

JAPAN'S FOREIGN TOURIST NUMBERS DECLINE IN APRIL 2026



In April Japan welcomed about 3.692 million foreign tourists, according to data from the national tourism body. Down by 5.5 percent compared to the same period last year, the figure reflects shrinking visitor numbers for the second time in 2026. The count stood nearly 210,000 lower than what was seen twelve months earlier.

A drop in April echoes an earlier decline seen during January 2026, breaking four years of steady expansion. While analysts point to shifting holiday patterns, the main weight behind the fall ties to reduced travel from China - Easter's delayed date played a supporting role.

Sharp Drop in Chinese Tourists

Back in April, Chinese visitors dropped sharply - down 56.8 percent - to about 330,700. **One of Japan's biggest visitor groups before, they now show the largest fall.** From January through April, that decrease sits at 55.1 percent.

Especially hard hit are city retail areas in Tokyo and Osaka - places where business once thrived on purchases by Chinese tourists seeking beauty products, gadgets, or premium brands. Downward trends began following warnings issued by China's government about visiting Japan, along with fewer available flights. Painful drops followed swiftly after that.

Mixed Outcomes Across European Source Markets

Across Europe, results split sharply. With gains of 3.7 percent, France drew near 59,200 tourists - April's highest ever. Yet Germany saw numbers drop 15.2 percent, landing at 48,500 visitors. Even so, its total through early 2026 rose 7.8 percent compared to last year, reaching about 147,300.

April brought drops in visitors from the United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain - Easter break timing pulled trips earlier into March. Still, behind these short-term shifts, European interest in visiting Japan holds strong, according to JNTO.

April saw fresh gains across major visitor sources. A rise of 21.7 percent brought nearly 878,600 travelers from South Korea. Growth from the U.S., alongside steady flows from additional nations, added notable volume. Record highs emerged from nine destinations that month. Though activity spread widely, strength was especially clear among top inbound corridors.

Cherry Blossoms Keep Drawing Attention

April's lower numbers came during the peak cherry blossom viewing, when crowds still flood famous spots like Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka. Even so, global visitors plan trips around the flowering trees, keeping demand steady through the short-term drop.

Even so, most visitors stick to the well-known Golden Route and big urban centers, which piles strain on already busy spots.

Government Keeps High Goals

Surging numbers mark Japan's travel industry lately. Over forty million foreign tourists arrived during 2025, which was a record. Still seeing trips abroad as key to growth, officials stick with their goal: sixty million yearly visitors moving forward.

Early in 2026, government leaders put forward a new tourism strategy. **That blueprint aims to draw more travelers while raising how much each one spends.** Instead of focusing only on big cities, it shifts attention toward rural regions. Staying longer becomes a quiet priority under the approach. Overnight trips beyond city hubs gain subtle emphasis through policy details. Growth isn't just about headcounts anymore - spending matters too.

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