

# PROFILE OF FOREIGN TOURISTS VISITING SARAJEVO DURING WINTER

Amra Čaušević<sup>1</sup>  
Amra Banda<sup>2</sup>

*Original Scientific Article*

DOI: 10.35666/25662880.2022.8.81

UDC: 338.48-054.68"324"(497.6 Sarajevo)

**Abstract:** Sarajevo is a very popular tourist destination during the winter months. A large number of foreign tourists visit Sarajevo during the winter, mostly because of the New Year and Christmas holidays, but also because of the proximity to famous Olympic mountains such as Jahorina, Bjelašnica, Igman, and Trebević. The purpose of this paper is to provide an answer about the demographic characteristics and other characteristics of foreign tourists who visit Sarajevo in winter. Descriptive statistics were used in the interpretation and analysis of the obtained data. The results of the research show that the largest number of respondents are employed, that they most often come with friends, individually and without children. The main reason for visiting the destination is rest and relaxation. Most of the respondents intend to stay in Sarajevo for two to three nights. There is a slightly higher number of respondents for whom this is the first visit to Sarajevo, but over 47.2% of respondents have already stayed in Sarajevo before and they have most often visited Sarajevo, namely 1 to 5 times. 89 respondents already knew of Sarajevo as a tourist destination.

**Keywords:** tourism destination, Sarajevo, foreign tourists, winter

## INTRODUCTION

The reasons for the different understanding of the content of the term tourist destination are primarily in the diversity of aspects of its observation (geographical, economic, sociological, marketing, and managerial aspects) and its different perceptions by individual partakers of the tourist destination (existing and potential tourist demand, domicile population, public sector certain area, local entrepreneurs, etc.) (Hitrec, 1995).

---

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, University of Sarajevo, Zmaja od Bosne 33 – 35, 71000 Sarajevo.

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, University of Sarajevo, Zmaja od Bosne 33 – 35, 71000 Sarajevo.

A tourist destination can be defined as a touristically organized and market-recognizable spatial unit, which by the sum of its tourist products offers consumers a complete satisfaction of the tourist need. It follows from the above that for the characterization of a spatial unit as a tourist destination, its size and geopolitical borders are not crucial, but the ability to attract tourists and fully meet the complex tourist needs (Leiper, 1995). It can also be defined as a special geographical region in which visitors enjoy a special tourist experience while traveling and visiting its places (Vodeb, 2010).

A tourist destination is a set of different components that come together to meet the needs of tourists. In this sense, "a tourist destination is described as a set of attractions and related tourist facilities and services that a tourist or group of tourists chooses to visit or which offer chooses to promote, or as an area with different natural features, characteristics or attractions that attract non-local visitors. tourists and excursionists" (Popescu, 2009, p. 6).

Sarajevo, as a tourist destination, is becoming more and more attractive to many visitors from all over the world. Natural beauties, numerous cultural and historical monuments, a turbulent past, and numerous cultural events are the reason for the growing number of tourist visits to Sarajevo. Of course, we should not forget the really good prices of accommodation and services (Čaušević, 2020).

In December 2018, a total of 24.079 arrivals of foreign tourists and 48.400 overnight stays of foreign tourists were recorded in Canton Sarajevo. Most arrivals were made by tourists from Croatia (12.133 overnight stays and 5.994 arrivals), followed by Serbia (2.932 overnight stays and 1.614 arrivals) and Slovenia (2.814 overnight stays and 1.475 arrivals). These three countries accounted for 36,94% of overnight stays and 37,72% of arrivals. Institute for Informatics and Statistics of Canton Sarajevo also shows that 42.073 overnight stays and 18.629 arrivals were made in Canton Sarajevo in January 2019 by foreign tourists. Most tourists came from Croatia (14.344 overnight stays and 6.221 arrivals), then Serbia (3.580 overnight stays and 1.646 arrivals), and Slovenia (2.356 overnight stays and 1.157 arrivals). The share of Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia in the total number of foreign tourists who visited Canton Sarajevo in January 2019 was 48,4%, while the share in overnight stays was 48,2% (Čaušević, Mirić, Drešković, and Hrelja, 2020).

According to the Institute for Informatics and Statistics of Canton Sarajevo, in December 2018, Sarajevo was visited by 17,499 foreign tourists who came individually and spent 37,116 nights. The number of foreign tourists whose arrival in Sarajevo was organized by the travel agency was 6,580, and they spent 11,284 nights.

In January 2019, Sarajevo was visited by 13,368 foreign tourists who came individually and realized 30,641 overnight stays. While only 5,261 foreign tourists came to Sarajevo through a travel agency and they realized 11,432 overnight stays (Čaušević, Mirić, Avdić, Avdić, and Džaferagić, 2021).

## METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH RESULTS

A quantitative approach was applied in the research, which included data collection through personal surveys of respondents. The population covered by this research is foreign tourists who visited Sarajevo during the winter months of 2018/2019. The convenience sample included 250 respondents (foreign tourists who visited Sarajevo during the winter months, from December 10th, 2018 to January 31st, 2019). Descriptive statistics were used in the interpretation and analysis of the obtained data. The purpose of this paper is to provide an answer about the demographic characteristics and other characteristics of foreign tourists who visit Sarajevo during the winter.

Table 1: Gender of the respondents

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	144	57,6
Female	106	42,4
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: Research results

A larger number of male respondents were present in the sample (57.6%), while 42.4% of respondents were female.

Table 2: Country of the origin

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4,0</b>
<b>Croatia</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>16,8</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>11,6</b>
Australia	2	,8
Slovakia	1	,4
<b>Austria</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8,8</b>
<b>Serbia</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8,8</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4,0</b>
United Kingdom	6	2,4
China	6	2,4
Sweden	8	3,2
Spain	4	1,6
Malaysia	2	,8
<b>Italy</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6,0</b>
Switzerland	5	2,0
Montenegro	5	2,0
Hungary	5	2,0
Poland	6	2,4
Qatar	1	,4
Turkey	8	3,2
Denmark	5	2,0
Czech Republic	4	1,6
Norway	2	,8
Ireland	2	,8
Romania	4	1,6
United States of America	5	2,0
Bahrain	3	1,2
Netherlands	3	1,2
Uganda	1	,4
Canada	1	,4
Kuwait	2	,8
Russia	4	1,6
Oman	3	1,2
Bulgaria	2	,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: Research results

The largest number of respondents came from Croatia (16.8%), Germany (11.6%), Austria (8.8%), Serbia (8.8%), Italy (6.0%), France (4.0%) and Slovenia (4.0%). From Table 2, it can be concluded that a large number of foreign tourists (79 respondents) who visited Sarajevo during the winter months of 2019 came from the region (Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Montenegro).

Table 3: Employment status of the respondents

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Employed	144	57,6
Self-employed	47	18,8
Unemployed	3	1,2
Retired/renter	7	2,8
Student/pupil	47	18,8
Other	2	,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: Research results

The largest number of respondents is employed (57.6%), while there is the same number of respondents who are self-employed and student/pupil (18.8% each).

Table 4: Who is accompanying you on your current visit to this tourist destination?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No one	53	21,2
Partner	54	21,6
Family and /or relatives	35	14,0
Friends	96	38,4
Co-workers	6	2,4
Business partners	3	1,2
Other	3	1,2
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: Research results

Foreign tourists most often come to Sarajevo with friends (96 respondents), then with a partner (54 respondents), alone (53 respondents), and to a lesser extent with family and/or relatives (35 respondents).

Table 5: How many children under the age of 15 are accompanying you?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
one	4	1,6
two	2	,8
no one	244	97,6
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: Research results

From Table 5 it can be concluded that a large number of respondents come to Sarajevo without children (as many as 97.6%), which can be related to the previous table, where only 14% of respondents come to Sarajevo with family and relatives.

Table 6: What are the main reasons for your visit to this tourist destination?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Rest and relaxation	49	19,6
Visiting relatives and friends	41	16,4
Business reasons	18	7,2
Culture	23	9,2
Fun	16	6,4
Sports and recreation	1	,4
More than one reason on this list	102	40,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: Čaušević, 2020.

The main reason for the arrival of foreign tourists in Sarajevo is rest and relaxation (19.6% of respondents), followed by visiting relatives and friends (16.4%) and culture (23%). Only one respondent stated that sports and recreation are the main reason for visiting this destination.

Table 7: How many nights are you planning to stay at this tourist destination?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
One night	7	2,8
Two nights	38	15,2
Three nights	78	31,2
Four nights	21	8,4
Five nights	44	17,6
Six nights	11	4,4
Seven nights	12	4,8
Eight nights	1	,4
Ten and more nights	31	12,4
I don't know	7	2,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: Research results

Table 7 shows that 116 respondents plan to stay in Sarajevo for two to three nights, while 17.6% of respondents plan to stay for five nights, and 12.4% over ten nights.



Table 8: Is this your first visit to this tourist destination?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	132	52,8
No	118	47,2
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: Čaušević, Mirić, Drešković, and Hrelja, 2020.

For most respondents, this is their first visit to Sarajevo (52.8%), while 118 foreign tourists have already been to Sarajevo.

Table 9: How many times have you visited this tourist destination in the past?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
This is the first time	133	53,2
Between 1 to 5	73	29,2
Between 6 to 10	28	11,2
More than 10 times	10	4,0
A lot	6	2,4
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: Čaušević, Mirić, Drešković, and Hrelja, 2020.

Those foreign tourists for whom this is not the first visit to Sarajevo mostly visited Sarajevo between 1 to 5 times (29.2%), while 11.2% of respondents visited Sarajevo between 6 to 10 times. 10 respondents visited Sarajevo more than 10 times.

From Table 10 it can be concluded that a large number of respondents already knew of Sarajevo as a tourist destination (35.6% of respondents), which can be related to previous results where almost half of the respondents already visited Sarajevo. 22.4% of respondents heard about Sarajevo through friends and relatives, and 20.0% of respondents via the Internet.

Table 10: Where did you hear about this tourist destination?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
I already knew of it	89	35,6
The Internet	50	20,0
Friends and relatives	56	22,4
Media	17	6,8
Books and guides	5	2,0
Travel agency	26	10,4
Fairs and/or exhibitions	1	,4
It was part of the travel package	6	2,4
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: Research results

Table 11: Was your trip to Sarajevo organized by a travel agency or some other organizer?

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	50	20,0
No	200	80,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: Čaušević, Mirić, Avdić, Avdić, and Džaferagić, 2021.

The largest number of foreign tourists (200 respondents) visited Sarajevo individually, while 50 respondents visited Sarajevo through a travel agency/other organizers.

## CONCLUSION

According to the data of the Institute for Informatics and Statistics of Canton Sarajevo, foreign tourists from Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia in December 2018 achieved a share of 37.72% in arrivals and 36.94% in overnight stays. The share of these three countries in the total number of foreign tourists who visited the Canton Sarajevo in January 2019 is 48.44%, while the share of overnight stays is 48.2% (Čaušević, Mirić, Dresković, and Hrelja, 2020). The results of the research are in accordance with the data of the Institute for Informatics and Statistics of Canton Sarajevo, which show that the largest number of foreign tourists (79 respondents) who visit Sarajevo during the winter months come from the region, i.e., from Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Montenegro.

The results of the research show that the largest number of respondents are employed, that they most often come with friends and without children. The main reason for visiting the destination is rest and relaxation. Most of the respondents intend to stay in Sarajevo for two to three nights. There is a slightly higher number of respondents for whom this is the first visit to Sarajevo, but over 47.2% of respondents have already stayed in Sarajevo before and they most often visited Sarajevo 1 to 5 times. 89 respondents already knew of Sarajevo as a tourist destination.

The results of the research also show that a large number of 80% of respondents came to Sarajevo individually, i.e., that their trip was not organized by a travel agency or other organizer. This data can be used to promote organized travel and attract tourists to visit Sarajevo because tourists stay in Sarajevo for an average of 2 to 3 days. Changing the way tourists arrive from individual travel to organized travel can certainly increase the number of overnight stays, stimulate consumption and affect the overall development of tourism in the city of Sarajevo (Čaušević, Mirić, Avdić, Avdić, and Džaferagić, 2020).

Sarajevo is a very popular tourist destination during the winter months. A large number of foreign tourists visit Sarajevo during the winter, mostly because of the New Year and Christmas holidays, but also because of the proximity to famous Olympic mountains such as Jahorina, Bjelašnica, Igman, and Trebević. By presenting these results, it was determined who are the foreign tourists visiting Sarajevo during the winter months, their demographic characteristics, and other characteristics. A large number of foreign tourists came from Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Montenegro.

These data can be very useful to the destination management about the importance of foreign tourists who visit Sarajevo during the winter months, their characteristics as well as their importance for the sustainable development of the destination. This is of great importance for the strategy of tourist destination development during the winter months, marketing strategy, but also the destination supply (Čaušević, Mirić, Drešković, and Hrelja, 2020).

## REFERENCES

Čaušević, A. (2020). Sarajevo Film Festival i njegov značaj za turistički imidž Sarajeva, Naučna monografija. Sarajevo: Prirodno-matematički fakultet Univerziteta u Sarajevu.

Čaušević, A., Mirić, R., Avdić, B., Avdić, A., and Džaferagić, A. (2021). Organized Travel vs. Individual Travel – The Case of Sarajevo. *Deturope*, 13(1), 94-120.

Čaušević, A., Mirić, R., Drešković, N., and Hrelja, E. (2020). First-time and repeat visitors to Sarajevo. *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality, and Recreation*, 10(1), 14-27.

Hitrec, T. (1995). Turistička destinacija – pojam, razvitak, koncept. *Turizam*, 3-4, 43-51.

Leiper, N. (1995). *Tourism Management*. Melbourne: RMIT Press.

Popesku, J. (2009). *Menadžment turističke destinacije*. Beograd: Fakultet za turistički i hotelijerski menadžment.

Vodeb, K. (2010). Cross-border regions as potential tourist destinations along the Slovene Croatian frontier. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 16(2), 219-228.