



2017 Report:
The Habits and Preferences
of Travelers to China

Overview

The China Guide is a Beijing-based travel agency run by a multilingual team of native speakers. We have more than ten years of experience customizing private tours for travelers to China. In 2017, we customized private tours around China for thousands of travelers from the United States, Germany, France, Spain, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia.

In this report, we will use the data we have collected from the thousands of travelers we served in 2017 to explore the habits and preferences of travelers to China in order to offer some helpful insights for people who are planning or want to plan a trip to China.

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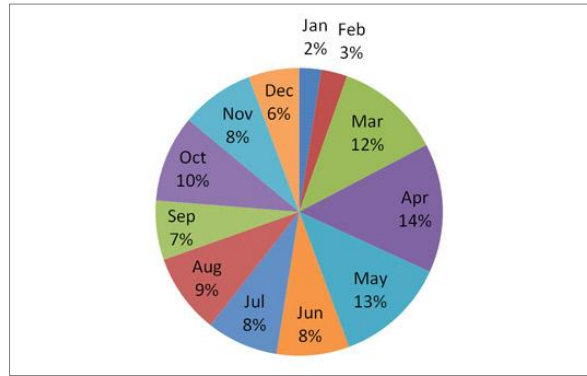
When is the best time to travel in China? Which city or cities should I visit? How many days do I need for my China trip? These questions trouble almost every traveler who is planning a trip to China.

With the end of 2017 in sight, The China Guide team decided to use the extensive data and experience we have gathered over the past year to help travelers better plan their China vacations in 2018 and beyond.

When is the best time to travel in China?

It is widely acknowledged that the peak season for travel in China is spring (March, April, May) and fall (September, October). In 2017, 49% of The China Guide's customers started their trip in March, April, May or October. However, June, July, August, September, November, and December are also popular months to kick off a tour of China. January and February represent a clear low season with only 5% of travelers starting their trip during these two months.

Distribution of visits to China (by month)



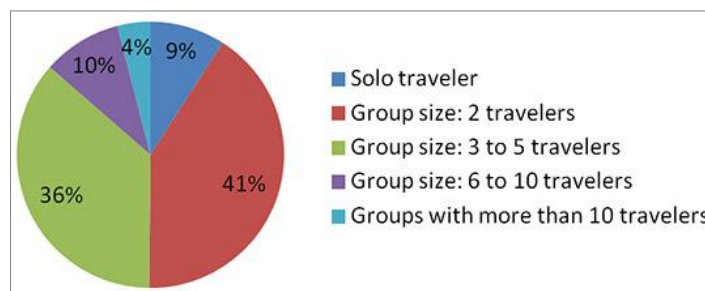
This means that travelers who want peace and quiet might consider choosing to visit China in January or February. It is the depths of winter at that time but those willing to brave the colder temperatures will be rewarded with significantly smaller crowds and unique photo opportunities - imagine having the chance to get photos of the Forbidden City or the Temple of Heaven covered with snow.

Another thing you may want to consider is the rainy season. If you plan to travel in southern China (especially Guilin) from April to August, be prepared for the possibility that your flight may be delayed or canceled due to bad weather. At this time of year, you may wish to consider traveling via high-speed train, which are fast, comfortable, and rarely delayed.

How many travelers are in a group?

In 2017, 9% of the groups that traveled with The China Guide had only one traveler. 77% of the groups had two to five people and are families, couples, friends, classmates or colleagues.

Distribution of Group Size

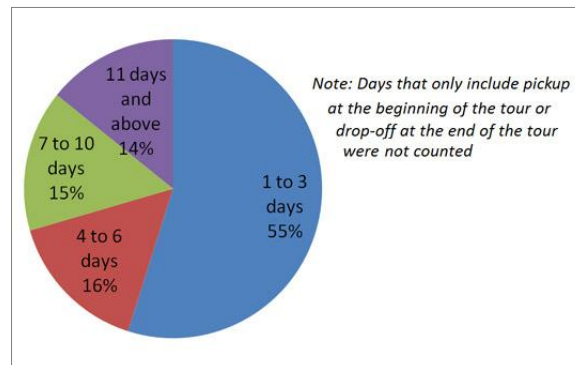


How many days do people spend in China?

55% of The China Guide’s customers spent one to three days touring China in 2017. Considering that few people would buy an international flight to China to spend only a couple of days there, these figures suggest that most of these customers have not traveled to China on vacation; rather, they are layover/transit passengers (several cities in

China offer visa-free transit for 72 hours or more) or business travelers who take one or two days off during their trip to relax and do some sightseeing. One or two days is more than enough time to see the most popular sights in most major cities in China.

Distribution of Tour Duration



Which city or cities did travelers visit in 2017?

Beijing is clearly the top choice for first-time visitors to China. According to our statistics, 88.26% of The China Guide customers visited Beijing in 2017, compared to 30.23% for Xi'an and 30.10% for Shanghai, the other two most popular travel destinations in China. Guilin/Yangshuo and Chengdu also received their fair share of visitors.

	Beijing	Xi'an	Shanghai	Guilin/Yangshuo	Chengdu	Luoyang
Percentage of travelers who visited this city	88.26%	30.23%	30.10%	10.27%	5.12%	4.03%
	Pingyao	Hangzhou	Zhangjiajie	Yunnan	Tibet	
	3.19%	3.14%	2.39%	2.26%	2.10%	

Luoyang and Pingyao are also fairly popular destinations, ranking above Zhangjiajie, Hangzhou, Yunnan, and Tibet. Apart from being rich in history and culture, Luoyang and Pingyao may be popular because they are more accessible and demand less time than remote destinations such as Zhangjiajie, Yunnan or Tibet. This suggests that travelers could consider off the beaten path destinations if they want to avoid the crowds in major cities such as Beijing, especially if they have a relatively long amount of time available to visit China.

Most popular itineraries and average length of visit

In 2017, 50.3% of our customers visited Beijing alone, compared to 3.4% who only visited Shanghai and 1.6% who only visited Xi'an. In addition to Beijing's outstanding tourist attractions, the number of transit passengers and business travelers who visit Beijing also contributed to the city's majority share. Travelers spend an average of 2.1 days in Beijing.

Top popular itineraries	Percent of travelers	Average days
Beijing	50.3%	2.1
Beijing - Shanghai	6.4%	5.3
Beijing - Xi'an	6.0%	5.4
Beijing - Xi'an - Shanghai	5.3%	7.5
Shanghai	3.4%	2.1
Beijing - Xi'an - Shanghai - Guilin/Yangshuo	2.1%	10.3

Note: Days that only include pickup at the beginning of the tour or drop-off at the end of the tour were not counted.

Tours to the "Golden Triangle of China", the three cities of Beijing, Shanghai, and Xi'an, attracted 5.3% of all travelers and took an average of 7.5 days.

The Beijing-Xi'an-Shanghai-Guilin/Yangshuo itinerary, another classic China route, was chosen by 2.1% of our customers and took an average of 10.3 days to complete. This itinerary is still one of the best choices for travelers who want to see many different sides of China, from modern cities to beautiful natural scenery.

Summary

While March, April, May, September and October represent peak tourist season in China, June, July, August, November and December are also a popular choice for many travelers.

77% of groups that traveled to China had two to five travelers. These groups are made up of families, couples, friends, classmates or colleagues.

For most travelers, Beijing, Xi'an, Shanghai, Guilin/Yangshuo, and Chengdu are still the top destinations. Increasingly, some keen travelers will go further to places such as Luoyang, Pingyao, Zhangjiajie, Hangzhou, Yunnan, and Tibet.

55% of travelers spent one to three days traveling in China, however, this figure is influenced by the number of transit passengers and business travelers to Beijing.

Data & Images: The China Guide