

# BEIJING SAW LESS INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS IN 2013



China Tourism Academy.

Tourists from different parts of the globe have continued to shun Beijing during their tours throughout 2013. This is amid the strengthening Yuan and the rising pollution which has seen the numbers drop to about 4.2 million visitors in the months of January to November from more than 5.01 million visitors in 2012. The data were published by Beijing Commission of Tourist Development and

A report that had been done earlier by domestic travel agents revealed that the **visitors' numbers had dropped by about half in the first three quarters of the year** when compared with the previous year.

The 2008 Olympics hosted in the city was one of the things that attracted lots of visitors. The numbers rose for about 5 years until 2012 when the industry experienced a 3.8% decline. This was followed by a drop further in the next year and subsequent years. This was quite unexpected because the city had come up with new policies like a 72 hour visa waiver for all the passengers on transit. This was introduced in a bid to enhance the tourism industry in China.

Only about 14,000 tourists took advantage of this waiver according to the Entry Frontier Inspection and Beijing General Station of Exit. This was short of around 20,000 that the officials had targeted when they developed the program.

The deputy director who works for the Institute of International Tourism which is under China Tourism Academy, Ms. Jiang Yiyi, said that one of the reasons why the tourists' numbers dropped is because of the strengthening Yuan currency. In 2013 there was a 3% Yuan appreciation against the US dollar. This made Beijing become a more expensive destination when compared with the previous years which were good. At the same time, there are some countries that enjoyed more visitors because their currencies weakened.

Ms. Jiang continued to say that while the RMB was rising other countries, China's competitors, has their currencies depreciating such as Japan. This implies that travelling to some Asian countries became cheaper when compared to traveling to China which was more costly and tiresome. The Yen fell 21% in 2013 against the dollar. This boosted their tourism industry as it attracted 10 million tourists from overseas.

**Officials also noted that the rising pollution could have something to do with the reducing numbers.** Pollution levels had gone off charts in the month of December with the worst bout of huge smog being the highlight of pollution from Beijing.

Tourism officials in China are putting in a lot of effort to reverse this trend so that it can enjoy high numbers of tourists from all over the globe. Experts say that some of the measures that will be taken include lowering ticket prices and revamping the tour packages that had become outdated.

They also plan to come up with a long term solution to enhance the country's investment and image so as to attract more tourists.

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