

Inside China's Travel Industry

When China's outbound tourism market became the largest in the world in 2012, everybody sat up and took notice. It grew even more over the next two years, reaching 107 million travellers in 2014. It comes as no surprise, then, that local players are lining up to get in on the action. They're offering everything from traditional travel agencies that plan outings down to the last detail, to online platforms that mimic huge supermarkets where visitors can cherry-pick items to fit their individual tastes. According to the latest data from the China National Tourism Administration, the country's globe trotters are no longer just first-tier

city dwellers intent of buying luxury brands during organised trips abroad. Instead, they're increasingly also from second- and third-tier cities in the country's middle and western regions. For them, travel is less about shopping than it is about experiencing different cultures and soaking up the scenery. Many bypass group tours for more personalised trips that they can at least partially plan themselves. And for those who prefer to stay at home and compete with the more than 120 million visitors to China each year, industry players are finding smart ways to meet their needs as well, offering everything from one-day trips to itineraries that can span an entire summer break.

In this **Cover Story**, *TheLINK* takes you on a journey of China's travel industry through the eyes of our alumni who are intent on getting their fair share of the rapidly growing sector. Jason Xie (MBA 2000) uses his Maitao App to meet the needs of a very specific niche market with lots of room to grow: families with kids aged 3 – 12. With his online travel platform woqu.com, Ivan Huang (EMBA 2006) provides a wide variety of travel products and services for Chinese outbound tourists. And Amy Deng (CEIBS EMBA 2014) tells us how, with the formidable resources of

the entire Alibaba Group behind it, Alitrip serves up a platform where even long-time competitors can find a space. We also bring you photos from readers' favourite travel spots. Read on for more in:

- Maitao Makes Travel a Family Affair
- The World is Your Oyster: Meeting the Needs of China's Millions of Outbound Tourists
- Alitrip: New Kid on the Block, New Angle
- Great Vacation Photos.

