost (USD)
Average daily budget	$25–40
Dormitory bed (per night)	$8–10
Basic double room (per night)	$20–40
Tashkent Metro ride	≈ $0.15
High-speed train: Tashkent–Samarkand	From $11

Source: Lonely Planet [6]. Indicative published estimates, not verified 2026 market averages.

This evidence, however, suggests a differentiation opportunity. A tourist with ability to use local lodging, traditional restaurants, local transportation and the possibility of several cultural activities in a day is likely to find Uzbekistan as having high cultural content per dollar spent. But it is not always the case that a low daily budget will translate to a cheap overseas getaway. Tickets, connections and visa or entry requirements, high season accommodation, guided tours and intercity transport can make a significant difference to the overall ticket. Indeed, tourists from the far corners of the globe evaluate the whole tour, not just the cost of local food or local accommodation.

3.3. Competitive strengths other than price

The nation's price is believable when coupled with unique aspects. Historical city centres, craft workshops, pilgrimage sites and museums allow multiple interests itineraries and UNESCO recognition enables the development of internationally legible heritage branding. An architectural, gastronomic, Islamic intellectual history, and urban exploration and community-based experience can be achieved in one trip. The sheer variety can be a positive attribute even if the absolute price isn't.

A wider benchmark for this year's index is provided by the WEF's 2024 index, which places Uzbekistan at 78th position (up from 94th in the previous year's index) with a 7.8% increase in the overall score [5]. This improvement occurs because the index assesses the enabling conditions on several aspects – and cannot only be attributed to low prices. Instead, it proposes integration of the competitive agenda to consider tourism infrastructure, accessibility, digital readiness, and workforce capacities and sustainability, in addition to affordability.

3.4. Limits to an affordable-tourism model

There are four restrictions that need to be considered. One major factor is that savings on the flight may be lost due to the cost and convenience of international travel. Secondly, there are different types and styles of accommodation and modes of transport available in the main tourist routes, as opposed to the secondary routes where options and information for tourists are less developed when it comes to the budget. Third, the information on tickets is often disjointed - it is available on multiple locations, in various languages, and with different information about how to access the ticket and what ancillary charges are involved in traveling. Fourth, cheap experiences can be economically or environmentally unsustainable if they involve underpaid work, the deterioration of historic fabric and/or congestion of a limited number of high-profile sites.

The risk of the strategy, then, is to sell “cheap Uzbekistan” as an end product. Undue competition may lead to lower quality services, loss of income to locally based businesses and a decline of available resources for conservation. A more robust approach is to provide consistently fair overall prices, reliable criteria, and culturally enriching experiences. Studies of tourism leakages also reveal that the retention of value within the local supply chain is more beneficial for development from tourism visitor spending [8].

4. STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Firstly, the tourism stakeholders of the country and the region must set up a regularly updated observatory of the cost of visitors. The median prices for a typical room, two days' worth of meals, local transport, key museum admissions and common intercity travel could be captured in a simple benchmark basket in Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and some emerging destinations. Results to be collected in the same way and published in big foreign languages. This would allow credible comparisons from season to season and competitor markets, and would separate out the median price, minimum and maximum prices.

Second, integrated budget-friendly products should decrease uncertainties of the final travel bill. This includes itineraries clearly priced for Silk Road tours, with 3-, 5- and 7-day options, including both accommodation and rail or bus options and both mandatory and optional heritage admission and guides. The bundled offers

should not take the place of the possibility for the independent traveller to book individual parts. Public facing journey planners could show the cost of the journey, payment methods, service language and cancellation conditions prior to booking.

Thirdly, connectivity and regional diversification should be integrated. Better onward connections from international gateways, reliable public transit to tourist attractions and well-defined information on intercity travel schedules would enhance both affordability and convenience. New routes may be established between the main cultural route and the Fergana Valley, Termez, the region of Zarafshan and nature-oriented routes, where the infrastructure and the tolerance of the routes are appropriate. Pilgrimage and scholarly heritage routes can have a role of not only traditional sightseeing groups but also families, students and culturally oriented tourists who are interested in Islamic learning traditions of Central Asia.

Fourth, the "high value at transparent prices" should be the message in targeted digital promotion, with verified sample budgets, multilingual independent-travel guides and partnerships between low-cost carriers and responsible tour operators and online booking channels. Promotion should be evaluated based on origin market – regional visitors to the country, young independent travelers and long haul cultural tourists have vastly different transport costs and buying habits. It is important to highlight the presence of small guest houses, women entrepreneurs, craft producers and local restaurants in these distribution channels.

Finally, there should be more than just a focus on arrivals when evaluating performance. Indicators suggested are: median total trip cost by origin market, growth in leisure trips, length of stay, satisfaction with value for money, proportion of purchases from local suppliers, distribution of trips by season and conservation pressures by site. A balanced scorecard would enable policy makers to work towards affordability and allow them to assess visitor experience and community benefit.

5. CONCLUSION

The tourism sector in Uzbekistan has a legitimate chance to become a moderate cost, high quality international tourist destination, due to its significant heritage resources, rising tourism demand and relatively low accessibility of everyday services. These are official 2025 figures, which, though positive, highlight the need to not equate inbound travel with leisure-tourism arrivals. The evidence indicates that it is not an independent claim that would measure the costliness of a destination, but rather a strategic proposition, for which Uzbekistan is a candidate. To change potential into sustained competitiveness, the country should track the standardised travel cost, make the travel to more than one city easier, encourage clear packages, expand regional participation and protect service quality and heritage. Under these conditions, affordability can become a durable component of destination reputation rather than a temporary discount-based slogan.

References:

[1] National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2026). The number of inbound tourist trips by foreign citizens to the Republic of Uzbekistan (total), SIAT indicator 2.04.11.0001. https://siat.stat.uz/data/1038/?lang=en

[2] National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2026). Inbound tourist trips for leisure and recreation purposes, SIAT indicator 2.04.11.0011. https://siat.stat.uz/data/1012/?lang=en

[3] National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2026). Inbound tourist trips for visiting relatives, SIAT indicator 2.04.11.0013. https://siat.stat.uz/data/1024/?lang=en

[4] UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2026). Uzbekistan: Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/uz/

[5] World Economic Forum. (2024). Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024: Executive summary. https://www.weforum.org/publications/travel-tourism-development-index-2024/executive-summary-4c15006478

[6] Lonely Planet. (2025). Travel to Uzbekistan on a budget. https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/uzbekistan-on-a-budget

[7] Uzbekistan Tourism. (n.d.). Travel guideline: Entry and visa information. https://uzbekistan.travel/en/travel-guideline/

[8] Chaitanya, A. K., Swain, S. K., & George, B. (2026). Managing economic leakages for building resilient and sustainable tourism destination performance. Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal, 74(1), 22–44. https://doi.org/10.37741/t.74.1.2

ASOSIY VOSITALAR HISOBI: BHMS 5 VA IAS 16 O‘RTASIDAGI FARQLAR VA ULARNING MOLIYAVIY NATIJAGA TA’SIRI

Rahmatova Zilola Izzatilla qizi
Buxoro davlat universiteti, Davlat auditi fakulteti 1-kurs magistr

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada Buxgalteriya hisobining milliy standarti (BHMS 5-son Asosiy vositalar) va Xalqaro moliyaviy hisobot standarti (IAS 16 Asosiy vositalar) o‘rtasidagi konseptual, uslubiy va amaliy farqlar chuqur ilmiy tahlil qilingan. Shuningdek, milliy standartdan xalqaro standartlarga bosqichma-bosqich o‘tish jarayonida korxonalarning moliyaviy natijalari, foyda va zarar hisoboti hamda balans ko‘rsatkichlariga ko‘rsatadigan ta’siri batafsil asoslab berilgan.

Annotation. This article provides an in-depth scientific analysis of the conceptual, methodological, and practical differences between the National Accounting Standard (NAS No. 5: Property, Plant, and Equipment) and the International Accounting Standard (IAS 16: Property, Plant, and Equipment). Furthermore, it offers a detailed justification of the impact that the transition from