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## **Specifics of guided tour organization in Lviv**

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### **Abstract**

The article analyzes the specific features of organizing guided tours in Lviv, one of the leading tourist centers in Ukraine. It explores the formation of the excursion product in the context of the city's historical and cultural background, seasonal tourist flows, and the demands of various target audiences. Particular attention is given to the interaction between the guide, the tourist, and the urban environment, as well as to the adaptation of tour routes to contemporary requirements such as inclusivity, interactivity, and safety. The role of local identity in the development of thematic and author's tours is also examined.

**Keywords:** guided tours; tourist route; urban tourism; cultural heritage; tour guide; Lviv.

## **Специфіка організації екскурсій по Львову**

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Статтю присвячено аналізу специфіки організації екскурсійної діяльності у місті Львів як одному з провідних туристичних центрів України. Розглядаються особливості формування екскурсійного продукту з урахуванням історико-культурного контексту міста, сезонності туристичних потоків та запитів різних цільових аудиторій. Окрема увага приділена взаємодії між гідом, туристом і міським простором, а також питанням адаптації маршрутів до сучасних вимог — інклюзивності, інтерактивності та безпеки. Проаналізовано роль локальної ідентичності у формуванні тематичних екскурсій, зокрема авторських турів.

**Ключові слова:** екскурсійна діяльність; туристичний маршрут; міський туризм; культурна спадщина; гід-екскурсовод; Львів.

**Problem Statement.** In the current context of tourism development, guided tours are gaining increasing importance as a form of engagement with the historical and cultural environment of a city or region. A guided tour serves as a communicative and educational tool that allows the integration of local cultural heritage elements into broader narratives about history, architecture, traditions, landmarks, and everyday life.

The city of Lviv is one of the most prominent centers of cultural tourism in Ukraine. Its excursion potential is determined by its centuries-old history, architectural heritage, multicultural past, and diversity of religious and artistic practices. However, with the growth of tourism and the changing behavior of travelers, there is a growing need for well-structured, meaningful guided tours that meet not only informational but also emotional, aesthetic, and ethical expectations of visitors.

Therefore, studying the specifics of organizing guided tours in Lviv is relevant both from the perspective of preserving the city's cultural identity and improving the tourist product in response to contemporary challenges.

**Purpose of the Article.** The purpose of the study is to analyze the specific characteristics of organizing excursion activities in Lviv, to identify the key factors influencing the formation of the excursion product, and to outline current trends and challenges in this field.

## **Analysis of Publications**

The issue of guided tours in the context of cultural tourism has attracted the attention of researchers both in Ukraine and abroad. Ukrainian scholars [2–5; 8; 13; 15] have explored the role of cultural heritage in shaping a city's tourism image, as well as the specifics of designing excursion routes. Certain studies focus on the influence of intangible cultural heritage on the structure of the excursion product [3; 5; 12].

In international academic literature [6; 11; 16], there is increasing interest in urban tourism, the interpretation of cultural space through guided tours, and the role of the guide as a mediator between the environment and the tourist. Contemporary scientific discourse actively discusses innovations in excursion practices, digitalization of tours, and the need to enhance their accessibility and interactivity.

## **Result**

Lviv, one of the oldest cities in Ukraine, possesses a unique historical and cultural value that shapes its strong excursion potential. The city has preserved an exceptional urban structure and architectural heritage representing various periods and styles – from medieval Gothic and Renaissance to Baroque and Art Nouveau. As noted by Kononenko (2020), Lviv's historical center is not only a UNESCO World Heritage Site but also a key element in the formation of the city's cultural identity and tourist attractiveness [8].

The city's multicultural history, shaped by Polish, Austrian, Jewish, Armenian, and Ukrainian influences, provides a rich foundation for the development of diverse guided tours. This complexity creates favorable conditions for excursions that explore themes such as religious coexistence, artisan traditions, literary movements, and political history. Scholars emphasize that cultural heritage significantly contributes to the construction of a city's tourist image and serves as a key motivation for cultural tourism in Ukraine [2; 4].

Lviv has developed a robust system of using both tangible and intangible heritage in tourism. Tangible elements such as churches, palaces, cemeteries, and museums are integrated into classic sightseeing tours. Meanwhile, intangible components – oral histories, legends, traditional crafts, local gastronomy, and rituals – are increasingly included in thematic and author's excursions [5; 12]. According to Hnatyuk (2022), this integration allows for the creation of a deeper and more emotional experience for tourists, encouraging them not only to observe but also to engage with the city's cultural space [5].

Thanks to its deep-rooted cultural memory, accessibility, and compact urban layout, Lviv continues to serve as a central hub for cultural tourism in Ukraine. Its excursion potential is further reinforced by the presence of professional guide associations, educational programs

for tour guides, and an increasing number of private initiatives that offer innovative forms of guided tours [13]. These factors make Lviv not only a destination of high historical value but also a dynamic laboratory for developing and testing new excursion practices.

In Lviv, a broad range of guided tours reflects both its historical depth and evolving tourism demands. Classical historical routes remain central, covering key urban landmarks such as Rynok Square, religious complexes, and notable architectural ensembles. These tours are grounded in well-established narratives and are typically aimed at first-time visitors or educational groups [2; 8].

Alongside traditional routes, Lviv offers a wide selection of thematic and author's tours. These include Jewish heritage walks, literary tours, gastronomy-focused experiences, and excursions dedicated to local legends or mystical stories. Such formats allow for a more personalized and emotionally engaging approach to urban space and history [5; 13].

In recent years, innovative formats such as theatrical performances, immersive nighttime tours, and gamified excursions have gained popularity. These approaches often combine storytelling with interaction and digital tools, increasing accessibility and appeal, especially for younger audiences [6; 11; 16]. By incorporating elements of intangible heritage and creative media, these tours foster deeper connections between visitors and the city's cultural identity [9].

Several factors significantly influence the organization of guided tours in Lviv, shaping both their content and delivery. One of the key elements is the preparation of guides and the content of the excursion product. Professionalism and expertise of guides are essential for creating engaging and accurate narratives. In Lviv, guides undergo specialized training programs that focus on both historical facts and storytelling techniques, allowing them to provide rich, contextually informed tours [8; 13]. The content of the tours is often tailored to reflect tourists' interests, whether they are focused on the city's history, architecture, or intangible cultural heritage.

Seasonality is another critical factor influencing the organization of tours in Lviv. The city experiences a significant influx of tourists during the warmer months, leading to higher demand for tours. However, in the winter, the number of visitors drops, affecting the frequency of tours and the availability of certain services. This seasonality is often linked to the types of tourists, with foreign visitors typically traveling in summer, while domestic tourists may visit year-round but in lower numbers [5; 6].

Urban, logistical, and infrastructural factors also play a significant role in shaping the excursion experience. Lviv's compact urban layout makes it an ideal city for walking tours, but

issues such as traffic congestion, construction work, and the preservation of historical sites can complicate logistics. Additionally, the accessibility of some areas, such as older buildings or remote locations, may pose challenges for certain groups of tourists, including those with mobility issues [12; 16].

Overall, the combination of well-trained guides, attention to seasonal variations, and urban infrastructure are critical to creating high-quality, accessible, and engaging tours for a diverse range of tourists.

The integration of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) into Lviv's guided tours plays a crucial role in enriching the tourist experience and deepening engagement with local identity. Traditions, legends, oral history, folklore, and culinary practices are often used as key storytelling tools that go beyond architectural observation. Through these elements, tourists are offered not only knowledge but also emotional immersion into the city's cultural landscape [3; 5; 12].

Many tours in Lviv incorporate urban legends, folk songs, and historical anecdotes as part of their narrative structure, particularly during evening or thematic excursions. Gastronomic tours introduce visitors to local dishes such as varenyky, syrnyky, or Galician-style coffee, while simultaneously recounting their cultural background and preparation rituals. Some guides even include short performances or invite local artisans to demonstrate traditional crafts like woodcarving, embroidery, or leatherwork, thus linking the excursion product with living heritage practices [6; 13].

An example of such integration is found in tours of the Lychakiv Cemetery, where biographical storytelling intersects with folklore and oral memory. Other examples include author's excursions centered on Lviv's interwar café culture, combining sites with personal narratives, period attire, and authentic recipes. These formats not only promote heritage but also contribute to its preservation by engaging local communities and craftspeople in the tourism process [9; 16].

In recent years, the excursion sector in Lviv has actively embraced innovations that reflect global trends in cultural tourism. Digital technologies have been increasingly integrated into the excursion experience through mobile applications, QR-coded city maps, and audio guide platforms, which allow tourists to explore the city at their own pace. In some projects, augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR) is used to visualize historical layers of Lviv's past, providing immersive experiences that combine physical space with reconstructed events or vanished architecture [6; 11].

Additionally, collaboration with local museums, theaters, galleries, and representatives of the creative industries has opened new formats of excursions. Themed performances, musical or literary interventions, and even interactive workshops are incorporated into tour programs. These hybrid forms help attract younger audiences and support interdisciplinary dialogue in the presentation of cultural heritage [12; 13].

Such partnerships contribute not only to the diversification of the excursion product, but also to the promotion of lesser-known cultural assets and the revitalization of intangible heritage in modern contexts [9].

Despite the overall dynamism of Lviv's excursion development, a number of challenges persist. A major concern is the growing commercialization of excursions, which in some cases leads to the simplification or distortion of historical narratives. Pursuing market trends can result in the prioritization of entertainment over educational content, thereby diminishing the cultural value of tours [5; 16].

Another pressing issue is the overcrowding of the city center, especially during the high tourist season. This not only affects the comfort of tourists and residents alike but also threatens the preservation of heritage sites due to overuse and noise pollution. It becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the quality and uniqueness of excursions when routes become overly saturated [6; 15].

Furthermore, the inclusion of intangible cultural heritage in tours still lacks clear methodological and legal frameworks. Some traditional practices are reduced to stereotypes or used without community involvement, which may undermine their authenticity and sustainability [3; 8; 9]. More attention is needed to ensure ethical representation, proper crediting, and the active participation of heritage bearers in the tourism process.

The analysis of Lviv's excursion landscape reveals a dynamic and diversified tourism environment where both traditional and innovative practices coexist. The prevailing trends include the thematic diversification of tours, increased involvement of intangible cultural heritage, and the steady integration of digital technologies. The city's ability to combine historical depth with creative approaches to interpretation distinguishes it among other Ukrainian and Central European destinations [6; 13].

Lviv stands out due to its rich multicultural past, high density of heritage sites, and a strong culture of author-led excursions. The use of folklore, local legends, gastronomy, and crafts contributes to a more immersive tourist experience and supports the preservation of living traditions [3; 9].

To ensure sustainable development of the excursion sector, it is recommended to strengthen methodological standards for the inclusion of intangible heritage, invest in guide training, promote decentralization of routes beyond the historic center, and foster partnerships between tourism professionals and cultural institutions. These steps will help balance commercial appeal with cultural integrity and long-term value.

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