

A Handbook of International Tourism

Destinations, Careers, and Governance

by

Robert Lanquar

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by Robert Lanquar

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*To my beloved Isabel and our six grandchildren,
Raphael, Romane, Fermin, Ana, Elias and Samuel.*

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Presentation

International tourism has become one of the most dynamic and influential sectors of the global economy. Over the past half-century, it has also evolved into an increasingly multidisciplinary field of study. Tourism can no longer be understood solely through economics, geography, or business management. It encompasses history, sociology, psychology, environmental sciences, public policy, governance, digital technologies, marketing, hospitality, transport, international relations and many other disciplines. Understanding tourism therefore requires both specialized knowledge and the ability to connect different perspectives.

This handbook has been written with a simple objective: to provide students, educators and professionals with a comprehensive introduction to the fundamentals of international tourism in a single volume. Rather than replacing specialized works, it offers a structured framework that helps readers understand how the many components of tourism interact within an increasingly complex global system.

The history of tourism, like history itself, can be interpreted from different perspectives. The examples, case studies and analyses presented here reflect my own academic and professional experience accumulated over almost six decades as a journalist, international civil servant, university professor and adviser to governments, international organisations and tourism institutions across many regions of the world. Other authors may emphasize different approaches or interpret certain developments differently. Such diversity of viewpoints is one of the strengths of academic inquiry and contributes to a richer understanding of tourism.

Throughout the book, I have sought to combine conceptual foundations with practical applications. Each chapter progresses from basic principles to contemporary challenges and includes definitions, concept boxes, case studies, discussion questions, and practical exercises designed to support both learning and professional practice. The objective is not only to explain how international tourism has evolved and how it functions today, but also to encourage readers to analyse destinations critically, understand governance and public policies, evaluate emerging technologies, anticipate future trends and make informed decisions.

Tourism is constantly evolving. Only by mastering its fundamental concepts can future professionals successfully adapt to the transformations ahead. To facilitate this learning process, the handbook concludes with a comprehensive glossary of key concepts, arranged alphabetically. Recognizing the international character of tourism, this glossary has also been translated and adapted into French and Spanish, using the terminology of UN Tourism, the European Union and the academic traditions of each language, thereby enabling a broader understanding of the concepts presented throughout the book.

I hope this handbook will also serve as a practical companion for professionals throughout their careers, encouraging continuous learning, intellectual curiosity and responsible leadership. Ultimately, tourism is about far more than travel. It is about understanding people, places and cultures, fostering dialogue between societies, and contributing to a future in which mobility promotes Convivence.

May this handbook inspire future generations of students, researchers and professionals to shape a more innovative, sustainable and humane tourism, guided by knowledge, responsibility and Convivence.

Cordoba, Spain, July 2026

Introduction

International tourism has become one of the most dynamic and influential phenomena since the Second World War. More than an economic activity, tourism is a global system that connects people, places, cultures, businesses, governments and technologies across national borders. It generates employment, stimulates innovation, contributes to regional development, supports cultural exchange and increasingly influences environmental policies, mobility systems and international cooperation. At the same time, tourism faces unprecedented challenges associated with climate change, geopolitical instability, demographic transitions, digital transformation and the emergence of Artificial Intelligence.

Understanding tourism today therefore requires an interdisciplinary perspective. Destinations, businesses, travelers, governments, transport systems, digital technologies, local communities and natural environments are presented as interconnected components of a single tourism ecosystem. Particular attention is given to sustainability, governance, destination management, employability, and innovation which are rapidly transforming both tourism practices and education.

The structure of the book follows a progressive learning pathway.

First, Destinations introduces tourism as a global system. It examines the historical evolution of travel, the geography of international tourism, destination analysis, tourism statistics, mobility, transport systems, sustainability, digital transformation and destination management. Progressively, we learn how destinations function, how they can be analysed, and how evidence supports better planning and decision-making.

Second, Careers focuses on the people who make tourism possible. It explores tourism employment, professional opportunities, education systems, lifelong learning, entrepreneurship and the competencies required by future tourism professionals. Tourism and hospitality education today encompasses hundreds, if not thousands, of universities, business schools and specialized institutions across the world, all striving to achieve academic excellence while responding to the evolving needs of the tourism, travel and hospitality industry.

To support quality assurance and continuous improvement, many institutions seek international accreditation through systems such as the UN Tourism TedQual Certification Programme. TedQual evaluates not only academic quality and industry relevance but also the integration of sustainability, innovation, governance and employability into tourism education. A distinctive feature of the certification is its strong emphasis on ethics, requiring programmes to embed the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism throughout their curricula. In doing so, TedQual encourages higher education institutions to prepare future tourism professionals who combine technical competence with ethical responsibility, intercultural understanding and a commitment to sustainable and inclusive tourism development. Particular emphasis is also placed on integrating technical knowledge with interpersonal and soft skills, as well as on the growing impact of Artificial Intelligence on careers and employability.

Third, Governance examines how tourism is governed at international, national, regional and local levels. It analyses public policies, strategic planning, sustainability, public-private partnerships, stakeholder engagement and institutional cooperation. It also explores how governments and destinations can respond to emerging

challenges such as climate change, overtourism, geopolitical crises and technological disruption.

This progression reflects the philosophy of the book itself: first discover what tourism is, then how destinations function, how they can be analysed, what professional opportunities tourism offers, and finally how tourism is governed and planned. The objective is not simply to accumulate knowledge, but to understand tourism as an integrated ecosystem whose economic, social, environmental, technological and political dimensions are inseparable.

Finally, this textbook seeks to prepare the next generation of tourism professionals, managers, entrepreneurs, media and policymakers. Tourism is one of the few industries capable of combining economic development, cultural dialogue, environmental responsibility and technological innovation. The future of tourism will ultimately depend not only on where people travel, but on how intelligently destinations are managed, how responsibly tourism is governed and, above all, on the knowledge, ethics, convivence and creativity of those who will lead the industry in the decades ahead.

Chapter 1

Towards Modern Tourism

Tourism, as a formally recognized economic sector, is a relatively recent development. However, the practices that underpin it, structured, temporary, and socially meaningful mobility, are deeply embedded in human history. To assume that tourism began with the eighteenth- or nineteenth-century seaside resorts, or organized package tours, is to mistake institutional formalization for historical origin. Long before the term “tourism” acquired statistical, economic, or policy significance, systems of circulation were already shaping political authority, commercial exchange, religious life, and cultural transmission.

Human societies have always been characterized by mobility. Mobility is not a homogeneous phenomenon. Analytical clarity requires distinguishing between different modalities of movement. Migration refers to the relatively permanent relocation of residence and implies demographic transformation. Circulation, by contrast, refers to temporary displacement followed by return to the place of origin. Tourism belongs to the latter category. It is a historically evolving form of structured circulation, increasingly commercialized, regulated, and embedded in institutional frameworks.

Between permanent migration and routine local travel exist multiple intermediate forms of mobility that prefigured modern tourism systems. Among the most significant were pilgrimage, long-distance trade journeys, scholarly travel, diplomatic missions, and participation in seasonal fairs. These movements were neither random nor purely individual; they were structured by routes, infrastructures,

and normative expectations. They generated early forms of hospitality, security arrangements, and service provision that would later become institutional pillars of tourism.

What distinguishes modern international tourism from earlier travel forms is not the existence of mobility itself, but its scale, democratization, technological acceleration, and systematic commodification. Industrialization, mechanized transport, and bureaucratic state systems expanded access to mobility beyond elites. Travel gradually transformed from a privilege of merchants, clerics, and aristocrats into a mass phenomenon integrated into global economic planning.

A historically grounded definition of tourism must therefore reflect both continuity and transformation. Tourism may be defined as institutionalized, temporary, non-remunerative mobility undertaken outside one's usual environment, supported by structured infrastructures and increasingly mediated by commercial/ marketing and regulatory systems. This definition emphasizes institutionalization, temporality, circulation, and systemic embedding.

Understanding these deep historical foundations prevents the conceptual error of viewing tourism as an isolated modern leisure activity. Rather, international tourism emerges as the contemporary expression of long-standing human practices of structured circulation, practices that have always combined symbolic meaning, economic exchange, and infrastructural organization.

A key analytical distinction must therefore be established between **migration and circulation**. Migration implies demographic transformation. Circulation implies economic and cultural exchange without permanent settlement. Tourism belongs to this latter category. It is a particular form of circulation, increasingly commer-

cialized and regulated over time. This distinction will remain central. International tourism is not merely a leisure activity; it is a structured system of circulation embedded in global economic, social, environmental and political frameworks.

Travel and tourism did not begin with the invention of the package tour, nor with the railways, the seaside resorts, or commercial aviation. Long before the modern word “tourism” appeared in political, economic, or statistical vocabulary, structured forms of temporary mobility already shaped civilizations, economies, religions, and systems of power. To understand international tourism today, it is therefore necessary to place it within the history of human mobility.

Mobility, Migration, and Tourism

Migration: Permanent relocation of residence, producing demographic change.

Circulation: Temporary movement with return to origin; no permanent settlement.

Pilgrimage: Structured religious circulation combining symbolic devotion and economic exchange.

Commercial/Business Travel: Mobility is primarily linked to trade, barter, and market participation.

Tourism: Institutionalized, temporary, non-remunerative mobility outside one’s usual environment, increasingly commercialized and regulated within global systems.

UN Tourism states tourism as a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon involving the movement of people to places outside their usual environment for personal, leisure, or business/professional purposes. Travelers are classified as visitors, either tourists or excursionists. The UNWTO Committee on Tourism and Competitiveness was established in 2013 to clarify and harmonize the main concepts related to tourism competitiveness and the tourism value chain. Its objective is to develop common definitions, models, and operational concepts that can be internationally recognized and used by member states for measurement, benchmarking, labelling, and policy development. Through its work, UN Tourism strengthens its normative role as the leading international organization for tourism standards, statistics, and governance.

For statistical purposes, UN Tourism defines a visitor as a person traveling to a place outside his or her usual environment for less than one year, for leisure, business, or other personal purposes, excluding employment by a resident entity in the destination visited.

A tourist is a visitor who stays at least one night in the destination, while a same-day visitor or excursionist does not stay overnight.

The historical foundations of tourism are therefore inseparable from the history of trade, religion, transportation, and globalization. Mobility progressively became structured by roads, ports, caravan routes, inns, caravanserais, maritime corridors, postal systems, security arrangements, and, eventually, modern travel infrastructure.

International tourism is the result of a very long historical evolution of human mobility. By studying the development of pilgrimage routes, trade roads, maritime networks, aristocratic travel, thermal and seaside tourism, railways, and mass tourism, readers will better understand how modern tourism systems progressively developed

through economic exchange, cultural encounters, technological innovation, and globalization.

Diasporas, Binational Communities and the Development of International Tourism

Throughout history, diasporas have played a fundamental role in facilitating international mobility long before the emergence of modern tourism. Armenian, Greek, Jewish, Arab, Persian, Chinese and other diasporic communities established transnational networks based on trust, commerce, religion and family ties. These networks connected distant regions through trade routes, ports, places of worship and systems of hospitality, providing travelers with information, accommodation and security. In many respects, they anticipated the functions later performed by travel agencies, hotel chains and destination networks.

Among them, Jewish communities illustrate particularly well how a globally dispersed population contributed to the circulation of people, ideas and culture. Religious pilgrimages, commercial exchanges and scholarly travel created enduring mobility corridors linking Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and later the Americas. Today, Jewish heritage routes, synagogues, museums and historic quarters attract millions of visitors and demonstrate how cultural memory can become a driver of sustainable tourism and intercultural dialogue.

Binational and multicultural communities play an increasingly important role in tourism development. Individuals with dual nationality or strong family ties across countries often act as cultural intermediaries, entrepreneurs, investors and ambassadors for destinations. They promote business links, stimulate visits to friends and relatives (VFR tourism), encourage international investment and facilitate destination marketing across borders.

Together, diasporas and binational communities demonstrate that tourism has always depended on human networks of trust, cultural exchange and cooperation. They remind us that the history of tourism is not only the history of destinations, but also the history of people whose transnational connections continue to shape global mobility and foster Convivence among cultures.

Modern tourism did not emerge suddenly. What changed over time was the scale, speed, democratization, and commercialization of mobility. Roads, ports, caravan routes, inns, railway stations, airports, and digital platforms progressively transformed circulation into an organized global system.

Three Perspectives on International Mobility

Milton Friedman (1912–2006), one of the leading economists of classical liberalism, viewed freedom of movement as an extension of economic freedom. From his perspective, international travel facilitates voluntary exchange between visitors and destinations, stimulates competition, encourages innovation, and contributes to economic prosperity. Tourism therefore benefits from reducing unnecessary barriers to mobility while maintaining fair market conditions.

Edgar Morin (1921– 2026), the French philosopher of complexity, considered tourism a complex social phenomenon full of paradoxes. Travelers seek freedom, authenticity and discovery, yet often experience highly standardized products and organised itineraries. Tourism governance must therefore balance economic development with cultural diversity, environmental protection and social coexistence. He wrote this very contradictory sentence in French: the value of holidays vs the vacancy of values (*la valeur des vacances vs la vacance des valeurs*).

Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) approached tourism through the concept of hospitality. Every destination welcomes visitors, but hospitality is never unconditional. Visitors are received under legal, cultural, and ethical conditions that define their rights and responsibilities. Tourism governance therefore requires balancing openness towards visitors with the protection and quality of life of residents.

These three perspectives illustrate that international tourism is a composite system of *global mobility* that combines economic freedom, social complexity, and ethical responsibility. So, tourism policies must reconcile competitiveness, sustainability, hospitality, security and even solidarity in an increasingly interconnected world.

Travel Before Tourism

The earliest forms of human mobility were directly linked to survival: hunting, seasonal migration, access to water, and exchange between neighboring communities. Gradually, ancient civilizations transformed these elementary movements into structured routes connecting cities, ports, empires, religious centers, and commercial regions.

Long before tourism existed as an organized industry, pilgrimage became one of the principal motivations for long-distance travel. Religious mobility created some of the first international circulation systems in history. Pilgrimage routes connected Jerusalem, Rome, Mecca, Santiago de Compostela, Varanasi, Buddhist sanctuaries, Shinto temples, and sacred rivers such as those associated with the Kumbh Mela in India, the largest in the world in terms of the number of pilgrims (perhaps about 660 million in 2025, up from 240 million in 2019, and inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity).

Pilgrimage rapidly stimulated the development of roads, bridges, inns, caravanserais, hospitals, food services, and protection systems for travelers. Religious circulation also encouraged commercial exchange. Pilgrims and merchants frequently shared the same routes, accommodations, ports, and transport infrastructures.

The pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela provide one of the clearest examples of how proto-tourism systems emerged in medieval Europe. Over several centuries, a dense network of roads, bridges, monasteries, hospitals, inns, markets, and information services developed to serve pilgrims travelling from across the continent. These routes fulfilled not only religious functions but also economic, cultural, and political ones, facilitating exchanges between regions and peoples long before the emergence of modern tourism. The *Codex Calixtinus*, compiled in the twelfth century, is often regarded as one of Europe's earliest travel guides, providing practical information on itineraries, accommodation, customs, and potential dangers along the route.

The Council of Europe recognized the Camino de Santiago as the first European Cultural Route in 1987, highlighting its role in shaping a common European identity through mobility, intercultural dialogue, and shared heritage. This initiative, later supported by the European Institute of Cultural Routes in Luxembourg, has inspired a broader network of cultural itineraries linking history, heritage, tourism, education, and sustainable development across Europe. The Santiago routes thus illustrate how ancient pilgrimage corridors have evolved into contemporary models of cultural tourism and international cooperation.

Similarly, Islamic pilgrimage routes toward Mecca linked Spain, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, India, and Southeast Asia. The Hajj simultaneously represented a religious

obligation, a commercial system, and an instrument of political integration.

Religious mobility also stimulated technological and infrastructural innovation. Roman roads, Mediterranean maritime systems, river navigation, contributed to facilitating long-distance circulation centuries before the emergence of modern tourism industries.

Pilgrimage as an Early Form of International Tourism

Pilgrimage was one of the first organized systems of long-distance travel in human history. Millions of pilgrims travelled to sacred destinations for spiritual, cultural, educational, and commercial reasons. These movements progressively created infrastructures, services, and mobility networks that later influenced the development of international tourism.

Pilgrims travelled for multiple reasons:

- Religious devotion and spiritual purification
- Education and knowledge, especially through monasteries and religious schools
- Trade and exchange along pilgrimage routes
- Diplomatic contacts between regions and civilizations
- Cultural discovery and contact with other societies.

Some destinations became major centers of circulation:

- Jerusalem for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
- Rome, center of Christianity
- Mecca, destination of the Hajj pilgrimage
- Santiago de Compostela in medieval Europe
- Varanasi and sacred rivers in India

- Buddhist sanctuaries in India, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia

Pilgrimage required organized mobility systems. Progressive infrastructures included:

- Roads, bridges, and maritime routes
- Inns, monasteries, abbeys, and caravanserais;
- Food supply systems and markets;
- Pilgrim hospitals and assistance centers;
- Security escorts and protection systems;
- Guides and information networks.

These services represent some of the earliest forms of tourism infrastructure and hospitality management.

Trade Roads and the First Globalization

Likewise, the history of tourism cannot be separated from the history of trade. Long-distance commercial routes created the first large-scale systems of international circulation linking Europe, Asia, Africa, and, since the sixteenth century, the Americas.

Among the earliest examples was the Amber Road connecting the Baltic regions to the Mediterranean world. Amber circulated southward in exchange for metals, wine, textiles, and luxury goods. Such exchanges required stable routes, negotiated passage agreements, storage facilities, security systems, and stopping places for merchants and caravans.

The Incense Route connected southern Arabia to the Mediterranean through desert corridors, transporting frankincense and myrrh used in religion, medicine, and luxury consumption. Crossing deserts

required water management, caravan organization, political agreements, and risk-sharing mechanisms.

The most famous example remains the Silk Roads. In reality, the Silk Road, a term invented during the XIX^o century, was not a single route but a complex network of terrestrial and maritime corridors connecting China, India, Persia, Central Asia, the Arab world, Africa, the Mediterranean and Europe.

These routes transported silk and spices, but also religions, technologies, artistic influences, scientific knowledge, financial systems, and political ideas. Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism all circulated through these transcontinental networks. Jewish, Armenian, Persian, Arab, Indian, Greek, and Chinese diasporas played a fundamental role in maintaining these systems of circulation. They provided translation, trust networks, logistics, commercial mediation, and hospitality services.

“Caravanserais” became one of the most important infrastructures of these systems. Positioned approximately every thirty to forty kilometers, they provided food, accommodation, water, commercial storage, animal protection, and information exchange. In many respects, caravanserais represented early hospitality establishments comparable to modern tourism infrastructure.

Trade Roads as Proto-Tourism Networks

Main Historical Routes: Amber Roads, Incense Route, Silk Roads, Mediterranean maritime routes, Indian Ocean trade routes, Mesoamerican and Maya trade networks. For example, Mesoamerican and Maya trade networks formed highly organized systems of circulation linking Central America, Mexico, and even the American Southwest. Without draft animals or wheeled transport, merchants carried goods on foot or used large maritime canoes along

coastal and river routes. The Maya built paved causeways called *sacbeob* connecting ceremonial centers and trade hubs. These networks facilitated the exchange of obsidian, cacao, feathers, shells, and precious stones over thousands of kilometers, creating sophisticated economic, political, and cultural mobility systems long before modern tourism infrastructures emerged.

Main Destinations and Hubs: Alexandria, Venice, Constantinople, Samarkand, Baghdad, Xi'an.

Main Services and Infrastructures: Caravanserais, Inns, Ports, Warehouses, Maritime transport, Security systems, Translators and intermediaries, Commercial insurance mechanisms.

Proto-Tourism Products Emerging: Merchant expeditions, Cultural itineraries, Maritime voyages, Pilgrimage-commercial circuits, Diplomatic travel, Scholarly travel.

UNESCO and UN Tourism have actively promoted the Silk Roads and other historical trade routes as instruments of cultural dialogue, heritage preservation, sustainable tourism, and international cooperation. UNESCO launched the Silk Roads Programme in 1988 to encourage research, education, and intercultural understanding among the civilizations linked by these routes. UN Tourism developed Silk Road tourism initiatives connecting destinations across Asia, the Middle East, and Europe through cultural itineraries and heritage tourism. These programs have stimulated destination branding, international cooperation, heritage conservation, and cultural tourism development while reinforcing the idea of tourism as a tool for peace and intercultural dialogue.

The Grand Tour and the Birth of Modern Tourism

Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, Europe progressively developed forms of travel much closer to modern tourism. The

“Grand Tour”, practiced mainly by British aristocrats, transformed travel into an educational and cultural experience. Young elites travelled across France, Italy, Switzerland, and sometimes the Eastern Mediterranean to study art, architecture, languages, politics, and classical civilization. Travel became associated not only with religion or trade, but also with culture, prestige, discovery, and personal enrichment. The Industrial Revolution profoundly accelerated this transformation. Railways, steamships, urbanization, and economic growth reduced travel time and costs. Mobility became progressively accessible to the middle classes.

Guidebooks and travel books also played an important role in codifying tourism practices. These guidebooks and travel books have played a fundamental role: beyond providing practical information, they have shaped how travelers perceive destinations and influenced the evolution of tourism itself. During the nineteenth century, publishers such as John Murray, Karl Baedeker and later Hachette Guides established a new standard for travel information by producing carefully researched guidebooks that recommended itineraries, identified major monuments, classified hotels, suggested restaurants and provided historical and cultural background. Their publications helped transform travel from an uncertain adventure into a more organised, predictable and accessible activity.

Guidebooks contributed to the standardization of tourism experiences. Millions of travelers began following similar routes, visiting the same attractions and using comparable criteria to evaluate destinations. In this sense, guidebooks not only described tourism but also actively shaped it. They influenced destination image, visitor flows, local economies and even conservation efforts by highlighting cultural and natural heritage. Throughout the twentieth century, publishers such as Michelin, Lonely Planet, Rough Guides, Fodor's,