

Japan named world's ninth most tourist friendly country

- ①Japan ranked ninth on the World Economic Forum's list of most tourist friendly countries this year. The country rose five spots from a 14th place in the previous compilation of the ranking which took place in 2013.
- ②Japan was only topped by Australia in the Pacific Asia region, according to the WEF study, which is officially named the WEF Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index. Australia scored a seventh place.
- ③“Japan's human resources are highly qualified and excel in terms of treatment of customers, where Japan is ranked first globally,” the WEF said.
- ④Commenting on the ranking, the Tokyo Times reports this underscores the appreciation for the so-called omotenashi tradition of hospitality in Japan. WEF assigned the country a second place for staff training and noted its rich cultural resources with unique cultural heritage and efficient ground and air transport infrastructure also contributed to the rise in Japan's overall score in the bi-annual ranking. Japan scored a fourth spot in the number of large sports stadiums.
- ⑤All these impressive rankings however come with a price tag, which is something the international organisation appears to have stumbled over. The WEF pointed out that in terms of what tourists pay for goods and services, other countries are far more attractive. “On a less positive note, Japan is not a price-competitive destination,” it said, assigning Japan an 82nd spot in the category ticket taxes and airport charges. For fuel price levels, Japan sank to a 126th place in the ranking.
- ⑥Offsetting that however were the country's “impressive” information communication technology readiness. Launching a paid wireless internet service with access points across the country, is what visitors appreciate and it also supports the business operations of firms, according to the WEF.
- ⑦Worldwide, Spain came out on top in the overall rankings, followed by France and with Germany scoring a third place. Most of the top ten countries on the list were in Europe, with only four nations from outside the EU making the top ten.
- ⑤stumble over つかえながら言う[演じる], どもりがちに話す

Spending by visitors to Japan surges in 2014

⑧Spending by foreign visitors to Japan rose sharply in 2014, bringing certain gains to the Japanese economy, the government said in a report Tuesday.

The 2015 white paper on tourism said spending by visitors to Japan last year — such as on shopping and accommodation expenses — shot up 43.1 percent from 2013 to ¥2.03 trillion, owing to rising incomes in many other Asian countries, the high quality of Japanese products, the yen's weakness against other major currencies and improvements to Japan's duty-free system.

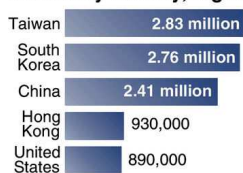
⑨Spending by Chinese visitors accounted for 27.5 percent of the total consumption by foreign visitors as more Chinese tourists visited Japan for shopping purposes.

Meanwhile, fewer Japanese traveled domestically last year, owing to the April 2014 consumption tax hike from 5 percent to 8 percent and a rise in crude oil prices, the white paper said.

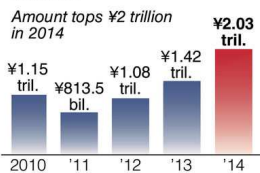
The average number of domestic trips made by Japanese in 2014 came to 1.3, down 7.2 percent from the previous year, while the number of nights spent at accommodation facilities dropped 5.8 percent to 2.1 nights.

⑩In the Tohoku region, which was hit by the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami, the number of people staying at accommodation facilities in Akita and Fukushima prefectures fell sharply from pre-disaster levels. The tourism situation in the Tohoku region as a whole remains severe, the report noted. 【June 09, 2015/Jiji Press】

Top 5 international arrivals by country, region



Spending by foreign visitors



☆Ice breaker for active discussion☆

1. What is World Economic Forum? What role does the organization play?
2. What is "Omotenashi"?
Can you share any specific story representing Japanese "Omotenashi"?
3. What do you think about the comments regarding Japan's rank?
4. What do you think about the top countries on the list? Do you agree?
5. If you were to decide the top country for tourists, which would you choose? Why?
6. According to the article, tourism level dropped in some areas in Japan.
What do you think can be done to boost the tourism industry there?
7. Make sentences using the following words: competitiveness, excel, hospitality, bi-annual, stumble, accommodation and offset.

1971年設立の世界経済フォーラムは、ビジネス界、政界、学界のリーダーたちが連携することにより世界情勢の改善に取り組む独立した国際機関。スイスのダボスで毎年1月に開かれる年次総会（通称：ダボス会議）では、世界中から2000～3000人が参加して、地球上の重要な問題について議論を繰り広げる。また今回発表された「旅行・観光競争力報告書」等様々な報告書を発表している。安倍政権は、成長戦略の1つに観光立国政策を掲げ、東京五輪が開催される2020年までに訪日外国人旅行者を2000万人に増やすことを目標にしている。2014年に日本を訪れた外国人旅行者は、前年比29.4パーセント増の1341万4000人と過去最高を記録した。