

# TOURISM IN JAPAN BEGINS TO FIGHT BACK



After the recent horrors of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster, Japan is attempting to tempt tourists back to its stricken land. Foreign agencies are also busy trying to convince their clients that Japan is now safe and worth a visit.

To discuss tourism and revenue in the aftermath of devastating natural disasters and an ongoing nuclear catastrophe may seem to be missing the point. The human element is the most important one, yet this is precisely the reason tourists are avoiding Japan at the moment. Images of debris, death, destruction and horror have dominated the news since 11th March 2011 and have created a picture that Japan is unsafe and should be avoided. At the moment, the exclusion zone around Fukushima really applies to the whole country in terms of tourism.

Since the earthquake, **there has been a drop of 61% in visitors from Hong Kong and less than half the tourists arrived in March compared to the same period in 2010.** This is more disappointing taking into consideration that 2010 was such a good year, with 9.44 million tourists coming to Japan and the Chinese market having taken off. Total visits have now plunged by around 21% and there is not much to be excited about as long as the Fukushima nuclear reactor remains unstable.

**A number of campaigns and eye-catching offers have started the road to the recovery of Japanese tourism.** For example, one agency in Hong Kong has offered its customers a full refund if they experience an earthquake of magnitude 6 or more. Considering there have been over 1,000 aftershocks since March 2011, they seem to be taking a financial risk. The tourists are not much better off. After a strong earthquake, one may not be in a fit state to claim a refund after all.

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