BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Brand USA, United Airlines, and U.S. destinations promote the USA to Chinese tour operators and tourists

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Brand USA, the destination marketing organization for the United States, in partnership with United Airlines, hosted its first-ever China familiarization tour (MegaFam), Oct. 19 to 27, 2016. The MegaFam included 50 prominent tour operators from locations across China, including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Xian, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Wenzhou, and Chongqing.

"We've been working with our partners for some time to host a familiarization tour of qualified tour operators from China as part of the U.S.–China Tourism Year strategy," said Thomas Garzilli, chief marketing officer for Brand USA. "The MegaFam provided top travel industry professionals, from locations throughout China, the opportunity to experience the United States to, through, and beyond gateway cities."

Brand USA's first-ever China MegaFam provided tour operators with visits to landmark U.S. cities like New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles, as well as experiences at regional destinations that are easily accessed by those gateway cities like Stony Brook, N.Y.; Mystic, Conn.; Estes Park, Colo.; Rapid City, S.D. and many more. The China MegaFam culminated with a finale event hosted by Visit California at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, Calif.

Thanks to partner tourism boards and destination marketing organizations like NYC & Company, Connecticut Office of Tourism, Discover Long Island, Visit Denver, Visit Houston, Travel Texas, Destination DC, Visit Baltimore, Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau, Discover Lancaster, Choose Chicago, Illinois Office of Tourism, Travel South Dakota, Discover Los Angeles, Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, and Visit California, tour operators received a well-rounded representation of what the United States has to offer. "From the vibrancy of our big cities to the culture of unique attractions in our smaller towns to the plethora of adventures that await in our great outdoors and national parks, visitors are always inspired by the variety of experiences in the United States," said Garzilli.

"We're excited to be partnering with Brand USA to continue the momentum of the U.S.-China Tourism Year on this MegaFam to promote the United States to Chinese tourists," said Walter Dias, United's managing director, Greater China & Korea Sales.

United Airlines operates more nonstop U.S.-China flights, and to more cities in China, than any other airline, as well as more trans-Pacific services from China than any other U.S. airline with 17 routes and over 100 flights to the United States from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

United began nonstop service to China in 1986 and in 2016 launched the first ever non-stop service from Xi'an to the United States and first Hangzhou-San Francisco nonstop flight. Currently, United serves Beijing with nonstop flights to airports in Chicago, New York/Newark, San Francisco and Washington-Dulles. Service from Shanghai includes nonstop flights from Chicago, Guam, Los Angeles, New York/Newark and San Francisco. Service from Chengdu, Hangzhou and Xi'an includes nonstop flights from San Francisco. Service from Hong Kong includes nonstop flights from Chicago, Guam, Ho Chi Minh City, New York/Newark, San Franciscoand Singapore.

In December, United will introduce an all-new United Polaris business class on long-haul intercontinental flights, including all of China-mainland U.S. routes, which includes Saks Fifth Avenue custom bedding and a new in-flight food and beverage experience, as well as amenity kits.

"Brand USA's MegaFam program, a first for the U.S. travel industry, is one of the most effective ways to promote international tourism to the United States," said Garzilli. "It is a highly successful program that has run repeatedly from Australia, Germany, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom." Since the program began in 2013, Brand USA has hosted more than 700 international travel agents and tour operators. MegaFam itineraries have included destinations in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia.

President Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping designated the U.S. – China Tourism Year in September 2015 in recognition of the ever-closer cooperation and steady development of U.S. – China tourism. The Tourism Year focuses on mutually beneficial enhancement of travel and tourism experiences, cultural understanding, and appreciation of natural resources within the travel industries of both countries and among U.S. and Chinese travelers. In February, Brand USA worked with the China National Tourism Administration and the U.S. Department of Commerce to launch the Tourism Year by hosting a gala in Beijing that included a high-level government and industry program and award-winning cooking and entertainment from the United States. The event was held during Brand USA's first-ever sales mission to China, a three-city, trip that allowed 40 partner organizations to meet and market their individual destinations to prominent Chinese travel agents and tour operators.

Brand USA has been the organizing force for the U.S. travel and tourism industry under the Tourism Year, pushing resources and information to the U.S. travel and tourism industry to engage and leverage the platform of the Tourism Year. For example, an online toolkit launched earlier this year contains resources such as in-depth consumer and market intelligence, the Tourism Year logo, a master calendar, videos from President Obama and Secretary Pritzker, Brand USA cooperative marketing opportunities and more.
Brand USA also recently launched a "China readiness" training program that is available to all partners and that Brand USA is lending to regional tourism conferences around the United States over the next year.

Brand USA is highly active in China with consumer marketing, robust travel trade outreach, and cooperative marketing platforms. The consumer marketing is entirely tailored to the China market and features heavy digital and social presence across established and emerging Chinese channels. To reach the travel trade and travel media and collaborate with the U.S. embassy and consulates, Brand USA has established representation offices in Beijing, Chengdu, Guangzhou, and Shanghai. Many of the cooperative marketing programs that Brand USA offers to its partners in China make use of this impressive media and trade footprint.

Airlift from China to the United States has increased as inbound travel demand from China to the USA continues to rise. According to preliminary statistics tracked by the National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO), the United States welcomed nearly 2.6 million visitors from China in 2015 - becoming the fifth-largest international market in terms of visitation to the United States. This was an 18% increase over 2014, a year that saw a 21% annual growth.

NTTO additionally reported that China was the single-largest source of international tourism spending in 2015. The over $30 billion that Chinese visitors spent surpassed the outlay by visitors from both Canada and Mexico. On average, the Chinese spend $7,164 during each U.S. trip – about 30% higher than other international visitors.

China is the number one international market in terms of U.S. travel and tourism exports – adding nearly $74 million a day into the U.S. economy. This trend positions China as one of the highest-growth potential markets for the USA.

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About Brand USA
Brand USA is the nation’s destination marketing organization, dedicated to attracting legitimate international inbound travel to strengthen the U.S. economy, increase exports, create quality jobs, and promote community prosperity. By running data-driven campaigns and unifying messaging across industry and government, Brand USA positions the United States as a top global destination while providing current visa and entry information.

Over the past 13 years Brand USA has driven 11.3 million additional international visitors who spent $38.1 billion in the United States, leading to $82.9 billion in total economic impact and sustaining an average of more than 40,000 jobs each year. These efforts have generated nearly $11 billion in attributable tax receipts at the federal, state, and local levels.