

CHINESE TOURISTS ARE HEADING TO NEPAL IN LARGE NUMBERS



A recent report from Nepal's Tourism Ministry shows that the recent attempts to attract tourists from neighbouring countries through selling low-cost travel with desirable air links has had a great impact. The idea began when the industry saw the need to look towards a new market following the drop in interest from Europe and America, areas still dealing with financial issues. The result was that this Asian market began to see the appeal of Nepal's geographic location and enhanced flight options and more visitors started to arrive.

Growth rates for Chinese visitors to Nepal are increasing steadily and it seems that these guests are enjoying their stay.

The approach definitely appears to be working, especially with the Chinese. European figures may be down, as expected, but the numbers of Chinese tourists are on the rise at an impressive level. Overall tourist growth has been rated as "satisfactory" by Nepal's Chambers of Commerce but the Chinese sector has surely surpassed this as it has been the fastest growing over the last three years, with numbers nearly doubling over this period. In 2011, there were a recorded 46,360 visitors to the country but this reached 89,509 in 2013.

What is interesting about the additional data from this report is that despite the promoted low-cost aspect of these Nepalese holidays, a trend which is growing in China among its younger travellers, these Chinese visitors are actually spending more than they were three years ago. Back in 2011, the average spend was just 50-60 US dollars a day but in 2013 this rose to \$100. It is easy to see this as a sign that these holidaymakers are enjoying their stay; it seems that the Chinese have been well and truly sold on the idea of Nepalese vacations - or "lured" as the report puts it - and now it is up to local businesses to see what else they can do to keep them coming and keep them spending.

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