

# INBOUND TOURISM IN CHINA TO INCREASE DO TO FACILITATED VISA PROCESS



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has significantly changed entry and visa policies for foreigners entering China. The unilateral visa exemption policy has been resumed, and efforts are being made to improve the overall visa processing experience. The procedure for applying for a visa has been simplified for eligible applicants, and fingerprint collection has been temporarily exempted.

The visa application form for foreigners in China has also been optimized. This optimization has resulted in a 34% simplification rate, boosting inbound tourism in China. **Almost 100 embassies and consulates abroad now offer "on-the-go" visa processing**, and by the end of this year, all embassies and consulates worldwide will generally cancel visa application appointments. Furthermore, 260 embassies and consulates globally are working to open up application channels and improve visa services so that applicants can submit their visa applications at any location in most cases.

China's National Immigration Administration has been implementing policies and measures to facilitate immigration and entry to support the country's development. There are three main policies in place. Firstly, the port visa policy is operational in 99 open ports in 77 cities nationwide. Secondly, the transit visa-free policy allows citizens of all countries to enjoy a 24-hour transit visa-free policy at all ports open to the outside world. Additionally, a 72/144-hour transit visa-free policy is in place for personnel from 54 countries at 31 ports in 23 cities across 18 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities.

The third policy is the regional visa-free entry policy. This includes the 144-hour visa-free entry for foreigners from Hong Kong and Macao, the 144-hour visa-free entry for tourist groups from 10 ASEAN countries to Guilin, Guangxi, the 15-day visa-free entry for cruise ships in Shanghai, and the 30-day visa-free entry for people from 59 Hainan countries.

Cheng Chaogong, the chief researcher at Tongcheng Research Institute, believes that improving entry policies will create a favorable environment for the recovery of the international travel market. Inbound tourism in China is already a trillion-level market segment, and its recovery is crucial for promoting consumption and the high-quality development of the tourism industry.

China's initiative to optimize the entry process will have a demonstrated positive effect on facilitating international personnel exchanges. It is expected that relevant countries and regions will introduce more visa facilitation policies for Chinese citizens in the future, which will help recover the outbound tourism market. This will create a good situation for the coordinated development of inbound and outbound tourism in the next stage.

Experts suggest that China's introduction of foreign tourist-friendly policies will vigorously develop inbound tourism in China, creating new opportunities for the travel business. This will also help explore and promote cultural tourism products that are more suitable for foreigners.

**There is significant potential for the growth of inbound tourism in China.** In some major

economies, inbound tourism contributes 1% to 3% of the GDP. If China's inbound tourism revenue accounts for 1.5% of its GDP, it can create an incremental market space of over one trillion yuan.

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