

CHINESE NEW YEAR: RECORD-BREAKING TRAVEL DURING THE CELEBRATIONS



The Chinese New Year celebrations are approaching and this year's joyful time is set to become a record-breaking festival. Major jumps in both domestic and outbound travel are expected during the week-long holidays starting on January 27th.

Domestic Travel

The Chinese are expected to make a total of 2.98 billion trips nationwide from January 13th to February 21st. **This would represent an increase of 2.2 % year on year during the annual travel peak, known in China as chunyun.**

12% of these trips will be made by railway, 84.6% by road, 1.4% by water and 2% by air, according to a report of the Ministry of Transport. The amount of passengers traveling by train and plane will increase by about 10 % compared to last year.

Besides that, Chinese travel enthusiasts are expected to take 8.4 million carpool trips during the Spring Festival, while more than 1.9 million hitch rides are predicted, according to a forecast from Chinese firm Didi.

The peaks are predicted to be on January 25th, three days before the first day of the Chinese New Year and on February 2nd, the last day of the national holidays.

The most popular routes before the festival are those from big cities to suburban areas. On the other hand, after the festival the migration pattern will reverse from smaller or medium cities to the metropolitan centers.

Chinese Travel to Europe

When it comes to outbound travel, East Asian countries are the hot spot for Chinese tourists, while Europe is making a comeback, based on a study conducted by ForwardKeys.

Overall, the Chinese New Year flight bookings are up nearly 10% compared to last year. East Asia represents more than half of the trips, while Europe only 11%. However, after security concerns last year, Europe is coming back to the spotlight in China, with a 68.5% increase compared to the Spring Festival in 2016.

Other than Europe, Latin America has also seen a rise in popularity with a 62.9% jump year on year. Africa and the Middle East are following a similar pattern, registering a 67.1% increase amid safety concerns. The USA and Canada have seen a 3.3% increase in flight bookings, representing 10% of Chinese travel abroad.

The most popular destinations for Chinese tourists are Thailand, Japan and Taiwan.

European countries have meanwhile registered a big jump in popularity. Spain is the trendiest 2017 destination, with 88.7% increase compared to last year. The UK is also becoming much more popular among the Chinese, resulting in 87.7% rise.

In Europe, Southern Europe is the most popular region, accounting for 34% of all the trips. However, Northern and Central/Eastern Europe are experiencing a big boom compared to last year, with increases of 100% and 101% respectively. The top 5 European destinations are Spain, the UK, Italy, Germany, and France.

When it comes to the Chinese travel peak, it is similar to the pattern in domestic travel. January 26th is the day with the most departures. The average length of stay at various destinations is 8 days, while most international travelers are unsurprisingly from China's biggest cities Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou.

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