



# UNWTO Recommendations on Urban Tourism





**A mirror in Bordeaux, France**  
© Vanessak | Dreamstime.com

# UNWTO Recommendations on Urban Tourism



Modern cityscape of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
© Kukotaekaterina | Dreamstime.com

## I Introduction

### Considering that

1. According to the United Nations, in 2015, 54% of the world's population lived in urban areas and that by 2030 this share is expected to grow to 60%,
2. Alongside rapid urbanization, the growth of the tourism sector in recent years, driven by affordable transport, increased mobility, travel facilitation, new technologies such as digital platforms for property renting and hospitality services, and a growing middle class, has made cities increasingly popular tourism destinations,
3. The wealth generated from both domestic and international tourism contributes significantly to the socio-economic development of many cities and its surroundings, drives cultural preservation and regeneration and promotes intercultural exchanges,
4. The growth of urban tourism also creates important challenges in terms of the use of natural resources, environmental changes, socio-cultural impact, fair working conditions, pressure on infrastructure, mobility, peace and security, congestion management and the relationship with host communities,
5. In a time of intense debate over the growing number of tourists and the livability and sustainability of cities, it is essential that all stakeholders – residents, visitors, local, regional and national authorities and private sector – work together to respond to the current and upcoming challenges,
6. Creating policies that provide guidance to the sector on how to more effectively develop and manage urban tourism is crucial to the long-term sustainability and development of the tourism sector and urban settings,
7. The principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism,
8. Tourism can make an important contribution to the New Urban Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 11 on 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable',
9. These recommendations stem from the series of UNWTO Urban Tourism Summits held since 2012, the Lisbon Declaration on Sustainable Urban tourism, adopted at the First UNWTO Mayors Forum for Sustainable Urban Tourism, held in Lisbon, Portugal, on 5 April 2019, in addition to research conducted by the UNWTO Secretariat in the area of urban tourism.<sup>1</sup>

1) World Tourism Organization and IPSOS (2019), *UNWTO/IPSOS Global survey on the perception of residents towards city tourism: impact and measures* (online), available at: <http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/docpdf/unwtoipsosglobalsurveysummary.pdf> (12-04-19).

World Tourism Organization; Centre of Expertise Leisure, Tourism & Hospitality; NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences; and NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences (eds., 2019), *'Overtourism'? – Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth beyond Perceptions, Volume 2: Case Studies*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284420629>.

World Tourism Organization; Centre of Expertise Leisure, Tourism & Hospitality; NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences; and NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences (eds., 2018), *'Overtourism'? – Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth beyond Perceptions*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284419999>.



**Residential building in the heart of Madrid, Spain**  
© Svetlana Day | Dreamstime.com

## II UNWTO Recommendations on Urban Tourism

### *Promote the integration of tourism in the wider urban agenda*

1. Tourism should be fully integrated in the wider city agenda as a means ensure its effective contribution to the development of inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities.
2. Cities should set governance models and collaboration mechanisms for urban tourism that engage the tourism administration as well as other relevant areas at all levels – national, local and regional, the private sector and local communities.
3. Tourism should be included in cities' monitoring and measurement systems ensuring evidence-based decision making, planning and management.
4. Tourism should be part of the urban policies and strategies to achieve the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 11 on 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'.



### ***Foster sustainable policies and practices in urban tourism***

5. Urban tourism should promote sustainable practices for a more efficient use of resources and a reduction of emissions and waste within the framework of the circular economy.
6. Cities should implement the concept of smart urban tourism destinations by integrating fully the following pillars in their policies and strategies: governance, innovation, technology, accessibility and sustainability in the three areas – social, economic and environmental.
7. Cities should promote universally accessible urban tourism in line with the UNWTO Recommendations on Accessible Tourism for All.
8. Cities should maximize the use of big data and technology to better plan, measure and manage urban tourism and promote evidence-based decision making on key issues such as infrastructure, carrying capacity, housing, transport and mobility, management of natural and cultural resources and community engagement in tourism.
9. Cities should develop innovative tourism products and experiences and the use of technology to diversify tourism flows in time and space, promote longer stays and attract visitor segments that better contribute to their long-term vision and strategy.
10. Cities should advance the measurement and monitoring of urban tourism in order to ensure sustainable development of destinations in a relevant and timely manner. In this regard, the UNWTO Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories can be a model to consider as it provides a framework for the systematic, timely and regular monitoring of resource-use and a better understanding of the impact of tourism in nine areas – seasonality; employment; economic benefits; governance; local satisfaction; energy management; water management; waste water (sewage) management; and solid waste management.
11. The sustainability of urban tourism will only be successful if a comprehensive and long-term planning strategy is adopted based on a multi-action and multi-stakeholder participatory approach.



**Market in old town of Marrakech, Morocco**

© Golasza | Dreamstime.com

**Create cities for all:  
building cities for citizens and visitors**

12. Cities should enhance the full integration of local communities in the tourism planning and management.
13. Cities should promote the inclusion of local communities in the tourism value chain ensuring that tourism benefits translates into community based wealth creation, decent jobs and social inclusion particularly for women, youth and less favoured groups.
14. Cities should promote the contribution of tourism in the creation of cities as spaces that foster urban regeneration, cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, innovation and the generation and exchange of knowledge.
15. Cities should consider tourists as ‘temporary residents’ and ensure tourism policy promote the engagement of visitors and residents in a holistic and fully integrated manner.
16. Cities should plan and manage city development and urban tourism in an integrated manner for residents and visitors alike.



**Heart of Rome, Italy**  
© Wirestock | Dreamstime.com





Copyright © 2020, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Cover photo: Buenos Aires, Argentina, architecture details; copyright © Curtis Heideman | Dreamstime.com

#### **UNWTO Recommendations on Urban Tourism**

ISBN (printed version): 978-92-844-2200-5 | ISBN (electronic version): 978-92-844-2201-2 | DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284422012>

Published by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Madrid, Spain.

First published: 2020. All rights reserved.

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)  
Calle del Poeta Joan Maragall, 42  
28020 Madrid  
Spain

Tel.: (+34) 915 67 81 00  
Fax: (+34) 915 71 37 33  
Website: [www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org)  
E-mail: [info@unwto.org](mailto:info@unwto.org)

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinions whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

**Citation:** World Tourism Organization (2020). *UNWTO Recommendations on Urban Tourism*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284422012>.

All UNWTO publications are protected by copyright. Therefore, and unless otherwise specified, no part of a UNWTO publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, microfilm, scanning, without prior permission in writing. UNWTO encourages dissemination of its work and is pleased to consider permissions, licensing, and translation requests related to UNWTO publications.

Permission to photocopy UNWTO material in Spain must be obtained through:

CEDRO, Centro Español de Derechos Reprográficos  
Calle Alcalá, 26, 3º  
28014 Madrid  
Spain

Tel.: (+34) 913 08 63 30  
Fax: (+34) 913 08 63 27  
Website: [www.cedro.org](http://www.cedro.org)  
E-mail: [cedro@cedro.org](mailto:cedro@cedro.org)

For authorization of the reproduction of UNWTO works outside of Spain, please contact one of CEDRO's partner organizations, with which bilateral agreements are in place (Cedro: <https://www.cedro.org/english?lng=en>).

For all remaining countries as well as for other permissions, requests should be addressed directly to the World Tourism Organization. For applications see: <https://www.unwto.org/unwto-publications>

