

Asian Top 3: China Outbound Is Growing Faster Than Japan and South Korea



Increases above all in travel to Europe - vacations an increasingly powerful motivation for travel, especially for the Chinese - Significant declines in foreign travel by Japanese expected

The volume of foreign travel from Asia's three main travel nations, China, Japan and South Korea, is growing again. Following a nine per cent decline due to the crises in 2009, in 2010 foreign travel from Asia increased by 17 per cent. This represents a total volume of 128 million individual journeys. Asia's share of foreign travel now accounts for 18 per cent of the world total. With this increase Asia has consolidated its position as the second most important region on the foreign travel market. An evaluation by "IPK International - World Travel Monitor Company", commissioned by ITB Berlin, reveals that Asia is exceeded only by Europe, with a 56 per cent share, as a source of foreign travel.

China, Japan and South Korea have long been the top 3 countries in outgoing travel from Asia with over one-third (a total of 46.5 million) of all Asians who travel abroad coming from one of these three countries.

And other Asian destinations are also very popular with travellers from these three countries. Three out of every four international trips by Asians start and end somewhere on that continent. However, the individual markets reveal substantial differences in terms of the destinations. Whereas some 39 per cent of Japanese choose destinations outside Asia, in China only 33 per cent of travellers go outside their own continent, while overseas trips are only undertaken by 20 per cent of Koreans. This trend is also apparent when we consider travel to Europe. Europe receives 3.6 million visitors from Japan and some 3.8 million from China, compared with only about 1.1 million Koreans. Five years ago the proportion of trips to destinations outside Asia was slightly higher. In 2005, for example, the Japanese accounted for 47 per cent of all international journeys from Asia, the Chinese for 37 per cent, and the Koreans for 26 per cent.

Referring to the changes in travel behaviour, Dr. Martin Buck, Director of the Competence Centre Travel and Logistics at Messe Berlin, stated: "The decline in overseas travel from Asia is attributable firstly to the world economic crisis and secondly to the rapid development of destinations within Asia. As a result Asians are finding that journeys within their own continent are not only more favourably priced but are also attractive."

Over a period of five years China has seen the largest increase in foreign travel, followed by South Korea and Japan. However, initial data indicates that, in the aftermath of the earthquake and nuclear disaster in Japan, and the subsequent economic consequences, instead of an increase this year there will be a significant decline.

With 15 per cent growth China also occupies first place in travel to Europe. There has also been a percentage increase in trips to Europe from Japan over the past five years. In contrast with other markets South Korea has not yet recovered to the same extent from the economic crisis. This is very evident in the long-haul travel sector, with trips to European destinations revealing a slight decline

over the past five years.

Approximately three-quarters of all foreign travel starting from China and Japan is in the form of a vacation or other private trip. In South Korea this is the motivation for almost two-thirds of all international journeys. By way of comparison: only just under half of foreign trips from India are by people vacationing.

In China in particular vacations now play a much more important role in motivating people to travel than was the case five years ago, the proportion of travel undertaken for vacationing purposes having risen from 56 to 77 per cent. In Japan the importance of vacation travel, at 67 per cent, was already at a relatively high level five years ago, while in South Korea the corresponding figure remains unchanged at 64 per cent.

A number of significant trends are evident in the type of vacation too. Round trips are particularly popular with holidaymakers from all three countries. In this respect, while there has hardly been any change on the Japanese market over the past five years, round trips are definitely becoming the most popular form of vacation for the Chinese and South Koreans. In recent years city tours have been increasingly chosen by vacationing Japanese, who now prefer them to beachside destinations. Among the Chinese the situation is completely reversed, with city tours declining in importance over the past five years and now lagging some way behind beach vacations in popularity. In South Korea city tours and beach vacations are of roughly the same importance, but with a decline in city tours as a percentage compared with previous years.

About ITB Berlin and the ITB Berlin Convention

ITB Berlin 2012 will be taking place from Wednesday, 7 to Sunday, 11 March, and from Wednesday to Friday will be open to trade visitors only. Parallel with the trade show, the ITB Berlin Convention, the largest travel industry event of its kind in the world, will be held from Wednesday, 7 to Friday, 9 March 2012.

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