

Role of Urban Green Environments in Shaping Sustainable Tourism Experiences

Daniel Moreau*

Department of Tourism and Recreation, Étoile Metropolitan University, Lyon, France

DESCRIPTION

Cities have traditionally attracted visitors through historical landmarks, museums, entertainment districts, shopping centers, and business activities. In recent decades, however, urban green spaces have gained increasing recognition as important tourism resources. Parks, botanical gardens, urban forests, waterfront promenades, and landscaped public areas contribute significantly to the quality of visitor experiences. As urban populations continue to expand and concerns regarding environmental quality become more prominent, green spaces have emerged as valuable elements that enhance city attractiveness and support tourism development.

Urban tourism often involves activities that expose visitors to crowded environments, transportation systems, and intensive schedules. While these experiences may provide excitement and cultural enrichment, they can also contribute to physical and mental fatigue. Green spaces offer opportunities for relaxation, recreation, and recovery within urban settings. Visitors frequently seek areas where they can rest, exercise, observe nature, or spend time away from heavily developed districts. The availability of such environments may positively influence perceptions of destination quality and visitor satisfaction.

The concept of visitor well-being has become increasingly important within tourism research. Well-being encompasses physical comfort, psychological health, emotional satisfaction, and overall quality of experience. Green spaces contribute to these dimensions by providing natural surroundings that encourage relaxation and stress reduction. Numerous visitors report feelings of calmness and comfort when spending time in parks, gardens, and waterfront areas. Exposure to vegetation, open landscapes, and natural elements can create positive emotional responses that complement other tourism activities within cities.

Botanical gardens represent one category of urban green space that attracts both domestic and international visitors. These facilities often combine recreation, education, conservation, and scientific research. Visitors may explore diverse plant collections, learn about environmental topics, and participate in guided

activities. Botanical gardens frequently host cultural events, exhibitions, and seasonal displays that expand their appeal beyond traditional nature enthusiasts. Their ability to combine environmental education with leisure experiences makes them important contributors to urban tourism portfolios.

Urban parks also play a significant role in attracting visitors. Large public parks often serve as multifunctional spaces where tourism, recreation, and community activities intersect. Visitors may engage in walking, cycling, photography, picnicking, or cultural events. Public parks can provide scenic views, recreational facilities, and opportunities for social interaction. Their accessibility and affordability make them attractive to a broad range of travelers, including families, students, and budget-conscious tourists.

Waterfront green spaces have become increasingly popular in urban tourism planning. Cities located near rivers, lakes, or coastlines frequently invest in landscaped promenades, public gardens, and recreational corridors that enhance visitor experiences. These areas often support walking, cycling, sightseeing, and outdoor dining activities. Waterfront environments contribute to destination aesthetics while creating opportunities for physical activity and relaxation. Such developments can improve city image and encourage longer visitor stays.

Urban forests represent another valuable component of tourism infrastructure. Although commonly associated with environmental management, urban forests can also support recreation and tourism activities. Forested areas within or near cities provide opportunities for hiking, wildlife observation, and nature-based experiences. Visitors seeking alternatives to densely populated urban environments may find these locations particularly attractive. Urban forests can enhance destination diversity by offering experiences that differ substantially from traditional urban attractions.

Social interaction represents another important function of urban green spaces. Parks and public gardens often serve as gathering places where residents and visitors interact. Cultural performances, festivals, recreational programs, and community

Correspondence to: Daniel Moreau, Department of Tourism and Recreation, Étoile Metropolitan University, Lyon, France, E-mail: daniel.moreau.emu@scholarmail.fr

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events frequently take place within these environments. Such activities create opportunities for tourists to observe local lifestyles and participate in community experiences. These interactions can contribute to a greater sense of connection with destinations and enrich overall travel experiences.

Accessibility is a critical factor influencing the effectiveness of urban green spaces as tourism assets. Well-connected transportation systems, pedestrian pathways, signage, and visitor information services contribute to positive experiences. Green spaces that are easy to access from major attractions, accommodation districts, and transportation hubs are more likely to attract visitors. Inclusive design practices that accommodate individuals with diverse mobility needs can further enhance accessibility and visitor satisfaction.

Collaboration among municipal authorities, tourism organizations, environmental agencies, and local communities is important for maximizing the tourism value of urban green spaces. Strategic planning can ensure that environmental conservation objectives align with tourism development goals. Community involvement may contribute valuable knowledge

regarding local needs, cultural preferences, and environmental priorities. Such cooperation supports the creation of public spaces that serve both residents and visitors effectively.

CONCLUSION

Urban green spaces represent valuable tourism assets that contribute significantly to visitor well-being and city competitiveness. Through their environmental, recreational, social, and economic functions, parks, gardens, waterfronts, and urban forests enhance the quality of urban tourism experiences. Their presence supports relaxation, cultural engagement, environmental quality, and destination attractiveness. Although challenges related to development pressures, maintenance requirements, and climate change remain important considerations, effective management can ensure that green spaces continue to provide substantial benefits for both visitors and urban communities. As cities seek innovative approaches to strengthen tourism competitiveness, investment in accessible and attractive green spaces is likely to remain an important priority.