



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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NMI November 2012 Visitor Arrivals Up 12%

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – November 2012 visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) were up 12 percent compared to November 2011. According to the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota registered 32,894 visitors in November compared to 29,275 in November 2011.

Arrivals from Japan reached 10,082 visitors in November, 6 percent higher than November last year, as the Japan market continues to stabilize. Asiana Airlines launched a charter flight with 250 seats from Osaka to Saipan on Nov. 22 for the Japanese long weekend, and continued territorial tensions between Japan and both Korea and China drove an increasing number of short-haul Japanese vacationers to other short-haul destinations such as the Northern Marianas.

Arrivals from Korea rose 4 percent percent to 11,833 visitors. The supply of air seats to the NMI out of the Korea market is projected to continue to increase in the final quarter of the year, with Asiana Airlines boosting its Busan-Saipan service from two to four flights a week beginning Nov. 20 and ensuring continued strong growth in Korean arrivals through the end of the year. Asiana Airlines will also operate charter flights with 290 seats using an Airbus 330 for the winter season starting Jan. 10 until Mar. 28, 2013; this will bring an additional 6,670 air seats out of the Korea market to the Northern Marianas.

Arrivals from China continued a consistent double-digit increase, jumping another 38 percent in November to 8,214 visitors. In addition to six weekly flights from Shanghai and Guangzhou, three new weekly direct non-stop flights from Beijing to Saipan launched Nov. 15, which will ensure continued extraordinary growth out of the China market for the coming year. With the launch of bi-weekly direct charter flights from Vladivostok to Saipan in late October, arrivals from Russia nearly doubled in November, jumping 194 percent to 700.

Japan, Korea and China Economic Highlights

The Japanese Cabinet Office's monthly economic report indicated slowing growth, as exports and industrial production declined, and the recovery in corporate profits and the employment situation slowed. The value of the yen continued to fall in November, thanks to lower exports and expectations of stimulus by the Bank of Japan. Versus the U.S. dollar, the Japanese currency went from 79.72 at the beginning of the month and closed at 82.1 yen to the dollar, making travel to the Northern Marianas more expensive for Japanese travelers. Travel agency JTB conducted an online survey of overseas travelers who live in Japan's major metropolitan areas (Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya), and 31.3 percent of respondents answered that their travel choices were motivated by favorable exchange rates.

The Korean economy showed growing exports and a slight improvement in consumption, but continued weakness in investment. In its financial stability report, the Bank of Korea believes the country's financial system is stabilizing despite worsening domestic and external conditions, including the prolonged Eurozone financial crisis, the economic slowdown at home and abroad, and mounting household debt. The won/dollar exchange rate declined 8.95 from previous month to finish at 1,082.95, due to external uncertainties including the looming US fiscal cliff. According to the Korea Tourism Organization, the total number of Korean outbound travelers from January to October was 11,449,456, up 7 percent from the same period in 2011.

China Business News reported that the first economic work conference of China's new leadership will set a 2013 growth target of 7.5 percent, the same target as this year. The Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, appreciated 18 basis points to 6.2908 against the U.S. dollar on November 21, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trading System.

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 Air Lines and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana provides direct flights from Seoul and Busan. China is served regularly from Shanghai, Guangzhou and seasonally from Beijing. For more information visit www.mymarianas.com.

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