

Pollution blamed for drop in Beijing tourism

July 1 2014



People visit the Forbidden City as heavy air pollution continues to shroud Beijing on February 26, 2014

The number of overseas tourists visiting China's capital fell by 10 percent last year compared to 2012, state media reported, with air pollution blamed for the decline.

The total number of foreign visitors arriving in Beijing during 2013 was 4.5 million, the official Xinhua news agency said late on Monday, citing official statistics.

The state-run China Daily reported last year that tourists had declined over the first half of 2013, the first such drop the capital—home to world-class sights such as the Forbidden City and Great Wall—had seen since 2008.

"Smoggy weather" contributed to the fall along with a sluggish global economy, Xinhua quoted the Beijing Tourism Society as saying.

The decline came despite a new policy allowing travellers from 45 countries to stop in the city for 72 hours visa-free, which was introduced last year.

Beijing regularly sees hazardous [air pollution](#), and levels of [particulate matter](#) rose to almost 40 times World Health Organization (WHO) limits during a heavy bout of smog last year, which attracted worldwide attention.

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