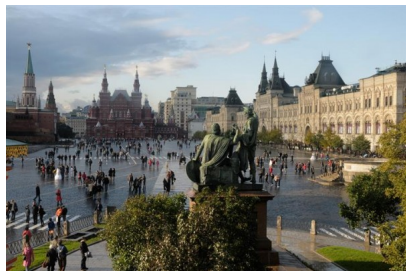


RUSSIA TO REAP MORE FROM CHINESE TOURISTS



Russia's amount of revenue from Chinese tourist endeavors is expected to rise. This rewarding expectation is based on research showing that from the start of 2015, 16% of foreign visits to Russia were from China. Also, Chinese tourists have proven to be big spenders. In 2014 alone, they collectively spent at least \$1 billion. According to GfK, a data research company, a Chinese tourist will spend around \$2400 on one trip in Russia.

China has significantly grown economically within the recent past. According to the Director at the Center for Chinese Strategic Studies, Alexey Maslov, this has resulted in an **increase in the number of the middle income earners, who on their trips to Russia, seek to purchase luxurious jewelry and clothes at the expense of Russian souvenirs and dolls.**

Some of the factors aiding the increased inflow of Chinese tourists into Russia include the dwindling value of the ruble due to Western sanctions, as well as the proximity of the two countries to each other. Therefore, with the same amount of money, a Chinese tourist will buy more in Russia compared to China. This is further evidenced by the tendency of a Chinese tourist to allocate 57.8% of his/her tourism budget to shopping - based on data from the World Tourism Cities Federation.

Due to the Ukraine conflict, the relationship between Russia and the West has been a crippling one. Therefore, Russia has invested its attention in China and signed numerous fresh agreements with the country. Among this is the China Friendly program that kicked off in 2014, seeking to provide Chinese tourists with a comfortable environment by offering them several benefits like language support, accepting their credit cards, etc. According to Rosturizm - Russian government's tourism agency - **this has led to the tripling of Chinese tourists in Russia since last year.**

Averaging 55 years, Chinese tourists are said to enjoy sites in Russia that are linked to the communist revolution and the former Soviet Union, such as Red Square in Moscow, the cruiser Aurora, and the Lenin's mausoleum - commonly referred to as red tourism. Therefore, the Russian government has endeavored to boost its red tourism marketing in China. Despite the challenges of high commodity prices and safety, Russia will for sure reap more from Chinese tourists.

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