

# CHINESE TRAVELLERS TURNING AWAY FROM TRADITIONAL TOURS



In the past, it has been common for groups of Chinese travellers to choose to travel together on specially structured, highly-organised tours via a tour group but it seems that more and more are turning away from this trend and deciding to make their own, independent travel arrangements. Research from Hotels.com and its Chinese International Travel Monitor shows that the stereotypical image of fast-paced coach loads of Chinese tourists seeing the sights is dying out: 67% of the 3000 Chinese respondents asked said that they would much rather make their own arrangements than travel with a tour. This is said to show a 5% increase on the figures from 2013.

This change has a strong link to the growing youth market: perhaps guided tours through these operators are simply outdated and uncool right now.

Tourism has been evolving steadily over the past few years with significant changes being brought on by altering attitudes in the youth market, both in their desire to travel abroad and the confidence to do so alone. Foreign trips used to mean order and structure but now Chinese travellers seem more keen to book their own arrangements and work on their own itineraries for trips with family or even on their own. Furthermore, this change is not just being expressed in the hopes and wishes of prospective travellers; 60% of Chinese hotel owners from the same survey said that they had seen an increase in guests travelling separately from tour operators. These tourists are becoming much more adventurous in their plans in this could change the image of Chinese tourism and the prospects for international trips.

Trends seem to come around in cycles and there is nothing to suggest that the next generation will not end up yearning for the retro charm of old-fashioned tours with a tour operator; however, for now at least, the confidence and desire for independent travel on their own terms mean that Chinese travellers have surely turned their backs on these rigid tours and will be enjoying holidays on their own terms for a while.

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