(CNN) -- It might be the biggest phenomenon to hit the global travel industry since the invention of commercial flight -- Chinese tourism.

The figures are incredible.

By 2015, 100 million Chinese will pack their bags to travel abroad, according to a report from the UN World Tourism Organization
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In 2012, Chinese overtook Americans and Germans as the world's top international tourism spenders, with 83 million people spending a record US$102 billion on international tourism.

Chinese travelers the world's biggest spenders

Pretty much any country with "Approved Destination Status" -- a bilateral tourism arrangement with China -- has remarkable numbers to throw out on Chinese tourism growth, from the United States to France.

The figures are even more dramatic closer to home. South Korea recently reported that in February, for the first time ever, Chinese tourists overtook Japanese tourists in terms of arrival numbers.

Hong Kong and Thailand cite similar growth.

Your response: Readers' reaction to Chinese tourism boom emotional, fascinating, sometimes hostile

Great, they're coming! (Now what do we do?)

In response to the boom, global travel operators have been frantically adapting their offerings -- hotels in particular.

itician throws computers at airportMei Zhang, founder and CEO of Beijing-based travel company WildChina , deals with both inbound and outbound tourists. She says though there are still teething problems, the world's luxury travel industry is taking positive steps toward making Chinese tourists feel at home.

"The Ritz Paris (currently under renovation) has a Chinese concierge," says Zhang. " Shangri-La and the Peninsula -- both considered by Chinese to be somewhat Asian brands -- have restaurants serving Chinese breakfast. They've adjusted their menus.

"In New York, at the Waldorf Astoria , if they know it's a Chinese person arriving they'll give them a tea kettle and a pair of slippers.

"The luxury stores in Paris have equipped themselves with Chinese-speaking staff. Similarly in Asia-Pacific, I was recently at the Four Seasons in Indonesia and they have Chinese menus, guides and guest ambassadors."

It's still not enough, says Dr. Wolfgang Georg Arlt, director of the privately run China Outbound Tourism Research Institute (COTRI), which has offices in Beijing and Heide, Germany.

He says the global travel industry needs to stop relying on old stereotypes about the Chinese and actually listen to what they want.

"If you look at surveys and forums in China, the majority of Chinese people are not satisfied with the service they get when they travel -- especially outside East and Southeast Asia, in areas where there are not as many Chinese, like in Europe or North America," he says.

The solution: Social media
suite

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