

Asian Countries Have Great Potential in Wellness

The Global Wellness Tourism Economy Report has released the latest figures for 2012 and the Asia-Pacific market size and impact are significant. After Europe and North America, the Asia-Pacific is the third largest region in the world for wellness tourism. Japan leads this area with 34.4 million trips and \$28.6b expenditures. However, even Hong Kong with its small size still has 1.3 million trips and \$2.2b expenditures. There are 5.6 million jobs created directly due to the wellness tourism industry and the total economic impact of the region is \$213.8 billion.



These market trends are primarily due to Asian country's proud wellness traditions and knowledge that date back thousands of years. Many of their practices include preventative, curative, or therapeutic aspects that cross over the area between medicine and wellness. However, in some of the Asian-Pacific countries, the local wellness services are only provided in a traditional way and have not been modernized to attract international tourists.

In fact, most of the international tourists to this region come from either Europe or Australia. However, Asia does offer a wide selection of high-end destination spas that are compatible with Western-styles. They have been created to meet the demand created by an international interest in Asia's cultural, historic, and spiritual wellness practices such as yoga and Tai chi. Businesses who are able to deliver local services in a tourist-friendly package see strong growth in international travelers.



The Asians who travel primarily for wellness reasons tend to be either wealthy travelers interested in Western-style treatments or those who want to stick to the less expensive, local services and destinations. However, as the traditional Asian packages are repackaged and modernized, there is expected growth both among international travelers and domestic tourists as well.

In particular, China boasts a huge wellness tourism industry due to its large size. In the next five years,

there is an anticipated 14.5% growth rate in outbound tourist grips while domestic tourism trips are forecasted slightly less with a 10.1% growth rate. Chinese citizens are traveling internationally on a more common basis but are likely to engage in wellness activities only when it is included as a part of the trip. However, inbound wellness tourism to China carries a considerable potential to tap into their ancient traditions and natural resources. China can expect to see an upsurge in demand if they offer packages with modern hospitality and service standards.



Seeing a place in the market, many governments and tourism ministries are promoting medical tourism today while there has been a slight decrease in promoting wellness tourism. However, the promotional language used typically mixes these distinct segments which may lead to confusion. India has taken a broader approach to wellness when approaching tourism and promotes a holistic package to attract tourists to the area.

In the next five years, the amount of wellness trips to these areas is anticipated to grow significantly. While Japan leads the way currently in almost all areas of wellness tourism, China is not far behind in the market. As these countries work on modernizing their offerings, they can expect to see a greater market share of the wellness and tourism industry.

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