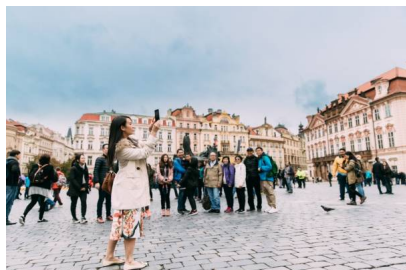


CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE INCREASINGLY ATTRACTIVE FOR CHINESE TOURISTS



Chinese tourists are increasingly heading to Central and Eastern Europe. Based on an initiative by the European Union, 10.3% more Chinese visitors travelled to this region between May and August 2018, according to Forward Keys and the European Travel Commission.

According to the study, the initiative contributed greatly to the popularization of unknown destinations like Estonia or Bulgaria. **Both countries registered an increase in terms of Chinese visitors of more than 40%.**

However, the country that is most attractive out of the southern European nations is Croatia. Chinese arrivals increased by 46.2% between May and August. Meanwhile, bookings made between September and December have registered a growth of 66.4%.

Russia and Belarus on the Rise

Even more to the east the increases are relevant. The number of tourists from China to Russia has almost quadrupled since 2012. In 2017, they set a record – 1.5 million inhabitants from China arrived in Russia.

There are more Chinese tourists thank to the friendly relations between the states and the increased interest of Chinese citizens in the Russian culture. In addition, comfortable conditions for tourists from China are being formed in Russia.

The main points of interest are Moscow and St. Petersburg. Foreigners are also going to regions where they can get acquainted with Russian exoticism. For example, icebreaking tours to the North Pole are in great demand.

Belarus can boast similar growth. At the end of 2017, the number of tourists coming to Belarus from China increased 2.1 times, according to official information. In addition, Belarus is counting on an annual increase in tourist traffic from China by at least 15%.

Chinese Gold Week in Prague

During the Golden Week at the beginning of October, around 700 million Chinese people were on the move. Of that, 6 million left China. The best-known Czech outlet center, Fashion Arena Prague Outlet, expected an increase of 75% in terms of Chinese visitors during the holiday. Last year, the Chinese spent 1.9 trillion crowns for travel during the Golden Week.

Fashion Arena Prague Outlet has seen significantly more Chinese visitors in recent years and, of course, even more of them during the Golden Week. In connection with the holiday, Czech firms implemented specially targeted marketing campaigns for visitors from China.

According to the Czech Statistical Office, a total of 185 thousand Chinese tourists were

accommodated in the Czech Republic last year. This is a remarkable 27.8% more than in the year before. Chinese visitors registered the highest year-on-year increase out of all nationalities. This is also connected to transport accessibility, as there are currently nine flights a week between Prague and China.

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