

The origins of tourism

By the early 21st century, international tourism had become one of the world's most important economic activities, and its impact was becoming increasingly apparent from the [Arctic](#) to [Antarctica](#). The [history](#) of tourism is therefore of great interest and importance. That history begins long before the coinage of the word *tourist* at the end of the 18th century. In the Western tradition, organized travel with supporting [infrastructure](#), sightseeing, and an emphasis on essential destinations and experiences can be found in [ancient Greece](#) and [Rome](#), which can lay claim to the origins of both “heritage tourism” (aimed at the celebration and appreciation of historic sites of recognized cultural importance) and beach resorts. The [Seven Wonders of the World](#) became tourist sites for Greeks and Romans.

Pilgrimage offers similar antecedents, bringing Eastern civilizations into play. Its religious goals coexist with defined routes, commercial hospitality, and an admixture of curiosity, adventure, and enjoyment among the motives of the participants. Pilgrimage to the earliest [Buddhist](#) sites began more than 2,000 years ago, although it is hard to define a [transition](#) from the makeshift privations of small groups of monks to recognizably tourist practices.



St. Stephen, Stoned to Death

Stoning is a traditional punishment, but among Christian martyrs, [St. Stephen](#), who died in 36 AD in Jerusalem, was the first to suffer that fate. He was one of the first seven deacons chosen by the early Christian community and became an evangelist. His success in converting Jews drew the ire of the Sanhedrin (the supreme rabbinic court). His punishment for speaking against “this holy place and the law” was to be stoned to death. As is common to many icons of Catholic martyrdom, St. Stephen is often depicted in paintings as holding the method of his death: a basket of stones.



St. Stephen

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