

CHINESE TOURISTS TRAVEL MORE THAN EVER



In recent years, China has become a very important market for many businesses. Tourism industry is no exception. A recent survey has shown that the number of Chinese traveling abroad steadily grows. In the first nine months of this year nearly 30 million Chinese traveled abroad. It is a 17 per cent growth compared to the same period last year. As Zhu Shanzhong, a tourism promotion official of the China National Tourism Administration, says the numbers show that China remains Asia's largest source of outbound tourists. The official also claims that the growth rate of outbound Chinese tourists has outpaced the average world level. Mr. Zhu said that 25.52 million (85 %) of the people traveled for personal purposes and 4.44 million (15 %) were business travelers. Last year 34.52 million tourists went abroad. The most popular destinations for Chinese tourists are Hong Kong, Macao, Japan, Thailand, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Russia, the United States, Singapore, Vietnam and Malaysia. China has so far approved 132 countries and regions as destinations for outbound tourists. China itself hosted some 22.21 million foreign visitors in 2006. The main sources of tourists for China are in the ROK, Japan, Russia, the United States, Malaysia, Singapore, Mongolia, Thailand, Britain and Australia.

Important news for businesses dealing with tourism is that more and more Chinese use Internet to gain information about tourism destinations. According to China Outbound Travel Monitor 2007, 63% of tourists prefer Internet to travel agents as a source of information. Only some 40% of respondents use newspapers and magazines as their source of information. Dr Grace Pan, head of Travel & Leisure Research, The Nielsen Company, China says: "Given the astounding growth in China's online population, the Internet will become the most efficient way to quickly understand consumers across China's vast markets; marketers have to innovate to leverage the Internet to reach consumers as standard online advertising may not be adequate to capture the attention of the increasingly technology-savvy Chinese online population."

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