

#### A HANDBOOK FOR ENTREPRENEURS



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### Introduction

This handbook is meant for entrepreneurs in the regions of the PAN Parks member national parks in Bulgaria, Turkey and all other countries, as well as for tour opperators bringing tourists to the parks. It does not offer universal and specific solutions, but instead aims to aid in the preparation of programs and the development of new tourism products as well as in the training of personnel.

Its main goals are to improve the understanding of the value of intercultural knowledge and the skills necessary for intercultural communication of participants in the tourism trade and to stimulate entrepreneurs to acquire these skills and knowledge. It also aims to give directions for working with the Muslim tourism market and help entrepreneurs to develop a vision, in accordance with their individual activities, place and segment of the market that they represent and to outline the main characteristics and special features of serving Muslim tourists.

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Foundation Information and Nature Conservation <a href="http://www.ecologybg.com">http://www.ecologybg.com</a> is executing the project "Improved awareness of religious, cultural and human dimensions in support of sustainable development" with the financial help of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue Between Cultures, head-quartered in Alexandria, Egypt <a href="http://www.euromedalex.org/">http://www.euromedalex.org/</a> and in partnership with the "Kure Mountains" Ecotourism Association from Turkey and the PAN Parks foundation, registered in the Netherlands.

The project aims to popularise ecotourism as an economic activity, which can bring the people and nations in the Euro-Mediterranean region closer together.

The following tasks were executed in the course of a year (September 2012 – August 2013):

- connecting of different organizations in intercultural dialogue in order to encourage an exchange of ideas and their participation in economic development;
- improving the capabilities of young people and women for participating in business initiatives with partners from a diverse cultural and religious background;
- encouraging intercultural learning on religious topics as part of the training of entrepreneurs in the ecotourism sector;
- creation of effective tools (a training program, methodology and materials as well as the current handbook) for the dissemination of knowledge about intercultural and inter-religious dialogue as well as about the diversity of Islam in Europe;
- creation of opportunities for the replication and enrichment of the knowledge and experience gathered during the project, in at least 15 countries from the Euro-Mediterranean region via interaction and sharing platforms and as a channel for communication with diverse target groups – from ordinairy people in provincial areas, to political decisionmakers.

## Cultural Differences and Intercultural Communication

Have you ever lived in a foreign country? Have you made a short visit to other countries? Have you experienced uncomfortable situations when others do not understand what you are asking for or why you behave in a certain way even though you speak their language? It's terrible – isn't it?

Why on earth do people who look so much alike and can speak one and the same language sometimes fail to understand each other? Why do Bulgarians shake their heads for "no" and all other Balkan and European nations do the same when they say "yes"? Or why do Bulgarians have their small talk prior to business meetings and Americans – after them? All these are cultural differences that make nations differ from one another and sometimes create problems. They can also lead to trouble when one has to manage in a completely new environment and may cause "cultural shock".



Culture is a set of commonly accepted values, customs, perceptions and behavioral rules of a nation. It is the way in which a specific group of people resolves problems and settles arguments. It is the filter, through which we take in and evaluate information and the basis upon which we make judgments.

Through our "cultural glasses", we see things not as they are, but rather, as we are.

Being aware of the cultural differences of our guests and being prepared to deal effectively with them can be crucial in tourism. Cross-cultural trainings are being offered more and more all over

the civilized world in the last ten years. In countries that export and import working power like Canada and UK this type of service has become an industry. Many companies that work with foreign clients pay in order to better prepare their employees and to improve the business results of their enterprise.

In Bulgaria only some of the big hotel chains and very few of the companies with foreign capital devote special attention to cross cultural issues. However, it is essential for all tourist companies that work with foreign clients to train their staff and develop the knowledge and skills necessary to deal with people from different cultures. This is one side of the issue.

The other one is that **presenting Bulgarian cultural specifics could become an attractive part of the list of tourism products.** Most tourists that visit new countries do this just because they want to know more about the local people's cultural traditions, values and beliefs.

Before learning about other cultures we should learn more about ourselves. Here is where Bulgarians are on the cultural map:



There are **three general types** of cultures (according to the theory of Richard Lewis http://www.crossculture.com/) – **linear-active, multi-active and reactive.** 

- Linear-actives are people from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, USA.
- Multi-active countries are Bulgaria and Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Monaco, Portugal, Russia, Rwanda, Ukraine
- Reactive ones are China, Japan, Korea (North), Korea (South), Laos, Thailand, Vietnam

**Linear-active** people tend to be task-oriented, highly organized planners who complete action-chains by doing one thing at a time, preferably in accordance with a linear agenda. They prefer straightforward and direct discussion, sticking to facts and figures. Speech is for information exchange and they talk and listen in equal proportions. They are truthful rather than diplomatic and do not fear confrontation, adhering to logic rather than emotions. They partly conceal feelings and value a certain amount of privacy. They are results-oriented and like to move quickly forward, compromising when necessary to achieve a deal.

They believe that good products make their own way and sometimes fail to see that sales are made in many parts of the world based on relationships. Linear-active people normally use official channels to pursue their aims; they do not have a strong inclination to use connections, take short cuts or to sway people through presents or under-cover payments. They are normally lawabiding and have faith in rules and regulations to guide their conduct. They honor contracts, which they have signed and do not unduly delay payment for goods or services received.

When doing business they are keen on punctual performance, good quality and reliable delivery dates. They dislike *mañana* behavior and too much talking. They are process-oriented, brief on the telephone and respond quickly to written communication. Status is gained through achievement, bosses are often low key, money is important. **Rationalism and science dominate their thinking more than religion.** 

**Multi-active people** are impulsive beings who attach great importance to feelings, relationships and people-orientation. They like to do many things at the same time and are poor followers of agendas. Conversation is roundabout and animated and they try to speak and listen at the same time. Interruptions are frequent, pauses in conversation are few. Multi-active cultures are uncomfortable with silence and seldom permit or experience it.

In business, relationships and connections are seen as more important than products. The former pave the way for the sale of the latter. Relationships are best when they are face-to-face; they cannot be maintained over a protracted period simply by correspondence or phone calls. Written communication has less effect with multi-active cultures than oral. They are extremely dialogue-oriented and wish to obtain their information directly from people. They trade in rumour and gossip and show less respect than linear-active people do for official announcements, rules or regulations. They have limited respect for au-

thority, but accept their place in their own social or company hierarchy. They like strong bosses, who are also expected to protect them.

Multi-active people often are late with delivery dates and when paying for services or goods received. They are less interested in schedules or deadlines than linear-actives and often move only when they are ready. Delays are common, unpunctuality frequent. Multi-active people are flexible and frequently change their plans; they often do this to accommodate other changes elsewhere. They do not plan in the same detail as linear-active people, but are good at improvisation and adept at handling chaos. They borrow and lend property rather freely. They value privacy less than company. They tend to be emotional and family-oriented. In business they use charisma, rhetoric, manipulations and negotiated truth. They are diplomatic and tactful and often circumvent laws and officialdom to take "shortcuts".

**Reactive** or listening cultures rarely initiate action or discussion, preferring first to listen to and establish the other's position, then react to it and formulate their own. Reactive cultures listen before they react. They are the world's best listeners. A decent period of silence after the speaker has stopped shows respect for the weight of the remarks, which must be considered unhurriedly and with due deference. Even when representatives of a reactive culture begin their reply, they are unlikely to voice any strong opinion immediately. Japanese, particularly, go over each point many times in detail to make sure there are no misunderstandings. Chinese take their time to assemble a variety of strategies, which would avoid discord with the initial proposal.

In reactive cultures the preferred mode of communication is monologue – pause– reflection–monologue. People belonging to reactive cultures not only tolerate silences well, but regard them as a very meaningful, almost refined, part of discourse. The American, having delivered a sales pitch, leans forward and says, "Well, what do you think?" If you ask reactives what they think, they begin to think. Reactive people think in silence. Another American, asked the same question, might well jump to his feet and exclaim, "I'll tell you what I think!", allowing no pause to punctuate the proceedings or interfere with western 'momentum'. Oriental momentum takes much longer to achieve.

Lack of eye contact, so typical of the East, does not help the situation. A Finn or a Japanese, embarrassed by another's stare, seeks eye contact only at the beginning of the discussion or when they wish their opponent to take up their 'turn' in the conversation. Small talk does not come easily to reactive cultures. The westerner should always bear in mind that the actual content of the

response delivered by a person from a reactive culture represents only a small part of the significance surrounding the event. Reactive people have large reserves of energy. They are economical in movement and effort and do not waste time reinventing the wheel. Although they always give the impression of having power in reserve, they are seldom aggressive and rarely aspire to leadership.

## Now that we know more about the main types of cultures let us try to see things from the point of view of our guests.

First of all try to think from their point of view and realize that it is not easy to be a foreigner even when you are on holiday. If possible prepare yourself with information about the country they come from. Even vague knowledge can help you understand them and make them feel more comfortable. A good way of learning directly from them is to start a conversation by "We Bulgarians like eating salad before our main meal and what do you like?" Or "It is quite usual for us to start a conversation with strangers in the shop or restaurant. Do you do the same?" This way you will learn about them and at the same time help them understand Bulgarians better. It is much easier to accept even the strangest things when you know that they are a part of the cultural specifics of a nation.

Do not forget that the first impression is most important. It would be good if you could learn at least one word in the language of your guests and use it when you welcome them at the door. Prepare a small welcoming ritual – give them a rose or a glass of a typical Bulgarian drink and tell them about the traditional hospitality of the people here. While being hospitable do not forget to keep your distance – don't try to shake hands with everyone, or give hugs and kisses, nor tap them on the back. Such physical gestures are completely unacceptable in some cultures.

It is very important that you give your guests full information about what they can expect. Start with warnings of any dangers – thefts at public places (this can happen even in the lobbies of big hotels, or in front of change bureaus). Keep in mind that in some countries like the Muslim ones such events are impossible for religious and cultural reasons. Then tell them about any inconveniences like dishonest taxi drivers and give recommendations on how to avoid them.

Develop some products around our traditional holidays or beliefs. You can either research companies that provide such services or try to create something around the most celebrated holiday in your region yourself. Demonstrate a typical ritual or a folklore tradition. Ask your guests about their traditions and folklore examples. Try to show them and teach them some of ours. Do not make the

presentation longer than half an hour. After having such an experience people become more open to the culture of their hosts.

Have all your staff learn some major cultural differences related to food. For example: Muslims and Jews don't eat pork nor do Muslims drink alcohol. Americans like their food served fast and hot. English often like cooked breakfasts – bacon and eggs. They also prefer their coffee steamed but in large quantities and served in big (tea) cups and don't eat much salad. It is always better to ask people what they usually have for lunch, or diner than to make a mistake. You can always start a conversation by saying "We Bulgarians usually start our dinner with rakia and salad. What do you have for dinner?" Do not assume that everyone wants to try the Bulgarian specialties. Some people do not like changing their diet.

Keep your distance and know your place. Most liner actives are very polite and smiley, but everything is acceptable only to a certain point. They can spend time talking to you when they need information but it does not mean that you can take a seat at their table unless you are asked to. When you are in a conversation – always listen and make sure that the other side has finished with what they want to say before you start talking.

Be aware that sense of humor is very much related to culture and each nation has its specific jokes. Do not expect all people to find our Bulgarian anecdotes funny and do not tell them to everyone.

It is a Bulgarian habit to talk a lot in the corridor. Liner actives do not understand that and can get irritated if you keep them at the door with conversations when they are ready to leave.

And finally – have in mind that culture is not everything about a person. People are different and what is true for one English person is not always valid for another. Be sincere and show that you are flexible and willing to learn about their culture and country. Would you say "All Bulgarians drink rakia or are football fans?" So do not allow yourself to be led by stereotypes. They simplify reality and are usually negative. They tend to perpetuate certain characteristics by transferring them on a mouth-to-mouth principle, but this does not make them any more accurate or true. Always try to learn about each of your guests and make notes of their names, habits, and favorite dishes. This will help you give them a special treat. There is no one who does not like being treated with consideration and feeling special!

In Tourism, where customer care is the main criteria for service quality it is important to read every guest individually in order to avoid jumping

to conclusions, which contain the words "always, all, never and every(one)". Instead, try to use and think in words like "many, most, often and some". Be sincere and show that you are flexible and would like to learn more about their culture and country.

#### **Good intercultural communication practices are:**

- getting to know ourselves first;
- putting ourselves in our guest's shoes and trying to understand them;
- always approaching them and new situations with good intentions;
- our curiosity should be coupled with respect and discretion;
- it is necessary for us to accept uncertainty and ambiguity and be flexible.

It is useful to outline cultural specifics, which distinguish us from our guests and to try to meet in the middle.

## Religious Beliefs and Cultural Values and Their Reflection on Hospitality

#### **The Three Abrahamic Religions**

**The Abrahamic religions** are monotheistic, i.e. they believe in the existence of one God, the creator of all, who cares for the world he created. Their common origin can be traced back to Abraham, the patriarch of the Jewish nation or to a spiritual tradition, which itself identifies with him. Chronologically, Judaism was established first, followed by Christianity and, finally, Islam.

**Judaism** is the religion of the descendants of Jacob (a.k.a. Israel), the grandson of Abraham. It is one of the oldest surviving monotheistic faiths. The belief that there is one almighty God, who created the universe and maintains its existence stems from Judaism. The Jewish religion is based on the Jewish canon of the Bible, the Tanakh, developed further in later scriptures, such as the Talmud. According to traditional Judaism, God revealed his laws and commandments to Moses on mount Sinai in the form of the written and oral Torah (law). These texts, traditions and values play an important role in later Abrahamic religions, such as Christianity and Islam. Judaism has directly and indirectly influenced many aspects of secular ethics and the civil laws of western civilizations.

**Christianity** is the belief of Christians in Jesus as the Messiah (*Hebrew* Mashiah; *Greek* Christos, Χριστός), "Son of God and redeemer of all people". The name "Christians" was first used in Antioch (ancient Syria, modern Turkey). Christianity honors the Bible as divinely inspired. It is composed of two parts – The Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains the books of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament contains 27 books, including Gospels, stories about the activity of the first Christians, letters (epistles) of the Apostles, and the book of Revelation. The New Testament is the core written testimony of Christianity, in which Jesus Christ is represented as the central personality. The Bible was written by people who were inspired by the Holy Spirit, which is why it invariably contains God's word.

Christianity developed as a unified religion until the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when the Christian churches of Central and Western Europe separated and formed the Roman Catholic Church, based in Rome. In the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Protestant churches separated from the Roman Catholic Church. These three branches of Christianity continue to exist separately, although there are

attempts at common activities. With 2,3 billion followers, Christianity is the biggest religion in the world. It is the predominant religion in Europe, North and South America, Australia and Oceania, the Philippines and large parts of Africa. Christianity is growing guickly in Asia – especially in China and South Korea.

Eastern Orthodoxy is the predominant religion in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church has its origins in the conversion to Christianity of the Bulgarian nation in the year 864, during the rule of the Bulgarian prince Boris I. It is part of the family of Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. A characteristic trait of Bulgarian Orthodoxy is its century-long, peaceful coexistence with neighbouring nations of different faiths. There are many examples of mutual aid between communities until today. Even when a temple is being built, Orthodox Christians often help with means or personal labor to erect a Mosque and vice versa. This tolerance can be explained both by the type of religious belief in our part of the world and by the common psychological traits of the Bulgarian nation.

#### Islam



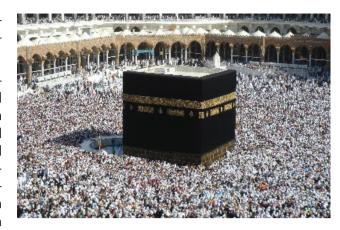
Islam is a monotheistic religion based on the Koran (a book structured in 114 suras (chapters) and regarded by its followers as the literal word of the only God – Allah), as well as on the Sunnah – descriptions of the teachings and activity of the prophet Muhammad. In Arabic "Islam" is a verbal noun, which means dedicating oneself to God, as postulated by the teachings and life of His prophet – Muhammad. After his death in 632, his followers carried his message like an army of conquerors, which penetrated the lands of the Christian Byzantine Empire. Today Muslims constitute a very large majority of all Eastern Mediterranean countries, except Israel and Cyprus.

Muslims accept the following righteous men and prophets from the Old Testament: Adam, Abraham (Ibrahim), Moses (Musa) and Jesus (Isa). According to Islamic tradition their earlier divine messages were distorted with time.

Muslim religious practices incorporate the Pillars of Islam – five obligatory canonical commandments for religious ritualism, behavior and actions for the worship of God. The five pillars are: testifying to God's oneness (following Islam), prayer, fasting, giving charity and pilgrimage (to Mecca). Their observance establishes the righteousness, which ensures salvation on the Day of Judgment. They are also a powerful factor for the unification of the Ummah (the community of

believers), due to their aid in reconciling differences in theoretical, theological and ritual opinion between the different branches of the religion.

Islamic law (Sharia) includes detailed instructions about almost every sphere of personal and social life. Sharia encompasses topics ranging from banking and military to charity and environmental protection. Islam has no clergy; there is no formal institution charged with the supervision and regulation of the order of the religion. There is no spokesperson and no one to express the formal position of Islam in the way that the papal institution acts in



Catholicism. After the collapse of the Islamic state, which continued to exist only two centuries after the death of the prophet Muhammad, religious authority was entrusted to the ulama – a group of scientists or spiritual leaders. Their role as protectors and interpreters of the tradition is much more akin to the role of a rabbi, than to that of a Christian priest. They have no political power, but restrict the authority of sultans and emirs (the political elite). It interprets and applies the divine law according to a system of laws, developed in the academies. The most prestigious Islamic academy, Al-Azhar in Cairo, was established in 971 and is thought to be the oldest university in the world.

With its 1,57 billion followers constituting 23% of the earth's population, Islam is the second most widespread religion after Christianity and, according to some appraisals, also the fastest growing one. Most Muslims are followers of one of the two main branches of Islam – Sunnism or Shiitism.

The Muslim faith is connected to travel, as the obligation to travel (pilgrimage) is one of the five pillars of Islam, alongside the belief in God and Muhammad, prayer, fasting and giving alms (charity). Islam encourages certain types of travel – the obligatory Hajj, a visit to religious holy places for gaining knowledge, etc.

## From the point of view of tourism Muslims can be divided into three groups:

- 1) Liberal toward all religious requirements people with more secular views, liberated from religious practices, some of them with a foreign education, and generally with a different educational and cultural status. They are not atheists or anti-religious, but do not identify themselves with religion and have a liberal approach toward fulfilling their obligations as Muslims.
- **2) Conservative traditionalists** not deeply religious, but live in keeping with most religious rules, restrictions and obligations. They may stick to certain

religious norms, while ignoring others. This group is the most numerous, but also the most particular, because their mindset dictates that if they do not keep all religious rules, the ones that they do keep need to be kept strictly. For example, they may visit a place of amusement or a casino, but they would not eat pork and would not even want a pork dish to be present on their table.

**3) Deeply religious** – consistent in their service, dogmatic, they keep all canons and would never undertake touristic travels, unless they are sure that they will be able to keep them. They rely mainly on travel agents, who offer specialised packages for religious Muslims.



Muslims live in over 100 countries around the world. Islam is the prevalent religion in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as in large parts of Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Significant Muslim communities exist in China and Russia, as well as in some of the Antillean islands (via the immigration of Muslim slaves from the colonies). Around 13% of all Muslims live in Indonesia, the biggest predominantly Muslim country in the world, 31% in the Indian subcontinent and another 20% in the Arab countries. Communities of Muslim immigrants or converts exist in almost all parts of the world.

The last National Park that entered the PAN Parks <a href="http://www.panparks.org/visit">http://www.panparks.org/visit</a> network is from a predominantly muslim country – Turkey. There are Islam followers in each of the other countries in the network: 10 % in Bulgaria, 10-13% - Georgia, 6% - Russia, 5% - Sweden, 2,5 % - Italy, 1% - Estonia, 1% - Finland, 1% - Lithuania, 0.3% - Romania.

The tree main religions connected to the name of Abraham have some common traits. They are all monotheistic and consider God a transcendent creator and the source of moral law. The ethical orientation of all three religions is the choice between good and evil, which is connected to conformance or non-conformance to the only God and His divine law. The stories, places and characters in their holy texts are alike, even though they are often presented in different roles, from different perspectives and with different meanings. They have many internal differences, based on the specific doctrine and practice. The most important theological difference in the development of Islam from the viewpoint of historical development is in the interpretation of sin. There is no doctrine about the primordial sin, there is not even a trace of the idea of the redemption of others' sins. The only thing required of people is to keep the divine covenants and to use their reason, intuition and talents to distinguish lies from truth, using the Koran as a criterion. Sometimes the different religions and even

the different branches of one and the same religion continue to have bitter conflicts amongst themselves.

#### **The Muslim Population in Bulgaria**

According to the 2011 census, the total number of self-defined Muslims in Bulgaria is 577 139 people, which constitutes around 10% of those who indicated their religion. Most Bulgarian Muslims are Sunni, since Sunnism is the form of Islam, officially supported by the Ottoman Empire, which governed the territories of today's Bulgaria for five centuries. Sects with mixed, or Shia beliefs such as the Ouizilbash and the Bektashi Order are also present in Bulgaria. These communities live predominantly in the area of Razgrad, Targovishte and Tutrakan. According to Midhat Pasha they are mainly descendants of Bulgarians who converted to Islam in order to escape prosecution, but chose a more Shia-oriented version of the religion, because of its higher tolerance toward diverse national customs.



The Muslim population of Bulgaria includes mainly Turks, Bulgarian Muslims and Muslim Roma. Its representatives live predominantly in southeast Bulgaria and the Rhodope mountains. Part of the Muslims in Bulgaria are immigrants from Arab countries who hold a Bulgarian citizenship.

Muslim hierarchy is headed by the chief Mufti and eighteen regional Muftis, who occupy the position for a mandate of five years.

#### **Coexistence of People from Different Religions on the Balkans**

The Balkan Peninsula is a region with a principally Christian population, but there are many Muslims, Jews and representatives of other religions living along-side the majority of Christian people, both as new immigrants and as traditional inhabitants of these lands. The coexistence was not always peaceful in all parts of the region. Many known religious conflicts have occurred through the centuries. There were numerous conflicts to the west of the Bulgarian boarder even in the last two decades; some of them were violent and led to bloodshed. These conflicts are not purely religious, but rather stem from political tensions, which are presented as religious clashes. The leaders of the respective faiths however, declare that there are no serious problems between the faiths.

Luckily for the population of Bulgaria, there are no such conflicts here. Even Christians and Muslims live harmoniously: they honor each others' holidays,

visit each other and share in each others' happiness and sorrow. When one community is building its house of prayer, people from the other community help with resources or labor and vice versa. In many settlements the church and the mosque are built side by side and this cohabitation is a century-long tradition. Another phenomenon, which has been observed, is that Muslims visit and pray in Christian temples and monasteries and Christians welcome them happily. It is also common for Muslims to make donations to Christian temples. In light of all of these positive practices, politicians have begun to speak of the "Bulgarian model" for peaceful coexistence between different faiths. The truth, however, is that this is not a political achievement, but one of the people themselves, and has been a national tradition for many centuries. Their long life together, the sharing of difficulties and hardships, as well as the successes and joys of daily life has taught them that religious differences are not an obstacle to their peaceful life together.

#### **Basic Muslim Beliefs and Virtues**

Muslim belief is concentrated around the well known five pillars of the religion: testifying (to God's oneness), prayer, fasting, charity and pilgrimage. It is characteristic of Islam that believers keep the requirements related to the five pillars fairly accurately.

**Testifying** to the faith is a mandatory condition. This is why we are not going to comment on it. The remaining four pillars of the Islamic faith have very strict rules, outlining the requirements for the fulfillment of religious obligations.

The five daily **prayers** (Namaz), especially the Friday noon prayer, the external (washing) and internal (repentance and forgiveness) cleansing, are meant to keep Muslims in good religious condition.

The same goes for the **fast**, especially in the month of Ramadan. The concept of fasting also includes constant abstinence from specific foods and alcoholic beverages.



**Charity** (Zakat) is a continual obligation for every Muslim, which is carried out readily and with generosity in the name of God. Special tables indicate how much each person has to give (in kind or money) as alms for the poor and needy. This does not solve social problems, but it maintains the feeling of empathy for fellow Muslims and the sense of community (Ummah).

**Pilgrimage** (Hajj) is mainly to Mecca and is considered an irrevocable duty.

All this creates a daily framework for Muslims, distinguishing them from everyone else as faithful people. These characteristics of every day religious life place certain requirements on the way of life of Muslim people.

## Cultural Characteristics Related to Customer Care – Accommodation and Food

One of the main cultural characteristics of Islam is the concept of cleanliness. **Cleanliness** in Islam is perceived as cleansing from all types of impurity. These impurities are categorised as internal and external from a religious perspective. In the external case, all impurities from the clothes, body and the place where one resides must be cleansed, i.e. all impurities which are visible, including forbidden foods and drinks – everything related to the pig, dog and alcohol.

In the case of internal impurity the soul must be cleansed from all types of indecent acts, committed by the person. From the point of view of Islamic law, cleanliness is not an end in itself. It means cleansing for "ibadah" – serving or submission to the almighty Allah, and is a requirement before ritual ceremonies such as prayer, reading the Koran from a book, etc.

Sharia classifies cleansing into two categories:

• Mandatory (wajib or fard) cleansing is required when one wishes to engage in prayer, when reading the holy Koran, before circling (tawaf) of the Kaaba, after sexual intercourse and when converting to Islam. It is said: "When you rise for prayer, wash your face and hands and arms up to the elbows and wipe your head, wash your feet up to the ankles. If you are dirty (from sexual intercourse), clean yourself; and if you are sick or traveling, or one of you has just come from the lavatory, or you have had sexual contact with women and were not able to find water look for clean earth and rub your face and hands with it."



 The Sunnah recommends washing the face and hands (up to the elbows) three times before reading the Koran or praying, and bathing before the Friday prayer, etc.

Legend has it that the Messenger Mohammad says: "Whoever performs the ritual washing and prayer as prescribed will be forgiven all their previous sins".

According to Islam: "when one cleans themselves they derive two benefits: they cleanse their body and their soul".

In order to perform these rites, clean running water must be made available to the Muslim guests. It is recommended for the tap and sink to be positioned so as to make it possible to wash the arms up to the elbows under the stream of water. It is a good idea to have a bidet, a portable showerhead, a hose or at least a bottle or jug of water in the toilets, for washing after use of the facilities.

In order for the space inhabited by the guests to be considered clean, unclean animals such as pigs and dogs must not have access to it and it must be free of alcohol.

Muslims need a **clean place for prayer** in order to perform their several daily prayers, as well as an **indication of the direction of prayer/bowing** – the so-called Quibla, the direction Mecca is in relative to the current location. All mosques, regardless of their location, face in this direction. The indicator may be permanent (e.g. an arrow on the ceiling of the room) or a portable sign. It is a sign of hospitality for the host to be prepared to point the way to the closest mosque for the Friday prayer, in case the guest is interested.

There are two types of **fast in Islam:** complete abstinence from food and drink, including water, during the light part of the day for the duration of an entire (lunar) month; and a constant abstinence from certain foods. Not much is expected of the host where the first type of fasting is concerned, apart from respect for the religious rite of the guest.



The second type of fast suggests the possibility of offering religiously **pure or halal food.** The origin of both the meat and other food, which may contain animal products from unclean animals, must be known. Muslims are very sensitive toward two animals – the pig and the dog, and protect themselves zealously from both.

Halal means something permitted and good. The antonym is haraam – something, which is forbidden, dangerous, a sin. Pork and alcohol are haraam, but so is entering the sea without being able to swim.

Meat is halal only if it is not pork. The animal must be slaughtered in a certain way, by a specific type of person – a Muslim, with the right hand, with a specific prayer, which says that the animal is being slaughtered in the name of God. The blood must run out completely and not a single animal may be slaughtered, unless it is in the name of God. The slaughter may also be performed by a Jew or Christian, but not by people from other faiths. Consuming carrion is unacceptable.

A Muslim must not only avoid consuming pork, but must also avoid being close to a pig at all. He must not even be able to smell one. Any contamination of this kind would lead to great discomfort.

Alcohol is also haraam. Folk tradition states that: "if a drop of alcohol falls on your arm, it would be better to cut it off". Alcohol, similarly to pigs, is considered impure and forbidden, not only to consume, but also to sell and manufacture. Muslims should dissociate themselves from the term alcohol completely. This applies to any substance, which intoxicates, including narcotics.

This is why it is recommended not to place alcohol in the rooms of Muslim guests, and even to remove it from the minibar in advance. Since the bar contained alcohol, they will neither take anything from it nor store anything in it.

Muslims feel very strongly about their reputation. They can be asked discretely, whether they would like something on the side, and alcohol may be served to them in a covered vessel, so as not to discredit them publicly as rule-breakers.

The host must also respect the way in which Muslims view the **relationship between the sexes.** These characteristics often lead to misunderstandings, for example, men refusing to shake hands with women, dissatisfaction with the attire of scarcely dressed female employees in the hotel or restaurant, a refusal to submit to so called face control at the hotel reception, etc. It may be seen as a lack of respect toward the guest if the male employee of the hotel is overly polite to the Muslim wife and shortens the interpersonal distance, which is commonplace in most other cultures. It is even recommended that professional communication with Muslim women be left to female employees.

#### **Muslim Tourists**

Almost half of the Muslim population of the world is around or under 24 years old. The majority of Muslims are educated and eager to acquire new knowledge. Muslim tourists are the second fastest growing tourist segment in the world, after the Chinese. The travel expenditures of Islamic tourists amount to 13% of the overall tourist expenditure in 2012, compared to just 3.5% in 1995.

According to market research, conducted by Muslim Lifestyle, published in Crescent Rating

and Dinar Standard in 2012, the expenditures of Muslim tourists in 2012 were \$130bn and the expected value for 2020 is \$200bn.





The same research showed that over 52,7% of Muslim tourists travel for recreation and a good time. They are increasingly looking for services tailored to their aspiration toward following an Islamic way of life. They look for the halal brand on hotels, restaurants and even the airlines they use. 50% of Muslim tourists would prefer halal services if they existed and 30% would look for services, which strictly adhere to the norms of Sharia (Islamic law). The main requirements revolve around halal food, which is one of the most sought after attributes of tourist services among Muslim tourists – 67% of them want halal food. Other important requirements for their recreational travel are the price (53%

find this important), which puts them on the same level as tourists from other faiths, and an experience in accordance with the norms for a Muslim way of life (49%).

It is clear that the next decade will likely bring a boom of Muslim travel. This is why it is important to know and understand the specifics of the Muslim tourism market. This involves distinguishing Muslims from other tourists, especially when it comes to the offering of food and the nature of the visits.

## Main and Supplementary Tourism Services for Muslim Guests

Tourists of Muslim faith have similar interests and look for experiences akin to those desired by Non-Muslims. They conform to the norms of Islam, but do not necessarily choose destinations, where Sharia is kept. Their reasons for traveling are not always (completely) religious.

#### They may be:

- general, for business, training, visiting of friends and relatives, shopping, holiday or amusement
- specifically Islamic (religious) visiting holy places, participation in celebrations for big Muslim holidays or family celebrations connected to religious rituals

And they MAY NOT be anti-Muslim. Sex, wine or gambling tourism as well as the consumption of pork and alcohol are unacceptable reasons for Muslim travel.

#### **Halal Tourism**

**Halal tourism or Islamic tourism** are tourism undertakings, which occur for reasons connected to Islam and are conducted in keeping with the principles of Sharia, which creates the **special necessities of these tourists.** 

- *In the narrow sense of the word,* this is religious tourism (visiting of religious places)
- In the wider sense of the word: it is a type of tourism, which conforms to Muslim values.

Muslims usually look for "halal" experiences when they are abroad. This includes food prepared in accordance with Islamic law, separation of the



sexes when possible, a time and place for prayers, a space clean of alcohol. This, however, does not mean that all Muslim tourists have an absolutely identical idea of what constitutes the perfect holiday. **There are no commonly accepted halal standards**, neither in Muslim countries, nor on a global scale. There is no functioning international mechanism for the recognition of this type of service.

According to research there are approximately 6 million halal food consumers worldwide. However, less than half of them are Muslims. Halal is a culture of eating, open to all and may be practiced by anyone.



The Halal market is one of today's fastest growing markets even in Non-Muslim countries and a new niche focusing on Muslim tourists is opening up in the tourism industry.

The "halal" concept is present in gastronomy as well as the production of clothing and cosmetics, services, banking, finance, logistics and hotel-keeping.

Although it is a large segment of the tourism market, few hotels, airlines and tourist destinations have made the effort to satisfy the demand for halal travel. This gives tourism entrepreneurs the unique

opportunity to add these types of services to their list of offers for culturally diverse guests.

#### The Expectations of Muslim Tourists Regarding Accomodation and Food

Muslim tourists look for holidays in new regions, where they can follow their religion and use services, which correspond to their way of life, beliefs and world view. They should not be treated in the same way as tourists of a Non-Muslim faith and culture.

Due to the growth of the Muslim tourist segment it would be beneficial to create packages, which conform to the norms of Sharia. There are many different views on Muslim tourism products and attractions for Islamic tourists, but there are some commonly accepted characteristics, which they expect fulfilled. We will present them here without claiming to provide a fully exhaustive list. There are also many individual characteristics of the different tourist segments, which is why this advice should not be applied equally for all Muslim tourists.

The tourists' expectations relating to religion are not limited to the hotels. They also apply to the activities, the infrastructure and facilities related to tourism, such as attractions, airports, tourist information centers, gastronomic establishments, theme parks, shops, etc.

It is most crucial to **refrain from offering any activities related to sex, gambling and alcohol.** The hotel should, ideally, not be located in close proximity to Casinos, slot machines, alcohol serving and selling establishments, night

clubs, bars and sex shops as well as any form of entertainment contradicting the principles of Islam.

It is, of course, necessary to offer suitable entertainment such as visits to mosques, religious and cultural monuments and landmarks of the local Muslim communities as well as Christian and Judaic temples, children's attractions and sporting events and culinary offerings made according to the specifications of their diet.

A main requirement of Muslim tourists is that the food and drinks at the restaurants, in the hotel, at the airport, during the flight and at other public places be halal. If the hotel does not have a halal restaurant or kitchen, it would be advisable to at least have a list of shops and places to eat, offering such food in the vicinity, ready to hand to the guests.

Another important prerequisite for your Muslim guests comfort is for them to have all the necessary conditions for conducting their prayers and the cleansing rituals connected with them. Muslim tourists look for and expect prayer rooms in the hotel as well as in public places, transit zones and tourist attractions.

It is advisable to have a prayer room, divided for men and women, in the hotel. This can be done with a curtain or temporary partition. The direction of the prayer toward Mecca (Quibla), should be indicated in the prayer room, as well as in a visible place in the hotel. The instructions should be in English and, if possible, also in Arabic. <a href="http://www.qiblalocator.com/">http://www.qiblalocator.com/</a>

There should be suitable taps for the ritual washing of the hands and arms up to the elbows and the feet in close proximity to the prayer room, as well as in the toilets. Muslims perform this rite of cleansing before every prayer.

It would be a gesture of good hospitality to offer transportation to the nearest mosque, especially for the Friday prayer, which is the most important one for Muslims. It is mandatory for all men and should preferably be carried out in a house of prayer, together with other followers of Islam. This is why it is best for hotel-keepers and tour operators to be prepared with a list of the mosques in the region and to offer assistance to their quests.

**For the more conservative Muslim tourists** tour operators try to provide the following additional conditions and opportunities:

- a predominantly Muslim staff with clothing compliant with the principles of Sharia
- separate receptions and floors for women and men, as well as female personnel on the female floors and male personnel on the male floors
- beds positioned to "face" Mecca



- arrows and/or a compass for determining the direction of Mecca, prayer rugs and copies of the Koran in every hotel room
- a calculator for prayer times on the websites of tour operators and other tourism service providers and/or a system for announcing prayer times
- during the month of Ramadan a special kind of food – suhoor is served in the hotel instead of breakfast and iftar after sundown, in order to enable the guests to keep their fast according to the rules of the Koran.

The provision of any of these possibilities would greatly increase the attractiveness of the hotel and its services in the eyes of Muslim tourists. Most of the recommendations made here would not change the overall character of the hotel, nor would they be expensive, they would, however, greatly enhance the satisfaction of Muslim tourists.

#### **Additional Tourist Services for Muslim Tourists**



There are a few main expectations of tourists of Muslim culture, which would increase the visitation of sports facilities, spas and beaches. The swimming pools should be separate or have different times for men and women. The same is valid for spa and relax facilities and sports centers. It is advisable to have female-only spaces on the beach as well as family areas with Sharia compliant bathing suits. Women should not expose themselves in front of any man other than their husband, which is why their burquini, (a swimming suite designed especially for Muslim women) which covers

everything except the face, palms and feet.

**The Islamic beauty salon and SPA center** should conform to the following requirements:

 all cosmetic and hygiene products used in the facility should correspond to Islamic principles, which means that there should be no trace of pig or dog fat, hair, skin, etc. in them

- the design of the space should allow for an area, where women can be separated and hidden from men
- the personnel in the female part of the facility should be made up of females, predominantly Muslim ones, and in the male part of Muslim men
- the conducting of prayers and their times should be taken into consideration and taken into consideration.



## What we need to know and stick to when travelingin Muslim countries?

The Koran encourages traveling and the Muslim religion does not have any influence on touristic activity. Hospitality is a traditional trait in the culture of most followers of Islam. It is no coincidence that some of the most sought after tourist destinations are Muslim countries.

Tourists from countries with a Christian culture however, should be aware of the traditions and customs stemming from Islam and respect them when traveling in Muslim countries. Holy sites have controlled visits for Non-Muslim tourists. Access to them is often restricted or only possible under certain conditions.

#### Absolutely unacceptable behavior in these countries would be:

- demonstrating physical closeness in public
- the consumption of any products containing alcohol or pork
- wearing of scarce clothing
- nudism
- gambling
- looking for or offering sexual services.

# Muslim Holidays, Customs and Traditions Suitable for the Formulation of Touristic Products

The Muslim holiday calendar is based on the cycles of the lunar phase. This is why the holidays are at different times of the year, according to our (solar) calendar, moving forward with 10-11 days each year. This means that the celebration of the holidays does not have a fixed date or season according to our calendar. In Arab countries the beginning of the holiday is determined by the actual appearance of the moon, this is why it starts at different times in the different locations.

The month of Ramadan and the two feasts Eid al-Fitir (festival of breaking the fast) and Eid al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice) are the central events in the traditional holiday calendar.

#### EID AL-FITIR (Turkish: RAMAZAN BAYRAMI) Festival of Breaking the Fast



This is the most honored holiday among Muslims. It is a festival of the breaking of the fast, which is celebrated in honor of the end of fasting during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar – Ramadan. The whole month of Ramadan is a holiday and is considered holy. God accepts prayers much more readily during this month. Muslims fast (refrain from eating or drinking absolutely anything) during the light part of the days of the month of Ramadan (from dusk till dawn). They start consuming food and beverages only after sunset, and even then only in moderation. During Ramadan Muslims must be careful not to commit any sins, i.e. not to consciously look at anything with judgment, not to say anything bad, not to listen to anything bad and not to

do anything wrong. In Islam fasting is considered a service to God. The Ramadan fast is one of the five main obligations of Muslims. The month finishes with the holiday Eid al-Fitir. The celebration is a feast of the spirit rising over the needs of the body, of the perseverance of will over physical needs.

In the eve of the holiday *zakat* is handed out (obligatory charity, which is another one of the five main obligations of every Muslim). The size of the zakat is calculated according to specific rules, according to individual income.

The night before the holiday is meant for honoring the dead, similar to All Souls' Day in the Christian tradition. Bread with milk and yeast is made from chickpeas and a fried egg or Turkish delight is placed on top of the bread. A filopastry is also made and handed out to the dead: "so that they may have it in case of need in the hereafter". It is handed out to an uneven number of houses.

The holiday begins after the Morning Prayer and continues for three days until late in the night, while everyone is celebrating. Children must first congratulate their parents and relatives and ask them for forgiveness.

Primarily sweet foods are served on Eid al-Fitir – baklava, sweets, semolina sponge cake in syrup and cakes. This is why the holiday is also known as *Şeker Bayrami* (Festival of Sweets).

#### **EID AL-ADHA (Turkish: KURBAN BAYRAM) Feast of the Sacrifice**

Eid al-Adha is celebrated seventeen days after Eid al-Fitir and lasts four days. It is a holiday of sacrifice. It symbolizes the strength of faith, humility, repentance, and forgiveness and testifies to the devotion to Allah. A ritual sacrifice (Tur. kurban) is made, where a male lamb or a ram is slaughtered (also a kid or calf). A special prayer for this holiday is recited before the sacrifice. The blood of the animal must run out in the river and the bones must be buried in the earth. The meat is used to cook soup and stew. A ritual bread, baklava and pilaf are also prepared. Guests, most of which are relatives are invited. The sacrifice must be divided into an uneven number of pieces, which are given out to the poor and to neighbors. One asks for forgiveness (one kisses the hand) from the older members of the family, beginning with the grandfather, followed by the grandmother, the father, the mother, the older brother/sister. The youngest members of the family are rewarded with money.



Eid al-Fitir and Eid al-Adha are rarely a reason for tourist travel. They are family holidays and few people would leave their homes. They may, however, serve as an attraction and a reason for travel for Non-Muslim tourists who wish to acquaint themselves with and experience the traditions and customs of Muslim communities.

#### **SPECIAL (HOLY) NIGHTS**

The Muslim religious holiday calendar contains the so-called holy nights, such as for example Qadr, Bara'ah, Baraat, Mi'rai, etc. The holiday begins after

the last prayer of the day and continues until morning. Prayers and chants are performed. It is important for these to take place in the Mosque. The believers meet in the space around the mosque and talk. The holy nights provide an opportunity for cultural exchange. The prayers during these nights are not as strict as the Friday prayer. The more Muslims one shares their prayers with during the holy nights, the better. During these nights many Muslims are inclined to travel and pilgrimage is very common. Believers from small villages or towns often go to more central mosques. Bulgarian Muslims travel to Edirne and those from Northern Greece – to Bulgaria.

#### **HATIM**



Muslims in Turkey gladly travel to Bulgaria for opening ceremonies of new mosques or for the so-called Hatim.

Hatim is organized when a child finishes the reading and study of the Quran. The celebration in Bulgaria and Turkey is a tradition, not a religious dogma. It is usually organized for a group of children in the spring-summer period. These are celebrations for the whole village or town and everyone is welcome.

The children recite texts from the Quran, receive gifts, everyone encourages them and a meal is prepared to celebrate.

Here is an amateur film presenting the Hatim celebration for the graduation of the Quran course of the children from Ribnovo village (Southwest Bulgaria) in 2011: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5BR221ylxs">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5BR221ylxs</a>

#### MAY 6 - ST. GEORGE'S DAY AND HIDIRELLEZ

The sixth of May is a holiday for both Muslims (Hıdırellez) and Christians (St. George's Day). Traditionally it is regarded as one of the most beloved holidays, which marks the beginning of the new agricultural year. May 6 marks the end of the winter and the beginning of the summer.

From the perspective of canonical Islam Hıdırellez is a pagan holiday. It is not present in the Hadith (the teachings of Muhammad) or in the Quran. Arabs do not know this holiday. For them it is a new addition, bordering on heresy. If it is offered to them as a touristic attraction they would not understand and would take offence. It is of interest to Turkish people and, mostly, to the Alevi. People often travel and visit holy sites on Hıdırellez.

For Muslims the holiday of Hıdırellez is associated with the figures of the prophets Hidir and Ilyas, who symbolize life, death and immortality. Tradition holds that on the night between 5 and 6 May, in the time between the first cockcrow and dawn the prophets met after a year of traveling around the world. At the time of their meeting immortality and the rebirth of new beginnings are created.

For Christians the holiday is related to the honoring of the martyr St. George. He is the protector of the Christian faith. He was thrown in jail and beheaded in the year 288 and this is how he became an example of the perfect Christian warrior and patron of the army.



According to legends a dragon appeared not far from his grave and ravaged the vicinity. With his miraculous power the saint beat the monster and thus acquired the fame of a dragon fighter. It is precisely this moment of the life of St. George that inspired the famous image of him with a spear in his hand, riding a white horse, under the hooves of which writhes a stabbed dragon.

The legend says that a poor farmer, whose ox had fallen in a pit and died, came to the cell of St. George. The saint took pity on the man who could no longer plough his field and gave him hope. The villager believed his words. Went home and found his ox alive. The belief that St. George protects herds from trouble originated from this story. In Bulgaria the saint is honored as the patron of shepherds and herds.

#### A few rituals are of interest to tourists:

- Before sunrise, women and children go out in the fields and roll around in the dewy grass three times for good health. Hidirellez dew is collected by soaking it up with a clean towel and squeezing the towel into a bottle.
- An important moment is the designating of the flower bunches. The young women bunch together the flowers and herbs collected in the eve of the holiday. They tie them with colorful string and hang ornaments on them in order to be able to recognize them. They put them in a copper pot over night.



- On the day of Hıdırellez an elderly woman takes the bouquets out of the
  pot one by one. At the same time Turkish folk songs about the holiday and
  specific to each region of Bulgaria are sung. The themes of the songs serve
  the purpose of a fateful sign for the girl, whose flower bunch is being taken
  out during each of them. Their lyrics are about success. Health, love and
  marriage.
- Swings and swinging for good health play a central role in this holiday. The girls swing first and then, anyone else who wants to can have a go.

Hidirellez is celebrated by Muslim communities in many different parts of the country – Belitza, Yakoruda, Borino, Dolni Chiflik, Momchilgrad, etc.

Turkish guests would be interested in the St. George's Day traditions and the rituals of these holidays can be offered as part of an additional service.

### **Customs**

#### **PAINTED BRIDE (pisana bulka)**



The unique custom of "painting the bride" in Bulgaria is present only among Bulgarian Muslims. This type of "drawing" on the face of the brides is famous in different places – in Ribnovo village, where it is still being practiced today; in the Blagoevgrad village Tzerovo (Southwestern Bulgaria), as well as in Sarnitza and Draginovo in the Velingrad area (Southern Bulgaria). In the Tetevenarea (Central Bulgaria) this custom has already become extinct.

In the past the "painting" of the bride happened in secret. Only the woman creating the decoration and those close to the bride could be present. Everyone else waited to see the bride. The ritual itself is

usually done on the wedding day by a special "painter" (pisachka). After the face has been painted the scarves, the so called wires, which today are replaced by thin garlands and silver threads, and other decorations are placed on the head. In Ribnovo, after the painting ritual, the bride is dressed in special clothing and led out to the gathered guests.

What is the meaning of this unusual "mask" present in the wedding rituals of Bulgarian Muslims? By means of this disguise the bride becomes invisible, loses her identity, she is not herself in order to ensure her successful transition from a maiden to a bride. The wedding is a symbolic death, journey to the beyond and birth of the woman into her new status.

It is interesting that a similar ritual involving the "coloring" of a bride existed among the slavic-speaking Gorani group in the Gora region, which nowadays is located between Kosovo and Albania. The population there was also Christian and converted to Islam quite late. It is a known fact that the last Christian woman in Gora died in the middle of the XIX century. The practice of "coloring" the brides, however, was terminated some time in the 60-70s of XX century.

#### Links to Articles and a Video About the Custom:

Articles in Bulgarian with beautiful pictures:

http://infomreja.bg/news.php?id=4685

http://goo.gl/Xy7x4Y

Scenes from the TVT film "Painted Brides do Not Cry":

http://goo.gl/KQQxGQ

#### **OIL WRESTLING**

**Oil wrestling**, known by the name of "Pehlivan Wrestling" is a type of sport. Muslims from Turkey organize such wrestling matches on religious holidays as well as on family celebrations like weddings, engagements, etc. especially if the family is more wealthy.

Even though this type of sport was forbidden during the communist regime, lately it has been revived. It is mainly practiced by the Muslim population in the region of Ludogorie region in northwestern Bulgaria, in Haskovo and in the Kurdjali region. Apart from Turkey and Bulgaria, oil wrestling is also practiced in northern Greece. It is included in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of UNESCO. An oil wrestling



competition takes place every year in Edirne in the Kırkpınar area in order to safeguard this valuable tradition. This type of competitive sport is similar to Kurash wrestling, which is traditional in Turkic nations. Participants in these events are called pehlivan (Persian for "hero" or "champion").

Before the start of the competitions the pehlivan smear themselves generously with fat, most commonly olive oil. Their clothing is scarce and they must be naked from the waist upward and barefoot. They wear only tight shorts, hand made from buffalo hide or calf skin, which can weigh up to 10-12 kilos.

The goal of each contestant is to hold their opponent down. This often proves difficult, as it is almost impossible to achieve an effective hold on the slippery bodies. Traditionally the winner of an oil wrestling match is the one who manages to turn their opponent on their back or raise them up in the air. The reward is a live ram. Many of the modern wrestlers train in Greco-Roman wrestling or other styles of the sport and are students of sport schools.

Individual wrestling matches are not usually organized. In the birth village of the legendary Yusuf İsmail – Cherna village in northeastern Bulgaria, however, the Yusuf Ismail Association organizes an oil wrestling competition in memory of the famous wrestler.

## Selected Touristic Sites, Architectural Monuments from Ottoman Bulgaria



Agushevi Konatsi Castle – Mogilitsa village http://goo.gl/FGb39t



**The Yambol Covered Bazaar** http://goo.gl/qqAKoB



**Bayrakli Mosque, Samokov** http://goo.gl/Mycp6H



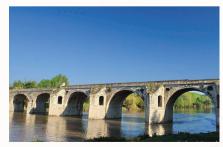
**Demir Baba Tekke Architectural Reserve** http://goo.gl/btCfwD



**Dzhumaya Mosque, Plovdiv** http://goo.gl/EduKRe



Kurshum Djamia Mosque, Karlovo http://goo.gl/22z62Z



**Kolyu Ficheto's Bridge over the Yantra** http://goo.gl/mL8MPD



**Sofia Mosque** http://goo.gl/lpzKZK



Tombul Mosque, Sherif Halil Pasha Mosque, Shumen http://goo.gl/D7xn8W



Osman Pazvantoglu's Mosque and Library http://goo.gl/t0qTkt



Mustafa Pasha Bridge in Svilengrad http://goo.gl/EKzl4R



Melevi Hane Dervish Monastery, Plovdiv http://goo.gl/nR3yME



**Dupnitsa Mosque** http://goo.gl/0QlT4k



Osman Baba Tekke Monastery, Haskovo Municipality http://goo.gl/bGakf6



Ak Yazili Baba Tekke, Obrochishte village, Balchik http://goo.gl/25L2ho



Kadin Bridge – village of Nevestino http://goo.gl/zRflzm

### In Place of a Conclusion

This handbook does not claim to exhaust the topic of customer care for Muslim tourists, but only to create an interest for it and to give a modest contribution of knowledge and instructions, because, for the time being, literature on this subject matter hardly exists.

We encourage everyone who works in this field to continue searching for additional information, exchange experience and share with colleagues and associates.

We would like to suggest a few interesting additional sources, which we discovered on the internet:

#### Tourism services adapted to Muslim religious requirements

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halal tourism

**Crescent Tours** <a href="http://goo.gl/cZ6ZRZ">http://goo.gl/cZ6ZRZ</a> the pioneer of halal tourism concept in Europe and globally; a unique brand, offering holidays clearly aimed at Muslim travelers and providing a holiday experience that is in harmony with Islam.

Crescent Tours developed the world first rating system to rate Travel & Hospitality Services and Facilities for Halal Friendliness based on the availability of Halal Food or information on Halal Food, prayer information, the availability of prayer facilities, water usage in washrooms, ability to cater during Ramadan, the level of non-Halal activities and privacy in the use of recreational facilities.

**Faith based needs of Muslim Halal conscious travelers** – Crescent rating's classification of the needs of Muslim Halal Conscious travelers. The "need to have", "good to have" and "nice to have" services and facilities needed to attract the growing number of travelers from this segment.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUdgXhFXVSIhttp://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUdgXhFXVSI

Travel agency for religious Muslims <a href="http://www.serendipity.travel/">http://www.serendipity.travel/</a>

http://www.crescentrating.com/crescentrating-rankings.html

Search engine for Muslim friendly hotels and resorts

http://www.halaltrip.com/

Web portal for Islamic tours <a href="http://islamictravels.com/">http://islamictravels.com/</a>

A Guide to Halal Restaurants & Food in Hotels <a href="http://goo.gl/dVx3dB">http://goo.gl/dVx3dB</a>

Guide to prayer (salat) facilities in Hotels <a href="http://goo.gl/TZINqz">http://goo.gl/TZINqz</a>

The rise of the affluent Muslim traveller <a href="http://goo.gl/MeDBsj">http://goo.gl/MeDBsj</a>

Global Muslim Lifestyle Tourism Market: Landscape & Consumer Needs
Study 2012 – executive summary <a href="http://goo.gl/sxfMQD">http://goo.gl/sxfMQD</a>

Global Muslim Lifestyle Tourism Market 2012: Landscape & Consumer Needs Study <a href="http://advisory.dinarstandard.com/travelstudy/">http://advisory.dinarstandard.com/travelstudy/</a>

Halal tourism's moment in the sun

http://travel.cnn.com/halal-tourism-329146

Catering to Muslim tourists in Malaysia <a href="http://goo.gl/yxRzwW">http://goo.gl/yxRzwW</a>

Global Travel Industry Gears Up for Muslim Tourist Boom http://goo.gl/RICtWW

Western Hoteliers Cater to Muslim Travelers <a href="http://goo.gl/vm00fm">http://goo.gl/vm00fm</a>

Crescent rating's Halal Friendly Travel (CRaHFT) names Asia's Muslimfriendliest destinations for 2013 – Survey <a href="http://goo.gl/gwS8cK">http://goo.gl/gwS8cK</a>

Ogilvy & Mather's Research Defines the Global Rise of the 'New Muslim Consumer' <a href="http://goo.gl/Jokhz3">http://goo.gl/Jokhz3</a>

After Islamic food and banking now halal-friendly travel http://goo.gl/UVtZWk

Source: http://goo.gl/nw0QBl

Ramadan packages provide an evening buffet to end the day's fasting <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk">http://www.bbc.co.uk</a>

Australia's Gold Coast is attracting Muslim tourists by offering a Gold Coast Ramadan Lounge <a href="http://goo.gl/e0ahNM">http://goo.gl/e0ahNM</a>

Thai hotel chain Centara Hotels & Resorts is offering **Ramadan hotel packages**: inclusive meals are served after dark and right through the night rather than in the day time

During the full summer holiday season, a halal menu will be available, along with Arabic newspapers and TV channels, a ladies' spa section and programs, http://goo.gl/A7Oduk, http://www.centarahotelsresorts.com

Preparing Your Hotel for the Ramadhan Season – Edition 2 http://goo.gl/RoFbwV

Finding the Qiblah direction <a href="http://goo.gl/ziuMPn">http://goo.gl/ziuMPn</a>

**Bespoke Islamic Branding practice**, offering expert practical advice on how to build brands that appeal to Muslim consumers, globally <a href="https://www.ogilvynoor.com">www.ogilvynoor.com</a>

## Glossary

**Abdest** – Islamic act of washing parts of the body using water for ritual prayers and for handling and reading the Quran.

**Alevi, Alian** – an ethno-religious group in Turkey (including a part of the Turkish and Kurdish population), on the Balkans and small groups in southwestern Iran, northern Syria and Iraq.

Although they are considered Muslims, the Alevi are seen as heretics by Sunni Muslims, because of their cult of Ali ibn Abu Talib and his family and their peculiar customs and rituals. In some respects the Alevi are closer to Shia islam, but their century-long isolated existence has separated them from the main Shia communities.

**Ezan (also adhan)** – a call to prayer, which the muezzin recites at prescribed times of day.

**Hajj** – the pilgrimage, one of the five pillars of Islam. The pilgrimage is primarily to Mecca and is regarded as an irrevocable duty for every Muslim.

**Halal** – is a term designating any object or an action as permissible to use or engage in, according to Islamic law. It literally means "good"

**Haraam** – is the antonym of halal. In Arabic the term means "sinful". In Islam it is used to refer to any act that displeases or angers G-d. Acts that are haraam are typically prohibited in religious texts and is the highest status of prohibition given to anything that would result in sin when a Muslim commits it. The religious term Haraam applies also to objects like food and drinks, such as pork and alcohol

**Ibadet** – worship and homage to the Almighty Allah, required before rites such as prayer, reading of the Quran from a book, etc. According to Islamic law, cleanliness is not a goal in itself. It means cleansing for the purpose of ibadet.

Iftar – the meal taken at the breaking of a fast, at dusk.

**Imam** – a spiritual leader in Islam; it can also mean "an example to be followed".

**Imaret** – a charitable establishment handing out food to the needy widespread throughout the Ottoman empire.

**Islam** – a monotheistic religion, based on the Quran (a book organized into 114 sura and regarded by its followers as the literal word of the only G-d Allah). In Arabic "islam" means giving oneself to G-d, as exemplified by the deeds and life of His prophet Muhammad.

**Kurban bayram (Eid al-Adha)** – the feast of the sacrifice; It is celebrated seventeen days after Ramazan Bayram (Eid al-Fitir) and continues for four days. It symbolizes the power of faith, humility, repentance, reconciliation, forgiveness and the testimony of faith toward Allah.

**Medrese** – a religious Islamic middle or higher education school, which educates future clergymen, teachers for the first grades and public servants in some Middle Eastern countries.

**Meschit** – a small mosque or a room for prayers.

**Mihrab** – a niche in the wall of a mosque indicating the direction of Mecca; it is often decorated with two columns and an arch.

Mufti – a high-rank Islamic clergyman and an expert in the Sharia – Islamic law.

**Mosque** – a temple where Muslims gather for common prayers.

Muslim - a person of Muslim faith.

**Müezzin** – (or muzim) is the person appointed at a mosque to lead, and recite, the call to prayer (adhan) for every event of prayer and worship in the mosque. Namaz–Salat, Namaz or Islamic Prayer is one of the five pillars of Islam, the five duties required of every practicing Muslim. The prayer is five time a day.

Pehlivan - an oil wrestler.

**Prayer Mat** – a mat that is used to ensure that the area used for prayer is clean. Prayer mats usually come in a standard size and have symbolic embroidered designs.

**Qibla** (Direction) – is the direction Muslims should face when praying. It is defined by the direction to Mecca. Mosques are also built facing this direction.

**Ramadan** – the 9th month of the Islamic calendar, which is spent fasting. Muslims do not eat or dring anything from dusk till dawn during Ramadan.

**Ramadan (or Ramazan, Seker) Bayram** – a Muslim holiday of ending the fast. It is the most observed holiday among Muslims. Predominantly sweet foods are served – baklava, cookies, revani (a soft semolina pastry), cakes. This is why it is also know as Seker Bayram – Bayram of sweets.

**Sharia** – the Islamic law. This is the path that each Muslim must follow. It is a collection of legal, moral and religious norms, which include instructions on almost every aspect of personal and social life – from banking and military to charity and nature conservation.

**Shia** – represent the largest schismatic sect in Islam, accounting for 10-20% of the world's normative body of Muslims. Adherents of Shia Islam are called Shi'ites or Shias. "Shia" means "followers", "faction", or "party" of Muhammad's son-in-law and cousin Ali, whom the Shia believe to be Muhammad's successor in the Caliphate.

**Suhour** – the meal taken at the beginning of a fasting period, at dawn.

**Sunnah** – the holy tradition in Islam, the description of the teachings and activities of the Prophet Mohammed.

**Sunni Islam** – the largest branch of Islam; its adherents are referred to "people of the tradition of Muhammad and the consensus of the Ummah". For short, in English, they are known as Sunni Muslims, Sunnis, Sunnites or simply Muslims.

In contrast with the Shia, they do not recognise the posibility of mediation between G-d and the people after the death of the prophet Muhammad. The reject the idea of the special nature of Ali and the right of his descendants to be regarded as possessing divine knowledge and authority. There are significant differences between the two branches of islam in the way that they decide legal issues, in the nature of their holidays, their attitude toward people of other faiths, prayer, etc.

**Tawaf** - the ritual circling of the Kaaba (a shrine) in Mecca.

**Tekke** - a special place where dervishes (a type of Muslim monks) – Sufi, Beshiktashi, etc. gather. Initially the tekke is the dwelling of a religious leaser and his students. With time tekkes became religious centers, which often included a medrese, imaret and other buildings, sometimes even a mosque. They became places for believers and students to spend the night.

**Turbe** - a tomb of a venerated religious, administrative or military leader.

**Ulema** - religious leaders, experts in Quran who hold the religious power.

**Ummah** - the Muslim community in the world, regardless of countries, boarders, nationalities, etc.

Wajib Haji – mandatory cleansing according to Sharia law.

**Waqf** – real estate or land given by the country or a private person for religious use or as charity. The income from the waqf goes toward the maintenance of Muslim religious buildings such as mosques and other public structures.

**Wudu** – also known as ablution, is the cleansing ritual Muslims undergo before each prayer. This can be done in the bathroom facilities of their hotel room, but it will be convenient if a restroom is available near the provided congregational prayer room.

**Zakat** – almsgiving, done one of the five pillars of Islam.



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