

# AMERICA LOOKS TO THE CHINESE MARKET FOR EXTRA REVENUE



It is the tourism industry's worst kept secret: the Chinese market is currently the fastest growing and most interesting market on the planet. Despite the fact that China's communist status and subsequent bureaucratic problems make travel abroad for Chinese people somewhat problematic, travelling abroad is becoming the Chinese national pastime. Thanks to the internet, the communist Chinese government is finding it more difficult to keep an eye on the movements of its citizens. Increased salaries also explain the enormous growth in outbound Chinese tourism. Whereas the average Chinaman working in Shanghai or Beijing used to earn something comparable to a bag of peanuts, the average salary in these cities is now up to around \$4.500. By western standards this is no fortune but more than enough in order for Chinese to put money aside for travel.

It is no wonder that the Americans are so keen to attract Chinese tourists to their country. The Chinese are big spenders and tend to splash out more than the US's most typical visitors, i.e. those from neighbouring Canada or Europe. However, there is a huge stumbling block in the marketing area. This is that advertising the United States is banned throughout China as the Chinese government doesn't want to see a mass exodus. The Americans have gone about the problem in a different way, by opening offices in China with the aim of selling holidays. In any case, most Chinese know about famous places in America from television shows.

Further steps on the marketing front have involved introducing the Mandarin language to many tour facilities and making agreements with the Chinese authorities to make it easier for Chinese people to successfully apply for visas. Numerous declarations have been signed to this effect.

Outbound Chinese tourism is expected to triple within the next few years and eventually reach 100 million people by the year 2020, if current growth rates are anything to go by. The middle class in China is growing at an extraordinary rate and one tenth of all visitors to the United States by 2015 are expected to be Chinese. It is no surprise that great efforts are being made right now to encourage such a rapidly growing market.

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