

CAMBODIA'S TOURISM BENEFITS FROM CHINESE AND THAI VISITORS



Tourism arrivals, especially among the Chinese and Thai visitors, are on the rise in Cambodia. Cambodia's tourism benefits mainly from the Vietnamese travelers who are on the top with respect to arrivals.

3.5 million foreign tourists visited Cambodia from January to September 2016. This data was presented by Kong Sopheareak, director of statistics and information at the Ministry of Tourism. **The number represents a 4.8% increase compared to the same period last year.**

Sopheareak continued saying that Chinese tourism inflow increased by 12.5%, up to 577,280. Vietnamese inflow is still on top with 695,670 visitors in Cambodia. On the other hand, Thailand's inflow rose by 18.9%, up to 255,647.

"Both Cambodia and China have a good relationship and big investments and that's the reason Chinese tourists like to come here and there are more and more direct flights from China to Cambodia," Sopheareak told the Khmer Times. Other than that he believes that the common border between Cambodia and Thailand helped to increase Thai inflow, as it is easier to cross the border.

Cambodia's tourism offers a large variety of interesting sites, activities etc. There are many temples within the country, such as the Preah Vihear, Banteay Srei or the magnificent Angkor Wat. Moreover, there are many beaches in Cambodia. Sihanoukville is the most notable beach resort with its white-sand beaches, tropical islands and much more. The country is also very rich in terms of natural beauty. Islands, mountains, forests, lakes are attractive for nature enthusiasts or hikers.

However, all this could have been undiscovered globally, according to Ho Vandy, secretary-general of Cambodia's Tourism Alliance. Vandy reckons that **the rise in tourism inflow from China and Thailand was mainly a result of strong diplomatic relations between the countries.** He also added that the numbers would be even higher, if there was a railway connection between Southern China and Cambodia.

Finally, Mr. Ho Vandy called for an increase of direct flights from China to Cambodia's capital Phnom Penh. The reason is quite simple - to boost the already growing tourism industry in Cambodia even more.

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