

THE NUMBER OF CHINESE TOURISTS IN SWITZERLAND ON THE RISE



Switzerland attracts more tourists from China than ever. The Switzerland Travel Centre, the official and largest tour operator in the country, recorded over 15% growth in bookings of Chinese tourists compared to the same period last year, especially for individual tourists.

Switzerland as a travel destination is very popular among Chinese tourists. As early as the first half of 2018, **the Switzerland Travel Centre recorded an increase in bookings by more than 15%**. In contrast to guided groups, however, there is a growing trend towards individual tourism. Especially young people are interested in exploring Switzerland on their own

For a long time now, they no longer want to visit only the typical Swiss places, but rather rely on authenticity and tranquility. It is no longer only the classic destinations such as Jungfrauojoch, Schwanenplatz etc., but more and more places like Appenzell, Gruyere or Rapperswil.

In most cases, young Chinese tourists in Switzerland are not planning and booking their trips via local tour operators, but rather through online portals such as “Fliggy Shop”. It was launched in late 2014 by Chinese online wholesaler Alibaba. The platform has over 200 million users. It has become one of the largest travel portals in the world. Nevertheless, Fliggy Shop is still largely unknown in Switzerland. The country is only beginning to recognize the great potential of direct sales in the Chinese online market.

Chinese individual travelers attach great importance to a comprehensive customer service in their own language. This is why some Swiss companies have their own operation teams in Beijing. These are not only responsible for translations into Mandarin but are also available to customers on various channels for further information and questions.

Even though most of the sales of products are in digital space – 77 % of the purchases in China are now handled via mobile apps – personal advice also plays an important role. Up to twenty chat messages are sent per purchase between travelers and the advisory teams. **Over half of the general inquiries arrive between six in the evening and midnight.**

“We sell most of the products in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou. The highest-paid group currently consists of women between the ages of 15 and 25,” said David Yang, Fliggy Shop Operations Manager for the Switzerland Travel Centre in Beijing.

Chinese individual tourism in Switzerland is booming and according to current forecasts, an end to this

development is not in sight.

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