

Sumela Monastery welcomes over 123,000 tourists in 99 days



Sumela Monastery in Trabzon province attracts thousands of visitors during its reopening after restoration

Sumela Monastery, located in Turkey's northwestern Black Sea province of Trabzon, was visited by more than 123,000 people in 99 days.

The monastery, one of the most important faith tourism centers of Turkey, was closed in 2015 due to a risk of falling rocks from the nearby Karadag Mountain.

After 70% of the restoration work was completed, the monastery was opened to the public from July 28 to Nov. 3, 2020.

During this period, it received 123,933 visitors.

Also known as Mother Mary, Sumela Monastery is located on the slope of Karadag Mountain in the town of Macka 300 meters above the Altindere Valley and was carved out of rocks in a wooded area.

Turkey's Culture and Tourism Ministry launched a restoration project in February 2016 for environmental planning, researching and reinforcing the rocks

geologically and geotechnically. The first phase of the project was completed and part of the monastery except its yard was opened to visitors in May 2019.

With the completion of a considerable part of the second phase, 65% of the monastery was opened on July 28, 2020. The opening was attended by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan via teleconference and by Culture and Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy at the location.

As part of the project, some rocks that posed a danger were brought down, some places were surrounded with steel webbing and the inner parts were restored at Sumela Monastery, which was closed down for almost five years.

Having hosted nearly 5,000 visitors daily during the first days it was opened to the public, the monastery became one of the most visited archeological sites in Turkey.

The monastery is expected to be opened to visitors one more time on Jan. 31, 2021.

Trabzon Culture and Tourism Vice-Principle Mustafa Asan told Anadolu Agency that Sumela Monastery is on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List and the Culture and Tourism Ministry, Trabzon governorate and Trabzon Metropolitan Municipality carry out serious work for the site to be put on the actual list.

“Our goal is to see Sumela Monastery on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2022. It is very important that with the restoration at the monastery, we will have left a sound heritage to the future generations,” Asan said.

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