



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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MVA EXIT SURVEY GAUGES VISITORS EXPERIENCE

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – Beyond the visitor information gathered from the CNMI Customs forms, the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) has reinstated its tourist exit survey to gather additional information on visitor behavior and opinions. The survey covers visitor demographics, travel planning, and visitor satisfaction and has been conducted during high- and low-peak seasons with visitors from Japan, Korea, and China.

“It’s been 12 years since the MVA has had the funding to conduct a visitor exit survey, which is essential for gaining information for the development and refinement of marketing strategies,” said MVA Managing Director Perry Tenorio. “Having a clear and current understanding of visitor perceptions, experiences, and habits gives the government and community a better idea of what needs to be done to improve tourism product.”

So far this fiscal year, visitors were satisfied overall with their visit, with most satisfactory aspects being the beaches (86/100) and scenery/parks (85/100). Visitors were least satisfied with the variety of tours and activities available at night and the availability of signs and directions. Eighty-five percent of respondents expressed they wanted to visit the NMI again and that they would recommend the destination to others.

Of the eight most frequently mentioned tours visitors are interested in, half involved activities that engage local culture. Open market/night markets were the number one mentioned activity they would like to see more of.

Sixty-five percent of visitors claimed to travel outside of their home country at least once a year or more, and 82 percent of those surveyed had never visited the NMI before. Saipan was also the primary destination for 80 percent of trips within the NMI.

Around 80 percent of visitors came for pleasure/vacation, while almost 10 percent of visitors came to honeymoon. The biggest motivating travel factors were nature-related: 75 percent came for tropical climate/sea/beach; 39 percent came for snorkeling/water sports, and 21 percent came for nature activities.

The most frequented optional tours were Managaha (79 percent), snorkeling (59 percent), island tour (32 percent) and jungle tour (32 percent). Water sports on the beach, scuba diving, and Managaha tour received the highest satisfaction ratings of 90 percent.

Almost 40 percent of travel arrangements to the NMI were made individually through the internet, and over half of the visitors came to the NMI with their spouse. The most frequently identified source (31 percent) to find about the NMI was the recommendation of friends and family, while 40 percent of visitors had also referenced travel agencies or travel guide books.

“Although visitor arrivals have been steadily increasing over the last several fiscal years and continue to increase this year, there is still much work to be done.” said Tenorio. “The results of this exit survey will be of assistance in this regard.”

Regarding hotel stays, people were overall satisfied with their hotels, with no satisfaction score lower than 75/100. In general, the most satisfactory element of the hotel was the hotel staff with a rating of 85/100. The least satisfactory element was the hotel facilities (75/100). Almost 40 percent of visitors dined most often at a hotel. More than half had a tour guide during at least part of their stay, and visitors were generally satisfied with their tour guides, especially the ease of communication (88/100). A majority of pre-paid expenses were for hotel/accommodations and airfare, an average of \$1,560.92/person.

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 daily flights from Seoul and Busan and Jeju Air provides daily service from Seoul. From China, direct flight service from Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, 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. Russian and Taiwanese visitors usually arrive via Seoul. For more information, visit www.mymarianas.com.

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