

Consumers in China May Resume Some Travel as Lockdown Measures Ease

ARTICLE | APRIL 30, 2020

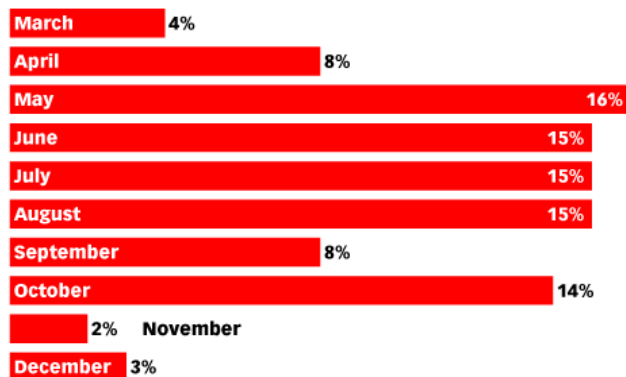
Man-Chung Cheung

As normal life slowly resumes in China, consumers are eager to travel again, albeit with reservations. Polls show that some consumers may start trekking as early as this month, but will mainly stay within the country's borders.

Barring any resurgence of COVID-19, travel will likely begin to recover in May—more than three months after the Wuhan lockdown began. According to a March 2020 survey from the [China Tourism Academy](#) and [Trip.com](#), 16% of internet users in China ages 18 and older cited May as the month they expect to travel, 15% said they would travel again in either June, July or August, and 14% of respondents said they would in October. These months are typically popular tourism seasons in the country.

What Month Will Adult* Internet Users in China Travel Again After the Coronavirus Pandemic?

% of respondents, March 2020



Note: *91% of respondents ages 18+
Source: China Tourism Academy (CTA) and Trip.com, "Post-COVID-19 China Travel Intention Report," March 20, 2020

254764

www.eMarketer.com

In the same survey, 90% of respondents said they will prioritize domestic destinations—including short-to-medium distance trips (43%), the city's immediate surroundings (24%) and long-distance trips (23%).

A February 2020 survey by management consulting firm [Oliver Wyman](#) echoed these sentiments; 77% of respondents said they would choose to travel within China for their first trip post-lockdown. Other Asian countries were cited as the top choice for international travel.

In terms of modes of travel, 65% of respondents said they prefer driving their own vehicle for their first post-lockdown trip, and 71% said they would completely avoid tour buses and cruises. Nearly half said they would avoid taking a cruise in the next few years, as concerns over contracting the virus elsewhere worldwide persist.

The country got a first taste of this recovery with the 115 million domestic trips taken during the Chinese Labor Day holiday (May 1 to May 5). This makes up just less than 60% of the total during the same period in 2019.

Another major test was the reopening of Shanghai Disneyland Park on May 11, which came with a host of social distancing and safety requirements (reduced shows and capped capacity). Tickets for the park's reopening day were sold out within minutes.

Katie Sham, principal of retail and consumer goods at Oliver Wyman, said as things return to normal, the hospitality sector needs to be mindful of public health and safety measures. She said it's "critical for Chinese travelers to feel safe and virus-free at each touchpoint along their journeys. They want to make sure that the hotels they stay at and restaurants they go to are frequently sanitized, with hygiene a top priority of the staff."