

JAPANESE AVIATION HOPING TO HIT THE SKIES



To make the airline industry more profitable Japanese government has decided to realize the plans to expand current airports. The extension of Tokyo International Airport at Haneda should bring more foreign tourists to Japan thus also helping tourism industry.

Japan plans to expand current airport facilities to increase incoming and outgoing traffic. Since Japan is a relatively small country with a large and growing population, the public response to giant building projects is not often favorable. The Japanese were also always complaining about airport noise and pollution. However, such complaints slowly died away as the noise from planes has been significantly reduced. **Airports are now viewed as facilities necessary for economic growth of the country and as important hubs for passenger transportation.**

The government views the revitalization of Japanese airports as more important than many other projects within the framework of improving tourism industry in Japan. The biggest project, unsurprisingly, is Haneda in Tokyo. **The new fourth runway there will become a gateway to 17 European cities**, directly from the Japanese capital. This, naturally, is great news also for Europeans and Americans. Indeed, the Japanese are hardly known for being mean when on holiday. **The number of slots will be gradually increased to 450,000 a year, 90,000 of which will be international flights.** This entails an increase of 50% for just the airport in Tokyo. Once other Japanese airports have undergone similar change, Japanese skies should be busier than ever since mid 1940s.

It is now the job of the remaining part of Japanese tourism industry to respond by improving its services and keep up with the airports. If it does, Japan could become one of the world's tourism giants. Indeed, getting the tourists there and back is the first step.

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