



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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NMI January 2012 Visitor Arrivals Up 10%

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – January 2012 visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) were up 10 percent compared to January 2011.

According to the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota registered 38,263 visitors in January compared to 34,738 in January 2011. Overall, visitor arrivals are up 5 percent this fiscal year to 125,649 visitors.

Arrivals from Japan dropped 1 percent to 15,467 in January, as the NMI received two daily flights from Narita for most of the month, compared to three daily flights in January 2011. However, due to high demand during the peak travel season, Delta Air Lines operated a third weekly flight, and Asiana Airlines has also re-launched daily service from Osaka in December.

Arrivals from Korea were up 1 percent to 12,758 visitors. Delta Air Lines operated Busan-Saipan charter flights from Jan. 5 to Feb. 26, 2012 on Thursdays and Sundays, while Asiana Airlines has continued to operate its Busan-Saipan charter flights launched in November.

Arrivals from China increased 96 percent in January to 7,660 visitors. This January the NMI received six flights weekly from China, compared to only two flights weekly last January, demand driven by the celebration of the lunar new year in January, this year.

“So far this fiscal year, the Northern Marianas has received almost twice as many visitors

from China as the same period last year,” said MVA Managing Director Perry Tenorio. “This underscores the continued and growing importance of the China market for us.”

Arrivals from Russia posted an increase of 15 percent to 686 in January 2012. Increases were also registered from Hong Kong (54 percent to 43).

Arrivals were also down in January from Guam (9 percent to 976), the United States (10 percent to 437), the Philippines (33 percent to 27), and Other Areas (20 percent to 209).

Japan and Korea Economic Highlights

The Japanese Cabinet Office’s January economic report maintained the stance that the economy continues to moderately recover.

Despite the earthquake and tsunami in March, Japanese outbound travel has consistently grown since July, mostly thanks to the strong yen, culminating in an 11.86% year-on-year increase in December.

Travel industry publication Travel Vision surveyed its readers to determine their results in 2011 and forecasts for 2012. The findings show that many group tours were canceled or postponed following the earthquake and fell into a slump until autumn, but individual travel remained resilient. Nearly half of all respondents said Asia was the best performing destination, especially Korea thanks to the popularity of Korean entertainment and extremely favorable exchange rates for Japanese.

Korea’s export growth is gradually slowing and domestic demand has weakened slightly. In 2011, Korea's real gross domestic product grew 3.6 percent from the previous year, according to the Bank of Korea. This is lower than the central bank's revised estimate of 3.8 percent released at the end of last year and significantly below the previous year's annual growth of 6.2 percent. The lower-than-expected growth is mainly attributable to fourth-quarter performance, which was at its lowest level in two years.

According to the Korea Tourism Organization), the number of Korean outbound travelers in December 2011 was 1,020,255, a decrease of 0.1 percent compared to the same month in 2010. The total number of Korean outbound travelers from January to December 2011 was 12,693,733, an increase of 1.6 percent compared to the same period of 2010.

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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