

SRI LANKA REPORTS 58% MORE CHINESE TRAVELERS IN 2012



Sri Lanka has been one of the favorite destinations for Chinese tourists according to some recent statistics that recorded a 58 percent increase in 2012. The trend is on a continuous rise with the aid of new promotions aiming to increase the number of tourists coming from the world's fastest growing economy.

At the end of 2012, the statistics for the year counted 58.1 percent more Chinese arrivals in Sri Lanka, totaling 2.5781 tourists while in 2011, the number was 16.308. In December, the increase in arrivals reached a peak of 213.8 percent rise when compared to the same month of the previous year.

Overall, the third largest cache of tourists comes from East Asia. Despite the fact that the number is relatively small, counting 132.730 people, the performance rates reached a 38 percent increase which is well above the average.

Basil Rajapaksa, head of the Economic Development Ministry and brother of the President focused its efforts to attract more Chinese tourists, promoting Sri Lanka. Such a marketing movement has been seen in December when SLTDA invited multiple journalists and TV crews to visit the island on the government's expense, promoting Sri Lanka and improving its exposure.

Sri Lanka's high value is not enough for a strong tourist campaign. The Maldives counted four times more **Chinese tourists**, hosting 229.551 Chinese tourists in 2012, 15.6 percent up from the previous year.

The current trend also mobilized Sri Lanka's national airlines to increase the number of flights to important Chinese cities and also invested in localization of their services. Social media also was used by the air company to increase the number of arrivals.

Even if China seems like a very attractive market for tourism, Sri Lanka's highest number of arrivals came from Western Europe counting 114.218 visits from UK alone, 71.642 German tourists and 56.863 coming from France. The total revenue generated in 2012 increased by 24 percent or 1 billion U.S. dollars. This revenue is estimated to increase in the following years and the government set a target to get 2.5 million tourists by 2016.

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