

# Entering the European market for religious tourism

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Developing countries all over the world have incredibly rich and diverse religious tourism products, and there are numerous opportunities to develop the sector to attract tourists from Europe. Believers and non-believers are attracted to a wide range of attractions that include sightseeing and spiritual experiences. They seek meaningful experiences and welcome the opportunity to enjoy religious and spiritual experiences with other like-minded travellers. Operators in the sector must understand the travel motivations of European religious tourists. For that, it is important to understand well what the religious travel product in their destination is so they can attract European visitors.

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## 1. What requirements must religious travel products comply with to be allowed on the European market?

European tour operators have to comply with strict requirements to ensure the safety of their customers overseas, as well as to protect them financially. These operators expect foreign suppliers to adhere to their own codes of conduct, and terms and conditions. If you will be selling your religious tourism product to them, it is important that you understand these requirements.

### What are the mandatory and additional requirements that buyers have?

The mandatory and voluntary requirements for religious tourism services are common across the sector. Read the CBI's [report on the requirements for tourism services in the European market](#) and familiarise yourself with comprehensive details of legal, non-legal and common requirements, such as:

- The European Package Travel Directive
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Liability insurance and insolvency protection

### Rebuilding religious tourism experiences after Covid-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused severe long-term problems for the tourism industry worldwide. Most European countries continue advise against any travel outside the EU. While some restrictions are gradually being lifted, recovery of the tourism market is not expected until 2021 or later. This will affect all tourism sectors, including religious tourism. For example, the Hajj 2020 in Mecca [allowed only 1,000 people among residents and other Saudis](#), instead of the 2.5 million who normally attended in previous years.

When travel restrictions are lifted or adjusted accordingly, it is likely that Europeans travelling for religious purposes will travel cautiously and in fewer numbers than before the pandemic. How you communicate with potential travellers will be key to building relationships moving forward. Do not try to market your religious travel product during this time of crisis, but if you have a website keep it regularly updated to inform future customers about the situation in your region.

### Tips:

Read the CBI study [Managing Risks in Tourism](#) to learn about measures that you can implement during this crisis and to prepared for future crises.

For more information about the COVID-19 pandemic, read the study [How to respond to COVID-19 in the tourism sector](#).

To help you win back consumer confidence, check [the resources offered by Trekksoft](#) about resuming travel in 2020.

## What are the requirements for niche markets?

### Understand your religious tourism offering

As a niche segment, religious tourism represents a substantial travel market. Religious tourists from Europe includes believers, who travel to worship, pray, or learn more about their religion, as well as other tourists who visit religious sites and destinations because of their historic, architectural, and cultural values. Believers and non-believers often take on this type of religious sightseeing as part of one or more activities during their trips.

Religious tourism has two major categories: pilgrimage and sightseeing. The first covers travel for religious or spiritual reasons, while sightseeing tourists will tour religious monuments, sites, buildings, places of worship, etc. However, the lines are usually blurred, since a person on a sightseeing trip could well be taking part in a long-anticipated pilgrimage, such as when people take a long trip to visit some of the holy sites in Jerusalem and Palestine. The Vatican, for example, is an important site for Catholics, but millions of non-Catholics visit its museums.

The table below provides some examples of religious tourism experiences that may exist in your destination.

Table 1: Examples of Religious Experiences around the World

Type of Religious Experience	Typical Places	Bits of Information
Sacred sites and places of worship	Churches, cathedrals, mosques, synagogues, temples, other holy places	Developing countries all over the world are rich in sacred and holy places that attract numerous believers and non-believers every year.

Holy cities and regions	Sacred City of Varanasi, India Mecca and Medina, Saudi Arabia Jerusalem, Israel and Palestine	These are important destinations that are broader than a single site.
UNESCO World Heritage Sites	<a href="#">Sacred landscape of Bagan</a> , Myanmar	There are numerous UNESCO sites with religious meaning.
Religious events and festivals	<a href="#">Hajj</a> , Saudi Arabia <a href="#">Kumbh Mela</a> , Northern India <a href="#">Timket</a> , Ethiopia	Major religious events and festivals are often very large and attract thousands, sometimes millions of people.
Pilgrimages	<a href="#">Camino de Santiago</a> , Spain <a href="#">Adam's Peak</a> , Sri Lanka	See <a href="#">this blog post with the 10 best pilgrimages for modern travellers</a> , highlighting pilgrimages.
Retreats and camps	<a href="#">The Bridges Retreat Centre</a> , South Africa <a href="#">Gaia Tree Center</a> , Peru	Destination for religious, spiritual or healing retreats and faith-based camps.

Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

### Tips:

It is important for you to know the religious tourism product in your destination well, so conduct a thorough research exercise to fully identify local attractions.

Download the CBI study [Market potential for European Religious Tourism](#) to find more detailed information.

## Offer authentic, immersive and spiritual experiences

Having a spiritual experience is a key motivation for religious tourists, for both believers and non-believers. The market for spiritual experiences has been growing in recent years, as religious tourists seek experiences that are interesting, personally fulfilling and that connect them spiritually to a place. Experiences that you offer should focus on meaningfulness and self-value, relaxation and escape from the stresses of everyday life.

Activities can be broad, ranging from pilgrimages and visits to religious attractions aimed at both believers and non-believers. Spiritual experiences that focus on the inner self, like meditation, mindfulness training and yoga retreats are more likely to appeal to non-believers.

At retreats or places that cater for groups of religious tourists, usually believers, participants like to meet up with like-minded people, who share the same interests and goals. Learning about the culture of the destination and interacting with local people to understand their way of life are important factors that also contribute to spiritual satisfaction.

### **Tips:**

Offer a range of spiritual activities that appeal to different groups of religious tourists, such as talks by a spiritual leader, or mindfulness and meditation sessions in a place of spiritual importance.

Provide group opportunities for like-minded people to get together, such as communal meals, events lead by theologians, with set times for meditation, mindfulness or prayer.

Make sure the guides or leaders of the sessions are knowledgeable, well informed and have undergone suitable training. Employ guides that can speak the language of the visiting tourist or English at the very least.

Ensure your experience includes interaction with locals to enhance authenticity, such as visits to people's homes, joining in on local religious or spiritual festivals, or volunteering with a mission or other organisation.

To find out more spiritual inner wellness tourism, read the CBI study [What are the opportunities for inner wellness tourism from Europe](#).

## **Accommodating large numbers of religious tourists**

If your destination is catering for large numbers of religious tourists at a particular time of year, for instance during a festival, think whether you could combine your experience with other tourism services in a convenient package. Connecting with accommodation providers, restaurants, and transportation providers to offer a range of suitable services in one package will help to provide good service and may encourage more bookings.

Religious tourists travelling to take part in pilgrimages, festivals or ceremonies tend to be less interested in luxury or quality of accommodation. However, European tourists will want to know that their accommodation is safe, secure and clean, with suitable bathroom facilities. If dormitory accommodation is typical for religious tourists in your area, make sure there are separate dormitories for men and women. Unmarried religious tourists will usually not wish to share a dormitory with members of the opposite sex.

### **Tips:**

Undertake an accommodation audit to ensure you know what the accommodation options are for larger groups at your destination.

Approach a variety of accommodation providers to see if they would be interested in partnering with your organisation.

Contact the local tourist board to see if they can put you in touch with potential partners.

When deciding who to partner with, make sure they have adequate insurance protection as outlined in the section [What are the requirements for religious travel products to enter the European market](#).

## 2. Through what channels can you get religious travel products on the European market?

### How is the end market segmented?

In Europe, the predominantly Christian countries of Germany, UK, France, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands are the most important markets for religious tourism, accounting for approximately 50% of religious tourists worldwide. France and Germany are interesting markets for Islamic sites, as they have large populations of Muslims, and the UK is a key market for religious tourism to India. For more information about the European markets for religious tourism, consult the CBI study *The European market potential for religious tourism*.

Religious tourists include all age groups, so you must consider the needs of young and old travellers. The chart below discusses the various characteristics of both believers and non-believers within each group.

Table 2: Characteristics of religious tourists

Group	Characteristics of Believers	Characteristics of Non-Believers
Younger Religious Tourists (Aged 18-29)	Traditional, conservative upbringing Trips often initiated by local church or religious group Religious trips may include elements of volunteering Fellowship and meeting like-minded people important Travel on a budget	Enjoy spontaneous or planned sightseeing trips to visit religious sites, such as temples, churches while on an adventure or other trips Often make their own arrangements (FITs) Travel on a budget
Mid-Life Religious Tourists (Aged 30-54)	Seek spiritual fulfilment Also interested in historical and cultural elements of destination — learning is important to them Enjoy ceremonies, festivals Like an immersive experience and meeting local people More likely to go on a pilgrimage	Seek spiritual fulfilment Enjoy historical and cultural learning when visiting a destination Enjoy immersive activities including attending festivals, meeting local people

<p>Older Religious Tourists (Aged 55+)</p>	<p>More likely to take a guided trip through a specialist tour operator          Enjoy a variety of excursions during trip; good guides important          More likely to take a once-in-a-lifetime trip to iconic destinations, such as Mecca or Holy Land          Luxury accommodation and good food more important to this group          Spend more money than other groups and have more time to travel</p>	<p>Will also take a guided trip through operator, specialist or otherwise, enjoying variety of excursions on trip, religious or not          Luxury accommodation and good food important to this group          Will spend more money than other groups</p>
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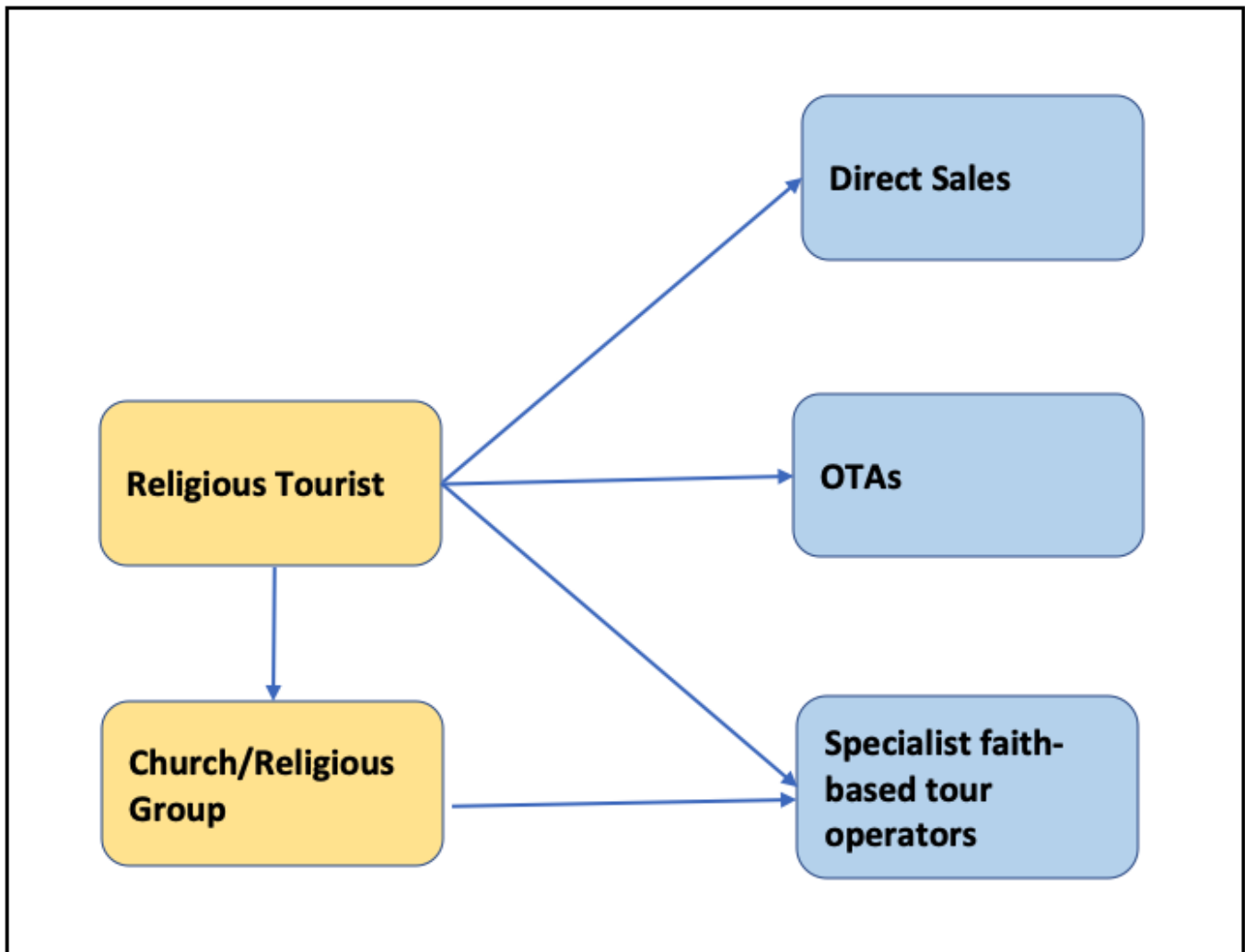
Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

### Through what channels do religious travel products reach the end market?

Specialist faith-based tour operators are the most common method for religious tourists, primarily believers, when booking guided or self-guided religious trips. Trips are generally booked either by the religious tourist or, if travelling in a group, by their church or religious group.

There is also an element of direct sales to tourists who are making all their own travel plans, usually fully independent travellers (FITs), either before they travel or once they have reached their destination. This group is made up of believers and non-believers. Bookings are either made directly with a local tour operator or through an online travel agents (OTA).

Chart 3: Sales Channels for Religious Tourism Trips, Experiences



Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

## Specialist Faith-Based Tour Operators

There are many faith-based tour operators throughout Europe, and many of these will be looking to local tour operators to supply trips and experiences. Some general tour operators have a religious or spiritual segment within their portfolio of holidays.

Some examples of faith-based tour operators include:

- Christian operators such as [McCabe Pilgrimages](#) conduct a range of trips to international destinations, including the Holy Land, Ethiopia, Armenia, Jordan, and Nepal. [Tours for Christians](#) provide guided and self-guided tours.
- [Worldwide Christian Travel](#) operates to a wide range of destinations worldwide.
- Part of [Globus Faith](#) and UK operator [Cosmos](#) offer a range of faith-based tours.
- French operators offering religious tours include [Ictus Tours](#) and [Cercle des Vacances](#).
- French adventure operator [Voyages du Monde](#) also provides trips to Buddhist nations, such as Cambodia, Myanmar, and Vietnam.
- Italian operator Conscious Journeys organises travels to a number of Asian destinations for religious and spiritual purposes, including Bhutan, Sri Lanka and India.
- In Germany, operator [Expenova](#) organises spiritual tours and pilgrimages to India and Nepal.
- In the Holy Land, the [Holy Land Incoming Tour Operators Association \(HLITOA\)](#) represents 50 tourism professionals that serve the Holy Land, including Palestine, Israel, Jordan, and Egypt. This is a useful resource for research, particularly FITs.

Many OTAs such as [GoOverseas](#) and [GetYourGuide](#) offer specialist religious, cultural or spiritual trips. Both of these offer a range of religious and spiritual activities, experiences and trips to numerous destinations. OTAs are increasingly recognising the popularity of spiritual experiences and are including them as categories on their sites.

Consider signing up with an OTA if there is one that suits your needs. [This guide with 95 Places to List your Tours](#) is helpful to identify possible OTAs, but remember that this is a dynamic market. Some OTAs may cease to exist and there are likely others that quickly appear and grow in market. [This detailed study, Working with OTAs](#), will help you plan a strategy.

If you have a website, you will be better able to reach the European market of FITs interested in taking part in religious activities on holiday.

## What is the most interesting channel for you?

Connecting with European faith-based tour operators that specialise in holidays to your destination offer the best opportunities for reaching European religious tourists, predominantly believers, but also non-believers who are interested in historical and cultural experiences.

### Tips:

Contact your local places of worship to find out if they have any links with European tour operators and see whether you can establish a relationship with them.

Read the following CBI studies to help you make business connections with the European market: [10 tips for finding buyers on the European tourism market](#) and [Entering the European market for the FIT segment](#).

For advice on working with OTAs, read the CBI study [10 tips for organising your tourism services export to Europe](#).

To find out how to build a website, read [How to be a successful company online](#).

## 3. What competition do you face on the European religious tourism market?

### Which countries are you competing with?

Religious tourists use the internet widely for research into their destinations. They consult blogs and portals, such as the [Complete Pilgrim](#) and [Sacred Destinations](#). These sites will also be useful for you to understand the competitive market within your region and further afield.

Religious tourism is widespread. Developing countries offer particularly rich opportunities for European religious tourists. Israel, Palestine and Saudi Arabia are the world's leading destinations for Christians and Muslims, but there are many competing destinations in religious tourism. The top developing countries in the European religious market are: Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Myanmar, Palestine, Peru, and Thailand.

### Egypt

Egypt has great religious significance for both Christians and Muslims and there are many important sites in the country. Cairo has many important mosques, such as the Al Azhar Mosque and the Mosque of Ibn Tulum. Christian sites include the Al Bagawat Cemetery in the Western Desert, with more than 200 domed



mausoleums, and monasteries, such as the Monastery of St Anthony in a remote location by the Red Sea.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Egypt's tourism industry had recovered strongly following the 2016 terrorist attacks. In 2017 religious tourism to Egypt was given a boost when Pope Francis confirmed the country would be included as an [official Roman Catholic pilgrimage destination](#) from 2018. The tourism industry created a special tour for pilgrims to recreate the steps supposedly taken by Joseph, Mary and Jesus, when they fled from King Herod after the birth of Jesus.

## Ethiopia

Orthodox Christianity is the predominant religion in Ethiopia, accounting for almost two-thirds of the population. Islam is practised by the other third of Ethiopians. The country is home to a number of significant religious sites, including the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela on the Northern circuit, a designated UNESCO Heritage site. Other important sites include the Mother Church of Ethiopia, which supposedly houses the Ark of the Covenant, the ancient city of Axum, and the preserved ruins of 600 stelae and underground tombs. The country hosts a number of Christian celebrations throughout the year, including Easter, Christmas and Timket, one of Ethiopia's greatest festivals, during which a model of the Ark of the Covenant (the Tabot) is paraded around various towns for a 24-hour period. Such festivals have become important travel experiences for visitors. In Eastern Ethiopia, Harar is an Islamic site of significance, known as the City of Saints and regarded as the world's fourth holiest city after Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism industry experts expected religious tourism to rise in Ethiopia and become one of the nation's most important tourism niches.

## India

India is well known as a religious and spiritual destination, attracting tourists from all over the world to experience its spiritual diversity. Hinduism is the predominant religion, the world's third-largest religion by number of followers. The country is home to thousands of Hindu temples and shrines which play an important part in daily life. The sacred city of Varanasi (or Benares) on the banks of the River Ganges is considered the most sacred place for all Hindus, but is also important for Buddhists and Jains. Other well-known places for pilgrimage include the temples of Tirupati, the monasteries at Spiti, the holy twin cities of Haridwar and Rishikesh, the Golden Temple of Amritsar, and Puskhar, where a famous fair attracts between 200,000 and 400,000 pilgrims every year. Read more about some of India's holy and spiritual places on [this blog post about spiritual places in India](#).

In 2018, India's Ministry of Tourism identified religious tourism as an area for growth. The Ministry launched the [Incredible India 2.0 Campaign](#) to promote religious and spiritual tourism products to the international market and improve infrastructure around religious sites. Spiritual activities that promote inner peace, well-being and self-awareness are particularly popular among European religious tourists. A key target market for India is the UK.

## Myanmar

Myanmar's culture is heavily influenced by its long history of spirituality and religion. Almost 90% of Burmese people are Buddhist and there are many thousands of pagodas and temples throughout Myanmar. Yangon is home to the Shwedagon Pagoda, the most sacred and majestic in the country. The ancient city of Bagan is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, home to more than 2,200 temples including the Shwezigon Pagoda. Early morning hot air balloon rides over Bagan are a common tourist experience.

Chart 4: Hot air balloon rides over the ancient city of Bagan, Myanmar



Source: Majkell Projku, Unsplash

Numerous working monasteries in Myanmar are open to visitors, often intricately decorated and well maintained. The Shwenandaw Monastery in Mandalay is a popular pilgrimage destination, while the Sule Pagoda in Yangon is a place for peace and meditation.

## **Palestine**

Palestine is inextricably linked to the history of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, so many sites are important pilgrimage destinations, including Jerusalem, which remains at the heart of the Israel-Palestine conflict. East Jerusalem and Bethlehem are home to some of the holiest sites for Christians and Muslims, and many religious tourists to Israel will also visit Palestine on the same trip. Palestine is keen to encourage visitors to exclusively travel to Palestine rather than as an aside to a trip to neighbouring Israel, in spite of the challenges in terms of lack of tourism and transportation infrastructure, safety concerns, lack of adequate guides at religious sites, and seasonality factors.

## **Peru**

Religious travel to Peru offers a mix of faith-based travel and visits to ancient sacred sites in the country. The Cusco region is particularly rich in religious and spiritual experiences as the main entry point to the country's sacred sites, including Machu Picchu, temples in the Valley of the Incas, and Lake Titicaca. Another spiritually important destination is Nazca, home to the unique Nazca Lines. For religious tourists interested in Peru's Spanish catholic history, Lima and Arequipa are home to several Catholic shrines, monasteries and churches which are popular attractions for those on religious holidays. High above the Sacred Valley of the Incas, the sanctuary of Senor de Huanca, an image of the martyred Christ, is a popular pilgrimage destination.

Peru is well served by local tour operators who advertise their cultural, religious and spiritual tours on their own websites or use OTAs, such as [GetYourGuide](#).

## Thailand

Religion is embedded in everyday life in Thailand, where there approximately 30,000 Buddhist temples, or wats. Some of the major temples include Wat Pho, the oldest and largest temple in Bangkok, with the largest collection of Buddhas in Thailand, including the vast Reclining Buddha; and Wat Phra Kaew, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. Wat Phra That Doi Suthep in Chaing Mai is one of the most sacred temples in Northern Thailand. They are often gathering places for local people, which in addition to being places of worship, also feature markets, schools, and housing for monks. Festivals and holidays revolve around the Buddhist religion, including the annual Makha Puja.

Religious tourism is recognised as an important tourism niche by the tourist board and its website, [Amazing Thailand](#), has a specific page devoted to temples and highlights.

## Which companies are you competing with?

### Companies in Egypt

[Over Egypt Tours](#) offers a wide range of trips along with a selection of religious and historical tours, such as the Holy Christian Sites and Nile Cruise Trip. The operator also offers custom tours based on the needs of tourists on pilgrimages, trips to Coptic Christian places and biblical sites. Religious trips are a combination of multi-day and day tours. Their website features a comprehensive guide to the major attractions in Egypt, which helps drive visitors, and encourages guests to post images of their trips.

[Ibis Travel](#) has a range of private Holy Land tours in Egypt, some extending to Israel and Jordan and varying in duration from four to 15 days. Examples include a six-day tour of Egypt and a 15-day Holy Land tour to Egypt, Jordan and Israel. Along with a blog, Ibis Travel's website has sections on the country's religious history that includes Coptic and Islamic history. The operator offers detailed information for its customers, such as FAQs, and prominently highlights why the operator is a reliable travel agency, using strong, bright infographics.

Chart 5: Why Book with Ibis Travel

**Why Booking With Us?**

If you are looking for a reliable travel agency in Egypt, [Ibis Egypt Tours](#) is the right choice for you. Here are some reasons why you choose us.

- Experience and Trustworthiness**  
Ibis [Egypt Tours](#) is one of the best Egypt Tour Companies founded in 1987, and we are happy to have you as a part of our Family.
- Best Price, no Hidden Fees**  
We offer the best fares on our flights, transfers and other services we offer compared to what is available in the market.
- Experience and Trustworthiness**  
Our clients' satisfaction is our main goal for our experienced team. That is why we work only with the best tour guides, hotels, and restaurants.
- Friendly and Qualified Staff**  
Our expert team working to keep you secure and satisfied, just contact us and we will assist you with planning a trip to Egypt.
- Secure Online Payment**  
We accept online payment with different currencies, and our online payment is so easily secure and fast system.
- Tailor-made holidays**  
Our packages can be tailored or built completely from scratch to suit your needs. Why not contact us with your interests? we are flexible to arrange it for you.

Source: Ibis Travel

## Companies in Ethiopia

Religious festivals are an important part of Ethiopian culture. Several local tour operators include religious tours within a broader portfolio of tours, such as [His-Cul Tour & Travel](#) and [Passion Ethiopia Tours](#). Passion Ethiopia Tours, which also promotes Muslim and Christian pilgrimages, has a section of its website to displaying religious paintings.

[Grand Holidays Ethiopia Tours](#) promotes itself as a local adventure specialist tour operator. Alongside their main portfolio of trips, they also offer a range of fixed date itineraries to enjoy the country's religious festivals, including Timket, Meskel along, Christmas and Easter. They also offer custom tours and a wide range of other services. This operator is listed as one of National Geographic's Best Adventure Travel Companies and has won an award by the Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism for its contribution to tourism in Ethiopia. Their site is available in English, German, and Chinese, a clear indicator of the markets they target.

## Companies in India

With a vast number of religious sites, [Tour My India](#), offers a wide range of pilgrimage tour packages segmented by religion (Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Muslim, Jain, Christian). Their site also provides lots of content for travellers to research in advance, including sections for research on best-selling pilgrimage tour packages and pilgrimage package by religion type. This operator is certified by Indian tour and travel associations and international organisations.

[Pilgrimage Tour](#) is a specialist religious tour operator that offers package tours and pilgrimages (*yatra* in Sanskrit) to a huge number of India's holy centres and destinations, including the sacred city of Varanasi, the Char Dham Yatra, and Devi Darshan. This operator maintains an active blog page with some recent posts, in spite of the COVID-19 crisis, and also encourages interaction through social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

## Companies in Myanmar

With almost 1,200 Tripadvisor reviews, [Oriental Ballooning](#) operates hot air balloon flights in several locations in Myanmar, including Bagan, Mandalay, and Inle. The business is seasonal, operating broadly between October and April each year. Balloon pilots are fully trained and usually speak other languages, including French and German. The company offers its employees the opportunity of learning English for free to improve their skills and opportunities for the future. Oriental Ballooning has partnered with general tour operator [Awinka Travels & Tours](#) to reach additional customers.

[Shan Yoma Travel & Tours](#) is a general tour operator that offers pilgrimage tours to various destinations, including Bagan, Yangon, and Mandalay. In many itineraries, a pilgrimage is combined with culture, adventure and wellness tours. The operator is committed to sustainable and responsible tourism and is a certified [Travelife Partner](#). Its website is available in multiple languages including English, French, and Portuguese. They also provide the useful guide [Do's and Don'ts Guide for Tourists](#) which includes information specific to religious tourists.

Chart 6: Do's and Don'ts for Tourists

# Help us preserve our cultural and religious heritage

16. Removal of cultural artifacts is a threat to the local culture. Do not buy protected historical and archeological artifacts or accept them as gifts
17. Don't go climbing over the fragile ruins of the temples to find the perfect sunset viewing position
18. Show respect towards historical sites and ask for permission before accessing local archeological, culturally, and spiritually important areas
19. Religious sites are subject to strict dress codes

Source: Ministry of Hotels & Tourism, Myanmar

## Companies in Palestine

[Murad Tours](#) offers a range of tours to holy sites in the West Bank and Jerusalem, along with Jericho and the Dead Sea. Their tours also offer an insight into the Palestinian way of life and culture. This operator provides day tours, multi-day tours and private tours ranging from three to eight days. The website also provides a link to [Made in Peace](#), an online shop that sells fair-trade goods from the Holy Land, as well as their other partners.

[HLA Tours](#) is located in Bethlehem, offering a range of cultural, religious, and adventure tours in the Holy Land, Jordan and Egypt. Christian pilgrimages and Muslim pilgrimages form part of their religious tours portfolio, each featuring a number of choices for clients. Their website is available in English and French, and soon in Arabic.

## Companies in Peru

Peru's spiritual culture is a common theme amongst Peruvian tour operators. [Outer Travels Inner Journeys](#) offers a number of pilgrimages and retreats throughout Peru's spiritual destinations. The Inspiration section of their website offers insights into Peru as a spiritual destination, with interviews and blog posts, They have also created an online shop selling spiritual book titles and artworks. This operator is very active on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest) and boasts notable media reviews.

[Peru Sacred Tours](#) offers spiritual journeys to sacred sites and retreats in Peru, aiming to provide a 'magical experience' to travellers. This operator also works with native healers and shamans (*curanderos*) who provide ceremonial and spiritual experiences at retreat centres for their customers.

[Inkayni Peru Tours](#) is an official Inca Trail Operator that also offers a range of sacred and mystical tour options. It has won numerous awards, including TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence (recently rebranded as [Travelers' Choice](#)) for several years in a row, [Tour Radar's Travellers' Choice](#) awards, and is [Rainforest Alliance Certified](#).

## Companies in Thailand

[Day Tours Bangkok](#) is a local operator that specialises in online tour bookings to a variety of attractions, experiences and activities including religious destinations such as the UNESCO designated Ayutthaya Temples. They offer shared tours, private tours and multi-day packages in the Kanchanaburi region. This operator clearly indicates what is included in the trip and what is not, and uses inspirational images to promote its products.

Specialising in Northern Thailand, [Hosanna Chaing Mai Tours](#) offers a range of activities, including trips to visit temples in the region. Their trips are usually combined with other activities in the region, such as visiting hill tribes. The operator is licensed by the national tourist board, Amazing Thailand.

## Which products are you competing with?

For European religious tourists, a trip to a destination to visit religious attractions, such as places of worship or other religious sites, are often included within a wider itinerary of activities and experiences. Europeans travelling developing countries farther away may combine such a trip with adventure. Therefore, you should consider that competitive products include a wide range of adventure tourism activities.

### Tips:

To attract the general religious tourist, package your trip or experience with other adventure activities that exist in your destination. This will add value to your assortment and help you stand out from the competition.

To find out more about the European adventure market, consult the CBI study [Opportunities in the European Adventure Tourism Market](#).

## 4. What are the prices for religious travel products on the European market?

The prices of religious tourism trips and experiences vary widely based on duration, location and type. The table below gives an indication of the variety in this competitive market. When pricing your trip, make sure you know what all your costs will be, including transportation costs and entry fees to attractions, if you decide to add them to the final price.



Table 7: Sample prices for religious and spiritual trips and experiences in developing countries

Religious Trips and Experiences	Country	Duration	Price per person €
<i>Day Trips or Experiences</i>			
Private Spiritual Morning with Thai Monks	Thailand	3 hours	25
Arba Minch - Visit to Orthodox Church plus local market and coffee tour	Ethiopia	4 hours	26
5 UNESCO Temples Tour in Ayutthaya	Thailand	5-10 hours	39
Jerusalem Old City Tour	Palestine	3 hours	41
Ancient Temples Private Tour	Myanmar	9 hours	46
Divine Delhi - Spirituality and Beliefs of India	India	4 hours	49
Tour to Coptic Cairo and Cave Church of St Simon	Egypt	8 hours	53
Tour to Wadi el Natroun Monastery	Egypt	8 hours	67
Tour to Citadel, Coptic and Islamic Cairo	Egypt	7 hours	71
Temples and Religion Tour in Ahmedabad	India	8 hours	78
Grand Palace, Wat Pho and Wat Arun - Bangkok	Thailand	3-5 hours	79
Temple of the Moon Horseback Ride	Peru	3 hours	81
Tour of Bethlehem	Palestine	8 hours	85
Sacred Valley Ruins Tour	Peru	8 hours	90
Ancient Cities and Temples of Belur, Halebeedu and Shravanabelagola	India	11 hours	153
Hot Air Balloon Ride over Bagan Temples	Myanmar	1 hour	354
<i>Multi-day Trips or Experiences</i>			

Peaceful Puducherry and Tirupati Darshan	India	6 days	182
Explore Chaing Mai and Chaing Rai	Thailand	3 days	190
Char Dham (from Delhi)	India	12 days	376
Christian Tour of Egypt	Egypt	6 days	453
Jerusalem and the West Bank	Palestine	3 days	613
Myanmar Catholic Pilgrimage	Myanmar	6 days	724
Myanmar Buddhists Pilgrimage	Myanmar	9 days	906
Holy Christian Sites and Nile Cruise Trip	Egypt	10 days	1,478
Peru Pilgrimage	Peru	9 days	1,509
Machu Picchu, Sacred Valley, Cusco Spiritual Tour	Peru	7 days	1,687
Meskel Festival and Historic Route Tour	Ethiopia	9 days	1,767
Ethiopian Timket Festival Tour	Ethiopia	9 days	1,965

Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

Notes: Multi-day experiences do not include international airfares.

### Tips:

For advice on setting prices, consult the CBI study [10 tips for doing business with European tourism buyers](#), particularly the section Set a fair price for your services.

Tourism Australia's [Pricing your tourism product](#) offers helpful advice in making sure your prices are consistent, accurate and competitive.

This study was carried out on behalf of CBI by [Acorn Tourism Consulting Limited](#).

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