In sync with the booming economy in China, our latest report looks at how the country’s newly wealthy citizens are traveling the globe and transforming the travel and leisure industries. This dynamic consumer group is being met with new conveniences, concepts, culturally sensitive services and travel guides.

While the flag-waving Chinese tour leader is still a common sight, the truth is that a growing segment of outbound Chinese are now traveling independently to increasingly far-flung locations. Cities, tourism boards, and travel, retail and hospitality brands alike are aggressively wooing this new cohort.

Hotels and theme parks are hiring Chinese-speaking staff and marketing on the Chinese messaging app WeChat. Indonesia is creating “10 New Balis” by sprucing up facilities and promoting air links with China. The United Kingdom’s three biggest cities—London, Manchester and Birmingham—are jointly marketing in China to encourage travelers to “Experience England.”

For good reason. Chinese nationals made 130 million journeys abroad in 2017, up 7% from 2016, according to a joint report by online travel agency Ctrip and China Tourism Academy. Chinese tourists also spend more while abroad. In 2017, Chinese travelers spent $115.29 billion abroad, up 5% from a year earlier, according to the government.
To understand this evolving cohort, we commissioned an original survey of 1,500 consumers from 16 Chinese cities who had travelled outside China in the past 18 months. The survey was conducted in March 2018 by our in-house data unit SONAR™, just after the peak Chinese New Year travel season.

Key findings include:

- 33% say they prefer to plan their own detailed itinerary, 32% say they prefer to plan a loose itinerary with room for spontaneity, and only 33% say they prefer to travel as part of a structured tour group.
93% say it is important to experience a local, authentic experience; at the same time, 79% say they look for a familiar feeling, akin to their own culture
65% travelled with a spouse or partner on their most recent foreign trip while 20% brought children and 9% brought their parents
47% are worried about terrorism, 45% fear crime and 27% worry about being discriminated against

The survey data, along with interviews with travel experts and tourists themselves, helped us identify 12 types of emerging travelers. They include:

- Medical tourists (15% of survey respondents have been on such trips and 31% have not but are interested)
- Wander women, traveling in female-only groups or solo (34% of women have been, 41% are interested)
- Adventure seekers (30% have been, 45% are interested)
- Filial travelers, bringing aged parents on an overseas holiday (57% have been, 37% are interested)

Download China Outbound for more.

Cover Image: Wild China.

New trend report: China Outbound

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