

## DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-BORDER TOURISM IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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### Abstract

China and Russia are countries with enormous tourism potential and great opportunities for its implementation. Cooperation with China in the field of tourism is strategic for Russia, as the tourism industry of Russia has just begun to recover from the recent negative consequences and needs the support of a stronger partner in order to reach the international level and be able to fully show its tourism potential.

The Chinese tourism industry, which was actively developed only with the beginning of the "openness" reforms, has reached the highest levels in a fairly short time, benefiting first from inbound and then from outbound tourism. Due to some political and economic restrictions in recent years, the entire tourism industry in Russia has experienced a noticeable decline. However, domestic tourism in Russia today has undergone positive changes and began its active development.

Russia, having significant tourism opportunities, is trying to strengthen its position in China as an important destination. This is facilitated by the creation of a comfortable environment for tourists from China through the introduction of the China Friendly program. Tourism cooperation in the border areas has an irreplaceable impact on expanding exchanges and strengthening friendship between the neighboring regions of China and Russia, and also brings significant benefits to the economic and social development in the border areas.

Thus, today cooperation between Russia and China in the field of tourism is a strategic and most promising area for both Russia and China. By actively maintaining and developing relations, both parties have the opportunity to fully realize their tourism potential.

## INTRODUCTION

Cooperation with China in the field of tourism today is one of the few promising areas for Russia in terms of outbound tourism. China, in turn, actively spreading its culture abroad, supplies Russia with the largest number of incoming tourists. For the Russian tourism industry to enter the international level, it is necessary to systematically develop and solve the existing problems of the lack of adequate infrastructure and the quality of tourism services, while China is currently on its way to becoming the largest tourism power. Accordingly, for Russia, cooperation with China as a country with an advanced tourism industry in this area is of tremendous importance and necessity, and for Russia, in turn, it is important to study these relationships and possible prospects for their development [1].

The Government of the PRC and the State Administration of Tourism of the PRC are doing their best to realize the country's tourism potential, pursuing an active policy to develop tourism in the country. But it is worth noting that China has long been a closed country in terms of inbound, international tourism. The first steps in the development of the tourism industry were taken by the Government of the PRC only in the second half of the 20th century.

Only in 1954, the Bureau of International Tourism (China International Travel Service) was founded in Beijing, which became the first state body regulating the country's tourism industry. In 1964, the State Administration for Tourism Affairs (SADT) of the PRC was established in the PRC - a body that is still responsible for the development of tourism in the state [12].

Tourism began to be perceived differently by the Chinese when the "opening up" reforms began in the country (1978). In the early years of tourism development in the PRC, the country was mainly visited by ethnic Chinese (i.e. Hong Kongers, Taiwanese, as well as people from Macau), but every year the interest of foreign citizens in Chinese culture grew, and China received more and more tourists from - abroad. The "openness" reforms, first of all, laid the foundation for the development of inbound tourism, because inbound tourism at that time seemed to be an easy and quick way to ensure the inflow of foreign currency into the state. The rapidly increasing flow of tourists contributed to the opening of a large number of new hotels of various levels and, accordingly, the emergence of a new economic industry in China - the hotel business [7].

In addition to inbound tourism, the new state policy has also had a positive impact on domestic tourism. Domestic tourism in China has always been plentiful. The policy pursued by the government at the end of the 20th - beginning of the 21st also had a positive impact on the increase in domestic (and outbound) tourist flows. In 1999, the number of holidays and days off was increased [10]

Speaking about domestic tourism in China, one should not forget about such a direction as "Red Tourism". Such trips are visits to the places of revolutionary glory of the PRC, and every year this direction of Chinese tourism is only gaining popularity, both among the elderly Chinese and among young people. And in 2004, the development of this direction was declared a priority in the tourism industry of China [6].

The beginning of the promising development of cooperation between Russia and China in the field of tourism can be considered May 18, 1989, when M.S.Gorbachev visited to the PRC, and after (May 15-19, 1991) the return visit of the president of the People's Republic of China Jiang Zemin to the USSR took place. This visit "opened" Russia to China, and Russia began to be considered by the Chinese side as a promising direction for the development of tourism. In view of the crisis phenomena of the 1990s, at this stage, the PRC mainly developed bilateral relations with the border regions of Russia, and the greatest attention was paid to the Russian Far East and Eastern Siberia. "Reciprocal visits of official and business delegations of the regions, participation in exhibitions, conferences, presentations and business forums held in Russia and China have become traditional" [8].







The period from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s was marked by the most important Agreements, which both states are guided by to this day. Firstly, on December 3, 1993, the Governments of the PRC and the Russian Federation signed the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Tourism, and this became an official document that marked the beginning and further development of cooperation in the tourism sector between the two countries. In order to increase the number of tourist flows from China to Russia and vice versa, as well as to expand the geography of trips, Russia and China signed an agreement “On visa-free group tourist trips” (1993 and 2000), under which Chinese tourist groups numbering from 5 to 50 people can visit Russia without a visa. Such a significant simplification of formalities for entry into Russia played an important role in the development of relations between the two states. In 2006, there was a need to make some amendments to this agreement. In view of the fact that there have become frequent cases when, under the guise of tourism, the Chinese began to travel for other purposes, the Government of the Russian Federation decided to limit the duration of stay of visa-free tourists from 30 days to 15. In addition, the changes were aimed at regulating the legal actions of tour operators, who organized visa-free trips [8].

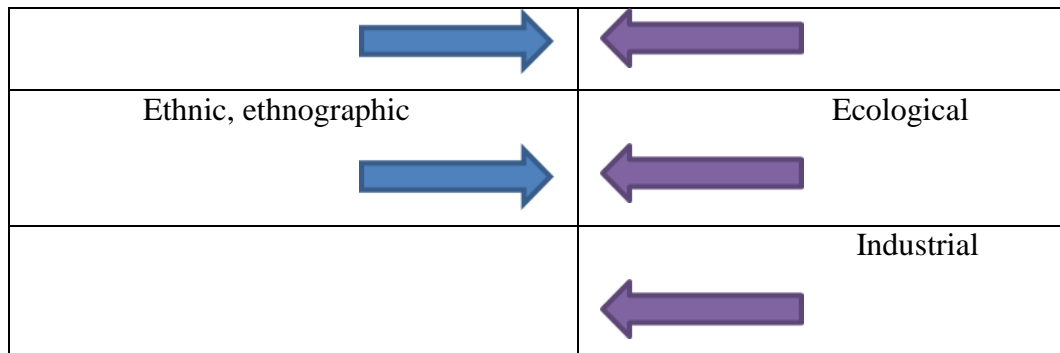
In order to strengthen and expand mutually beneficial tourism ties between China and Russia in the period from 2006 to the present, joint large-scale projects have been created: National Years of Russia and China (2006-2007), Years of Russian and Chinese Languages (2009-2010), Years of Tourism (2012 -2013), Years of Russian-Chinese youth exchange (2014-2015). In February 2018, the Years of Interregional Cooperation between Russia and China (2018-2019) were launched. Each of the above projects includes several hundred events such as exhibitions, conferences, festivals [8].

Russia is becoming an increasingly interesting country for Chinese tourists in terms of shopping. According to the largest shopping centers in Moscow and St. Petersburg, the Chinese now account for 5 to 20% of revenue. The most popular are the luxury segment of goods, watches, cosmetics and Russian jewelry (gold and amber). Also, recently, the demand for hotels and luxury hotels has increased [44]. Thrifty guests usually buy only souvenirs, paying about 3-6 thousand rubles for them. Matryoshka, a hat with earflaps, chocolate, vodka, a T-shirt with the image of Lenin or Putin and an item made of amber - and the standard set from Russia is ready. Amber is especially interesting to the inhabitants of the Middle Kingdom, because this type of stone simply does not exist in China. The Chinese will give his last money, but he will buy the coveted amber pendant or bracelet.

## 2. METHODS

### List of promising types of tourism in Russian-Chinese tourism relations

| Promising types of tourism                                                                                      |                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Russia                                                                                                          | China                                                                                              |
| Therapeutic and wellness<br> | Medical<br>    |
| Children's<br>               | Children's<br> |
| Family<br>                   | Family<br>     |
| Gastronomic                                                                                                     | Icebreaking, arctic                                                                                |



**Source: compiled by the author.**

The most significant factor in increasing the number of tourists from China to Russia is the desire to create a favorable environment in Russia for Chinese tourists staying here. Today, more and more hotels and restaurants in Russia are joining the China Friendly program, which is the most important project of the Russian Federation to create a comfortable environment for the Chinese. Another goal of this program is to promote the Russian tourism product in the international arena and increase income from the tourism industry.

The Chinese tourist is a target direction for the development of the Russian tourism industry today, and they are trying to provide all tourist sites in the country with Chinese-language signs and guides, Chinese-speaking employees, etc. According to data obtained from the GfK Institute for Marketing Research, a resident of China spends an average of about 15,000 yuan (~ \$ 2,400) on one tourist trip.

Along with Moscow and St. Petersburg, Primorsky Krai is no less popular. The Amur region is also attractive for Chinese tourists. That is why the Amur Region is actively organizing global tours, including visits to hydroelectric power plants and the opportunity to fish on the reservoir. Agreements were also reached on an organized trip to the Vostochny cosmodrome, rural tourism routes are being developed [4].

Another discovery over the past few years for Chinese tourists has been Kazan and Lake Baikal. Not a small role in this was played by the participation of the city of Kazan in the cultural and educational tour of the “Red Route”, dedicated to the return to the origins of the socialist past of Russia.

Among the interregional trips in the Caucasus, a special place is occupied by the new bus tour “The Great Silk Road”, which was launched in the fall of 2016. During this tour, tourists have time to visit each of the regions of the North Caucasian Federal District, see the sights of each of them and get acquainted with the famous Caucasian hospitality. The organizers of the route were such organizations as the Ministry of the Caucasus of Russia, the Corporation for the Development of the North Caucasus and the Visit the Caucasus Foundation.

The opening of the Great Silk Road route will strengthen strategic cooperation between Russia and China, said Zhao Hongqing, Head of the Diplomatic Representation of the State Administration of Tourism of the People’s Republic of China in Moscow [3].

Separately, I would like to note that in 2016, for the first time, a trip was organized for a group of Chinese tourists (more than 20 people) to the Republic of Crimea [3]. The purpose of their visit was a historical and educational route, including the era of the Romanov dynasty and the Great Patriotic War. According to the head of the Committee of the State Council of the Republic of Crimea on the health resort complex and tourism Alexei Chernyak, in the future they plan to organize a tourist flow of groups of tourists from China on a regular basis [3]. In general, China is one of the few influential countries in the world that accepted the fact that Crimea was annexed to Russia and did not impose any sanctions against Russia, which once again confirms the strength of ties between the two states.

Another significant event contributing to the improvement of Russian-Chinese tourist ties was the

introduction of short-term (up to 30 days) electronic visas for tourists from China (as well as 17 other countries such as India, Japan, Singapore, the UAE, Kuwait, Turkey, etc.). Electronic visas are a very convenient mechanism that allows you to get a visa of a particular country without leaving your home, with only a modern gadget and the Internet at hand.

Foreigners (from 18 countries) wishing to visit the Far Eastern region of Russia have already begun to issue electronic visas from August 1, 2017. At that time, the point of reception of such persons was located only at one airport in Vladivostok. Now there are already 6 such points and it is planned to open several more (in the Republic of Buryatia and the Trans-Baikal Territory). However, it should be noted that the maximum number of days for foreigners to stay in Russia on this visa should not exceed 8 days [4].

In recent years, cooperation in areas such as culture and tourism between China and Russia has become increasingly close. In pursuit of Chinese tourists, Russia provides an increasing range of tourism products. In the short term, taking traditions, culture and history as a basis, tourism organizations will create a variety of programs, including such areas as sports, winter tourism, trips to the Arctic Circle, military and industrial tourism. These events, according to experts, should satisfy the needs of Chinese tourists of all ages.

Between China and Russia there is a wide border area, where there are several dozens of open port-cities and checkpoints. I would also like to note that the “border regions” of Russia primarily mean such regions as the Amur Region, the Jewish Autonomous Region, Primorsky and Khabarovsk Territories. On the Chinese side, these are the northeastern provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning. In recent years, tourism between these regions of the two countries has begun to develop quite rapidly and successfully.

The development of cross-border tourism between the two countries takes place in good natural and socio-economic conditions. In the Northeast of China, a land transport system is developed, and in the Far East of Russia, sea, land and air transport networks are developed. Transport links have been established between the border cities.

Over the past few years, the interest of Chinese tourists in exploring the border regions has been actively growing, and accordingly, the flow of tourists is also increasing. Primorsky Krai is strategic both for Russia and for the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, and today this region is actively working to achieve conditions that can attract investment to the region. It is also worth noting that Primorsky Krai currently occupies one of the leading positions in terms of the pace of development of cooperation with China [11].

In order for the positive dynamics of the Chinese tourist flow to Primorsky Krai to continue, it is necessary to develop new types of tourism, develop new routes, and most importantly, find ways to make Chinese tourists feel at home abroad. That is why many enterprises (hotels, restaurants, shops, etc.) are already preparing to join the China Friendly program: they invite people who speak Chinese to work, study the “portrait” of a Chinese tourist, translate all the necessary texts into Chinese, and so on.

Also interesting is the fact that between the Amur city of Blagoveshchensk and Heihe, a city in Heilongjiang province, there is a simplified entry (visa is not required if the stay is not more than 30 days). All you need is an international passport. This agreement between the two border cities was adopted more than 30 years ago (the 30th anniversary was celebrated in 2018).

High technology is another area where Beijing and Moscow are actively working together. For example, the Russia Today news agency and China Radio International launched a new Russian-Chinese application for mobile devices, “Russia-China: Key Issues”. Their goal was to create an information attraction between the two peoples. The application works in two languages - Russian and Chinese. It allows you to read news in various areas, including tourism, watch photos and videos, live



broadcasts, listen to the radio and much more. And, of course, there is a Russian-Chinese translator for complete understanding. "Russia-China: Key Issues" is a fundamentally new information product, it is the world's first joint media between the two countries in a mobile format.

A lot of attention during the development was paid to the national code and traditions of both countries. But creating such an application was not easy. The developers used one of the advanced Big Data technologies. It allows you to process huge amounts of data every second in order to not only promptly, but also point-to-point deliver to the user only information that is interesting and necessary for him. Every year the application improves, developers listen to their audience and add information that, according to the results of research, will be more in demand.

The application "Russia-China: Key Issues" even has its own logo - two links of the same chain, even it indicates the close ties between Russia and China.

Today, it is important for Russia to attract new tourists from China. At the moment, Russia is visited mainly by representatives of the older generation of Chinese who remember the USSR and were brought up in Soviet culture. To attract Chinese youth as a segment of the market, which so far prefer the western direction, it is necessary not only to improve the quality of services in tourism, but also to make enough efforts to create comfortable conditions for young Chinese tourists: make signs in Chinese, train staff in Chinese, actively to position its well-formed tourist product, which will interest not only the adult generation, but also the youth. But it should be noted that measures to prevent a number of problems have already been taken: guidebooks and reference books in Chinese for some regions of Russia have begun to be published, more and more often you can find Chinese menus in hotels, restaurants, near the main attractions of cities, which significantly improved the situation as a whole.

Having put together and considered all the claims and shortcomings in Russia from tourists from China, in 2014 the China Friendly program was created. It should be the key to solving many problems faced by the Chinese who decided to visit Russia. The purpose of this project is to interest the inhabitants of the Middle Kingdom to come to Russia for tourism purposes, by developing a service and quality services adapted to the Chinese audience [5]. China Friendly standards, which many tourist organizations in Russia work today, are not just a set of services, but an environment that includes, first of all, a respectful and tolerant attitude towards guests and the desire to provide them with a more comfortable environment. In the conditions of building this environment, many of the difficulties that arise today in the Chinese direction will be determined sooner.

China Friendly unites about 100 organizations of the tourism industry in 17 regions of Russia. Hotels, restaurants, museums, tour operators and airports can become participants in the program. This program was included in the structure of the Russian Hospitality project of the Federal Agency for Tourism, which linked service adaptation programs for different groups of tourists throughout the country.

Moreover, China Friendly is running an active program of promoting itself not only in Russia, but also in China: it participates in road-shows, attends tourism exhibitions, promotes itself in the Chinese media, and so on.

I would also like to note the fact that the China Friendly program is part of the international project China Friendly International, whose partners are located in Spain, Italy, India, Mexico, Colombia, the USA and African countries [12].

## RESULT

Also, as part of attracting Chinese tourists and expanding the inbound tourism market, the Russian side launched another important and interesting project for the Chinese - the Red Route. This tour includes visits to several cities: Moscow, Ulyanovsk (the birthplace of V.I. Lenin), Kazan and St. Petersburg. Tourists from China will be shown modern Russia, they will be able to find out what the USSR is,

“touch” the rich cultural heritage, feel the whole flavor of Russian life, and most importantly, follow the path of the “leader of the world proletariat” and tie a red tie in the Leninsky Ceremonial Hall memorial. [6] (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Stages of following the “Red Route”**

The purpose of this project is to further expand and strengthen relations between China and Russia, strengthen cooperation in the field of culture and tourism, as well as the subsequent acquaintance of Chinese citizens with Russia [6].

The idea of the Red Route project is based on the norms for the growth of the social base of friendship between the two states, humanitarian ties that contribute to the strengthening of mutual trust and create a strong social basis for interstate cooperation.

At present, as part of nostalgia for the socialist past, Chinese tourists are increasingly interested in the places of revolutionary glory of the USSR, thus promoting “Red Tourism” outside the state.

“The geography of the Red Route is expanding rapidly. Since March 1, 2018, agreements have already been signed on the entry into this project of new regions related to the Soviet history of Russia. A number of regions will join the route in the near future,” said Vladimir Sharov, Executive Secretary of the Coordinating Council for the implementation of the interregional tourism project “Red Route” under the Federal Tourism Agency of the Russian Federation, President of the Association of Domestic and Inbound Tourism of Russia, speaking at the VI Summit that opened in Moscow Russian-Chinese Tourism Forum [6].

Every year more and more new regions associated with the Soviet history of Russia express a desire to join the Red Route, which cannot but rejoice. If the expansion of the geography of the “Red Route” continues to grow as rapidly, then in the near future, it will be possible to speak of this project not as an interregional, but as an international one [11].

The Red Route project, like China Friendly, has an official website with translations in two languages at once: Russian, Chinese. That is, any citizen of China can go to one or another site and freely see the information he needs. The project also has an English version of the site.

If we talk about “Red Tourism” and “Red Route” as one of the most important areas of cooperation in

the field of tourism between two countries, then it is of the greatest importance not only as a way to attract tourists to us, but also as a way to expand the list of cities visited Chinese tourists in Russia.

China Friendly and Red Route are both projects that were created to increase the flow of Chinese tourists to Russia, as well as to raise awareness and interest of Chinese citizens in Russia. These projects are successfully promoted in the Chinese market, helping to promote the Russian tourism product on the international market.

Today, China is Russia's most promising tourist ally, which is why more and more programs are emerging in Russia to strengthen and develop cooperation between the two states.

Also, new routes are being developed to attract Chinese tourists to all regions of Russia. The tourist infrastructure is becoming more and more focused on tourists from China. Rostourism opens its representative offices in China. For the purpose of marketing promotion of the Russian tourist product, Visit Russia offices are opened abroad, including in China.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to say that the prospects for tourism cooperation between Russia and China today are quite promising, even despite the ambiguous forecasts for the flow of Russian tourists to China. As for Russia, according to market participants, in the next few years, the Russian inbound market will face significant changes, which will indicate new mechanisms for working in the Russian-Chinese direction. The tourism business will be more transparent, the quality of the regional tourism product will change, and there will be funds for active investment in Russian tourist facilities by partners from China, as well as new forms of mutually beneficial cooperation between the two states in the field of increasing mutual tourist flows.

China and Russia are countries with enormous tourism potential and great opportunities for its implementation. Cooperation with China in the field of tourism is strategic for Russia, as the tourism industry of Russia has just begun to recover from the recent negative consequences and needs the support of a stronger partner in order to reach the international level and be able to fully show its tourism potential.

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