

Moving from Pilgrimage to Cultural Heritage Tourism in Palestine: Potentials & Limitations

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A popular idea among Destination Management Organisations, managers of tourism facilities, rural and cultural heritage resources, and local places, particularly in Palestine, is the shift from pilgrimage tourism to rural heritage tourism. This article uses the case of Palestine to examine the processes and instruments for such a change. The conceptual paper starts by discussing the trends in tourism, determinants of destination success and different trends in promoting rural and cultural heritage destinations instead of mass tourism (pilgrimage). It discusses the main argument that shifting from pilgrimage to cultural heritage raises several issues and difficulties. A complete or partial shift from pilgrimage to cultural heritage-based tourism is more than a simple product replacement. It has several consequences. The paper follows by discussing the consequences of the 'welcome' and the 'unwelcome' arguments for such change (from a pilgrimage to cultural heritage), the associated constraints and issues, and finally, two possible scenarios for such a change. This paper also explores the answer to the basic question of why there has been a shift from pilgrimage to rural cultural heritage.

