

HEALTH RESTRICTIONS IN CHINA HURT TOURISM SECTOR



The Chinese policy tightening the restrictions imposed on the population - with several cities under lockdown - to contain the spread of variant Omicron COVID-19 in the country, continues to impact the economy. This time, it is the tourism sector that has suffered.

During the Mid-autumn Festival, also known as the Mooncake Festival, the number of trips shrank and revenue from tourist activity retreated.

According to data from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the number of trips by domestic tourists decreased by 16.7% compared to last year, to 73.4 million during the holiday. Revenue from domestic tourism fell 22.8% to 28.68 billion yuan (\$4.14 billion dollars).

Road travel fell 37% to 48.18 million and naval travel retreated 15% to 1.54 million, state television reported.

The Mooncake Festival is famous for prompting many Chinese to visit their families in other provinces. As a result, places specializing in overnight trips and with lakes and rivers, such as Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Shanghai and Nanjing, have suffered greatly from the health restrictions.

Control is still strict. In Beijing, people returning to work need to show negative results from tests carried out in the previous 48 hours, compared with the 72 hours required in the past.

Authorities have also asked people to avoid non-essential travel in the run-up to the week-long National Day holiday next month, and also for the Communist Party Congress in mid-October.

Those who preferred to stay at home did not take advantage of the time off to go to the cinema, for example. The box office for the long weekend was 370 million yuan (\$53.44 million), the lowest since 2017, according to data from the movie ticket website Maoyan. **The number of cinema visits, at about 9.2 million people, was the lowest since 2013.**

One positive statistic in this period was online shopping. The Chinese postal authority said it shipped nearly 1.8 billion parcels during the holiday, similar data to last year. And the 2021 figures exceeded 2019 levels by more than 90%, according to an official report.

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