

The 20th UN Tourism / PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook *The Next Frontier: Travel Trends in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*

19-21 October 2026, Guilin, China

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME *(external version)*
(Venue: Shangri-la Hotel Guilin)

as of 05 October 2026

Monday, 19 October 2026

Arrival of delegates

15:00 – 18:00

Registration (Lobby)

Venue: Ground Floor (GF) Shangri-la Hotel Guilin

Tuesday, 20 October 2026

08:00 – 09:30

Arrival and Registration of delegates

Venue: Ground Floor (GF) Shangri-la Hotel Guilin

09:00 – 09:40

Opening Ceremony

09:00 – 09:10

Cultural Performance

09:10 – 09:15

Celebrating 20 Years of the Forum (Video)

09:15 – 09:40

Welcome Remarks

- Guilin Municipal People's Government
- **Mr. Liu Shijun**, Executive Director, UN Tourism
- **Mr. Noor Ahmad Hamid**, CEO, Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)
- **Prof. Kaye Chon**, Dean and Chair Professor, Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Hong Kong PolyU)
- People's Government of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

09:40 – 10:00

Tourism in 2026 and Beyond: Presentation of the latest World Tourism Barometer by UN Tourism

As the Forum opens its substantive programme, this presentation provides the essential data foundation for all discussions that follow. The September 2026 issue of the UN Tourism World Tourism Barometer — the most timely global tourism data available at the time of the Forum — offers a comprehensive picture of international tourism performance, regional trends and the outlook for the sector.

Mr. Javier Ruescas, Senior Programme Officer, Market Intelligence, Policies and Competitiveness, UN Tourism

10:00 – 10:20

Keynote Presentation: The Next Chapter of Travel: Values and the Changing Traveller in the Age of AI

As tourism enters a new era of digital maturity, this keynote will reflect on the evolution of travel platforms and the growing role of artificial intelligence in shaping how people discover, plan and experience travel. It will offer insights into emerging traveller expectations and discuss how destinations and tourism stakeholders can adapt to remain relevant, competitive and resilient in an increasingly digital global tourism landscape.

Mr. Xiong Xing, Chief Operating Officer, Trip.com Group



10:20 – 10:50

Group Photo and Coffee Break

Beyond refreshments, this coffee break has been specially designed by the host city of Guilin to showcase local flavours, traditional snacks and elements of intangible cultural heritage. Participants are invited to experience Guilin's culture, creativity and hospitality through carefully selected products and artistic expressions.

10:50 – 12:00

High-level Roundtable: Tourism Policies that Shape the Future

This high-level roundtable will provide a high-level platform to exchange perspectives on how governments can effectively govern the changes and challenges in tourism including changing consumer trends, managing growth, building resilience, attracting and retaining talent in an age of rapid digital transformation and impact of artificial intelligence. It will explore how policies, governance and public-private collaboration, and international cooperation can support inclusive, resilient, sustainable and competitive tourism development across regions.

Moderator: Mr. Mike Valerio, CNN

Panelists:

- **H.E. Dato' Sri Tiong King Sing**, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Malaysia
- **H.E. Mr. Mohamed Awadh Ayaz**, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Maldives
- **Ms. Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes**, Director, Macao Government Tourism Office
- **Mr. Suranjith Wewita**, Chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

12:30 – 14:15

Lunch

14:30 – 15:00

Dialogue: Who Shapes Tourism Trends in the Platform and AI Era?

Building on the keynote and ministerial discussions, this high-level dialogue will explore how artificial intelligence and digital platforms are reshaping the tourism marketplace and redefining the balance between policy, platforms and destinations. Through an in-depth conversation, the session will examine how decisions made by governments and platforms translate into real market outcomes, and what this means for competitiveness, innovation and the future structure of the tourism value chain.

Moderator: Mr. Simon Moriarty, Vice President, MMGY Global

Panelists:

- **H.E. Mr. Mohamed Awadh Ayaz**, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Maldives
- **Ms. Jody Barnett**, Senior Vice President, Global Public Sector, Mastercard

15:00 – 15:50

Panel Discussion 1: From Social Media to Experience: Redefining Travel Decisions

This panel will examine how digital platforms, content creators and artificial intelligence are reshaping the way travellers choose, discover, plan and purchase travel, bringing together leading content platforms, an independent travel content creator, and destination tourism authorities. The discussion will



explore the convergence of content, commerce and destination strategy, and consider how platforms, creators and tourism boards can work together to enhance visibility, trust and competitiveness in an increasingly platform-driven tourism economy.

Moderator: Mr. Mike Valerio, CNN

Panelists:

- **Ms. Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes**, Director, Macao Government Tourism Office
- **Ms. Tsetsegmaa Bayanbat**, International Relations and Partnership, Mongolia Tourism Organization
- **Mr. Ethan Wang**, Team Leader, Local Service-User-Transaction Product, TikTok
- **Mr. Bei Shi**, Travel Content Creator

15:50 – 16:10

Coffee Break

16:10 – 16:25

AI and Tourist Behaviour: Insights from the Greater Bay Area Tourism Satisfaction Index

Prof. Haiyan Song, Chair Professor, Mr and Mrs Chan Chak Fu Professor in International Tourism, Director of Research Centre for Digital Transformation of Tourism, School of Hotel & Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

16:25 – 17:15

Panel Discussion 2: Decoding the Chinese Traveller: From Data Insights to Market Strategy

Building on the research insights just presented by Prof. Song, this panel moves from evidence to strategy. China remains the world's largest outbound tourism market by expenditure, with traveller preferences increasingly shaped by AI-driven discovery tools, evolving booking behaviour and spending patterns. Yet market intelligence on Chinese travellers often remains fragmented or too general to drive effective action. Drawing on booking data, payment insights and destination experience, the discussion will explore how to decode what Chinese travellers want, and how destinations and tourism businesses can translate that understanding into more targeted and competitive market strategies.

Moderator: Prof. Tony Tse, Professor of Practice and Programme Director (Industry Partnerships), School of Hotel & Tourism Management, Hong Kong PolyU

Panelists:

- **Mr. Ji Xiaodong**, Chairman, China Chamber of Tourism
- **Ms. Vera Huang**, Sales & Marketing Director, Stargazer

18:00- 20:00

**Welcome Dinner
20th Anniversary Tribute**

As part of the 20th Anniversary celebrations, this tribute ceremony honours the individuals whose dedication, expertise and sustained commitment have helped shape the UN Tourism/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook into the leading platform it is today. Over two decades, the Forum has drawn its strength from the people behind it — researchers, policymakers, industry leaders and institutional partners who have contributed year after year to advancing tourism knowledge and dialogue across Asia and the Pacific. This recognition is a moment to pause, reflect and express our collective gratitude to those who have made the Forum what it is.

Hosted by Guilin Municipal People's Government
Venue: TBC
Dinner dress code: Traditional / Smart Casual

Wednesday, 21 October 2026

08:00 – 09:00

Arrival of delegates

09:00 – 09:15

Industry Outlook: China's 2030 Tourism Vision: Translating Data, AI and Innovation into the Next Frontier of Inbound Growth

China has outlined a clear and far-reaching vision for its inbound tourism sector through a new five-year tourism development plan, placing digital innovation, AI-enabled visitor experience, visa facilitation and destination competitiveness at the centre of its strategy. This presentation examines what it will take to realise that vision — how technology, data, policy and partnerships can work together to elevate China's position as a global tourism destination. Drawing on the latest policy directions and market trends, the PATA CEO will offer a forward-looking perspective on China's inbound tourism trajectory and what it means for the broader Asia-Pacific tourism ecosystem.

Mr. Noor Ahmad Hamid, CEO, PATA

09:15 – 09:45

Fireside Chat: From Trends to Culture: How New Consumer Behaviours Are Reshaping Travel Experiences

This fireside chat will explore how evolving consumer culture, creativity and digital engagement are influencing travel motivations and experiences, particularly among younger generations. Drawing on insights from the creative and experience economy, the conversation will reflect on what these shifts mean for destinations, tourism development and the future design of tourism experiences.

Moderator: Mr. Xu Jing, Vice Chairman, Global Tourism Economy Research Centre

Speakers:

- **Mr. Simon Moriarty**, Vice President, MMGY Global

09:45 – 10:35

Technical Session 1: From Market Intelligence to Action: How Data Systems are Shaping Better Destinations

This panel will focus on how national tourism administrations, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) and industry stakeholders are using the digital and AI-driven transition to create better planning, management and marketing strategies for tourism. It will discuss key indicators, governance models, partnerships and how data-driven insights are translated into stronger destination competitiveness and market development.

Moderator: Mr. Javier Ruescas, Senior Programme Officer, Market Intelligence, Policies and Competitiveness, UN Tourism

Panelists:

- **Mr. Michael Zhou**, President of Guilin Tang Dynasty Tours Co., Ltd.
- **Ms. Sung Eun LEE**, Director, Department of Tourism Industry, Jeju Tourism Organization
- **Mr. Tran Phong Binh**, Deputy Director of International Relations and Tourism Marketing Division, Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism (VNAT)

10:35 – 10:50

Coffee Break

10:50 – 11:20

Spotlight Dialogue: Digital Dunhuang — When Technology Meets Endangered Heritage: Transforming Visitor Experiences and Destination Management

Home to the Mogao Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site with over 2,000 years of Buddhist art and culture, Dunhuang has become a global reference for the application of AI and digital technology to heritage tourism, combining 3D digitization, virtual reality experiences and smart visitor management systems to balance growing tourism demand with long-term conservation. In this moderated dialogue, a representative from the Dunhuang Academy will share how digital transformation has reshaped both the visitor experience and destination management at one of the world's most iconic and fragile sites. A ministerial guest will reflect on the policy and governance dimensions — how governments can create the enabling conditions for heritage sites to embrace digital innovation while safeguarding cultural integrity. Together, the conversation will draw out practical lessons for tourism authorities navigating the intersection of technology, culture and conservation.

Moderator: Prof. Zheng (Phil) Xiang, Department Head and Professor, Howard Feiertag Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Virginia Tech University, and Visiting Professor of Hong Kong PolyU SHTM

Panelists:

- Ms. Li Ping, Researcher, Dunhuang Academy
- Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Malaysia

11:20 – 12:10

Technical Session 2: AI, Digital Platforms and Community-Based Tourism: Turning Innovation into Local Impact

This panel will explore how artificial intelligence and digital platforms can support the development of rural and community-based tourism by improving market access, destination management and local participation. Drawing on concrete experiences, the discussion will focus on how digital tools can empower communities, support youth and local entrepreneurs, and translate innovation into tangible benefits for destinations seeking more balanced and inclusive tourism development.

Moderator: Prof. Bao Jigang, School of Tourism Management, Sun Yat-sen University, 16th UN Tourism Ulysses Prize Laureate

Panelists:

- **Ms. Zhao Xiaojing**, Deputy County Head, Yixian County People's Government (*UN Tourism Best Tourism Village*)
- **Mr. Frank He**, General manager of CSR, Fliggy
- **Mr. Shaun Xin**, Vice President of Strategic Cooperation - China, DidaTravel
- Da Zhai Village, UN Tourism Best Tourism Village

12:10 – 12:30

Closing Ceremony

Closing Remarks

- **Dr. Eunji Tae**, Programme Officer, Regional Department for Asia and the Pacific, UN Tourism
- **Mr. Noor Ahmad Hamid**, CEO, PATA
- **Prof. Kaye Chon**, Dean and Chair Professor, Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Hong Kong PolyU)
- Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region



12:30

Lunch

Technical Tour *(The technical tours may be adjusted, and the confirmed tour details will be announced as early as possible.)*

Option 1: for the international delegates who will depart on Thursday, 22 October 2026

Wednesday, 21 October 2026

14:30 – 17:30

Guilin City Tour

- 14:30 Gather at the Lobby of Shangri-la Hotel Guilin
- 17:30 Return to Shangri-la Hotel Guilin

Option 2: for the international delegates who will depart late on 22 October or after 22 October

First register, first serve (To be confirmed at the Registration Desk)

Visit to Yangshuo

Nestled among the iconic karst peaks of the Guilin landscape, Yangshuo is one of China's most celebrated destinations for natural scenery and cultural experience. This overnight excursion features a scenic cruise along the Lijiang River — widely regarded as one of the world's most spectacular river journeys — followed by an evening performance of Impression Liu Sanjie, the acclaimed outdoor spectacle staged on the Li River against a backdrop of illuminated karst mountains.

Wednesday, 21 October 2026

- 14:00 Gather at the Lobby of Shangri-la Hotel Guilin and depart to cruise deck
- 14:30 Arrival at the cruise deck and depart to Yangshuo
- 14:30 – 18:30 Lijiang River Cruise to Yangshuo
- 19:00 Dinner in Yangshuo
- 20:00 Impression on Liusanjie Performance
- Rest Yangshuo

Thursday, 22 October 2026

- Morning Free Time in Yangshuo
- 11:30 Gather at the Lobby of the Hotel in Yangshuo and depart to Guilin by bus
- 13:30 Arrival at Shangri-la Hotel Guilin

Option 3: for the international delegates who will depart late on 22 October or after 22 October

First register, first serve (To be confirmed at the Registration Desk)

Visit to Longsheng Rice Terrace (FAO GIAHS site and UN Tourism Best Tourism Village)

Carved into the mountainsides of Longsheng County over more than 600 years, the Longsheng Rice Terraces are one of China's most extraordinary examples of traditional agricultural landscape and living cultural heritage. Rising from 300 to 1,100 metres above sea level and home to the Zhuang and Red Yao communities, the terraces represent a remarkable model of sustainable land use that has endured across generations. Recognized as both an FAO Global Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) and a UN Tourism Best Tourism Village, Dazhai offers participants a firsthand experience of community-based tourism at its most authentic.

Wednesday, 21 October 2026

- 14:00 Gather at the Lobby of Shangri-la Hotel Guilin and depart to Longsheng by bus
- 16:00 Arrival at Longsheng
- 16:00 Visit Dazhai Village
- 18:00 Dinner
- Rest in the Village

Thursday, 22 October 2026

- Morning Free Time in the Village
- 11:30 Gather and depart to Guilin by bus
- 13:30 Arrival at Shangri-la Hotel Guilin

