



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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NMI December 2011 Visitor Arrivals Up 6%

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – December 2011 visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) were up 6 percent compared to December 2010.

According to the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota registered 33,418 visitors in December compared to 31, 572 in December 2010. November and December both posted increased arrivals this calendar year compared to last..

Arrivals from Japan dropped 8 percent to 13,094 in December, as the NMI received only two daily flights from Narita for most of the month, compared to three daily flights in December 2010. However, due to high demand during the peak travel season, Delta Air Lines launched a third weekly flight again on Dec. 29, and Asiana Airlines re-launched daily service from Osaka on Dec. 22.

Arrivals from Korea were up 8 percent to 11,345 visitors. Asiana Airlines continued to operate Busan-Saipan charter flights launched in November, as well as its two daily Incheon-Saipan flights using a Boeing 767 with 250 seats on the daytime route and an Airbus 321 with 177 seats on the nighttime run.

“The overall increase in visitor arrivals for November and December has had a direct and positive effect on government revenue,” said MVA Managing Director Perry Tenorio. “To sustain this benefit, we still need to support these added flights with adequate promotions.”

Arrivals from China increased 59 percent in December to 5,708 visitors. This December the NMI received six flights weekly from China, compared to only two flights weekly last December.

Arrivals from Russia posted an increase of 20 percent to 673 in December 2011, and increased were also registered from the United States (2 percent to 788) and Hong Kong (185 percent to 94). Arrivals were also down in December from the Philippines (2 percent to 47), Guam (9 percent to 1,402), and Other Areas (2 percent to 267).

Japan and Korea Economic Highlights

The year 2011 saw the value of the Japanese yen soar to record highs against other major currencies, making overseas travel increasingly attractive to the Japanese.

The Japanese Cabinet Office’s economic report remained mostly unchanged in December, with the government releasing a revised forecast of 2.2 percent GDP growth for fiscal year 2012.

The Japan Travel Bureau Foundation (JTBF), the non-profit research arm of Japan’s largest travel agent JTB, has delivered its forecast for the Japanese travel industry. JTBF says 2012 will see a further increase of 2.7 percent to 17.4 million outbound travellers, which would be the highest since 2006. JTBF says that the Japanese mindset towards overseas travel prior to the earthquake was “just another expense,” but since March Japanese are looking for a more memorable experience.

Compared to JTBF, the Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) has set a more aggressive target for 2012, looking to break the all-time record of 17,818,590 overseas pax, set in 2000.

The Korean economy showed moderate growth, mainly in exports and manufacturing. The Korean economy is expected to grow 3.6 percent in 2012, down from 2011’s growth estimate at 4.0 percent, because the nation's three growth engines--exports, domestic demand and government stimulus--are all likely to lose momentum from 2011.

Asiana Airlines marked an annual record for its second consecutive year with more than 10 million international passengers. It expects the number to reach 10.64 million by the end of

December, a 2.3 percent increase from last year's record.

The Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are a chain of idyllic islands in the West Pacific, offering a friendly, fun and exciting vacation in paradise. They are an excellent destination for families, adventure and sports-minded travelers, as well as business people looking for a tropical haven. Adventurous travelers from Asia, Australia, Europe and elsewhere looking for new travel discoveries will find them in the Mariana Islands, just three hours travel from most cities in Japan, and four from Asia and Australia. The Northern Marianas are served from Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka in Japan by Delta and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana Airlines provides direct flights from Seoul and Busan. Fly Guam/Fly Marianas provides direct flights from Hong Kong and Nagoya, Japan. For more information visit www.mymarianas.com.

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