

SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS TO LURE MORE CHINESE TOURISTS IN DUTCH MUSEUMS



Chinese tourists eager to see the works of Vermeer and Rembrandt at Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum will now be able to enjoy audio tours in their native language, buy books in Chinese and pay via UnionPay. With the numbers of tourists from China rising year on year, Dutch museums are adding special customized services to cater to this growing demographic. In 2014, more than 15,000 Chinese tourists visited the Rijksmuseum, and more are expected in the coming years.

Visitors to the Rijksmuseum will also be able to view the official museum app, which offers practical information as well as games and other features for art lovers, in Chinese. **In addition, the museum has lined up a series of Asian-themed exhibitions in 2015.** These include the ongoing "Early Photography in Imperial China" (which opened on June 5) and the upcoming "Asia in Amsterdam - Exotic Luxury in the Golden Age" which will run from October 2015 till January of the following year.

These exhibitions are based on trade between Asian and European countries during the Golden Age (roughly spanning the 17th century). International travelers are attracted to the museum's permanent collection as well, which features a separate area housing Asian art and Chinese pieces from 2000 B.C.

The museum also has plans to collaborate with the museums in Mainland China in future exhibitions, which will potentially offer international talents the scope to work at the museum.

The Rijksmuseum has been one of The Netherlands' most important cultural centers for more than 130 years. It was recently awarded the prestigious and long-running European Museum of the Year title presented by the European Museum Forum. Other museums in Amsterdam have followed suit with their China-friendly services.

Chinese tourists to Amsterdam in 2015 will also find the Stedelijk Museum at the Museum Square offering a warm welcome and incentives to make their visit extra special. The museum, which is dedicated to contemporary art, has invited several Chinese travel agents and tour operators for a Fam Trip, to familiarize themselves with the collection at the museum. This move is part of a sales mission that the Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions has organized along with the goal of wooing tourists from China.

The attitude of the Dutch museums is the result of a tremendous growth of Chinese tourism to the country. The figures have doubled since 2010, and from 2013 to 2014, there was a growth of 18 percent to over 250,000 visitors. The same growth rate is expected for 2015, and 295,000 visitors are expected this year from the country. In contrast, the overall international tourist influx is expected to grow only by 4 percent.

Another reason for the new pro-Chinese attitude of the Dutch tourism industry is that the Chinese have displayed more than twice the spending power of other international tourists. The Chinese spend over 1250 Euros on each visit, while the average international visitor spends about 600 Euros. Much of the spending is in shopping, but galleries and art museums also feature high on the list of interests that the visitors display. According to an NBTC tourism survey in 2014, 25 percent of

Chinese visitors to the country visit the excellent galleries and museums that The Netherlands is home to.

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