

Grace Liu

Chinese visitors' experience in Iceland

I was asked to
talk about
Chinese visitor's
experience in
Iceland

- Following are a few points on my view from 5 years of guiding Chinese/Mandarin speaking guests, small and big groups of tourists and delegations, mostly from mainland China and Taiwan.
- My points are on what and how we can do better for these guests, how to make them feel more welcome and be safe in Iceland.



Please be aware not to generalize about Chinese visitors in Iceland.

- There are many different groups of Chinese people based on different ethnical background, education, finance and previous travels to Europe.
- Now with upcoming 'direct' flights, we might expect to receive groups which possibly are not from major cities, meaning less travel experience and even less knowledge of English and western culture.

Int'l airport – what can be improved

- No Chinese sign at airport showing information such as directions, visa control, luggage claim, delay assistance, transportation, airbus, airline claim, security, boarding gate, etc
- Lacking more Chinese staffs working at tax refund, need more info and certain help at dutyfree shop, customs, visa check, etc
- KEF airport does not show the same hospitality to Chinese tourists as Helsinki and Copenhagen do.



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Hotels and Restaurants

Service standard in China and in Iceland are different. Tourists pay less there but get more quality service

No sign in Chinese to show 'house rules', and on the need to take care of environment both inside and outside

Typical Chinese stomach needs warm water, fully cooked food also vegetable, less meat (beef or lamb) but more fish and vegetable, very few of them can accept raw food

Different understanding on what is better food. What we think is the best, might not be what Chinese appreciate the most. Chicken leg vs breast, lamb chops vs fillet.

Info needed on it's not allowed to bring your own drinks and food into Icelandic restaurants.

Shops - service improvement to consider

Chinese in China and elsewhere in Asia are used to be welcomed in shops, especially in those who are selling expensive goods. If this is not done they frequently feel rejected and leave store without shopping.

More payment methods welcomed at local shops, such as Alipay, Wechat pay, those help to increase the sales

More training needed for Iceland shop employees to help tourists to claim their promotion coupon on APPs such as Alipay or Wechat, when Chinese don't succeed they direct frustration also towards APPs



Activities and Safety in Iceland

- First of all the wide spread 'joke' on Chinese drivers buying their driving licence on internet, without any lessons or tests, it is NOT TRUE!
- In general, as other Asians, they have no experience on driving on gravel or snowy roads with slippery surface
- There is a different understanding on difficulty level on outdoor activities from Chinese visitors. Local suppliers and guides need to provide better info to remind what to watch out for

Activities and Safety in Iceland

Car rentals can show more responsibility:

A) Although Safetravel.is has info Chinese page to give notice on weather and road conditions for tourists, Chinese tourists need to be informed where to access this information

B) Most Asians don't have any knowledge of Iceland environmental policies nor the huge effort Icelanders have made towards land restoration, therefore they need to be properly informed on that it is strictly prohibited to drive off roads, this carries heavy fines

Activities and Safety in Iceland

WE WANT YOU BACK SAFE!



We strongly recommend familiarizing yourself with these country specific signs to ensure safe and secure travelling on the Icelandic roads.



Passengers are required by law to wear seatbelts, regardless of where they are sitting. **Rules apply!** If car seats are also required to be 1.24 hours a day while the vehicle is in operation.



The speed limit in urban areas is normally 50 km per hour. Outside towns, it is 90 km on paved roads and 70 km on gravel roads. Always adjust your speed to the driving conditions.



There are many single-lane bridges in Iceland. **Slow down and use caution** when driving across them.



Off-road. **Possible only by Jeeps**, i.e. vehicles with a higher than ordinary passenger seats and are four-wheel drive (4x4).



You can expect livestock to be on or along the road. Drivers who hit them may be required to pay for the damages.



End of paved road. Be cautious and drive slowly. There are also many old curves in gravel.



Blind hills, where hills are not separate, can be very dangerous, and should be approached with caution. There are also many old curves in ice and that test a driver's skill.



Unbridged rivers are for 4x4 vehicles only.

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C) There are number of road signs in Iceland which are not international, if there is text on the sign, it is only in Icelandic or English