

CHINESE TOURISM REOPENS BUT TOURIST ATTRACTIONS FACE CHALLENGES



As many industries in China return to normalcy and people come back to work a large number of tourist attractions (65.8%) have also opened to domestic visitors. Many of them now fight overcrowding.

As the Chinese tourism reopens, people benefit from the opportunity to finally explore the country - in great numbers. **The recent Qingming holiday saw an increase in tourism as the number of domestic tourists reached a peak of 43.25 million.** On the second day of the Qingming holiday, a popular tourist attraction Mount Huangshan, located in Anhui Province in China's eastern region was faced with a large number of visitors. The authorities had no easy task to manage the situation.

The popular tourist attraction strengthened its prevention and control efforts in light of the epidemic and also enhanced reservation procedures during the holiday.

The reason for such a large number of people visiting these reopened tourist attractions is not farfetched; many people are eager to move out of their houses and see the sights, after being unable to do that for months.

The somewhat unexpected crowd of eager tourists has not only brought life to the tourist attractions but has also posed a challenge of overcrowding to many sites, raising concern over the possibility of infection and transmission of the virus if such large gatherings are left unchecked.

In a bid to manage the situation and ensure the safety of tourists, the National Health Commission, in a joint order with the Ministry of Culture announced several measures to be taken with regards to tourist attractions.

Only outdoor tourist attractions will be allowed to open and receive visitors right now while the indoor centers remain closed.

The second guideline stipulates that tourists visiting these outdoor attractions must not fill up more than 30 percent of the center capacity, to make social distancing and general health protection possible. Finally, the expected number of tourists at any time should be calculated beforehand to conform to the measures.

As more national-level tourism attractions open to the public with discounts and promotional offers, some local attractions have more than just the health measures limiting their number of customers to take into consideration. They now have to compete with major scenic sites giving out tickets at a highly discounted rate.

The head of a tourism enterprise in Ankang, located in China's northwestern Shaanxi Province, Zheng Youping has decried the challenges and limitations placed on the local attraction sites by the 4A and 5A scenic spots.

According to him, the main income of his enterprise is drawn from accommodation and ticket sales, both of which they were charging less than the major scenic spots, giving tourists a cost-effective

option.

With 5A and 4A scenic centers massively beating down their prices, Zheng expressed that many tourists no longer see the need to visit local attractions when they can go for the national centers and still save money.

While other scenic spots and attractions are reopening, Zheng has decided to remain shut for the time being as the cost of reopening and running in light of the passenger flow and price reductions will drive his business to a loss.

Just as Zheng predicted, **many scenic spots that have reopened are facing financial challenges as the operating cost exceeds the revenue generated from the lower number of tourists.** With no form of financial support at the moment, these scenic spots are hoping for financial supports and stimulus measures to be directed towards the tourism industry to provide support and strengthen the economy.

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