

PRESS RELEASE

ITB China Travel Trends Report: Strong demand for island vacations

- Trend towards more expensive journeys
- Customization key to addressing market segmentation and diverse experience preferences
- Marketing via new technology platforms
- Travelers continue to be influenced by the silver screen

Berlin/Shanghai, 15 January 2019 – Island travel is on the growth path: Chinese consumers continue to hone their conception of leisure due to rapid urbanization in the country as a recent report commissioned by ITB China revealed. The ITB China Travel Trends Report was created in collaboration with the international consulting and research company Kairos Future and will be presented at ITB China, set to take place from the 15 to 17 May 2019 in Shanghai.

Although China has a long coastline, beaches are rather rare and during holiday seasons often overcrowded. Within the past years the vision of escaping to an island has become more and more popular. Several travel companies are reporting an expected Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 35 percent in the next three years, while the market for island travel currently already exceeds RMB100 billion annually (approximately USD 146 million).

According to interviewed experts, one of the main drivers behind the growing interest in island travel are the **visa-free policies** for island destinations guaranteeing a smooth, carefree, and relaxed journey. The growth expectations are being fuelled especially by Chinese millennial consumers, whereas in a referenced poll 30 percent of questioned millennials expressed the desire to go on an island trip within the next three years.

The research further highlights that from the perspective of Chinese travelers, islands are typically associated with **romance, adventure** and **escapism**. According to Kairos Future's text analysis of social media posts on the topic of island travel, privacy is a key trend, correlating closely with the notion of romance. Segments that stand out among island travelers include soon-to-be wed couples engaging in destination wedding photoshoots, newlywed couples on their honeymoons, and adventure seekers looking for activities such as scuba diving.

In the past years the perceived image of some island destinations important to the Chinese traveler had suffered due to operated **'zero-dollar' tours** that included **unannounced mandatory shopping trips**. This phenomenon might, however, now have come to an end, following shifting



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values among Chinese consumers paired with an increased control and regulation by destination government authorities having identified and addressing this issue. The Indonesian Tourism Association, for example, began to intensively regulate low-cost tours in 2018 and Bali, one of China's top island destinations, has seen all tour-related shopping sites close. Since 2016, Thailand has also taken drastic action to eliminate 'zero-dollar' tourism.

As the purchasing power and travel knowledge of Chinese consumers continues to grow, vendors are seeing an increasing number of tourists choosing customized tours to meet their specific travel needs. **'Travel tips'** is one of the largest themes in the analyzed travel-related social media posts. By exploring destinations through social media, and developing preferences for activities on their itinerary, Chinese consumers are prepared to make informed decisions about their travel plans. On top of beaches, more diversified, niche activity offerings – including hiking active volcanos, whale watching, and jungle adventures – reflect a present shift towards experiential tourism.

Over the next three years, more than **70 percent** of island tourists are expected to opt for **tailored or self-guided tours**. Identifying each island's differentiators and understanding market demands will allow vendors to engage in more precisely targeted marketing and advertising campaigns, thereby attracting more customers.

Island travel demand is also strongly influenced by the island depictions in media, with **films, TV, and social media** that highlight previously-unknown islands attracting the attention of new travelers.

The complete analysis will be published together with ITB China Travel Trends Report. Keep up to date with our newsletter <http://www.itb-china.com/Newsletter/>

About ITB China and the ITB China Conference

ITB China 2019 will take place from Wednesday to Friday, 15 to 17 May, 2019, at the Shanghai World Expo Exhibition and Convention Centre in Hall 1. ITB China is a three-day business to business travel trade fair that focuses exclusively on the Chinese travel industry. The ITB China Conference will take place parallel with the show and is co-organized by the leading conference organizer TravelDaily (www.traveldaily.cn).

About ITB Berlin and ITB Asia

First launched 53 years ago, ITB Berlin is recognized as the most successful trade show for the global travel industry. Some 10,000 exhibitors from more than 180 countries regularly attend this event. Every year in October for the last eleven years Messe Berlin has successfully organized ITB Asia in Singapore. Boasting 940 exhibitors from 113 countries, ITB Asia in Singapore has established itself as Asia's Leading Travel Trade Show. As the second show in Asia, ITB China will take place in Shanghai, one of the leading industrial cities in the People's Republic of China, and with a population of around 23 million one of world's largest cities. In contrast to ITB Asia, which reflects tourism in Asia as a whole, ITB China focuses entirely on the Chinese travel market.

About Kairos Future

Kairos Future has been in the business of spotting trends and helping

clients understand and shape their futures since 1993, with travel and tourism among its core business areas. The company has conducted studies for the European Travel Commission, the World Tourism Organization, and a number of destination marketing organizations and tourism businesses on the changing tourism landscape in general and the Chinese outbound travel market in particular. Kairos Future is headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, and has an office in Shanghai, China.

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