

Destinations that are grouped in this category face many of the same challenges as those faced by seasonal attractions, which were discussed in Chapter 9. For example, managers must hire and train a staff in a very short time and then bring all systems into operation by opening day each season. Taking care of the basics such as ordering supplies, manicuring the grounds, and deep-cleaning guest rooms are routine operations that can be easily scheduled. However, other tasks can become more difficult because facilities are often located in out-of-the-way places where there is limited access to potential employees and other services. Just think about how difficult it might be to find on short notice a plumber or an electrician for a remote fishing lodge in Manitoba.

Links to the Past

Dropping down the left-hand side of Figure 10.1, we see a collection of destinations that have been attracting travelers for hundreds, even thousands, of years. The primary designations of destinations in this category are religious and heritage sites.

These locations may or may not be affected by the seasons. Some are affected by religious holidays, such as the Vatican City at Easter. Others may be affected by season of the year. For example, the pyramids of Egypt experience a reduction in visitor traffic during the scorching summer months. By definition, there is little, if any, recent commercial development at these sites, because they have been classified as heritage locations. Some, such as the Petra archaeological site in Jordan, the Mnajdra prehistoric temples in Malta, or the Itum Monastery in Kathmandu, are rapidly succumbing to the ravages of time and the stresses of Mother Nature.⁷

Travelers have been embarking on journeys called **pilgrimages** to religious sites for centuries. Greeks and Romans traveled to worship their gods, and Jews still journey to Jerusalem, Muslims to Mecca, and Hindus to Varanasi. These well-known, as well as other lesser known, sites are so popular they attract hundreds of thousands of pilgrims each year. One popular pilgrimage site that draws almost half a million people a year is Santiago de Compostela in Spain. The focus of this pilgrimage is the central marble pillar of the Gloria Portico, where St. James is depicted welcoming the tired pilgrim. This pillar has been etched with deep finger marks where untold numbers have touched it over the years.⁸

The other destinations found in this grouping feature primarily heritage attractions. These sites are dedicated to preserving and passing on the natural or cultural heritage to future generations. Several sites worldwide—such as Angkor, Cambodia; Ruins of St. Paul, Macao; Machu Picchu, Peru; and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania—have been recognized for their unique heritage appeal to travelers. “Heritage tourism, or visiting an area’s historical sites, is the hottest trend in the travel industry today. Tourists, these days, want more out of travel than visiting a park or a mountain range. They want to experience unique places, traditions, and history and learn about their roots” (p. 8).⁹



Pilgrims to Jerusalem continue to arrive even in times of political unrest. Photo by C. E. Yale