

JAPANESE BORDERS TO OPEN NEXT YEAR



During the second half of November, Japan is experiencing a new peak of around 2,500 new daily Coronavirus contaminations and a handful of related deaths per day. Such statistics reach record levels in the history of the epidemic in Japan. Therefore, the Japanese borders are likely to remain closed.

The ranking of the most affected provinces in Japan has been relatively stable since the beginning of the contaminations in January (apart from the episode of the cruise ship "Diamond Princess"). The largest number of cases can be found in the following provinces: Tokyo, Osaka, Kanagawa, Aichi, Saitama, and Hokkaido

"Go-To Travel" and "Go-To Eat" in Focus

The Japanese government has released **a budget of 1.35 trillion Yen (about 10.8 billion Euros) to cover up to 50% of hotel, transport and catering expenses for domestic tourism, from the end of July 2020 and presumably until spring 2021.** This is to support this sector which is in distress.

Over the first 4 months of the campaign, 40 million trips had already benefited from the support. Experts agree to point fingers particularly to "Go To Eat", since clusters are formed more logically in restaurants, with faces uncovered, than outdoors with their masks over their noses and mouths.

However, right from the start, the campaign was mocked by playing on the readout of the katakana officials chosen for "goto□□□□", as they also read "Go to Trouble".

Faced with the resurgence of the epidemic, the government unveiled new adjustments on November 24th:

- a shortening of the hours for bars and restaurants (closing at 10 pm) for 3 weeks;
- the withdrawal of the prefectures of Hokkaido and Osaka for the same period (in the direction of arrivals only);
- ongoing discussions with Tokyo (added late to the campaign at the beginning of October, as it has been the most affected area in Japan from the onset, and logically because it is the most densely populated).

However, the trips already booked for the next few weeks do not necessarily have to be cancelled, only new bookings will be blocked, for a limited effect.

At the same time, the mayor of Kyoto agreed to organize a giant Pokémon Go event on November 22nd, to support tourism... finally cancelled at the last minute.

Foreigners to Be Blamed?

While the Japanese media may point to new immigrant arrivals said to bring the Covid in their suitcases despite the mandatory PCR tests, even some health experts do not hesitate to target expatriates who do not speak Japanese well and would not understand/respect the measures, as the

cause of the resurgence of the epidemic on the territory.

To be more complete, Japan is certainly not the only country to suffer a third wave in the world: South Korea, Denmark or the Maldives in relatively controlled levels. More heavily affected, of course, is the United States.

2021 Olympic Games

It has been officially said and repeated since September by all the project's organizing bodies (International Olympic Committee, the Japanese government, Tokyo City Hall, etc.): **the 2020 Summer Olympic Games, postponed for a year, will be adapted but maintained in any case.**

The recent arrival in Tokyo of Thomas Bach, President of the IOC, attests to this once again.

This gives the prospect of the reopening of the Japanese borders, which should take place from the beginning of April, according to the information given in an interview with Japanese journalists at the beginning of October.

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