

INDONESIA EXPERIENCES A DECLINE IN VISITORS FROM CHINA



Due to the increase in tension over China's trade war with the United States, there has been a decline in Chinese tourism. China is now in the process of ramping up to bring in more visitors from various European countries. Indonesia announced a decreasing number of visitors from China.

The Minister of Tourism Indonesia and former journalist, Wishnutama Kusubandio, reported that they do not rely only on the arrivals from China. The ministry has shifted the focus to European countries such as the UK which was not tapped into before.

The traits of Indonesia's tourism suit the European market which leans toward natural settings and outdoor activities including sailing in East Nusa Tenggara and Tanjung Puting in Central Kalimantan. According to Kusubandio, although there is a huge opportunity of marketing the archipelago as a tourist destination for Europeans, it would be quite costly and would require a great deal of effort. Research has shown that Labuan Bejo has been welcoming European tourists for some time now and Kusubandio is seriously looking at both the United States and Australia to join in as well.

According to statistics, between January and September 2019, Indonesia welcomed 1,565,200 tourists from Europe which is just slightly less than the year before. During that same period, the country welcomed 482,500 American tourists with an increase of 12.9% in comparison to the year before.

Kusubandio said he was going to shift his focus on marketing Indonesian tourism in Europe along with other Western countries. He intends to continue encouraging visitors from China as well. Despite his new strategy, Kusubandio plans to boost the growth of Chinese arrivals to Likupang and Manado in North Sulawesi as the main targets for attracting tourists.

Based on the latest data, the number of Chinese tourists between January and May 2019 increased slightly by 2.2%. **Due to the decline, Malaysia replaced China as the number one tourist attraction with a 23.04% growth during the same period.**

According to Haryadi Sukamdani, Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Industry Association chairman, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Indonesia could very possibly drop by 15 to 20%.

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