

MORE COUNTRIES BOOST DOMESTIC TOURISM WITH GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES



Japan's government has launched a tourism campaign with subsidies from taxpayers' money for travelers, despite the rising number of corona infections. Up to half of the tourism expenses such as accommodation and transport are to be covered by the state.

With this measure, which started last week before a long weekend with four days off, Japan wants to support domestic tourism, which has been severely affected by the corona crisis. **The offer only applies to travelers within Japan, the country's external borders are still closed.** In addition, the capital Tokyo was excluded because of the significantly increasing number of new infections per day.

In Japan, there was resistance even before the start of the promotion campaign. Critics fear that the virus could spread further if people travel to other regions again. The third-largest economy in the world is in a severe recession, with industrial production and exports collapsing. Tourism, which had been booming until the outbreak of the Corona crisis, came to a standstill.

Japan confirmed 631 new cases of infection last week, including 231 in Tokyo. In three prefectures the daily figures reached their highest levels since the outbreak of the pandemic. Due to the pandemic, the 2020 Olympic Games, which were to be held in Tokyo, were postponed until next year.

The wealthy city-state of Singapore also wants to boost domestic tourism in view of the corona-related absence of international visitors. The 5.8 million inhabitants are to be encouraged to discover "different sides of Singapore" through a programme costing around 28 million euros.

Russia is another country that plans to boost domestic tourism through government subsidies. **According to Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, the government already provided subsidies in the amount of about 3.5 billion rubles (\$49.3 million) to tour operators.** He stated that Russians will receive between 5,000 (\$70) and 15,000 (\$211) rubles, depending on the tour they decide for.

Russian travelers will be eligible for the rebate if they buy a tour from a government-compiled list and use the Russian Mir bank card — a would-be competitor of Visa and Mastercard heavily promoted by the government. The tours have to be at least five nights long and cost at least 25,000 rubles (\$352). The promotion would begin in August and last through Dec. 20.

*** facebook video ***

Date: 2020-07-27

Article link:

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