



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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NMI September 2012 Visitor Arrivals Soar 20%
Visitor Arrivals Up 15% in FY 2012

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – Overall, visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands were up 15 percent to 389,475 visitors in fiscal year 2012 ending September, as compared to the previous fiscal year. The primary markets of Japan and Korea, as well as the secondary markets of China and Russia, all posted gains in FY 2012 compared to FY 2011.

Several local and international factors played a role in the increase, according to Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) Managing Director Perry Tenorio.

“First, we had more flights from Korea, and China in FY 2012 than in the previous fiscal year, giving travellers from these two key markets more access to the Northern Mariana Islands,” said Tenorio. “At the same time, greater demand helped keep those air seats filled and flights operating. This was due in part to more Chinese travelling abroad, as well as strategic promotions by the MVA and our travel partners in our primary and secondary markets, including a pre-summer blitz and the opening of our China promotional office this past summer.”

In the closing month of the fiscal year, September 2012 visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) soared 20 percent compared to September 2011. According to the

Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota registered 30,472 visitors in September compared to 25,408 in September 2011.

Arrivals from Japan edged 1 percent higher for the fiscal year. In September, arrivals reached 12,244 visitors, 3 percent higher than September last year, as the Japan market continues to stabilize and re-establish its position as the Northern Marianas' number one source market of incoming tourists. Delta Air Lines launched an additional four weekly flights from Narita on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday in July, continuing through Sept. 24.

Arrivals from Korea jumped 19 percent for the fiscal year. Arrivals from Korea in September posted an eighth consecutive month of double-digit increases, up 31 percent versus the previous year to 8,836 visitors. Asiana Airlines re-launched a second weekly service from Busan to Saipan on June 13 which had been suspended since June of last year due to lack of available aircraft. Looking ahead, 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.

In FY 2012, the Northern Marianas received 70 percent more visitors from China compared to the previous year due to the launch of new flights, including six weekly flights from Shanghai and Guangzhou. In September, arrivals from China jumped 46 percent to 6,586 visitors. Continuous significant growth in Chinese arrivals is projected through the end of the year thanks to China's National Day holidays in October, the launch of three weekly flights by China Eastern Airlines from Beijing beginning on today (Nov. 16), and on-going major media and travel agent promotions launched by the MVA's new China office.

Meanwhile, although arrivals were down 8 percent from Russia to 199 in September, overall arrivals from this secondary market increased 10 percent in FY 2012 compared to the previous year. Bi-weekly charter flights by AviaCharter DV commenced from Vladivostok in late October 2012 and are expected to drive significantly higher arrivals from Russia through March 2013.

"FY 2012 was a strong year of recovery, but much work remains to be done to restore a healthy tourism economy in the Northern Marianas," said Perry. "Everyone has a role to play, and we encourage the government, our private sector partners, and individual members of the

community to stay focused on the crucial importance of tourism to the economy of the NMI. A healthy tourism economy means increased government revenues and makes our islands a better place to live and do business.”

In FY 2012, arrivals were lower from most other markets: Guam (down 5 percent to 14,784), the United States (down 6 percent to 8,381), Hong Kong (down 64 percent to 672), the Philippines (unchanged at 540), and Other Areas (down 34 percent to 2,966).

For the month of September, arrivals were higher from the United States (up 116 percent to 1,178) and Other Areas (up 14 percent to 187), lower from Guam (down 13 percent to 1,059) and Hong Kong (down 56 percent to 39), and unchanged from the Philippines (40 arrivals).

Japan, Korea and China Economic Highlights

The September economic report by the Japanese Cabinet Office assessed that the recovery in Japan is stagnating “due to the deceleration of the world economy.” In September, the Japanese yen remained basically flat against the U.S. dollar to close at 80.87 yen. The Japan National Tourism Organization reported a preliminary total of 1,965,000 Japanese traveled overseas in August, the highest August total ever.

The Korean government plans to spend \$305.6 billion in 2013, an increase of 5.3 percent compared to the previous year, with the aim of boosting Korea’s sagging economy while maintaining fiscal health. Korea’s consumer spending grew at a slower pace than the country’s economic growth for the past three years, adding to concerns that domestic demand in Korea may further cool. The won/dollar exchange rate declined 27.8 from previous month to finish at 1,105.6, due to the China-Japan territorial conflict and other reasons. According to the Korea Tourism Organization, the number of Korean outbound travelers in August was 1,334,651, an increase of 7 percent compared to the same month in 2011.

China’s Premier Wen Jiabao said the economy will stabilize after recent measures such as tax cuts and measures to boost consumer spending are implemented. Wen told the Summer Davos forum in Tianjin the speed of China’s economic growth is still within the range set at the start of 2012, and although growth is slowing, it is more stable. The chairman of China’s National Tourism Administration predicted global tourism sector growth of another 3% to 4% this year. The China Foreign Exchange Trading System reported the renminbi weakened 58

basis points to 6.3353 against the U.S. dollar on September 18, ending rises in the previous four trading days.

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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