

Mexico Wooing One Billion Chinese Tourists

Efforts to promote Mexico's tourism destinations are being heard half way around the globe. Mexico is ahead of many tourism destinations in courting the fast-growing Chinese market. For the second consecutive year in a row, the Mexico Tourism Board participated in what is now one of the most attended business-to-business outbound travel events in China, the 2007 China Outbound Travel and Tourism Market (COTTM), which took place at the China World Trade Center in Beijing on May 14 - 16.

As one of the 132 countries around the globe to be given the status of Approved Destination Status (ADS) by the Chinese government, Mexico, where tourism ranks as its second-highest source of foreign revenue, is especially eager to increase visitor influx and expenditure from this region. The 2007 COTTM, which attracted more than 200 exhibitors from 40 different countries across the world, was attended by Mexico Tourism Board's CEO, Francisco Lopez Mena. As part of President Felipe Calderon's agenda to stimulate the tourism industry in Mexico, Lopez Mena was an active participant in all promotional events that took place in Beijing.

"China's emergence in the world market has significant implications for the global economy, and especially for the tourism industry," said Mexico Tourism Board CEO, Francisco Lopez Mena. "We are quite ambitious about the Chinese market and are eyeing the potential it is representing already to our tourism economy," added Lopez Mena.

According to the World Tourism Organization as many as 100 million Chinese will be traveling abroad annually by 2020, and the number of Chinese traveling internationally more than doubled in just four years. The International Forum on Chinese Outbound Tourism reports that the number of outbound departures rose from 16.6 million in 2002 to 34.5 million in 2006. Although over 12,000 visitors traveled to Mexico from China in 2006, according to latest statistics from the Mexico Tourism Board, the annual growth rate is over 12% compared to 2005 figures. This best illustrates the potential upside for Mexico's economy.

Sensing the outbound tourism potential in China and continuing the government's agenda to strengthening relationships between the two countries, Mexico was able to change visa procedures for Hong Kong residents. Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) passport holders visiting Mexico now enjoy visa-free access for up to 90-day visit. This means greater convenience for Hong Kong travelers and helps promote trade, business and tourism relations between the two countries.

Mexico is China's second-largest trading partner in Latin America after Brazil, and tourism plays an active role in strengthening cultural and trade relationships. Continuing on the smooth development of Mexico-China relations, the Mexico Tourism Board considers China as a friendly and cooperative partner, and expects to make joint efforts with China to promote the development of both countries mutual relations in an all-around way.

About the Mexico Tourism Board

The Mexico Tourism Board (MTB) brings together the resources of federal and state governments, municipalities and private companies to promote Mexico's tourism attractions and destinations internationally. Created in 1999, the MTB is Mexico's tourism promotion agency, and its participants include members of both the private and public sectors. The MTB has offices throughout North America, Europe, Asia and Latin America.

About Chichen-Itza, the World Wonder

Swiss-based New7Wonders Foundation is revising the original seven ancient wonders of the world, and Mexico's Chichen-Itza in Yucatan State is one of 21 finalists to become a new Seven World Wonder. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1998, Chichen-Itza is considered to have been one of the greatest Mayan centers of the Yucatan peninsula, and today is one of the largest and most impressive archaeological sites in Mexico. To vote for Chichen-Itza as one of the new Seven World Wonders, visit the "new7wonder" website.

About the Author

Erick Laseca works for Burson-Marsteller as public relations liaison for the Mexico Tourism Board in Chicago.

Source: <http://www.guiding-stars.com>