

RECREATIONAL AND TOURISTIC OPPORTUNITIES OF UZBEKISTAN'S MOUNTAINS

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Abstract: In this article, recreational and tourist opportunities of the mountains of Uzbekistan are studied and analyzed. Recreational resources provide information about natural objects that can be used for travel, tourism, and healing purposes. Proposals and recommendations for the development of all sectors of the tourism industry have been developed in areas with recreational resources.

Key words: Recreation, tourism, travel, health recovery, treatment, mountains, rivers, regions, resources, recreational-tourist opportunities.

Аннотация: В данной статье изучаются и анализируются рекреационные и туристические возможности гор Узбекистана. Рекреационные ресурсы предоставляют информацию о природных объектах, которые можно использовать в путешествиях, туризме и лечебных целях. Разработаны предложения и рекомендации по развитию всех отраслей туристической отрасли на территориях, обладающих рекреационными ресурсами.

Ключевые слова: Рекреация, туризм, путешествия, оздоровление, лечение, горы, реки, регионы, ресурсы, рекреационно-туристские возможности.

The word “recreation” signifies the concepts of improving and restoring health. Recreational resources refer to natural objects that can be utilized for travel, tourism, and entertainment purposes. These primarily include mountain ranges, forests, meadows, rivers, lakes, coastal areas, and mineral springs.

The southern and eastern parts of Uzbekistan are characterized by mountains. This fact indicates the abundance of natural recreational resources in these mountainous regions. Therefore, numerous healthcare and wellness facilities have been established in the mountainous areas of our republic. Particularly, in the Fergana Valley, located in the eastern part of our country and surrounded by mountains, several resorts and sanatoriums have been built.

In the northern region of the valley, in Namangan Province, the slopes of mountains such as Chortoq, Kosonsoy, Chodaksoy, G’ovasoy, and Poshshaotasoy have influenced the construction of various recreational and entertainment facilities. In the southern part of the valley, in areas like Chimyon, Shoximardon, Qiziltepa, Farg’ona, and Ropqon, similar resorts and recreational centers have been

established. Moreover, Qurbonkuli, a lake situated in the valley, is also one of the beloved places for locals to relax and have a good time.

In the eastern part of the valley, within the territory of Andijan Province, there are recreational facilities such as Polvontosh, Janubiy Olamushuk, Marhamat, and others. Along with that, the Fergana Valley is also rich in cultural and historical recreational resources, such as the Xudoyorxon Palace and historical monuments in Shoximardon and more.

Even in the Chirchiq and Ohangaron regions of the natural geographical basin, there are abundant military recreational resources. Due to the presence of mountains and mountain ranges in the eastern direction of the valley, numerous resorts and recreational centers have been established. Among them, Oqtosh, Xumson, Chorvoq, Chimyon, Kumushkon, and others hold significant importance.

The availability of water reservoirs like Chorvoq, Oxangaron, and Tuyabo'g'iz in the region is also considered as one of the favorite recreational destinations for the local population and the people of our country as a whole. In the mountain ranges of Chimyon, the conditions are suitable for enjoyable recreation throughout the year. Additionally, many ancient historical sites are preserved in the valley, such as Zangiota, Baroqxon, Ko'kaldosh madrasas, and others.

The Zarafshan River flows through the capital of our republic, and it is surrounded by mountains in the north, northeast, east, and south (Turkiston, Zarafshon, Qoratog', Oqtog', Ziyoviddin Zirabuloq mountains). The river administratively encompasses the regions of Samarkand, Bukhara, and Navoi. The region has preserved numerous cultural and historical recreational resources. Consequently, 40% of the foreign tourists visiting Uzbekistan directly come to this region. At the same time, this area is abundant in natural recreational resources. For instance, various mineral springs have been discovered in the region, leading to the establishment of sanatoriums and recreational resorts such as Sitorai Mokhi Khosa, Og'aliq, Ibn Sino, Samarkand, and others.

Our Republic has several mountainous regions in Jizzax, Qashqadaryo, and Surxondaryo provinces, which offer abundant recreational resources. In the southern part of Jizzax province, there are a series of dammed and reservoir areas in the Turkiston river valleys, including Xavotog', O'rikli, Zomin, Baxmal, and others. Additionally, the Zomin mountain range is located within the province, while the Nurota mountain and Yong'oqzor nature reserves are found in Navoiy

province. The northern and eastern parts of Qashqadaryo province are adorned with mountains. This region boasts numerous picturesque spots and ample opportunities for establishing resorts and health facilities. However, due to the rapid population growth in the province, it has become more crowded compared to other regions in the country in terms of dammed and recreational areas.

Surxondaryo province, situated in the southernmost part of our country, encompasses the Ko'hitang, Boysun, Bobotog', and Hisor mountain ranges. The absence of cold air masses in this area creates favorable climatic conditions. The presence of various healing mineral waters has been identified in the region, with Jayronxona mineral water being of great importance. Furthermore, the Uchqizil water reservoir provides convenient opportunities for dam construction. Several dammed areas have been developed in the mountain valleys.

During the years of independence, significant efforts have been made to promote tourism and recreational activities in the mountainous regions of the country. State and private resort houses and sanatoriums are available to visitors who come to enjoy the dammed areas.

In meeting the demand for recreational, resort, and tourism facilities by the population of Uzbekistan, the recreational opportunities in Tashkent province play a crucial role. The remarkable development of the province from an industrial and social perspective, as well as its unique natural and recreational resources, not only cater to the province's residents but also meet the demands of neighboring regions.

With an area of 15,600 square kilometers and a population of over 4.5 million, Tashkent province holds a significant position geographically, and its rapid economic and social development compared to other provinces contributes to its distinct status. The wide river valleys, cultural landscapes, plateau and lowland mountains with moderate elevations, and high mountain ranges create unique recreational areas. Among these mountains are the Chorvoq and Xodjикent reservoirs built on the Chirchiq River, as well as the Angren and Tashkent reservoirs constructed on the Ohangaron River, along with numerous underground mineral water sources found throughout the province.

If the conditions are suitable in terms of average elevation, ranging from 800-900 meters to areas at an absolute elevation of 2500-3000 meters, and hydrogeologically, it corresponds to lowlands (0-300 m), foothills and semi-desert (300-1200 m) regions. The provin'e has natural-recreational resources that can be

utilized in four main areas of recreation: improving public health, sports, nature exploration, and healthcare for the population.

Analyzing the natural-recreational resources of Tashkent province, it is possible to allocate recreational areas such as Chirchiq-Pargos, Khumsan-Oqtosh, Chingon-Beldersay, Burchmulla-Nanay, Oqsuqota-Parkent in the Chirchiq basin. Among them, the most convenient in terms of recreational points is the Khumsan-Oqtosh, Chingon-Beldersay, and Burchmulla-Nanay areas located in the middle and upper parts of the Chirchiq reservoir. Let's provide brief information about them below.

Khumsan-Oqtosh region. The most important for recreation in this area is the Khumsan resort. It is located in the western and southeastern foothills of the Ugam ridge, the southern foothills of Korjontog, and along the Ugam river, covering an area of 15,000 hectares with a population of 3,300 people. This village, mainly inhabited by Uzbeks, is situated at an absolute elevation of 800-1000 meters. The unique landscapes, climate, ethnic characteristics of the region, the absence of industrial and agricultural complexes polluting the environment, and its proximity (60-90 km) to the capital city of Tashkent, the Republic of Uzbekistan, make its territory significant as a recreational area. The period from May to September is considered the tourist season in the Khumsan-Oqtosh region. During this time, the population in Khumsan reaches 10,000, and within the entire region, it can reach up to 120,000 people. Activities such as hiking, walking, treatment, and fishing are possible during this period. In addition, they can engage in activities in the "Khumsan" and "Oqtosh" sanatoriums, as well as in the "Khumsan-buloq" fishing house and many other state and private fishing houses and resorts that operate throughout the year.

Burchmulla-Nanay region. This area includes the southern-eastern part of the Chorvoq water reservoir, located in the western parts of the Piskom and Koksuv rivers, with an absolute elevation of 900-1000 meters, and includes the villages of Burchmulla, Yakkatut, Yangikurgan, Yusupkhona, Bogiston, and Nanay, as well as the surrounding areas. The most important in terms of recreational points in this region is the Burchmulla resort, which covers an area of 15,000 hectares with a population of 4,100 people, mainly consisting of ethnic Tajiks. It is possible to access the Kolsoy mountain range, Ohotnichiy waterfall, Ko'ksuv watercourse, and Chorvoq water reservoir from these resorts. Currently, the residents of these resorts are engaged in fishing in the Chorvoq water reservoir, organizing long and

short-term excursions, visiting landmarks, hiking, fishing, and providing services in personal sectors and in the “Oltin yombi” fishing house. 80% of the tourists visiting Burchmulla-Nanay are residents of the capital city. The limited infrastructure and the high demand for services do not allow attracting many foreign tourists to this area. Currently, during the tourist season, the Burchmulla-Nanay region attracts around 100-150 thousand visitors. If the number of tourists increases in the future and the aforementioned issues are resolved positively, it can accommodate up to 350 thousand people. This also requires providing clean air, sunlight, water, and creating treatment points, beaches along the Chorvoq water reservoir, and improving medical and rescue services.

Chimgon-Beldersay Recreation Area. It is part of the Ugam-Chatkal National Park, and the most significant area for recreation within it is Chimgon. It is located 80 km northeast of the capital city Tashkent and 12 km south of the Chorvoq water reservoir. Chimgon is situated in the upper part of the Chimgon mountain range at an elevation of 1600 meters above sea level.

Chimgon attracts tourism enthusiasts with its picturesque mountain ranges. The proximity of the area to the city of Tashkent, the absence of industrial pollution in the surrounding environment, the comfortable climate throughout the year, the diverse and captivating nature, abundant natural resources, and the population’s culture and traditions all contribute to the development of not only tourism but also ecotourism in this region.

Chimgon-Beldersay stands out among the previously analyzed regions due to its well-developed sports and tourism infrastructure. Therefore, during the summer season, the number of visitors reaches up to 3,000 per day on weekdays and up to 10,000 on Saturdays, while during the winter season, the number of visitors can reach around 5,000 per day. If the necessary facilities and opportunities for visitors and tourists are created in the area, the number of visitors can exceed 350,000 per year. Currently, Chimgon offers a hotel, a restaurant, two cable car lines, and skiing slopes, while Beldersay, located near Chimgon, has a cable car line that operates according to international standards.

The Molguzar Range Is the northern part of the Turkiston Range, which is the southernmost and westernmost branch of the Tianshan System, located in the southern part of Mirzacho’l. The Molguzar Range stretches over an area of 390,301, and 400 kilometers in terms of north-south width and 680 kilometers in terms of east-west length. The range is considered the northern watershed of the

Sangzor River basin. It extends from the Go'ralash Pass (2710 m) in the east to the Amir Temur Gate (Ilon o'tdi Gate) in the west. The Molguzar Range extends from the west (900 m) to the east and reaches its highest point at Sho'rbel Davon (2621 m), which is almost at the center of the range. The range starts to slope down again from the middle-eastern part.

Administratively, the Molguzar Range includes parts of the G'alla Orol District of Jizzakh Region, as well as the southern part of Jizzakh District, the western part of Zomin District, and a portion of Zarbdor District. The mountain ranges and ridges in the northern part of the Molguzar Range are located about 35 km from north to south and 65 km from west to east, covering an area of over 2,000 square kilometers. The Molguzar Range is a vast area with abundant recreational resources. Its picturesque mountain landscapes, fresh air, rich flora and fauna, clean springs and rivers, ancient settlements, caves, historical sites, and breathtaking views attract tourists. They provide convenient opportunities for opening tourist routes, developing recreational areas, and promoting mountaineering activities.

The establishment of unique and extraordinary residential areas that do not lag behind famous resorts is becoming a key issue in the conditions of the market economy in the Molguzar region. This can be accomplished primarily through scientific research and investigations. In order to strengthen people's health during the ecological crisis, sanatoriums, preventive treatment facilities, residential houses, and children's recreation centers are being considered to be expanded based on local recreational resources. Currently, several climatic and health resorts are operating in the Molguzar mountain range.

The Jizzakh region's mountainous landscapes, lush valleys, numerous springs in rocky gorges, and unique relief shapes created by the accumulation of large moraine boulders are the exclusive treasures of natural beauty. The northern slopes of the Zomin mountain range (archazors, bodomzors, butazors), the western part of the Zomin mountain range, the valleys in that area, and the clear waters that result from them are magnificent natural museums. The northern slopes of the Molguzar range are home to more than 30 rare plant species, such as white tulips, orchids, snowdrops, wild saffron, and various bird species, including black stork, eagle owl, hoopoe, and partridge, with over 150 bird species. The Jizzakh National Park houses the Kulsoy research base of the mountainous industry research institute, the "Zomin" botanical garden, and more than ten residential facilities.

Several caves are found in the northern slopes of the Molguzar range, some of which are still unexplored. In the upper part of Pishogorsoy, the formation of Pishogor caves has occurred.

Local geologists have determined that the first hall of the cave is 300 meters long, with a height of 10-12 meters and a width of 8-10 meters. The cave's chambers, inscriptions, and drawings have not yet been fully studied. There are several pilgrimage sites in the northern slopes of the Molguzar range. Karst formations such as annual ice caves and other caves are considered pilgrimage sites, and some people's graves are considered sacred pilgrimage sites. In addition, it is possible to mention the Parpi father pilgrimage site along the Ko'rpassoy on the Ravotsoy stream, the Molguzar father pilgrimage site in the upper part of the Molguzar range, and the large stones and others on the slope of the Uchqizlar wintering ground. The majority of the residential facilities in the northern slopes of the Molguzar range are located in the upper part of the Zominsoy River. The Zominsoy and Yettikechusuvsoy valleys offer ample opportunities for utilizing clean air, recreational resources, and taking advantage of the low humidity, mild climate, and wide distribution of mountain ranges. Residential facilities such as the Sharshara residential complex, the Buxoro-Sharif pension, the Mirzashirki pension, the O'rikli pension, the Qashqasuv pension, and seven student and children's recreation centers are located there. They serve thousands of people every year. Additionally, the Zomin Republic sanatorium is available for mothers and children to improve their health.

In the western part of the Molguzar range, in the Uobsoy area, there are four children's recreation centers. The construction of the "Boston" children's recreation center is underway in the upper part of Uobsoy. There is also the "Paxtakor" children's recreation center, and at the lowest part, there is the "Bobur" children's recreation center affiliated with Jizzakh State Pedagogical Institute. These centers accommodate and improve the health of numerous students every year. The mountainous and hilly regions of Uzbekistan stand out among the Central Asian countries with their unique ecotourism potential. More than 60 mineral water sources have been identified in Uzbekistan for the improvement of human health.

The mountainous territories of the Samarqand region are diverse and attractive for tourism. The geographical location of the region, consisting of southern, northeastern, and western slopes with mountains and hills (including

Oqtog', Qoratog', G'obdin in the north, Chaqlikalon, Qoratepa, Ziyovuddin, Zirabuloq in the south) is significant for the development of mountain tourism. This has led to the emergence of distinct natural and landscape recreation resources in the area.

The distribution of precipitation and temperature in the region varies considerably, with an average of 300-450 mm of precipitation in the mountainous and arid areas, and an average of 650-850 mm in the eastern and southeastern parts. Therefore, the specific climate of the Samarqand region provides great opportunities for organizing and developing seasonal tourism during spring and summer.

The hydrological features of the Samarqand region, including mountain rivers and valleys, enhance the tourism potential of the area. The presence of mountain formations, such as peaks, gorges, caves, springs, and waterfalls, contributes to the tourism opportunities. Additionally, the healing and medicinal properties of the available mud, springs, and fish in the region create favorable conditions for improving and maintaining the health of the population. These accommodations are located in the mountainous and hilly areas of the Urgut, Samarqand, Nurobod, and other districts of the region, offering excellent opportunities for tourism purposes.

The Omonqo'ton nature reserve stands out for its unique characteristics, such as the difference in precipitation (750-800 mm in Omonqo'ton and 320-340 mm in Samarqand city), which ensures the diversity of plant life. Taking these features into account, artificial forest plantations were established in 1887, covering an area of 2,158 hectares. Nowadays, convenient conditions are created for tourists to visit the forest plantations in the Omonqo'ton basin, and special trails are being developed.

The mountainous and hilly regions of the area are rich in diverse plant life, including colorful vegetation such as juniper, apple trees, wild cherry, archazors, and others, which give the Omonqo'ton forests their distinctive landscape shapes. The unique combination of climate and plant life in this region has created many recreational areas and opportunities for establishing orchards.

In addition to the Samarqand region, there are also dam-affected areas in the Ohalik mountain ranges. The presence of these dammed areas, such as the "Yoshlik" tourist base and others, is directly related to the favorable climate,

beautiful landscapes, and ecotourism potential, which attract seasonal accommodation for dam-affected areas in the region.

The natural landmarks in the Chaqlilqalon Mountains are widely known. In this area, the remains of ancient glaciers that existed during the Ice Age have been well preserved. This place is considered one of the unique geological formations in the world. It includes cliffs and rocks of various shapes, picturesque valleys, steep cliffs, intricate caves, and other geomorphic landmarks. Two famous karst caves, Lev and Kelsi, are found in the Chaqlilqalon Mountains. Lev Cave is located in the Bulbulzor area of Omonqo'ton and was inhabited by people during the Stone Age, about 40-50 thousand years ago. Naturally, the current appearance of the cave may not leave a significant impression on tourists. Therefore, it is necessary to organize the surroundings of the cave, create appropriate appearances resembling the Stone Age, and depict images and sculptures depicting the life of early humans to make it more interesting. Kelsi Cave was discovered by Ukrainian scientists in 1980. The depth of this cave exceeds 800 meters, making it one of the top three deepest caves in the world. It is undoubtedly fascinating for mountaineering enthusiasts. If materials about this cave are published and advertised, it can further increase the interest of tourists. Additionally, the steep slopes, deep valleys, unique rock formations, and stone pillars resembling haystacks in the villages of Kamargaron, Vaxashti, and G'us contribute to the expansion of hiking and excursion routes.

The Chaqlilqalon Mountains are also rich in hydrological landmarks, including healing springs, beautiful waterfalls, mountain streams, and magnificent lakes. The karst springs in Kelsi and Lev caves, Qaynar buloq, Rohat buloq, Muz buloq, and Alvasti lakes, as well as the Sharsharal waterfalls in G'usoy and Kamangaron valleys, are included in tourist routes according to their attractiveness.

The ancient Robotkhodja water separator in the upper part of the Zarafshan River and the historical Darg'om and Eski Tuyatortar canals, which were built a long time ago, also attract the interest of tourists. Promoting and highlighting these places can greatly attract tourists.

The recreational areas in the Fergana region are divided as follows:

1. Recreation areas in the river and lake valleys. These areas include So'x, Isfayram, Shoximardonsoy, and the natural vegetation on the left bank of the Sirdaryo River, where cultural tree plantations and seasonal residences (convenient in May, June, July-August) are located. These areas are characterized by a

moderate climate, abundance of vegetation, sufficient humidity, a variety of birds and fish species, and distance from major highways. These areas are suitable for short-term (1-day) stays.

2. Climate therapy-oriented and curative recreational areas in central Fergana. These include Zilxa, Akbarobod, Yozyovon, Bostonbuva sand massifs, and the “Yozyovon Springs” natural landmark in central Fergana. This recreational region is mainly intended for seasonal (primarily the first half of summer and autumn) therapy. It features healing sandy areas as the main curative objects. It is convenient for patients with respiratory, skin, and rheumatic diseases.

3. Al-Farg’only reservoir in Fergana city. It is characterized by its natural beauty and recreational features related to water sports.

4. Recreation areas located in the Adir region, incorporating the Chimyon, Arsif, Satkak, Avval, Karkidon water reservoirs, offering seasonal and year-round opportunities for swimming, recuperation, and relaxation with their healing waters, beaches, and springs. Arsif and Chimyon have bathing and recuperation facilities. Good transportation accessibility.

5. Recreation areas in the Tog’oldi region. This includes the Vodil, So’x, and Quvasoy areas, which have established recreational areas at an elevation of 800-1200 meters above sea level. These places have many adult and children’s playgrounds. They also offer opportunities for treating nervous system-related diseases.

6. Recreation areas in the mountainous regions. They cater to various recreational activities. However, the large size of the Fergana region’s mountainous territory and the geographical and geological limitations pose challenges for access to recreational areas. Shohimardon village, located near Fergana city, is considered a recreational area accessible through such challenging mountain passes. At the same time, the access of visitors to this area is significantly restricted.

Creating recreational facilities and making effective use of them involves considering not only the natural and resource potential of recreational areas but also their economic aspects, which are of significant importance. First and foremost, it requires taking into account services such as food supply, transportation, and residential services for visitors.

In terms of utilizing recreational areas, it is not only essential to provide visitors with food and supplies but also to address the transportation issue because for short-term stays (1-2 days), visitors can bring their own provisions. However,

for longer stays, such as a week or ten days, there will undoubtedly be a need for new supplies. Consequently, waiting for transportation, changing vehicles along the way, or experiencing discomfort during transportation in unfavorable weather conditions are possibilities.

Such a situation can be evaluated as follows:

$$\{ T = T1 + T2 + TZ \}$$

Here, T1 represents the time spent on traveling to and from recreational areas, T2 accounts for inconveniences related to changing transportation, and TZ refers to difficulties arising from unfavorable weather and other conditions affecting transportation.

In unfavorable weather conditions and sometimes when the number of visitors is high, there may be an increase in costs associated with transportation. Thus, to meet their recreational needs, different professional and age groups of the population in the Fergana region take advantage of short-term residential facilities located within a radius of 5-10 km from nearby cities. The load on these specific recreational areas is significantly higher in terms of ecological and medical-sanitary standards. This, in turn, necessitates a high level of service organization in these particular recreational areas.

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