

Japan National Tourist Organization London Office
Press Release – for immediate release – 19 October 2007



Japan at the 2007 World Travel Market – stand AS2200

Japan Pushing for Huge Growth by 2010

Japan is poised for major tourism growth by the end of the decade. The ever growing increase in popularity of Japanese food and culture in the UK is leading more and more people wanting to visit Japan. Recent hit movies such as *Memoirs of a Geisha*, *Zatoichi*, *Lost in Translation*, *Ghost in the Shell*, *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift* and *The Last Samurai* have made a positive and lasting impression on audiences around the world. Spurred by the Japanese Government's Visit Japan Campaign the Japan National Tourist Organization aims to boost tourist arrivals to 10 million by 2010.

New Japan Training for Travel Agents

Travel agents are invaluable in increasing visitor numbers to Japan so at this year's WTM, JNTO will be providing details of the new online Japan training programme - www.essentialjapan.co.uk - that launched this summer, together with a host of incentives and sales tools, to help significantly improve travel agents' knowledge about Japan. The Japan stand will also have free Essential Japan guides for travel agents created by Time Out and free guides to organizing school trips to Japan.

Japan's the New Hot Family Holiday Destination

"Japan is becoming a key destination for family holidays with many children now begging to be taken to the home of Playstation, Nintendo and the Japanese animation characters now so prolific on British TV, Pokemon, Dragonball Z, the Transformers and the Oscar winning film *Spirited Away*," said JNTO London Office Director, Mr Tetsuya Okuda . At this year's WTM the Japan stand will be well-stocked with information to assist tour operators to start family holidays and school trips to

Japan. Also on the stand will be ground handlers able to provide advice and quotes for family holidays and school trips in Japan.

Winter Holidays in Japan Booming

Sports enthusiasts will love Japan with its guaranteed powder snow for skiing and snowboarding and stunning national parks for hiking. "Over 75% of Japan's land area is composed of mountains and the winters are governed by the Siberian air mass, the coldest air mass in the world. As a result at least four months every year the mountains in the central highlands and northern regions of Japan are blanketed with snow, making Japan's ski grounds among the best in the world. Japan was the first Asian country to host Winter Olympics in 1972 and then again in 1998. Yet despite the country's brilliant winter sports conditions and facilities few Europeans have ever been skiing there. This makes Japan the ideal destination for people who take regular winter sports holidays and want to discover somewhere new," said JNTO London office's Director, Mr Tetsuya Okuda. At this year's WTM JNTO will have a wealth of information about skiing in Japan and a number of ground handlers who can work with tour operators to do winter sports tours of Japan.

Japan Offers Fantastic Value

One of the key messages JNTO will be sending at the WTM is that the current low value of the Japanese yen makes Japan a great value destination with a wide variety of affordable accommodation, transport and dining options. In the last 18-months the price of the latest model digital camera has dropped from an average of £140 to just £85, McDonalds Hamburgers from 39 pence to just 24 pence and 3-star hotel accommodation from an average of £72 to £60 to name just a few examples! Stop by the Japan stand to pick up a free copy of the Affordable Japan leaflet.

Cool Japan - Fusion with Tradition

JNTO will be continuing to promote the *Cool Japan: Fusion with Tradition* campaign that was launched at the 2006 WTM. The Japan National Tourist Organization launched the *Cool Japan - Fusion with Tradition* campaign to make people aware that in addition to Japan's traditional charms such as geisha, sumo, gardens, temples and Mt Fuji the country also has a vibrant uber modern side to explore as well. JNTO London office Director, Mr Tetsuya Okuda said, "One of Japan's key draws is its dynamic blend of old and new. In a holiday to Japan

people can experience ancient temples, gardens and cultural traditions at the same time as enjoying some of the world's most futuristic and technologically advanced cities. Through the campaign JNTO wishes to highlight that Tokyo, along with New York, Paris and London, is now one of the world's leading cities when it comes to trends in food, fashion and pop culture."

The aim of the campaign is to diversify the types of travellers going to Japan. Currently Japan's main market is "empty nesters" - couples over 50 with a keen interest in Japanese culture such as gardens and temples. It is hoped that by highlighting Japan's cool modern attractions we will soon see more young couples, single young professionals and families travelling to Japan.

Visitors to Japan on the Increase

Visitors to Japan were up 9% on 2005 figures with a total of 7,334,077 visitors to Japan in 2006. The highest increases in European travellers to Japan were from France with a 6.3% annual increase to 117,785 visitors to Japan in 2006; Sweden with a 9.5% increase to 25,299; Finland with a 18.2% increase to 15,242; Portugal with a 14.7% increase to 12,246. The highest number of European visitors to Japan was once again from the UK with 216,476 for 2006. In 2007 Japan has received 145,300 UK visitors for January – August; a 2.7% rise on the same period in 2006. JNTO London office Director Mr Okuda said, "We are optimistic that with the increasing recognition of Japan as a holiday destination thanks to the Visit Japan Campaign, together with the start of ski tours and promotion of school trips to Japan, 2007 will see strong growth."

Companies Represented on the Japan Stand

On the Japan Stand the Japan National Tourist Organization will be joined by 14 co-exhibitors from the fields of aviation, accommodation, rail transport and ground handlers. The 14 co-exhibitors are All Nippon Airways, Conrad Tokyo, Imperial Hotel Tokyo, Into Japan Specialist Tours, Japan Airlines International, Japan Railways Group, JTB Global Marketing and Travel, Kintetsu International, Nippon Travel Agency, Prince Hotels & Resorts, The Royal Hotel, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Tonichi Travel Service and TopTour Europe.

Learn more about Japan over Sushi, Sake & Kirin Beer!

Japan Stand Happy Hour – 16:00 – 17:00 on Monday & Tuesday

From 4 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday the Japan stand will be offering sushi and

refreshments for tour operators, travel agents and journalists. A range of Japanese sakes will be available to try as well as Japanese Kirin beer and other beverages. It will be a great opportunity to get to know JNTO staff and learn more about Japan from the hoteliers, ground handlers, regional tourist board and airline representatives that will be on the Japan stand.

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