INSIGHTS FROM CHINA'S 2026 NATIONAL DAY HOLIDAY



According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, during the seven-day National Day holiday in 2026, China witnessed 826 million domestic trips and 738.375 billion yuan of total domestic travel spending, increasing by 6.3 percent and 4.3 percent respectively on a daily basis as compared with 2025. More tourists flocked to not only the hub cities, key urban centers and unique tourist destinations, but also the county, characteristic town and countryside areas.

Looking at the industry attributes of tourism, the expanding tourism market has brought passenger flow and spending to more cities and rural areas, leading to enhanced transport capacity and connection as well as deepened economic ties.

It was noted that the average travel distance of tourists National Day holiday nationwide reached 214.56 kilometers, an increase of 15.8 percent year-on-year. **Long-distance tourist flows converged on big cities, provincial capitals and key hub cities, while scattered to small and medium-sized cities, county-level cities, industrial and commercial towns and rural markets.** Along the way and at the destinations, spending on catering, accommodation, shopping and other forms of consumption took off, enabling more business entities to benefit from the National Day holiday travel rush.

Tourism flow has also brought about improvement in transportation. Upgraded road networks, extra train services and expanded air routes have facilitated passenger and freight flows between the source and destination regions, fueling the local economy.

Tourism Products and Experiences Are Innovated

Travel agencies rolled out more competitive small-group tours and customized itineraries. Tourist attractions featured art exhibits, intangible cultural heritage performances and handicraft experiences, which helped to draw more visitors and spending. Tourist sites accelerated the empowerment of technology and intelligence. The robot "barista" at Beijing's Summer Palace and the "mind dialogue with the Qin Terracotta Warriors" brainwave experience at Xi'an's Qin Emperor's Mausoleum were among the top projects that attracted plenty of tourists.

In both inbound and domestic tourism, visitors ventured into characteristic county, industrial towns, traditional markets and ordinary commercial streets. Many tourists shopped and experienced the local production and lifestyle at places like Yiwu International Trade City in Zhejiang, E-Shang Town in Caoxian County of Shandong, Zhouwo Music Town in Hengshui of Hebei, Huaqiangbei Electronics Street and Beijing's Hongqiao Market. The emerging demands, like “import-style China tours,” further drove sales of products and expanded the scope for integrated development of commerce and tourism.

People's Satisfaction and Benefits Are the Foundation

The construction of a strong tourism nation hinges on people's satisfaction and benefits, requiring simultaneous enhancement of the sense of gain for both tourists and local residents. It is only when ordinary people see job opportunities, an increase in income, and improved access to education,

medical care and elderly care through the development of tourism that they will lend support and become involved.

In Yingtan Ancient Town of Xingtai, Hebei, left-behind villagers have taken up tour guides, opened homestays and sold intangible cultural heritage woven products. The whole village has become more tidy and orderly. Activities like village galas, village songs and village "super games" draw tourists while enriching the spiritual and cultural life of local residents. More consumption brings more income to people and, at the same time, provides a funding, manpower and industry-based foundation for elderly care, medical services and education.

Tourist satisfaction ultimately lies in the improvement in urban and rural infrastructure and public services, a matter closely related to the quality of life of residents. The attractiveness of cities and rural areas to both domestic and international tourists is no longer limited to their natural landscapes and historical and cultural heritage, but also extends to the happiness derived from overall social and economic progress. In this sense, a real pillar industry should also be a livelihood and happiness industry, one that is truly inclusive and shared.

In promoting tourism development, localities should leverage their comparative advantages of mountains, rivers and culture while focusing on shared basic infrastructure, public services, commercial systems that benefit both hosts and guests. Bringing service scenarios to highway service areas and building smart platforms for shared, interactive reservations, tickets and navigation will make travel more efficient and everyday life more convenient, encouraging people to come, stay longer and return again and again.

Cultural Construction and Social Progress

Tourism should also be rooted in its professional attributes, contributing to the general accounts of cultural construction and social progress. During the National Day holiday, 40 percent of tourists participated in red tourism and National Day cultural activities. Yan'an in Shaanxi, Zunyi in Guizhou and Shaoshan in Hunan became popular among tourists who deepened their patriotic feelings.

Folk cultural activities and ethnic arts have entered tourist attractions and urban communities, helping to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of outstanding traditional Chinese culture through deep integration with tourism. In terms of shopping, the customer list of inbound tourists featured more Chinese-style clothing, trendy cultural and creative products and smart items that reflect Chinese aesthetics and design concepts. By enjoying the products and the creativity behind them, tourists can feel the achievements and new trends in China's social and economic development, which lays a rich foundation for and broad space to promote traditional Chinese culture as well as cultural exchange and mutual learning.

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