

Japan National Tourism Organization London Office
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Visit Japan Year 2010 Plans Revealed at WTM

The Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) has announced they will undertake their biggest campaign yet in the coming year. JNTO will launch a multi-faceted worldwide strategic marketing campaign for 2009-2010 in a bid to boost inbound visitor numbers and achieve the Japanese government's *Visit Japan Campaign* target of attracting ten million international visitors per year to Japan by 2010. The Yokoso! Japan "Visit Japan Year 2010" campaign will start this month with the launch of a global website aimed primarily at the Visit Japan Campaign's 12 key target markets, and subsequently will be available in English, French, German, Chinese, Korean and Thai.

The Visit Japan Year 2010 campaign will be driven through the website, with two key focus periods – winter and autumn. The website will launch with a "winter in Japan" theme, aiming to increase visitors to Japan from 1 January through 31 March 2010. The autumn push will aim to increase visitors to Japan from 1 September through 30 November 2010. The website will promote Japan's key charms of culture, food and shopping and highlight special events taking place during the campaign periods. Through the website, visitors will be able to find special "Visit Japan Year 2010" discounts and special offers for accommodation, transport, attractions and shopping. The website's official launch is 20 November 2009, when it will be available at www.vjy2010.jp.

JNTO's London office will launch the Visit Japan Year 2010 campaign in the UK in January with a major marketing campaign in collaboration with Virgin Holidays. In its first major marketing campaign with a British tour operator, JNTO London will sponsor a major print and online advertising campaign for a competition to win a Virgin Holidays trip for two to Japan. Fantastic runner-up prizes will include Nintendo Wii game consoles - complete with critically acclaimed title

'Muramasa: The Demon Blade', Matsuri restaurant vouchers, bottles of Japanese sake and luxury Clear Springs organic Japanese food hampers.

Following on from this, JNTO London will run a London Underground advertising campaign in February with Finnair. JNTO has been working closely with Finnair for two years to promote the airline's convenient and competitively priced fares to Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya via Helsinki. JNTO has found that in the recession consumers are finding indirect routes to Japan increasingly appealing as they generally save over £100 on a return flight to Japan through convenient hubs like Helsinki.

As part of the Visit Japan Year 2010 campaign, JNTO will be promoting selected key regions of Japan including Hida-Takayama, Kanazawa, Nagano, Okinawa, Niigata and the Seto Inland Sea.

"Despite the recession, 2009 has been a good year for tourism to Japan from the UK. This year we have seen major tour operators such as Funway Holidays, Thomson and Hayes & Jarvis start tours to Japan, taking the total number of UK tour operators selling Japan to 135! With the launch of Visit Japan Year 2010 we believe the year ahead will be even better. As part of the new campaign we will be undertaking our first ever major campaigns with British tour operators and a major British airline. I believe the focus regions of our 2010 campaign are perfectly suited to the cultured British traveller who wants to experience the 'real Japan' beyond the big cities of Tokyo and Osaka," said JNTO London Executive Director, Mr. Koichiro Yoshida.

Tourism has been a very high priority for the Japanese Government since the Visit Japan Campaign was launched in 2003 with the goal of reaching 10 million annual inbound visitors by 2010. The Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) and Japan National Tourism Organization hope that "Visit Japan Year (VJY) 2010" will enable the Visit Japan Campaign to reach its goal of having 10 million visitors in the coming year.

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Notes to editors:

1) Japan received 8,350,835 visitors in 2008. Detailed visitor arrival statistics are available at www.seejapan.co.uk/contact/press/

2) Muramasa: The Demon Blade is a classic Japanese tale from Rising Star Games, the UK publisher which brings Eastern games to Western players. The game is based on ancient Japanese

lore, plunging players into the mystical Genroku era. Featuring hand-drawn imagery reflecting the heritage and tone of the storyline, Murmasa transports players into a classic mythology envisioned by the creators of the critically acclaimed Odin Sphere. Already hugely respected in the gaming arena, it's a game whose style and beauty perfectly represents the Japanese mythology it recreates. www.risingstargames.com

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