

CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISM GROWS 13.5% THANKS TO PERSONALIZED PACKAGES



This summer, China's outbound tourism has grown 13.5%, encouraged by the demand for personalized travel packages, according to data submitted by the Chinese Outbound Tourism Research Institute (COTRI), and gathered by the ForwardKeys consultancy.

According to ForwardKeys, this kind of packages represent 15% of the market's total and its demand was multiplied by three in Asia's largest country for 2017. **This year, the numbers are close to 120,000 orders every month.**

Taking into account these patterns, the consulting company estimates that Chinese tourism to Europe has grown by 10.5% this summer. Chinese visitors choose the United Kingdom as their preferred destination when traveling through personalized packages.

According to the consultancy company, Europe as a destination represents 9.3% of long distance flights coming from China. In 2017, more than 6 million Chinese nationals visited the Old Continent, and this number is expected to increase.

From January to April this year, Chinese arrivals in Europe were up 9.5% and the bookings for the period May-August are currently 7.9% higher than last year. The worldwide figures for Chinese outbound tourism are 6.9% up for the first four months and 6.2% ahead for May-August.

"The most wealthy and adventurous Chinese travelers are staying away from traditional tour packages and demand personalized tours that include movie locations, Michelin-starred restaurants, secluded ancient ruins and sporting events," explains ForwardKeys.

This kind of travel offer has a cost of about 400 dollars (342.5 euros) per person, according to data from the travel agency Ctrip, which forecasts that prices will continue to rise.

Ctrip, which points out that these types of travelers tend to be among the youngest, explains that until recently Chinese visitors used to buy traditional packages that would fit the "mass tourism" profile, and had a limited traveling budget, but now the trend is leaning towards the perspective of "affordable luxury".

According to Wolfgang Georg Arlt, founder and director of COTRI, **the reason why Chinese tourists who travel to Europe opt for these packages is due to the difficulty of the procedures required to travel to the Old Continent, such as applying for visas.**

"The language barrier also has an influence," adds Georg, who explains that because of this issue, Chinese visitors have difficulty carrying out simple tasks such as buying train tickets.

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