

CHINESE TOURISM GROWTH TO CONTINUE AMID PASSPORT PRICE REDUCTION



Chinese tourism has been growing at an astonishing pace in the past years. At the beginning of the new millennium, 10.5 million overseas trips were made by Chinese tourists. In 2018, the number rose to 149.7 million. This represents an incredible increase of 1326%.

As remarkable as the numbers sound, it is far from the full potential of the industry. **The reason for this is that only about one-tenth of all Chinese people possess a passport** - a very low number in contrast to the USA (40%) or Great Britain (76%). According to researchers, however, overseas trips from China should reach more than 400 million by 2030 and the country is doing everything possible to reach this staggering number.

Cheaper Passports

From the beginning of this month, the price to receive a passport dropped by 25%. Experts predict that this could lead to a double of the passport numbers by next year to 240 million.

Moreover, the application process is now much simpler, and people can apply for a passport across the country and not at only one point. In 2017, Chinese authorities processed 570 thousand passports, with the number rising to 690 thousand last year. A further increase is inevitable in the next years.

Optimism about Growth

The biggest provider of Chinese travel services, Ctrip, is also very optimistic with regards to the future of Chinese tourism. "As Chinese people's incomes continue to increase, the remaining 90% of the population could all be potential customers for international travel," said Lu Yang, a spokesman of the company.

Now, many post-80s Chinese have a family with young children and retired elders. With the passport fee reduction and easier access to obtain one, **more families are expected to travel** overseas taking children and elders along.

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