SEOUL SEES RECORD SURGE IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS



South Korea has witnessed an unprecedented surge in the number of international tourists hitting the capital city of Seoul in 2026, and they are willing to spend more cash on average this year. As per the official statistics released by the Seoul Metropolitan Government, there were 11,560,000 foreign tourists who visited the city between January and August this year, a rise of 21.6 percent compared to the same period last year.

It is worth noting that the overseas visitors continue to increase in both numbers and spending capacity. Card spending by foreign tourists jumped 59.9 percent to 7.78 trillion won (about $5.8 billion) from a year ago.

For the month of August, **1.72 million overseas tourists flooded Seoul, up 23.3 percent from 1.4 million for the same month of last year.**

Meanwhile, China continued to be the largest contributor of international visitors to the capital, with 636,000 tourists (36.9 percent of the total), followed by 322,000 visitors from Japan (18.6 percent) and 188,000 from Taiwan (10.9 percent). The three Asian countries accounted for 66.4 percent of the total.

As per the survey, **in-store shopping accounted for the largest portion (46.6 percent) of the card spending by international tourists, followed by health and wellness services (23.8 percent), eating and drinking places (13.2 percent) and hotel stays (10.4 percent).**

Spending at large shopping malls soared 77.5 percent while medical tourism grew 64.2 percent, and a 59.5 percent increase was recorded in the amount spent at eateries.

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