

TAIWAN MAKES STEPS TO LURE MORE VISITORS



Number of visitors coming to Taiwan from the mainland China has increased significantly. It is mainly because of the direct flights that were established in July 2008. Taiwan, however, tries also other measures to lure even more tourists.

Taiwan has managed to lure four times more visitors from mainland China since July 2008. The increase has been caused by the establishment of the direct flights, by simplification of procedures and also by successful marketing.

According to the **Taiwan Tourism Bureau**, 3,561 tour groups with a total of 91,274 tourists from the mainland have visited Taiwan since July 2008. Taiwanese, however, hoped for even better results. The global economic crisis is taking its toll from the island's economy and the officials try to stimulate the economy in various ways. They have for example changed the minimal limit of tourists in one group from 10 to 5. Tourists are also allowed to stay 15 days instead of original 10. Taiwanese officials also hope that the number of tourist will grow as additional 113 authorized travel service providers and people from other 12 mainland provinces will be allowed to visit Taiwan.

Other move that could bring more tourists to the island is its new visa policy. Citizens of additional countries will not need visa to visit Taiwan. It concerns India, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and

Philippines.

However, it is not as simple as it may seem. The visa free regime will apply to those who already have a valid visa to the United States, Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand or the so called Schengen visa. Blue collar Filipino workers will arguably not be eligible for the visa waiver. The Asian source market is very important for the country's tourism industry. Taiwan receives approximately **one million tourists** annually; most of them (700,000) are from ASEAN. It comes naturally from the location of the island. For example a flight from Manila to Taipei takes less than two hours.

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