China bounce back set to lead return of Thailand’s international tourism market

Mainland overseas travel forecasted to return in Q3/Q4

Positive sentiment towards outbound travel from China highlights the survey results that reveal 53% of respondents would like to travel in 2020. Moreover, the most popular months for trips aboard for the remainder of the year are August, October and December.

Getting inside the numbers, which focus directly on sentiment towards Thailand as a destination, 71% of those surveyed said they would like to travel to the country. One interesting shift in the data is that 83% choose independent travel versus group tours.

The China Thailand Travel Sentiment Survey 2020 has been conducted in mid-April of this year by C9 Hotelworks and DAC China Digital Services. The in-depth research and methodology targeted over one thousand respondents in first tier cities within China and focused on sentiment towards outbound overseas travel. It continues with a deep dive into providing a metric of Thailand’s travel potential post COVID-19 and looking at the impact on specific destinations within the country.

Key Takeaway Points

- Most popular Thai destinations Chinese travellers want to visit in order of popularity are Bangkok, Phuket, Chiang Mai, Koh Samui and Pattaya.
- Top five preferred booking channels for hotels are Ctrip, Fliggy, hotel website, Booking.com and WeChat.
- Trip budget for 50% of those surveyed was USD1,400 per person.
- In 2019, nearly 11 million Chinese travellers visited Thailand.

Forward Outlook

- Chinese Yuan (RMB) has continued to appreciate against the Thai Baht in 2020, after reaching a low-point in Q4 2019, thus making travel more attractive.
- Short-haul travel due to flight health concerns is expected to be a key mover in Asiam’s travel recovery.
- Thailand’s policy of visa-on-arrival for Chinese travellers is a strong driver of demand.
- Resumption of domestic air travel in China in Q2 is bolstering low-cost airline (LCC) financial liquidity.
Travel Preference

Would you travel to Thailand?

- Yes: 29%
- No: 71%

Where would you travel in Thailand?

- Bangkok: 71%
- Phuket: 20%
- Chiang Mai: 10%
- Koh Samui: 0%
- Pattaya: 0%
- Others: 0%

Where do you prefer to stay?

- Hotel / Resort: 28%
- Airbnb: 72%

What is your preferred channel to book hotels?

- Ctrip: 83%
- Fliggy: 17%
- Hotel Website: 0%
- Booking.com: 0%
- WeChat: 0%
- Others: 0%
- Agoda: 0%

Which travel method do you prefer?

- Independent: 83%
- Group: 17%

Source: C9 Hotelworks Market Research and Delivering Asia Communications

China Thailand Travel Sentiment Survey: Apr 2020
Respondent Profile

What is your gender?

- Male: 54%
- Female: 46%

What is your age group?

- 20-30: 50%
- 30-40: 33%
- 40-50: 13%
- 50-60: 4%
- Others: 4%

What is your travel budget per trip?

- 5,000 RMB (US $710) per person: 4%
- 10,000 RMB (US $1,400) per person: 50%
- 15,000 RMB (US $2,100) per person: 33%
- Above 15,000 RMB (US $2,100) per person: 13%

What is your occupation?

- Company Employee: 50%
- Student: 33%
- Management: 13%
- Self-employed: 4%
- Business Owner: 4%
- Others: 4%
- Retired: 4%

Source: C9 Hotelworks Market Research and Delivering Asia Communications
Thailand’s Top Inbound China Markets 2019

- **Chiang Mai**: 1,074,153 (35%)
- **Bangkok**: 8,502,737 (38%)
- **Phuket**: 2,000,732 (36%)
- **Pattaya**: 2,800,465 (30%)
- **Samui**: 335,068 (16%)
- **Krabi**: 564,047 (24%)
- **Khao Lak**: 101,743 (14%)

**Total**: 10,994,721

Source: Thailand Ministry of Tourism and Sports and C9 Hotelworks Market Research; Data as of FY2019
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