

# THE TOP 5 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHINESE AND WESTERN TRAVELLERS



When Western tourists travel to China, they often do so because of the country's ancient history and the many cultural experiences that will await them but it seems that the differences between the East and West extend even further into our attitudes to tourism and the expectations of a holiday. Chinese travellers are heading abroad more readily than before and, while doing so, are exhibiting some noticeable trends and dispelling a few misconceptions. The

following five examples show interesting contrasts in the desires and level of preparation behind Western and Chinese holidays as well as the style of the trip chosen and spending habits.

## Travelling Alone or as Part of a Group

The first major cultural difference between these two types of traveller is who they choose to spend their vacation with - a group of close friends and family or themselves. Chinese travellers see the fun of a foreign holiday as the experience of being in another country with loved ones so they can share what they learn (which is a reason why Chinese tourists are also keen on the ability to easily connect with people at home from their hotel room). Westerners, on the other hand, are happier travelling solo, such as on a personal city break or an introspective backpacking tour, and will talk about the experiences on their return.

## The Motivation Behind the Trip

Another key difference between Chinese and Western travellers is the reason for taking the holiday. While Western tourists feel a sense of entitlement, that the holiday is something they personally deserve and have earned because of their hard work, Chinese tourists do not appear to feel the same levels of stress or desire to escape from daily life and are more motivated by the different experiences they will enjoy in foreign lands. This idea of the negatives of stress and escapism versus the positive Chinese approach of relaxation and experiences perhaps helps to explain the cultural difference of travelling with friends and family and travelling alone: the difference between the shared experience and the self-serving personal break.

## The Amount of Preparation

Chinese travellers also seem to be more relaxed when it come to planning their holiday by generally having a lot more fun at the airport and spending less time reading up on the places they are visiting before hand than the average Westerner, someone who is more likely to be seen carrying out extensive research and reading guidebooks on the location, history and culture. This laid back approach could be partly due to this idea that Chinese tourists are simply looking forward to a relaxing, cultural expedition with friends while the Western traveller is more determined to see his 'deserved' holiday go exactly to plan.

## The Type of Trip and Cultural Experience they are After

Another reason for this sense of relaxation and limited planning with Chinese tourists is that while

Westerners are quite often responsible for every aspect of the trip and prefer to fully immerse themselves in one particular city, Chinese travellers generally wish to experience a wider region as part of a package tour that is planned by a travel agency. Some attribute this difference in the style of the holiday to the fact that Westerners have been happily exploring alone for years while foreign travel is relatively new to the Chinese. They want to learn as much as they can from a wider area via a structured program while Westerners will plan a more detailed city break themselves.

## **Shopping and the Amount of Money that is Spent**

The final difference between Chinese and Western travellers to be examined here is their attitude towards spending money and the type of goods they end up buying. Souvenir shops are big business in many countries but it seems that it is mostly Western tourists that will be buying these low-cost reminders of the city and its culture. Chinese travellers seem very happy to get out their wallets, having become the number one spenders in an increasing number of countries, but these purchases are often on big ticket items like designer shoes and handbags rather than locally-made produce or cultural craft items. In France, 87% of the goods bought by Chinese tourists were Parisian fashion items.

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