

HOW WAR IMPACTED ON THE TOURISM IN DONETSK REGION

The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of the full-scale invasion on tourism in the Donetsk region.

Before the full-scale invasion, tourism was one of the main economic sectors in the region. Outstanding hydrological, geological, and biological natural monuments, the region's rich historical past, numerous historical and cultural landmarks, resort complexes, and dozens of unique industries [1] were attractive not only to Ukrainians but also to foreign tourists. Many resort towns combined most of the features mentioned above, making them both popular and comfortable for vacations. Many children used to spend their summers at a variety of summer camps catering to different ages and interests.

Probably the most famous attractions among tourists were Svyatohirya, the Artwinery sparkling wine factory in Bakhmut, the salt mines in Soledar, the Belokuzminovsky chalk cliffs in the Kramatorsk Regional Landscape Park, and the Kamiani Mohyly Reserve [2]. These sites were even promoted by the State Agency for Tourism Development in Ukraine.

Unfortunately, everything changed after the start of the full-scale invasion. Many roads, hotels, and historical, cultural, and natural sites were destroyed or looted. Businesses connected to tourism were forced to either shut down or relocate, making travel to the Donetsk region impossible and even dangerous [3]. This led to a decline in the economy and a significant drop in tourist numbers.

All of this will have many long-term effects on the region, such as the perception of it as unsafe for tourism even after the war ends, the psychological impact on both potential visitors and locals, and, as mentioned before, the damage to cultural and natural heritage sites. Many of these sites are impossible to restore or rebuild due to their condition.

At this point, there are some possibilities to restore at least part of the tourism in this area. For example, leisure tourism could be replaced with war tourism, attracting journalists, researchers, and war historians. Additionally, some historical artifacts could be relocated to safe places such as museums or galleries. Another possibility is the development of VR tourism, allowing people to explore old sites virtually.

Future prospects and challenges for this region are making strategies for rebuilding the tourism industry post-war, changing travel trends and their impact on future tourism in Donetsk and increased attention to the region from the government.

In conclusion, the full-scale invasion has profoundly affected the tourism industry in the Donetsk region, transforming a once-thriving sector into an inaccessible and dangerous landscape. The destruction of infrastructure, historical landmarks, and natural sites, along with the collapse of tourism-related businesses, has led to severe economic and cultural consequences. Even after the war ends, the region will face significant challenges in rebuilding its tourism industry due to long-term damage, safety concerns, and shifts in public perception.

Despite these hardships, there are potential paths toward recovery which could help maintain interest in the region's rich cultural and natural heritage. However, restoring tourism in Donetsk will require strong governmental support, strategic planning, and

international cooperation. The long-term future of the region's tourism depends on its ability to adapt to new realities while preserving the legacy of what was lost.

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