

THAILAND TOURISM: UNREST NEEDS TO BE SOLVED QUICKLY



Thailand has suffered significant losses due to the pandemic compared to \$60 billion in revenue in 2019. Only 6.7 million tourists are estimated to arrive in Thailand this year - a huge decrease from an average figure of 40 million in the last couple of years.

Nevertheless, it seems that better times are ahead for Thailand tourism. Last week, the country welcomed the first group of Chinese tourists. This could be an important signal for the sector, considering that **China accounted for over a quarter of total tourism inflow (11 million) before the Coronavirus outbreak**. Chinese tourists also brought a staggering \$17 billion into the country in 2019.

In the initial phase of the reopening of borders, there will be a limit of 1,200 arrivals per month. This is significantly lower than the usual inflow of 3 million tourists during the pre-crisis times, but a sign of slight recovery.

The first group of Chinese tourists consisted of 41 people, while 100 more will arrive from Guangzhou on October 26 and one more group from Shanghai will travel to Thailand two days later.

Travel Corridor in Talks

In case of success of this initial phase, there could be more to come in the coming months. Thailand is reportedly negotiating the creation of a travel corridor without mandatory quarantine with China in a desperate attempt to save the tourism industry.

If the above-mentioned gradual process goes smoothly, mandatory quarantine would be replaced with other measures. These include Covid-19 testing, tracking applications and more to try to tackle the risk of further infections.

However, perhaps the recovery of Thailand tourism will not be as smooth as the leadership of the country would like.

The current anti-government protest could halt tourism even more, as predicted by the Bank of Thailand. The Thai Hotels Association (THA) president noted that the situation must be resolved as soon as possible to 'maintain positive tourism sentiment'.

Plan for 2021 Presented

In the meantime, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) introduced the Thai tourism industry plan for 2021. This plan aims to promote safety, natural beauty, food, Thai uniqueness and target quality tourists with high purchasing power.

Next year's tourism will primarily depend on the pandemic and the plan is based on the best-case scenario **that tourism will start growing early next year or in the second quarter**.

Under this scenario, Thais would make 120 million domestic trips and spend around 800 billion baht next year. For inbound tourism, TAT expects around 20 million visitors to arrive and the country to

generate around 1.5 trillion baht (almost \$48 billion) next year.

Date: 2020-10-26

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/thailand-tourism-faces-anti-government-protests-news11734>