

MOST CHINESE TRAVELERS ARE FEMALE



A recent travel sentiment survey by China Trading Desk found that 62% of outbound Chinese travelers were female. Among them, nearly 40% were between 18 and 24, while a little over 27% were between 25 and 29.

According to the Chinese Ministry of Culture & Tourism, 3.6 million outbound trips were made during the Chinese New Year from February 10 to 17. Dragon Trail research predicts that **China's outbound tourism will reach 80% of pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2024.**

The upcoming five-day Labor Day holiday starting from May 1 and the summer travel season are expected to boost outbound tourism further.

Women Travelers Are Driving the Change

According to experts, a new generation of Chinese travelers is digitally savvy and interested in culturally enriching experiences. This demographic comprises young, educated women who opt for solo trips and are keen on independent travel, nature activities, and cultural experiences.

To cater to these travelers, travel businesses and destinations must prioritize safety, wellness, and support services. They should also focus on promoting unique local activities, shopping, and luxury experiences that appeal to the interests of young Chinese travelers—female travelers, to be exact.

Regarding travelers' preferences, shopping is one of the top five things people spend money on when traveling abroad. Accommodation, air tickets, and food are the other four. More than a quarter of travelers said they research shopping activities before buying air tickets. Among those aged 18 to 29, this percentage increases to just under 70%.

Chinese Travel to the United States Remains Challenging

Singapore continues to be the most popular destination among Chinese travelers, followed by Thailand and South Korea. In the first quarter of 2024, China contributed the highest number of visitor arrivals to Singapore, with almost 724,000 entries, marking a 481% year-on-year increase. This figure also accounted for 75% of the visitor arrivals in 2019 for the same period. Singapore and China implemented a 30-day visa-free travel arrangement in February, while Thailand and China entered a mutual visa exemption agreement starting March 1.

Travel to the United States from China still needs to be improved. Chinese travel to the U.S. may increase again in the fourth quarter of 2024 or early 2025, but only if no further obstacles exist.

Several challenges currently prevent Chinese citizens from traveling to the U.S., including strict visa regulations, political tensions, and warnings from the Chinese government. Due to the ongoing geopolitical complexities and the upcoming U.S. elections in November, it is unlikely that there will be any immediate improvement in the U.S.-China travel situation. Government travel restrictions remain one of the main factors affecting people's travel decisions.

Apps for All: Planning, Researching and Paying

Chinese tourists now book their trips more quickly and rely more on digital platforms. According to the survey, this trend suggests that their digital skills drive a preference towards spontaneity and flexibility.

They are utilizing popular travel apps such as Ctrip and Qunar and social media platforms such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu (China's version of Instagram) to gather information and plan their trips. These platforms are also commonly used to organize shopping experiences.

Experts emphasize the importance of digital tools in travel and shopping, highlighting how they influence and shape people's trip plans.

Friend recommendations, followed by digital advertisements, significantly impact hotel bookings. This underscores the crucial role of social networks and targeted marketing in the hospitality industry.

To enhance their shopping experiences, travelers, particularly those aged 18 to 30, prefer using digital wallets and mobile payments. Alipay is the most popular payment method for outbound travel, and WeChat Pay is also widely used among Chinese travelers.

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