

TIBET'S TOURISM SEEMS FINALLY RECOVERING



Tibet is a hot spot and also a luring tourism destination. The region is becoming more and more dependent on the revenue from tourism industry but the well known violent riots have damaged the industry significantly. Nevertheless, recent numbers show that the Tibetan tourism is recovering.

Tibet certainly is a luring tourism destination. The region is increasingly dependent on the tourism industry but the relatively recent violent riots caused a considerable drop for the industry. Tourists were restricted from visiting Tibet after the riots and **tourism arrivals were nearly 70 per cent down** in the first half of the last year. According to official data the arrivals for the whole year 2008 were **2.25 million**, which is 44 per cent down, compared to the previous year. The Tibetan capital Lhasa reported only 1.4 million tourists who visited the city, which is a 51 per cent drop. In an effort to lure tourists back to the Himalayan region, local hotels and restaurants were giving their customers 50 per cent discounts. Prices for tickets to tourism attractions dropped by as much as 40 per cent.

Nevertheless, it seems that the Tibetan tourism industry is finally recovering. The official Chinese press agency, Xinhua, reported that **tourism arrivals rose by 12 per cent** from late October 2008 to late March. Approximately 430,000 tourists visited the autonomous region of Tibet during this period. The majority of the visitors were domestic tourists but 24,000 of them were foreigners. The local officials expect some 3 million tourists will visit the region this year. Because the tourism sector is recovering the discounts are not going to last much longer. Tibet is going to reintroduce the usual summer prices. For example the Jokhang Temple restored the 80-yuan price (€ 8,8) from the discounted 35 yuan (€ 3,8).

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Date: 2009-05-04

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