

CHINESE TOURISTS ARE TREATED LIKE ROYALTY AT US HOTELS



Over the past few years, the Chinese has been branded as the world's most sought after traveler. As a result, major hotel brands are bending over backward to make sure that the Chinese tourist's needs are met. From congee for breakfast to Mandarin speaking employees, major US Hotels have adjusted to make sure Chinese tourists are satisfied.

Chinese tourists are expected to arrive in American shores in extraordinary numbers. Thanks to the more efficient visa process along side the rising number of middle class Chinese. Hotels have adjusted to make sure that any Chinese tourist would feel at home upon checking in. The rooms have hot tea prepared, there is congee for breakfast and employees are trained to speak Mandarin as well.

Marriot and Hilton have gone the extra mile, in fact. No Chinese tourist is allowed to step on any floor of their hotels where a number four is seen because it sounds like the word for death in Mandarin. Robert Armstrong, a reputable sales manager who handles Chinese travelers booking at Waldorf-Astoria New York, feels very relieved that finally, some major hotel groups are already adjusting to the Chinese market.

Last year, over 1 million Chinese tourists visited the US which generated almost 5.7 billion US dollars to the US economy. That marked 36% over 2010's data. This data came from the Department of Commerce and by 2016, they are looking at 2.6 million Chinese visitors.

As much as people would say Chinese trips to the US are for business, the truth is a big fraction of Chinese tourists going to the US are there for fun and pleasure. They bring along with them a lot of money as well. Statistics has proven that an average Chinese traveler spends over \$6,000 per trip. According to Roy Graff, a travel consultant who specializes in Chinese culture, hotels are winning the hearts of the Chinese by adjusting to their needs. Even the slightest details are being thought about like traditional Chinese slippers and tea kettles on all hotel rooms.

Marriot has a choice of Chinese breakfast depending on what part of China a tourist came from. Other Major hotels are being cautious of all actions and demeanor as it might offend a Chinese visitor. They are considering superstitions as well. White is avoided while red is respected because it is known to be lucky. The pecking order of Chinese is recognized by making sure no one is on a higher floor than their masters. Thus, there is indeed a race on who can capture the Chinese tourists' loyalty. Starwood hotels moved its senior leadership to China for a month. According to Clayton Ruebensaal, Marketing VP for Ritz, it is imperative that leaders know the Chinese at a more personal level to ensure the success of their plans.

The State Department said that Chinese visitors spend over 22 million USD on several Chinese cities and processing visa applications. Last February, the US government released news that Chinese who had a visa in the last 4 years do not need to reapply in person but may do it via courier instead. Thus, a week is enough to process visas for Chinese.

However, experts say that Europe is way ahead the US when it comes to attracting Chinese tourists. Furthermore, Rich Harrill, the director of the Sloan Foundation Travel & Tourism Industry Center at

the University of South Carolina, said that US is not prepared for Chinese tourists given the ill prepared industry wise.

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