

# Number of Chinese Tourists in Russia More Than Doubles

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The number of Chinese tourists who visited Russia in the first quarter of this year was 2 1/2 times more than in the same period last year, mainly because of tourism promotion and the ruble's devaluation, the Interfax news agency reported Sunday.

About 23,500 Chinese tourists came to Russia in the first three months of this year, Russian travel association World Without Borders told the news agency.

Moscow was the tourists' preferred destination, with more than 9,500 visitors, followed by locations in the far eastern Amur and Primorye regions, which border China.

"The rise in the number of Chinese interested in trips to Russia is attributable to the drop in the ruble exchange rate — which has made tours in our country cheaper — as well as the active promotion of Russia's tourist potential," the travel association's press service told Interfax.

But as trips to Russia become cheaper for the Chinese, the number of Russians visiting China has fallen by more than 75 percent to about 29,000 in the first quarter, the report said.

However, as Russia's relations with the West stumble amid the Ukraine conflict, Russia has turned eastward and is enjoying increased collaboration with China, with multiple new agreements signed in recent months.

Chinese President Xi Jinping will be one of the most honored leaders to visit Moscow during the upcoming Victory Day celebrations in early May.

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