

JAPAN LURES MORE FOREIGNERS



Land of the Rising Sun managed to lure 4.3 million foreign tourists in the first half of this year, which is a 10 per cent growth when compared with the same period last year. Japan is becoming increasingly popular with foreign visitors.

The growth has several reasons. There was of course the promotion abroad but also cheaper yen helped to lure people with expendable income. The improving economic situation in Asia especially in China has allowed increased number of people to visit Japan and spend their money here. We also should not omit to mention the rising oil prices that are putting Asians off from traveling to far away destinations. All those factors combined resulted in the growth of foreign tourism arrivals in Japan.

The biggest source market for Japanese tourism industry was South Korea. Numbers of South Korean visitors have grown to 1.3 million. Also people from Hong Kong have become more interested in visiting Japan and the number of visitors from this region has risen to 267,000.

Japan has lots to offer. Tourists may admire some of its UNESCO world heritage sites but also the so called "new Japan" is a powerful attraction. There is for example the growing popularity of anime (i.e. animation). Foreign visitors are able to spend huge sums of money on comic and anime-related purchases. Asians from other countries enjoy shopping trips to Japan. Also the popularity of cosplay restaurants is on the rise. Cosplay restaurants are e.g. maid cafés where staff is dressed as maids. More conservative visitors may naturally admire the "Old Japan", there is for example the world known Mount Fuji.

As Asia becomes economically stronger it also becomes more interesting to investors in the tourism industry. It is, however, necessary to be aware of the fragility of the tourism industry as the global economic downturn already changes the tourists' preferences.

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