

Number of “foreign visitors” to exceed 18 million this year

The trend of number of foreign visitors can be found in the statistics of “Number of foreign tourists visiting Japan” released by the Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO). The statistics for the last 2 months show estimated “numbers of tourists” from the key 18 countries and regions which have larger number of tourists to Japan. Also, the Ministry of Justice releases provisional numbers of incoming tourists from 36 countries and regions for 3 months ago and before. Confirmed numbers are announced in the following year.

Point 1

Number of “foreign visitors” continues growing

Promotion measures by government, weak JPY and increasing flight numbers raised the number of tourists

- The latest “Number of foreign tourists visiting Japan” was released by JNTO on June 17th, gaining by 50% y-o-y in May. The number tends to slow in May, a gap month between April’s cherry blossoms’ season and summer holidays. However, it continued increasing at a rapid pace this year and the monthly number has grown to the second highest, next to the previous month. The backdrops are visa exemption, relaxing visa requirements, increasing duty free items from last October, JPY depreciation and increasing flights to Japan.
- The annualized number from January to May is estimated to exceed 18 million. The Japanese government tries to reinforce the promotion in order to raise the number to 30 million, as the government originally planned to raise the number of visitors to 20 million a year in 2020, but the target can be achieved soon.

Point 2

Historical high visitors from Taiwan, Hong Kong and India MERS might affect the number

- By countries and regions, visitors from Taiwan, Hong Kong and India hit historical highs on a monthly basis. The numbers of visitors in May from 18 countries and regions except for UK and Russia also renewed historical highs. An increasing number of flights pushed the number of visitors higher from Taiwan and Hong Kong, whereas promotion advertisements raised the tourists from India, as many of them tend to travel in May.
- The visitors from China increased by 2.3 times y-o-y underpinned by an increasing number of flights from Guangzhou to Osaka and Fukuoka, higher incentives to go shopping due to weaker JPY and promotion advertisements. The visitors from Korea also rose by 61.5% y-o-y, but the effect of Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) might affect the tourism.



■ Increasing duty free shops to almost double

A number of duty free shops almost doubled in six months from last October to April alongside a solid growth in “foreign visitors”. The number in seven prefectures in Tohoku and Kyushu region outstandingly grew by more than 4 times. This shows inbound tourism consumption is spreading to regions from large cities.

■ Increase of “Inbound tourism consumption” will support the economy

According to the data by Japan Tourism Agency, the expenditures by foreign visitors rose by 64% y-o-y to JPY 706.6 billion in January-March 2015. The spending would grow to about JPY 3 trillion this year with this pace. The “Inbound tourism consumption” is expected to support consumer expenditures as the number of visitors is likely to continue growing.

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