FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVALS IN KOREA HIT 17.11 MILLION THROUGH SEPTEMBER



Foreign tourist arrivals in Korea totaled 17.11 million between January and September this year, and if the current trends continue, the number is set to exceed the 18.94 million visitors for all of 2025.

These are the latest statistics published in the government's "Inbound Tourism Trends in Korea, September 2026", showing that 2.06 million foreign tourists came to South Korea last month, up 21.1 percent compared to the same period last year.

This was the fifth consecutive month in which at least two million foreigners have visited Korea, after the figure crossed the two-million mark for the first time in March and then again in four of the next five months.

China continued to top the list of source markets, with 5.47 million tourists arriving in South Korea through September, up 29.2 percent from a year earlier. Japan, which came in second with 3.12 million visitors (up 16.9%), was followed by Taiwan (1.86 million, +32.4%), Hong Kong (550,000, +18.6%) and the Americas (1.62 million, +12.0%). The number of visitors from Europe jumped 20% to 1.19 million.

Meanwhile, the amount spent by foreigners rose to 15.94 trillion won between January and September from 10.79 trillion won a year earlier.

Regional airports such as Gimhae, Jeju, Cheongju and Daegu **saw 3.24 million foreign tourists, up 37.4 percent from the same period last year.** Busan, Jeju, Seogwipo, Yeosu and Gunsan ports witnessed 1.58 million seaborne arrivals, up 14.5 percent.

Regional airports accounted for 19 percent of the national picture and the ports for 9.2 percent, meaning that a quarter of foreign tourists (28.2 percent) entered Korea through non-capital channels.

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