

ASIANS HURTLE FOR EUROPE



Asia seems to become a tourism industry superpower. This is highly influence by the growing economic power of India and China as well as other Asian countries. The upcoming Olympic Games will boost the tourists' interest in the continent even more and it will be an excellent promotion for the region.

It is predicted that the Asia Pacific region will continue to lead the world tourism growth also in 2008. According to the statistics, the tourist arrivals in the region increased by 8% in 2006 and by more than 10% in 2007. What is even more important for the big tourism players around the world is that the number of the outbound tourists from Asia grows as well. As the Asian Travel Monitor states, the top eight markets of Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, India, Malaysia and Thailand generate over 70 million outbound trips overall.

The biggest market for tourism players is Japan. Approximately 18 million trips were made by Japanese in 2007. China's official outbound trip count reaches 34.5 million but about 70% of these trips are for Hong Kong and Macau, which are in fact domestic destinations. The number of real outbound trips was therefore only about 13 million.

Europe is becoming more attractive for Asian travelers. According to the World Travel Trends Report 2007/08 the majority of Asians travel to short haul destinations but the number of e.g. Chinese in European destinations has risen significantly in 2007. India generates important number of tourists from its emerging middle class. These people are educated and the knowledge of English is widespread among them. This makes traveling to foreign destinations much easier for them. Other important source countries for European tourism market are South Korea, Thailand and Malaysia. The tourism ministries of China, Japan and Republic of Korea confirmed their intention to work closer on tourism related issues and joint promotional efforts which will probably further enhance the profits of the travel trade.

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