CHINESE TOURISTS FLOCK TO RUSSIA

Newly released data on foreign travel to Russia shows a significant increase in visits in 2023 compared to the previous year, particularly for Chinese tourists.

The number of Chinese visitors to Russia in 2023 increased by a staggering 23,000% compared to the previous year, which can be attributed to the gradual relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions in both countries.

It is important to note that in 2022, **China's efforts to combat the pandemic resulted in strict lockdowns and travel restrictions, severely impacting tourism.** The trend of increased tourism from China is significant in terms of numbers and the changing travel patterns in this crucial market.

Last year, Russia received 15.4 million foreign visitors, out of which only 670.7 thousand were tourists. However, the number of tourists has grown significantly from 200 thousand in 2022, mainly owing to increased Chinese visitors. The number of Chinese tourists has doubled from the previous year, reaching 199.8 thousand. It is worth noting that these figures were relatively low because many Chinese visitors preferred to stay in the country due to complex and expensive quarantine procedures upon their return.

In 2019, Russia had over 5 million tourists, with 1.5 million from China accounting for about 30% of all visits. **The statistics remain similar, with China being the top visiting country.** Germany, Turkey, the UAE, Turkmenistan, and Iran have replaced EU countries, Japan, and South Korea, as their flow of tourists has reduced.

The share of Chinese tourists is expected to increase in the coming years, exceeding the current 30%. However, given the current instability of the international situation, it is uncertain whether they will grow at the same rate as before the pandemic. Nonetheless, Chinese tourists are expected to play an increasingly vital role in the Russian tourism industry.

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