

# HOW TO ATTRACT CHINESE TOURISTS



It is well known that Chinese tourists are a hot issue on the travel market. In the first quarter of 2018, the number of Chinese holidaymakers bound for Europe increased by 35% year-on-year. Since Europe is the second-most popular region after Asia for them (it accounted for 9% of the total outbound Chinese tourists), many countries do whatever they can to attract these travelers to their destination. What follows are several tips and tricks for the destinations to become more attractive to Chinese holidaymakers.

## Adapt the Means of Payment

Alipay, Union Pay and WeChat Pay. These three Chinese giants share the mobile payment market in China and were right to focus on this segment. According to a study by Nielsen and Alipay, 65% of Chinese tourists use mobile payment, against 11% for all other nationalities combined.

According to Ludovic des Garets, sales director of Docomo Digital, "mobile payment can increase the average amount of a basket, the conversion rate and help retain Chinese customers". A clientele that spends a lot since Docomo Digital estimates that Chinese tourists spent \$3,754 on average in Europe last year, not counting transportation.

According to the Nielsen and Alipay study, 43% of Chinese consumers prefer these solutions because they avoid currency exchange problems. 48% also use them because they are Chinese services and 64% because they are fast and efficient. Integrating Alipay, Union Pay and WeChat Pay solutions gives hoteliers, restaurants and cultural institutions an additional argument to convince Chinese tourists to spend on their products and services. "WeChat Pay makes 1 million transactions per minute... See the potential!" Ludovic of Les Garets points out. This phenomenon is expected to increase in the coming years with the arrival on the market of Generation Z, "very fond of these solutions".

## Target Families

The Chinese middle class is the one that feeds the contingent of tourists who go abroad. Kevin Guo, head of strategic partnerships and marketing innovation at Ctrip, recalled that only "10% of Chinese citizens have a passport to travel abroad". That still represented 130 million Chinese tourists who travelled abroad last year! Golden Week, a national holiday week in the autumn, can be an ideal time to attract tourists since in 2017, 710 million Chinese travelled during this period (taking into account domestic tourism). It is especially important to focus on families, since family trips now account for 46% of all trips made by Chinese tourists.

"This is a very important opportunity for theme parks like Disney, or cultural institutions. The question to ask is: "Is my product suitable for children?" underlined Kevin Guo. A speech that echoed that of Thierry Hellin, Deputy Managing Director of Pierre & Vacances-Center Parcs. "Our Nature Villages, inaugurated last year next to Disneyland, are totally adapted to families, with dedicated activities that can be enjoyed whatever the weather.

## Offer "Nature" Experiences

The other major expectation of Chinese tourists, according to Thierry Hellin, is disconnection with

daily life, stress and an environment free of pollution. "Even on short stays - 3 days on average for us - our clients must be able to return to the basics such as nature, well-being and family, friends, on the outskirts of large urbanized areas," he explains. Pierre & Vacances-Center Parcs also believes a lot in its concept for the Chinese... in China. The opening of 10 resorts under the Sun Parks brand has already been recorded.

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