

# SPECIAL TRAIN FOR SENIOR TRAVELERS TO BE INTRODUCED IN CHINA



Tourism products designed to meet the needs of older people will be developed in China. In recent years, a growing demand for silver-haired tourism has led to the emergence of new experiences and formats in the tourism market.

One notable example is the introduction of "special train tours for the elderly" by certain travel agencies. These tours provide a tailored travel experience that caters specifically to older adults' leisure and vacation needs while minimizing travel fatigue. The primary audience for these unique train products consists of middle-aged and elderly travelers.

## **Special Train for Returning Home**

The "Migratory Bird Train" has been operating since 2017, running annually from Harbin to Sanya in October and returning from Sanya to Harbin in early April. This special train is tailored for elderly travelers and offers additional destinations such as Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan, Shanxi, Hebei, and Jilin along the journey home.

Experts note that the Silver Travel Class presents new opportunities for travel agencies in China to expand their markets, diversify their offer, enhance their brand image, foster cooperation, and promote regional tourism development. Travel agencies should take advantage of these opportunities by developing silver tourism products that cater to the needs of older travelers, improving service quality, and aligning with market demand.

## **Giving Birth to a New Matrix of "Silver Careers"**

Many travel agencies in China have innovated and created new segments in the tourism market. With the improvement of the railway network and the enhancement of facilities suitable for older people, silver tourism is emerging as a new opportunity in the cultural tourism sector. According to the National Commission on Aging, silver tourists now represent over 20% of the total number of tourists in the country, indicating that senior tourism is shifting from a niche market to a mainstream one. Driven by this growing demand, tourism enterprises have developed a variety of specialized jobs through innovative products and services, forming a new ecosystem of "silver occupations."

## **Experts: Innovative Forms to Activate the Silver Tourism Economy**

Yang Yanfeng, a researcher at the China Tourism Academy, noted that the silver tourism market is transitioning from extensive development to more refined operations. The emergence of new job roles has filled the gap in exclusive services for older people. According to incomplete statistics, there are more than 50 categories of tourism jobs related to seniors in the country, leading to over one million jobs in related fields. As the aging process accelerates, "silver service specialists" who possess humanistic care and professional skills are expected to become a key focus of talent competition in the tourism industry.

According to the seventh population census data, over 280 million people over 60 in China account for 19.8% of the total population. The "14th Five-Year Plan" for the National Aging Program proposes cultivating new forms of the silver economy, making the introduction of the "Silver Hair Account" timely.

Experts believe the silver economy is not merely a simplistic replication of products tailored to older people. **Instead, it requires establishing a comprehensive service system across various scenarios.** As the "silver trumpet" sounds, it not only represents the aspirations of older adults but also heralds the emergence of a trillion-dollar market.

The silver economy directly addresses the consumption needs of older people, providing both social and economic value. It aims to meet the growing demand for high-quality travel experiences for seniors while stimulating growth in the silver economy. This approach focuses on diversifying and upgrading consumption meaningfully and relevantly.

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