

CHINESE TOURISTS FLOCK TO EUROPE

Increase confirms success of EU-China Tourism Year

Brussels, 20 February 2019

Chinese tourists continue to put Europe at the top of their favourite destinations despite the relative slow-down in the Chinese economy and any concerns about Brexit, according to the latest figures from the European Travel Commission (ETC) in collaboration with the leading air travel analyst ForwardKeys, which monitors 17 million flight bookings a day.

The data shows there was a 5.1% year-on-year increase in Chinese arrivals in EU destinations during January-December 2018. The ETC says the latest figures show that the EU-China Tourism Year 2018, designed to promote the EU as a tourism destination to the rapidly-growing Chinese market, continues to deliver success.

Eduardo Santander, Executive Director European Travel Commission said: “The 2018 EU-China Tourism Year initiative has been extremely successful. And we continue to see the benefits in 2019. The growth in Chinese travellers has been solid, and the near future, judging by current bookings, will see the EU continuing to increase its share of this valuable market, not just to traditional destinations, but lesser-known and emerging ones as well.”

Olivier Jager, CEO, ForwardKeys, commented: “Our findings confirm what a concerted effort to boost tourism can achieve. It also appears to have lasting effects, as we can see in the forward booking figures.”

Over the course of 2018, the top three EU destinations in terms of volume of Chinese arrivals were the UK (+2.4%), Germany (+2.6%) and France (+7.7%). The three most growing destinations were Croatia (+45.7%), Estonia (+35.8%) and Hungary (+25.1%). Forward bookings also look robust. Chinese bookings to the EU for the first four months of 2019 are 16.9% ahead of where they were at the end of 2017. This compares very favourably to the global trend, which is 9.3% ahead.

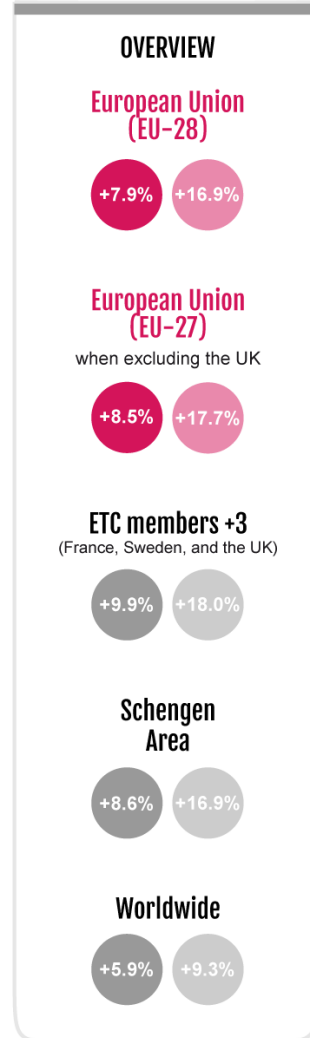
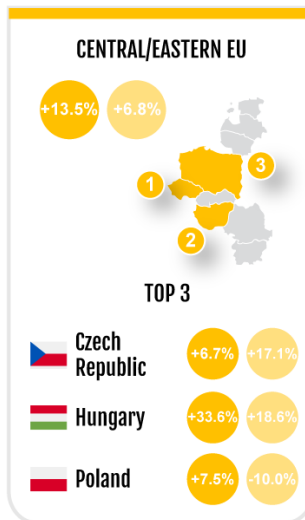
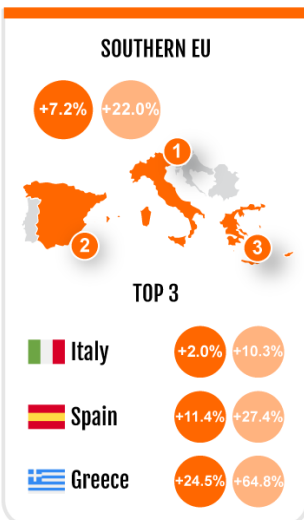
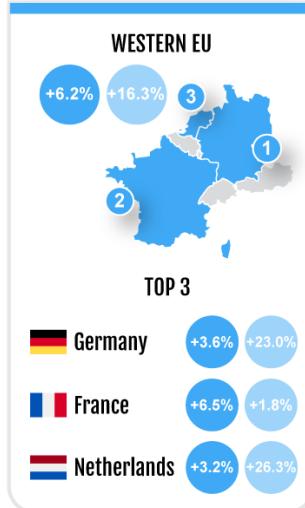
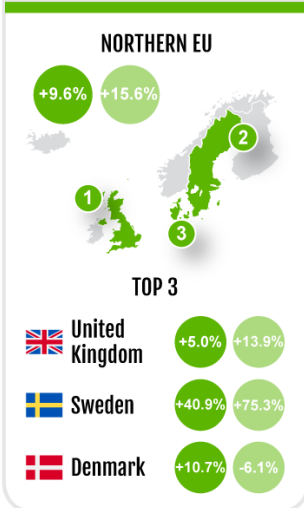
In the context of Brexit, it is interesting to note that if the UK were excluded from the data, the performance of the EU would look even stronger, with arrivals in the whole of 2018 up 5.8%, as opposed to up 5.1% with the UK included. Similarly, looking ahead, forward bookings are 17.7% ahead for the period January-April 2019, as opposed to 16.9% with the UK included.

2018 EU-China Tourism Year

Chinese arrivals in the European Union

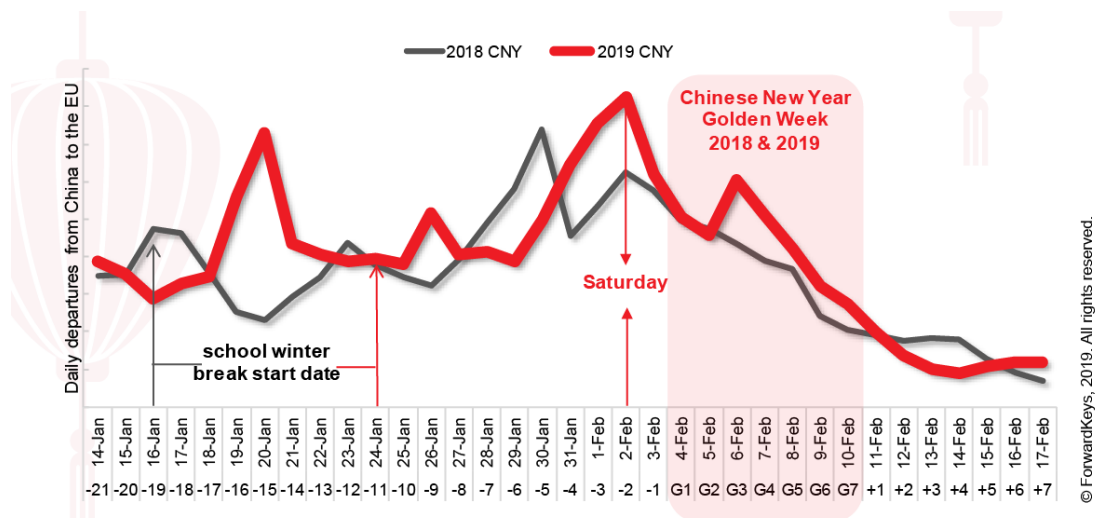
History Forward-looking

Top 3 destinations in terms of volume by sub-region
History Sept-Dec 2018 & forward-looking Jan-Apr 2019






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Chinese bookings for trips to the EU during the 2019 Chinese New Year season are ahead 9.2% compared to last year – well above the global average of 0.2%. Chinese travellers are arriving early, two-weeks before the Golden Week. Some return home in time to celebrate New Year, others are choosing longer stays and celebrate in EU destinations.



The positive near-term outlook echoes a pattern that was seen last year. Then Chinese travel to the EU registered above-global-average performances for the two Golden Week periods in 2018. Within the EU, Central/Eastern EU was the fastest growing region, and outperformed the EU average during each of the three busy periods (the two Golden Weeks and the summer school break).

	 2018 Chinese New Year Golden Week	 2018 summer school break (July–August)	 2018 Mid–Autumn & China’s National Day Golden Week
Worldwide destinations	+ 3.8 %	+ 7.1 %	– 0.6 %
European Union (EU–28)	+ 5.1 %	+ 3.4 %	+ 0.4 %
Northern EU	– 8.7 %	+ 1.8 %	+ 2.3 %
Western EU	+ 3.7 %	+ 4.1 %	– 1.1 %
Central/Eastern EU	+ 22.8 %	+ 15.7 %	+ 4.0 %
Southern EU	+ 20.8 %	+ 1.3 %	– 0.3 %
European Union (EU–27)	+ 10.9 %	+ 2.4 %	+ 0.03 %

Chinese arrivals in the EU vs worldwide destinations during the monitored period below:
 2018 Chinese New Year Period – 25 January to 28 February 2018 vs 6 January to 9 February 2017
 2018 summer school break – 1 July to 31 August 2018 vs 2017
 2018 Mid–Autumn & China’s National Day Golden Week – 18 September to 8 October 2018 vs 2017

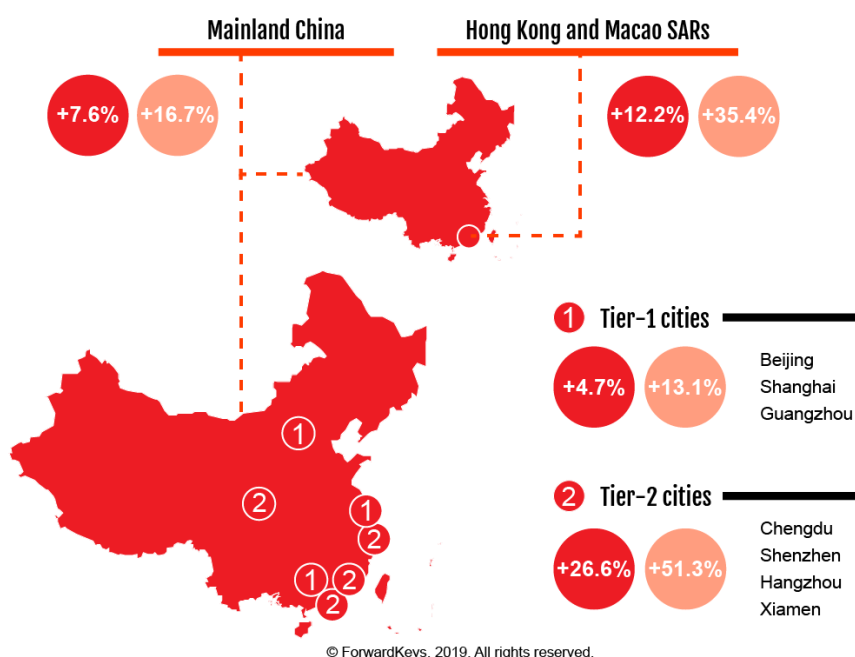
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Chinese departures from mainland China were up 5.2% during 2018, and bookings are 16.7% ahead for January–April 2019. It is a similar picture for Hong Kong and Macao – up 7.6% for 2018, and ahead 35.4% for the first four months of 2019. Tier-two cities, Chengdu, Shenzhen, Hangzhou and Xiamen are showing strong growth: up 18.1% for the end of last year, with bookings ahead 51.3% for January–April 2019.

Chinese departures to the European Union

History Sept-Dec 2018 & forward-looking Jan-Apr 2019

History Forward-looking



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[About the European Travel Commission](#)

The European Travel Commission is an association of National Tourism Organisations (NTOs). It was created in 1948 to promote Europe as a tourist destination to the long-haul markets outside of Europe, originally in the USA and later in Canada, Latin America and Asia. It currently has 33 member NTOs, including 7 from outside the European Union. Europe is the world's no. 1 tourist destination with 712 million international arrivals in 2018 and more than 50% of the market share of worldwide tourism.

For further information: ETC's corporate website <http://www.etc-corporate.org> is aimed at industry, government and educational personnel interested in tourism to Europe. Tourists seeking travel-specific information and ideas are directed to ETC's consumer portal <http://www.visiteurope.com>.

For more information, please contact European Travel Commission (ETC) info@visiteurope.com.

[About ForwardKeys](#)

ForwardKeys analyses more than 17m flight booking transactions a day, drawing data from all the major global air reservation systems and selected airlines and tour operators. This information is enhanced with further independent data sets, including flight search and official government statistics, plus data science to paint a picture of who is travelling where and when. ForwardKeys' analytics are used by travel marketers, retailers, hotels, destination marketing organisations (DMOs), financial institutions, car rental companies, tour operators, online travel agents (OTAs) and other traveller-focused businesses worldwide to monitor and anticipate traveller arrivals from a particular origin market at a specific time. This analysis enables parties to anticipate the impact of events, better manage their staffing levels, fine tune supply requirements, adjust and measure the effectiveness of their marketing efforts and anticipate future market trends.

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