

Outbound Japanese Travelers Declined 3.9% in November -Outbound Travelers to Set New Annual Record in the 18-Million Range

According to the estimate of outbound Japanese travel released on December 21 by the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), the number of outbound Japanese travelers in November was 1.44 million, a decline of 3.9% year on year. This was the largest drop since September, which was the first time in 15 months (since June 2011) that the figure was negative year on year. In November 2012, the number dropped by 58,000, from 1.498 million the previous year.

The cumulative figure for January through November 2012 was 17,062,000, a 9.8% increase compared to the previous year's figure of 15,532,800 and an 11.3% increase compared to the 2010 figure of 15,328,000.

Because the cumulative figure up to November 2012 exceeded 17 million, it is nearly certain that number of outbound Japanese travelers in 2012 will surpass the 18-million mark. This will set a new record by outstripping the previous highest figure of 17.82 million attained in 2000.

The Japan Travel Bureau's 2013 Travel Trends Outlook released on December 20 predicts that outbound Japanese travelers will increase in 2012 by 8.5%, to 18.43 million.

Meanwhile, according to JNTO, the number of foreigners visiting Japan in November increased 17.6%, to 648,600. The cumulative figure for January through November rose by 36.0% year on year, to 7,678,900.

However, this is still 3.6% below the cumulative figure

for January through November 2010, which amounted to 7,962,795.

JTB's 2013 Travel Trends Outlook forecasts that inbound foreign travelers will increase in 2012 by 32.6% year on year, to 8.25 million.

Month	Japanese Overseas Travelers		(Unit: Persons)
	2011	2012	Change
1 Jan.	1,282,348	1,331,144	3.8
2 Feb.	1,391,193	1,572,587	13.0
3 Mar.	1,420,584	1,737,033	22.3
4 Apr.	1,114,906	1,410,963	26.6
5 May.	1,152,339	1,431,204	24.2
6 Jun.	1,267,227	1,481,674	16.9
1~6 Jan.-Jun.	7,628,597	8,964,605	17.5
7 Jul.	1,465,379	1,595,000	9.1
8 Aug.	1,786,412	1,965,000	10.0
9 Sep.	1,637,158	1,625,000	-0.7
10 Oct.	1,517,525	1,472,000	-3.0
11 Nov.	1,497,704	1,440,000	-3.9
1~11 Jan.-Nov.	15,532,775	17,062,000	9.8
1~12 Jan.-Dec.	16,994,200		

JAPAN NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION

Overseas Travelers will Exceed 19 Million in 2013, Predicts JTB Foundation's Senior Researcher Kurosu

The Japanese travel market (domestic and overseas) has been stagnant for an extended period, since the late 1990s, but starting around 2010, a change seems to have appeared in the underlying trend. Hiroshi Kurosu, senior researcher at Japan Travel Bureau Foundation, a public interest incorporated foundation, explains as follows concerning this change and the outlook for travel in 2013.

Based on market trends and the business outlook as of early December 2012, Kurosu predicts that, in travel in 2013, we will see a slight increase in leisure trips that include domestic lodging ("domestic travel"), and in overseas trips, outbound travel will reach 19 million (a 2.7% increase given 18.50 million travelers in 2012) and inbound travel will rise to 9 million (an 8.4% increase given 8.3 million travelers in 2012).

Looking at domestic travel and overseas travel in total,

Kurosu believes that the underlying trend in the Japanese travel market may have shifted in 2010. While travel demand is affected in the short term by alterations in the external environment such as economic fluctuations and the exchange rate, there are other major factors that change slowly over a long time span, such as the ratios of young people and seniors in the population and whether the national economy is in a growth phase or a mature phase. Whether travel demand is growing or flat over a long span is determined mainly by the latter factors. Kurosu thinks that these factors which govern the underlying trend may be pointing toward a slight uptrend in travel.

Kurosu points out that it is important to pay attention to customer segments that you might normally not watch and to check that you are not shackled by assumptions.