

# NEW POLICY IN CHINA ENABLES EASIER SELF-DRIVING ROAD TOURS



China has eased up on the restrictions that it has formerly imposed on tourists who take on self-driving tours in the country.

In a joint notice released by the ministries of Public Security, Foreign Affairs, and the National Tourism Administration, more practical measures will be adopted to streamline international tourists' driving trips. **This new policy will become effective on October 1st this year.**

For those who want to take on these kinds of tours, approval documents issued by tourism administrations and public security bureaus will no longer be required. The permits will instead be handled by selected tour agencies beforehand. Those who want to go on self-driving tour trips will have to sign up under these agencies. The agencies will also be in charge of hiring and assigning tour guides who will accompany tourists who choose to go on self-driving tours. No solo trips are allowed.

According to China's Tourism League Association secretary general, Wei Xiao'an, this new development (which is applicable only to foreigners) is a sign that China's tourism industry is going global in its scope. He added that **the former procedure of having tourists go through public securities and customs was so overly complicated that it actively prevented more tourists from going on self-driving trips.**

He hopes that this new policy might help attract more people to these tours. Wei added while that it might be hard to predict the potential of the market, this brand new policy might jumpstart its growth in the future.

However, there are few who are not too excited about the news. Currently, the number of foreign travelers availing themselves of self-driving tours account for only a small percentage of the tourism business, according to Yu Liangbing, a deputy general manager of China CYTS Tours. If more international tourists rent vehicles, then more specific policies will be enacted to manage them, he mused.

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