

Success of Portuguese tourism has a Chinese secret

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Tourism in Portugal, one of the sectors that have most supported the economy during the recent years of crisis, continues to grow at a high pace, with an expected contribution from 100,000 Chinese tourists this year.

Figures released last week by the Global Blue consultancy show that Chinese tourists, amongst those whose numbers have grown most, are the ones that spend most on shopping in the Portuguese market.



On average, the Chinese tourist spends 935 euros per purchase in 2014, or 3.2 times more than Angolan tourists and 4.2 times more than the Russian tourists.

“In Portugal, Chinese shopping tourists are already at the top of the list of customers who spend most per purchase,” said the consultancy in a recently published study.

In 2014, the number of Chinese tourists in Portugal grew by 70 percent and this year is expected to exceed 100,000, according to recent estimates from the Portuguese government.

The 1st Sino-Portuguese Joint Committee on tourism, held in Shanghai in 2014 and this year, for the first time China participated in the Lisbon Tourism Fair, with Chinese operators showing greater interest in the Portuguese market.

Understanding amongst the Chinese of tourism in Portugal has increased due to the Portuguese “golden visa” scheme, which offers residence permits in return for investments in property of over 500,000 euros.

The Chinese have been by far the largest participants of the scheme, with nearly 2,000 residence permits issued since 2012, mainly for the acquisition of real estate, which already exceeds 1 billion euros, far ahead of Brazilian or Russian investors.

Tour operators and trade have adapted quickly to the influx of Chinese tourists, and there are already several shopping centres, especially in Lisbon, which have their own services for these consumers and, in some cases, have hung the Chinese flag next to those of Portugal and the European Union.

On arrival at Lisbon airport travellers are greeted by many posters in Chinese – some announcing what is on offer at shopping centres, other investment opportunities in real estate, with images showing river and sea views and slogans like “this apartment could be yours.”

The contribution that Chinese investors made to the Portuguese economy during the 2011-2013 crisis, particularly with about 10 billion euros invested in privatisations, has been publicly praised by the Portuguese authorities. (macauhub/CN/PT)

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