



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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NMI MARCH 2014 VISITOR ARRIVALS SAME AS MARCH 2013

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – March 2014 visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) were essentially the same as March 2013. According to the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota registered 40,666 visitors in March 2014 compared to 40,613 in March 2013.

Arrivals from Japan were the greatest of any source market for the NMI during the month of March, but dropped 26 percent versus 2013 to 13,396 visitors. A 22.4 percent decline in air seat supply from Narita impacted the Japanese market heavily, as Delta temporarily suspended its second night flight from Narita. Weakness in March was also attributed to consumer sentiment toward the hike of Japan consumption tax from 5 percent to 8 percent effective from April 1, as well as the shift in timing of the Saipan Marathon from March to April as the marathon attracted 554 Japanese runners to the NMI last year in March together with friends and family, and this benefit will now be felt in April instead of March.

Arrivals from Korea rose 14 percent in March to 10,732 visitors. Dynamic Airways temporarily suspended flights from Seoul to Saipan beginning March 1, and will operate select flights during Korean Golden Week on April 30, May 2 and May 3. Dynamic Airways has not yet decided if their Seoul flights will be re-launched or if new flights will be launched from Busan instead.

Meanwhile, arrivals from China jumped 33 percent to 12,359 visitors, making China the second largest source market of tourists for the NMI in March. Century Tours suspended Dynamic flights from Hangzhou and Tianjin in March, but additional lift is projected to come on-line from the North China market in the coming months. Travel to the NMI grew much faster year-on-year than to other competing destinations and Saipan was recognized as one of the Top 10 Best Island Tourist Destinations of the Year by Ctrip, China's leading on-line travel portal.

Arrivals from Russia declined 5 percent to 1,602 visitors in March. This drop comes with the rapidly increasing political and economic instability in Russia. Key Russian tour operators are confirming that Russian tourists have begun cancelling trips to U.S. territories due to unstable Russian-U.S. relations. Secondly, the value of the U.S. dollar has suddenly increased by over 10 percent against the ruble since January, with tour prices to the CNMI rising by 20 percent compared to 2013 due to rising hotel room rates and the impact of the weak Russian currency. The MVA is carefully monitoring the rapidly evolving situation in the Russia market and continues to work closely with key partners such as AVIACHARTERS and Asiana Airlines to minimize the impact on travel from Russia to the NMI.

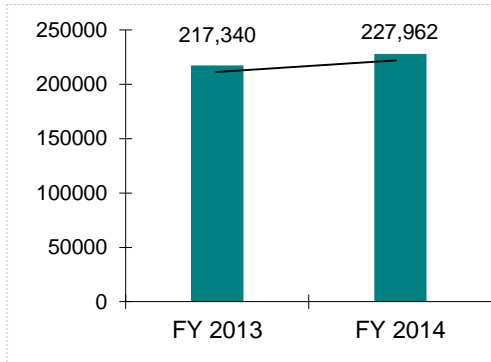
Japan, Korea and China Economic Highlights

In March, the Japan Cabinet Office's economic report noted that demand spiked, leading up to the consumption tax increase on April 1. As of March 31, exchange rates stood at 102.83 yen to the U.S. dollar.

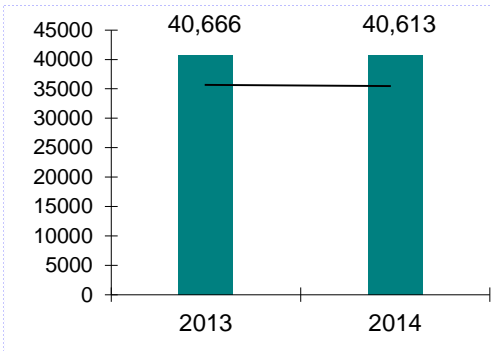
According to the Bank of Korea, the nation's economy grew 3 percent in 2013, faster than earlier estimates, as exports remained robust and consumer spending gained. The won/dollar exchange rate rose 1.25 over the past month to be closed at 1,068.83 won per dollar since the U.S. decided to maintain its low-interest policy for the time being. However, dollar depreciation is expected due to the appreciation of the Korean won.

The International Monetary Fund believes China is about to embark on the next phase of a remarkable economic journey, aiming for higher quality and more sustainable growth. A China State Council think tank said that after 30 years of double-digit growth, China's economy is set for slower but stable growth during the coming two years.

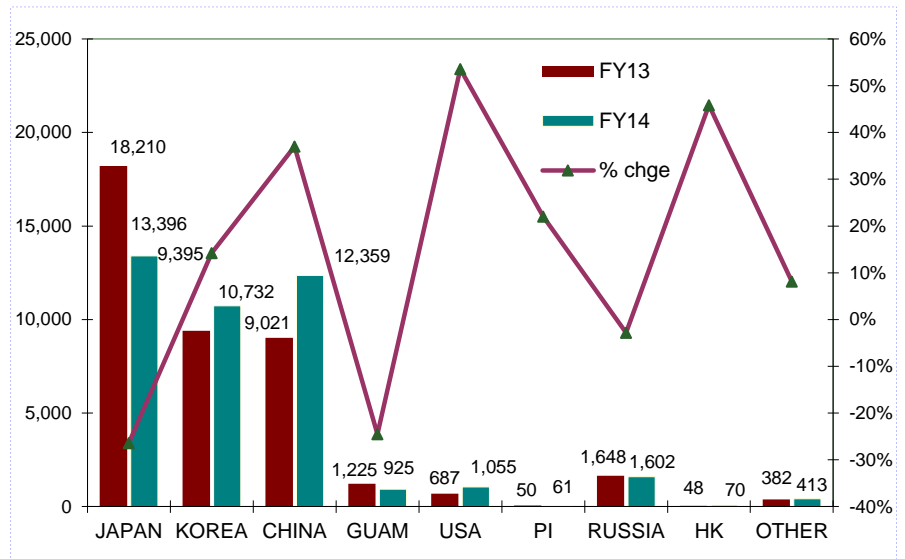
**Visitor Arrivals Year to Date
FY 2013 vs. FY 2014**



**Visitor Arrivals
March 2013 vs. March 2014**



**CNMI Source Market Arrivals
March 2013 vs. March 2014**



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 and Osaka in Japan by Delta and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana provides direct flights from Seoul and Busan. From China, direct flight service from Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Tianjin, Hangzhou and Wuhan to Saipan is available. United Airlines has daily flight connections from nine cities in Japan to Saipan with one stop. United States mainland connections can be made by Delta Air Lines to Saipan via Tokyo Narita, and United Airlines via Guam. For more information, visit www.mymarianas.com.

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