

PRESS RELEASE

Japan is Safe and Open for Business

PATA notes encouraging signs as Japan's inbound and outbound travel starts to recover

July 13, 2011 Bangkok: After assessing the situation in Japan, the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) reaffirms that the vast majority of the country is safe to travel to. Nearly all the country is operating as normal, with the exception of the locally impacted tsunami area in the vicinity around the Fukushima nuclear plants.

Bill Calderwood, Interim CEO said: "With government support, collaboration between the public and private sector and the support of the international tourism community, the Japan tourism industry has worked hard to turn things around. PATA encourages the world to fully engage with Japan as a travel destination and visit this wonderful destination again soon."

PATA's Strategic Intelligence Centre notes that inbound and outbound travel has also shown encouraging recovery signs.

The Japan National Tourism Organization estimates that outbound travel from Japan has dropped by around 3.6% over the last five months. However, a number of destinations in the Asia Pacific region are defying the odds and actually boosting their market share of Japanese arrivals. Even with this decline in outbound traffic Japan has generated close to 6.4 million departures in the five months to May 2011.

Countries that have boosted their market share of Japanese travellers include Thailand, Sri Lanka, Palau and Singapore. All have all expanded their inbound counts from Japan with each destination showing double-digit growth rates in May relative to the corresponding period last year. Initial figures for June show this momentum continuing in Thailand, Nepal, Chile and Vietnam. Year-to-date, some 15 destinations in Asia Pacific have recorded increased Japanese arrivals, with nine of those destinations showing double-digit gains.

There appears to be some small signs of recovery in visitors travelling to Japan. The estimated foreign inbound figure for Japan in May was 358,000, up from 295,800 in April. Many Asian source markets such as Chinese Taipei, Thailand and Singapore produced better performances in May.

Nevertheless, PATA statistics show that foreign arrivals into Japan have declined 32 % to May this year, a sharp reversal of the positive growth trend seen in January and February.

Mr Nobutaka Ishikure, PATA Life Member and PATA Foundation Trustee said: "Four months after 3/11 we are getting along with ordinary daily life in Tokyo and most of Japan. Visitors should come to Japan as before. The Japanese will soon travel overseas in numbers again."

On the aviation front, there was a significant drop in demand for flights to Japan after the crisis. While flights into Tokyo have been adjusted due to lessened demand, there are still ample options. The new direct route between New York and Tokyo's Haneda Airport will resume this summer.

According to UBM Aviation, the scheduled international air seat capacity to and from Japan is listed as around 6.095 million for July 2011, some 2.5% behind that of July 2010 but virtually identical to the capacity available in July 2009.

All airports in Japan are open and in operation. Sendai Airport has also re-opened with flights to and from Haneda (Tokyo), Itami (Osaka), New Chitose (Sapporo) and Centrair (Nagoya).

Pacific Asia Travel Association

Most tourist attractions, tourism facilities and transportation service are operating as usual in Tokyo and all areas outside of the tsunami impacted locations.

On June 1 PATA presented its Japan Appeal support package worth tens of thousands of dollars to the PATA Japan Chapter. The package comprised a one million yen (US\$12,318) cheque and extensive in-kind support to help Japan's travel industry members attend PATA Travel Mart in New Delhi in September.

"Now more than ever we need to recognise the importance of two way traffic between key markets in Asia Pacific. Healthy inbound traffic to Japan supports strong outbound traffic to the rest of the region." Calderwood added.

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Issued by:

PATA Communications,
Bangkok, Thailand.
Tel: +66 2 658 2000
E-mail: communications@PATA.org
Online newsroom: www.PATA.org/news
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About PATA

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) is a not-for profit membership association that acts as a catalyst for the responsible development of travel and tourism within the Asia Pacific region. This year, PATA is proud to celebrate 60 dynamic years of developing responsible tourism.

In partnership with private and public sector members, PATA enhances the sustainable growth, value and quality of travel and tourism to-from-and-within, the region. The Association provides leadership and counsel on an individual and collective basis to over 80 government, state and city tourism bodies; nearly 50 international airlines, airports and cruise lines and many hundreds of travel industry companies across the Asia Pacific region and beyond. Thousands of travel professionals belong to 39 active PATA chapters worldwide and participate in a wide range of PATA and industry events. PATA's Strategic Intelligence Centre (SIC) offers unrivalled data and insights including Asia Pacific inbound and outbound statistics, analyses and forecasts as well as in-depth reports on strategic tourism markets. For more information, please visit www.PATA.org