



## TURKEY

### **Pre-Task 2. Home Countries – To Discover Specific Niche Markets and Various Approaches to Segmentation**

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# **GOLF TOURISM IN TURKEY**

## **Introduction**

Tourism is one of the main industries that generate income, and the volume has been increasing rapidly over the last decades. It is not only for the rich and the privileged anymore, and since many more people can travel, the need for new destinations and activities that can be offered to different groups with different needs and wants is increasing. Due to the expectations of the new tourists, niche markets emerge and attract small groups of people with special interests.

Destinations need to be careful when planning for the niche markets since it is risky because of the size of the target market and the specificity of the attraction. Market segmentation and target market selection is an important step in planning and preparing a market strategy (Bryant & Morrison, 1980). A specific segment is necessary for the destinations to succeed that target niche markets in order to know the expectations and characteristics of the tourists they want to attract. Other than the ability to predict the tourist behavior, market segmentation could give the ability to identify and exploit new market opportunities to the destinations (Heok, Gendall & Esslemont, 1996). Coshall (2000) indicates that for the future product development and promotions, pre-purchase behavioral studies can be used to identify tourists' motivations, destination images and tourists' decision-making behaviors.

New tourists want more for the time and money they spent. Offering only one attraction or one type of tourism product is not enough to succeed in this competitive industry. Destinations can offer complementary products to enhance their possibilities of attracting tourists. Travel Industry Association of America (2003) states that 81 % of adult travellers include heritage or culture in their vacations other than a main attraction. So, the destination that use all their resources and can offer alternative or complimentary products may be more successful and attract more tourists.

## **Golf Tourism in Turkey**

The pace of tourism growth proves that it would be one of the leading industries of the global economy in the near future. Golf tourism has been increasing its impact and share on the international tourism market during the recent years. In order to attract this market with high income and expenditure factors, many countries have been planning and marketing golf destinations.

In recent years, as golf courses with international standards have opened up, Turkey has become an elite golfing center where players from around the world can meet in an environment of quality and prestige. Especially the area of Belek, 30 km east of Antalya, where there is a potential for golf tourism with the unique bonus of the cultural, historical and natural sightseeing opportunities of the region. Top-class courses are also being planned for Istanbul, Ankara and Muğla.

In Turkey, most courses are in the vicinity of tourist resorts, around the coastal regions, which have the necessary facilities like accommodation, restaurants and entertainment. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism plans to establish another 11 golf courses in these destinations.

Turkey has also been offering incentives, subventions and infrastructure to tourism industry from 1980s onwards, which led the industry to move forward among the tourist receiving

countries especially concerning the bed supply. However, the increase in the number of golf facilities in Turkey neither did match the general tourism development in the country nor the golf tourism growth in competing destinations.

A climate suitable for golf, availability of an airport and related transportation infrastructure, adequate land to handle minimum 4 golf courses, convenient topographical structure, appropriate water and rain levels required for maintenance of golf courses are the factors mentioned, which should be considered when planning a microgolf destination.

The micro destinations that might be considered in golf tourism development have been listed as; Bodrum, Kuşadası and Dalaman by the golf club managers.

### **Golf Tourism in Belek**

Turkey might not be the first that comes to mind as a golfing destination, but with its mild climate and vast acres of verdant countryside, the southern coastal region is fast gaining acclaim on the international golf scene. Belek is the main hub of the sport and home to five golf courses. Luxury hotels and resorts in the area offer inclusive golf packages. Even if your game isn't quite up to par, you'll be able to revel in the landscape of natural lakes, gently undulating lawns and eucalyptus forests, set to a backdrop of the snowcapped Taurus Mountains.

### **Golf Tourism in İzmir Kuşadası**

Developed by Turkish firm Oyzer Group, the Kusadasi International Golf Club is located in a popular resort area around 90 km south of Izmir, Turkey's third largest city. Designed by Spanish golf architect Jose Canales, the Kusadasi course, measures almost 6,400 meters and has around 140-270 meters above the sea level with views to the surrounding Aegean Sea, Long Beach, Samos Island, National Park bays and mountains. This unique resort offers an 18-hole championship golf course, a full-service 3174 m<sup>2</sup> Club House, VIP lounge, restaurant, banquet and meeting room facilities, event organizations and lodging accommodation all in one location.

### **Golf Tourism In Bodrum**

Up until now Turkey's golf courses have been concentrated in two clear regions – Istanbul has three and Belek has 13 courses – but now the southwestern province of Muğla is sure to be the one to watch. A holiday hotspot taking around 70% of all tourist arrivals to the country, Muğla has the potential to become on a par with Spain's Costa del Sol. A holiday hotspot, Muğla, has over 1,100 kilometers of coastline punctuated with chic marinas, but up until now very little golf. An 18-hole course has been completed in Vita Park near Bodrum and a 27-hole course winding through pine forests and olive groves is under construction close to the village of Mumcular.

## Conclusion

Turkey has a lot to offer to different segments with a large selection of tourist products and tourist attractions. Tourists can experience culture, heritage, natural resources and four seasons as well as unique cities that can offer authenticity in Turkey. Gastronomy tourism, festival tourism, sports such as golf, skiing, wind surfing, nature walks etc., culture and heritage tourism are only a few of the tourism types Turkey can offer with the natural and manmade resources.

Golf tourism is a popular sport among a small group of people with a high purchasing power and expectation of luxury and prestige. Carter & Shipman (1996) implies that the elderly is an attractive market for leisure and travel industries due to the trend of earlier retirement, increased number of leisure years, wealth and active lifestyle. The segment indicated might be a suitable target for golf tourism.

Turkey, with the scenery, coastal regions, resorts and hospitality, is an appropriate destination for golf tourism. In addition to Istanbul, other destinations such as Belek, Kusadasi and Bodrum have resources to be a leading golf destination. With good planning and development, these destinations can compete with the leaders in the market.

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