

WHEN WILL CHINESE TOURIST COME TO EUROPE?



The world eagerly awaits the influx of Chinese tourists after the Covid-19 restrictions were removed. Now that Chinese tourists can travel abroad once more, will they return to Europe soon?

Chinese Travel Lust Is Growing

Chinese citizens are growing increasingly enthusiastic about travel. This is evident in the most recent Chinese traveler sentiment survey from December 2022. **Four out of 10 Chinese respondents said they would love to travel at least once more.**

One year ago, in the month of December 2021, this number was limited to just two percent of Chinese. With the restrictions lifted for Covid-19, the proportion of travelers willing to travel is expected to rise to a higher degree.

Border Reopened: From Mainland China to Hong Kong

China's decision to reopen its borders to Hong Kong, coupled with the tense demand for travel during the Lunar New Year break, increased.

Hong Kong is keen to regain its status as a financial center of the world as well as a gateway for China, the world's largest source of tourism as well as its biggest trading partner, as its economy suffered an enormous hit during the lengthy shutdown.

Hong Kong is rapidly removing restrictions on the spread of pandemics after China ended the Covid Zero policy and is now back to normal, with the only exception of a mask mandate. During the last month, daily quotas, as well as testing requirements, were removed, and all checkpoints at the boundary were opened.

In an effort to draw visitors, officials this month announced a tourism promotion that includes the distribution of more than 500,000 complimentary tickets to fly this year. They say that Airport Authority purchased the tickets in 2020 as part of a \$2 billion (\$255 million) bailout package for the aviation industry.

Visitors from the mainland to Hong Kong could rebound this year, reaching 78% of the levels in 2019 by the end of the year, with the elimination of restrictions such as the daily traveler limit, as well as the mandatory Covid tests.

Domestic Tourism in China 2023

Experts expect that this year there will be approximately 4.55 billion Chinese tourists traveling in China, up 80 percent over the previous year and 76 percent higher than the year's levels, as per China Tourism Academy.

The academy has predicted that the domestic tourism industry will earn four trillion dollars (about 580.44 billion U.S. dollars) this year, a rise of 95 percent, returning up to 71 percent of the amount in 2019.

The number of both inbound and outbound travelers during the entire year is predicted to be over 90 million, increasing year-on-year and then returning to 31.5 percent prior to the pandemic.

Furthermore, summer is predicted to bring about a complete recovery, and summer travel is expected likely to be close to or even at that level prior to the pandemic.

European Tourism Remained below the Levels of 2019

The most important concern is when Chinese tourists come back to Europe and what effect will it have on the European tourism sector? Tourism has been badly hit by the covid-19 pandemic, especially in the years 2020 and 2021, in which the number of visitors in hotels was cut in half.

Despite significant growth in 2022, the number of visitors in Europe reached 91% of the pre-pandemic average at the end of 2022. For Italy and Germany particularly, it was evident that there were lower numbers of tourists in 2022 compared to prior to the outbreak.

Chinese tourists are growing increasingly interested in travel, and the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions is expected to increase the number of travelers from China. However, it may take some time before European tourism returns to pre-pandemic levels, and it is still being determined when Chinese tourists will start revisiting Europe.

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