

# Pope Francis' Popularity is Generating New Tours and Travel

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Since when is the pontiff, the head of the Roman Catholic Church, a tourist attraction?

Since now, since Pope Francis, whose appearance on the world stage since his election in 2013 has electrified the world in a way that is unmatched by any of his predecessors.

A [recent study](#) by Pew Research Center gave Pope Francis a 90 percent approval rating among Catholics and an impressive 70 percent approval rating among non-Catholics.

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Pope Francis, soon to be embarking on [his first visit to the U.S.](#), is causing quite a stir stateside, and his presence in the cities of New York, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., will be an attraction in those cities, drawing people from all over the country to see the new head of the Roman Catholic Church.



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The Pope is also boosting tourism back in his home territory, the Vatican City and Rome. According to the Catholic Church itself, Pope Benedict attracted 2.5 million visitors to the Vatican in 2011. In Pope Francis' inaugural year of 2013, he attracted 6.6 million.

Whatever else he may be, the Pope is clearly a tourism phenomenon.


Perillo Tours recently [created a new tour](#) especially around the Pope inspired by his popularity. Perillo's eight-day tour of Rome and the Vatican City is based on the Pope and especially on his recent declaration of 2016 as the Holy Year of Mercy.

Pope Francis is also generating travel and tours in his home country of Argentina, where he is known as Papa Francisco. [Kangoo Tours](#) offers [a tour of Buenos Aires](#) that is based on the life of Pope Francis.

[City Wonders](#), a tour operator that specializes in expert and special access tours in the UK, France and Italy, reports that since Pope Francis' election in 2013 the traffic on the web page for its Vatican tours has increased by 115 percent, and the sales of those tours have increased by 175 percent.

City Wonders has a special relationship with the Vatican through which it is able to provide special access to parts of the Vatican's art collection that are not open to the public, early access to the Sistine Chapel, and a special entrance that allows clients to skip the long lines that always form in front of the entrance to the Vatican.

The tour operator is jumping on the opportunity created by the popularity of the new pontiff by promoting its tours of the Vatican and Rome, hoping to catch the attention of those in the Pope's expanding fan base.

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