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China's May Day Holiday Report



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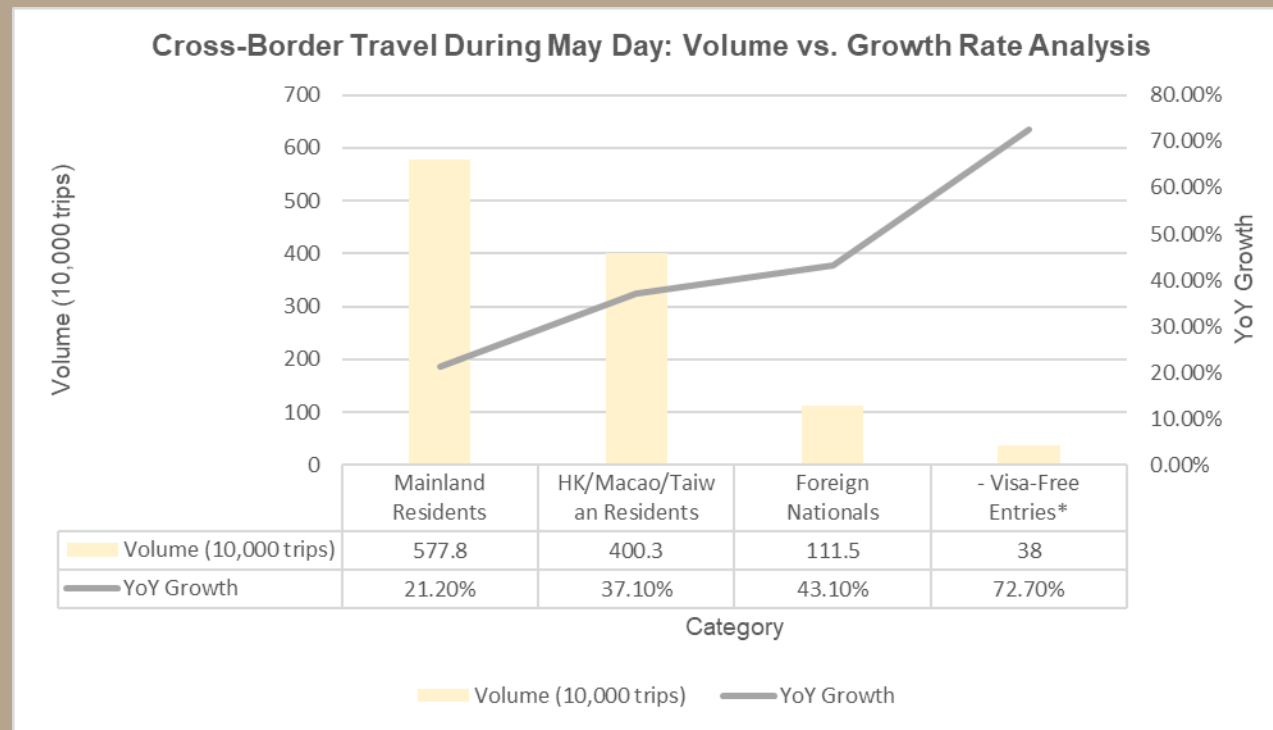
New Breakthrough

Breakthrough in Both Travel Volume and
Destination Diversity



China's cross-border tourism market is recovering strongly, with growing demand and spending power.

During this year's May Day holiday, Chinese border authorities handled 10.9 million cross-border trips (approx. 217,900 daily), marking a **28.7% increase from 2024**.



Note: "Visa-Free Entries" is a subset of Foreign Nationals

Data Source: National Immigration Administration of the People's Republic of China

China's cross-border tourism market is recovering strongly, with growing demand and spending power.

Cross-border mobility is rapidly recovering

- Mainland residents made 5.78 million trips, remaining the **main force** behind outbound tourism.
- Hong Kong, Macao & Taiwan residents: 4 million trips, up 37.1% YoY, showing steady recovery.
- Inbound foreign visitors up 43.1%, with **visa-free** entries +72.7%, showing policy impact.

Broader geographic diversification of Chinese tourism spending.

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According to data from Qunar.com, **outbound hotel bookings** during the 2025 May Day holiday **increased by over 20%** year-on-year. Chinese travelers booked accommodations in **1,303 cities worldwide**, marking an **increase of 290 destinations** compared to the same period last year.



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Beyond the Usual: Chinese Tourists Expanding Toward Longer and Deeper Destinations.

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According to reports from multiple Chinese travel platforms, **Southeast Asia, Japan, and South Korea** remained the **most popular destinations** during the May Day holiday, driven by a combination of factors such as geographic proximity, visa policies, and language convenience.



Southeast Asia



Japan



South Korea

Beyond the Usual: Chinese Tourists Expanding Toward Longer and Deeper Destinations.

Many people extended their five-day holiday to **up to 14 days** by combining paid leave with the official break. This allowed them to travel to **farther destinations** and seek a **more in-depth vacation experience**.

According to Airbnb China, over **half of the top 30** most-searched international destinations during the May Day holiday were **in Europe**.

- **Italy** remained the **most popular European destination**, with search interest more than **doubling year-on-year**.
- Countries such as Norway, Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Bulgaria, and Romania also saw strong momentum, each recording **over fivefold year-on-year growth in popularity**.



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New Tendency

Immersion / Niche / High-quality



Immersion: Travelers seek deeper cultural and emotional engagement.



Chinese travelers are increasingly **seeking deeper, more meaningful travel experiences**. More and more are choosing to **stay longer** in a single destination, slowing down their pace, enjoying better accommodations, and engaging with local daily life.



As vacation mindsets evolve, **island getaways** have become a signature form of immersive travel, offering an ideal way to “pause” and unwind under the sun and sea breeze.

Niche Exploration: Increasing Demand for Personalized and Decentralized Travel.



Chinese travelers are shifting toward more diversified and personalized travel patterns.

There's a growing interest in niche destinations with unique natural or cultural appeal.

Hiking and **self-driving** trips are gaining popularity, reflecting a stronger preference for autonomy and in-depth exploration.

Niche: Niche Exploration: Increasing Demand for Personalized and Decentralized Travel.

Hiking enthusiasm is on the rise:



Camino de Santiago, Spain

As one of Europe's oldest pilgrimage routes, it remains a top destination for Chinese hiking enthusiasts. Search activity related to the coastal city Gijón, a key stop along the route, increased by **more than 100 times** year-on-year.



Dolomites, Italy

The Trentino-Alto Adige region saw a **nearly sevenfold increase** in interest, driven by its alpine trails, wildlife, and the geological uniqueness of the Dolomites National Park.

Niche Exploration: Increasing Demand for Personalized and Decentralized Travel.

Self-Driving: Flexible travel on the rise:



French Riviera (Nice–Monaco–Menton)

This classic coastal route saw search volume **grow by over 70 times**, with travelers drawn to its blend of natural beauty and cultural sophistication.



Ring of Kerry, Ireland

A core section of the Wild Atlantic Way, the route **recorded a 40-fold year-on-year increase**. Its appeal lies in its coastal cliffs, Celtic landmarks, and immersive countryside experience.

High-quality: There's a growing focus on premium and refined experiences.

Chinese outbound travelers are increasingly **prioritizing travel quality** over cost minimization, with a growing emphasis on **comfort, reliability, and service standards** throughout the journey.

➤ **Higher-end accommodation demand is rising:**

According to Tongcheng Travel, bookings for four-star hotels increased by **54%** and five-star hotels by **28%** year-on-year during the 2025 May Day holiday, reflecting a shift toward more premium lodging preferences.



High-quality: There's a growing focus on premium and refined experiences.

➤ Cruise Travel Rebounds as a High-Comfort Option:

Cruise tourism is experiencing a strong comeback.

According to Ctrip, cruise bookings from China during the May Day holiday increased by **140% compared to 2019**, with Japan and South Korea emerging as top routes.



High-quality: There's a growing focus on premium and refined experiences.

➤ Service infrastructure expectations are increasing:



Chinese-language support



Compliant transportation services



Seamless local coordination

Travelers now place greater importance on **Chinese-language support**, **compliant transportation services**, and **seamless local coordination**, especially in **customized tours** and **semi-independent travel scenarios**.

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New Challenges and Opportunities





While the growth potential in outbound travel is clear, converting these opportunities into scalable products also brings challenges.

➤ **Visa Complexity Limits Booking Decisions.**

Visa requirements remain a major barrier to outbound travel. For example, Schengen visas are often seen as complex and time-consuming by Chinese travelers.

➤ **Language Barriers Disrupt Travel Experience.**

Many destinations still lack adequate Chinese-language support in key areas such as navigation, guided tours, and customer service. This gap particularly affects independent travelers and reduces overall confidence.

➤ **Infrastructure Gaps Slow Product Scaling.**

In emerging or less-developed destinations, the absence of standardized travel routes, verified activity partners, and service consistency increases product design complexity for platforms and operators, making it harder to scale offerings efficiently.

1 Design High-Immersion Travel Experiences and Itineraries

As Chinese travelers shift toward longer stays and deeper cultural engagement, there is growing demand for itineraries that go beyond sightseeing. Travel providers can create value by integrating local activities into multi-day packages, such as **guided nature walks**, **hands-on cooking classes**, or **farm stays**.



2 Develop Travel Routes in Less-Visited Destinations

By designing routes in secondary cities or rural areas, travel providers can tap into rising interest in authenticity and escape from crowds. These areas not only offer unique cultural or natural experiences but also help reduce costs related to accommodation and logistics—making them attractive for both travelers and operators.



3 Offer Travel Advisory and Services Across the Full Journey

As outbound travel becomes more complex, Chinese travelers are increasingly looking for trusted advisory support—from visa applications and hotel bookings to personalized route planning, high end services and on-the-ground in depth experiences.. Brand or travel and hospitality service providers can leverage this challenge into opportunity to address Chinese travelers.



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China's outbound travel is entering a new chapter—centered on depth, quality, and connection.

Now is the time to rethink how we create, serve, and inspire.

THANK YOU!