

### **Business Overview**

• The tourism situation in Phuket province in 7M2023 was an improvement over the same period last year. This is reflected in the number of visitors, which increased by 170.0%YoY to 6.43 million person-time as a result of the expansion of both Thai and foreign visitors. Thai visitors increased by 43.9%YoY to 1.72 million person-time, while foreign visitors increased by 297.5%YoY to 4.71 million person-time, partly due to the low base last year together with the easing of the COVID-19 situation, and the increase in Chinese tourists after the Chinese government opened the country and the return of Russian tourists, especially those with high purchasing power, who turned to travel to Thailand instead of going to Europe, where many countries have sanction measures to cancel flights from Russia.

Million Person-Time 14.58 CAGR 15 2019 2022 2020 7M/22 CAGR 2021 7M/23 10.60 -32.1% +170.0% 10 CAGR +390.2% (+297.5%) -16.6% 6.43 +1,378.7% 5.63 +149.9% 4.71 5 3.98 +43.9% 4.00 3.32 2.31 2.38 2.11 1.89 1.20 1.18 1.15 0.92 0.22 Total

Figure 1 The number of Phuket visitors

Source: Compiled by LH Bank Business Research based on data from TAT

• Major foreign tourist groups to visit Phuket in 2023 are China, Russia, Australia, India, and Hong Kong. In 7M2023, the number of tourists from these countries has been well compared to the same period last year following the relaxation of international travel restrictions after the COVID-19 situation around the world has improved. However, the overall number of foreign tourists, while showing a good expanding trend, is still considered to be at a lower level compared to the period before the outbreak (2019), especially Chinese tourists, whose recovery has been slower than expected due to the problem of economic slowdown from the effects of the long lockdown, together with the real estate crisis that has continued to spread to the financial sector due to the default of major real estate developers. The slowdown in the Chinese economy has affected the purchasing power of

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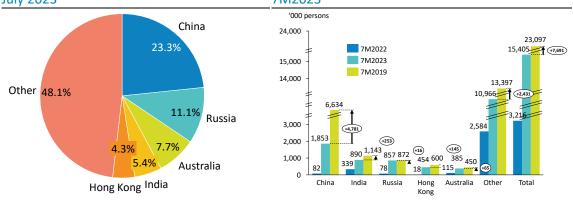
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Chinese tourists and adjusting the conditions for applying for a visa to enter Thailand to be more stringent.

**Figure 2** Phuket's foreign tourist structure in July 2023

Figure 3 Thailand's foreign tourist arrivals in 7M2023

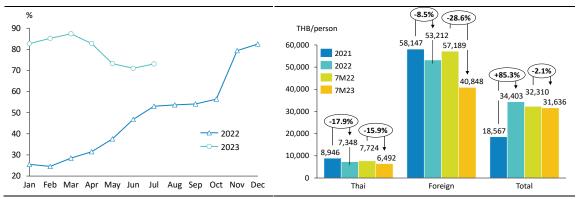


Source: Compiled by LH Bank Business Research based on data from Phuket Immigration and TAT

In 7M2023, Phuket's hotel occupancy rate averaged 79.3%, an improvement from 35.4% in the same period last year, in line with the recovery in the number of both Thai and foreign tourists, particularly Russian tourists who have almost recovered to the pre-covid level. Spending by Phuket tourists averaged 31,636 THB per capita, down 2.1%YoY due to a decline in spending by both Thai and foreign tourists. Thai tourists spent an average of 6,492 THB per person, down 15.9%YoY, partly due to cautious spending due to cost-of-living issues and high household debt levels. Meanwhile, foreign tourists spent an average of 40,848 THB per person, down 28.6%YoY, partly due to the slower than expected recovery of Chinese tourists, who are relatively high spenders. In addition, the purchasing power of Russian tourists was affected by the depreciation of the ruble.

Figure 4 Phuket's hotel occupancy rate

Figure 5 Phuket's tourist expenditure per capita



Source: Compiled by LH Bank Business Research based on data from TAT

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#### Disclaimer:



## **Business Outlook**

• Over the next year, it is expected that the tourism situation in Phuket will likely continue to improve following the recovery of the number of foreign tourists who have more confidence in international travel, and will gradually return to the level before the COVID-19 crisis, especially Chinese tourists who have positive factors from the free visa measure. Meanwhile, the Bank of Thailand estimates (as of May 2023) that 29 million foreign tourists will visit Thailand in 2023 and rise to 35.5 million in 2024. In addition, there is a positive factor from the recovery of the purchasing power of Thai tourists, who are expected to benefit from the new economic stimulus measures of the government. However, there is still a risk of protracted geopolitical conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and the situation is uncertain, including signs of a slowdown in the Chinese economy due to the effects of the long shutdown and the real estate crisis. These may hinder the recovery of the number of foreign tourists in Thailand and cause tourism in Phuket to recover slower than expected.

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