

Travel Trends for the Autumn Season 2003

- **Main travel trends this autumn**

- The number of departures and the growth rate for overseas travel both peaked on September 23.
- Favorable trends continue from October centering on long (three-day) weekends.
- Rapid growth seen in travel to Europe, Oceania and Hawaii

JTB Corp. has just announced travel trends for the autumn overseas travel season based on sales of LOOK JTB package tours.

The actual figures for September clearly show that long (three-day) weekends are being exploited effectively by tacking on holidays before and/or after the weekend. This year, over the October-November period, there are another three such long weekends, and travel demand is expected to rise, as it did in September, immediately before and after each weekend.

Studies by the Tourism Industry Association of Japan (TIJ) show that the proportion of schools adopting the two-semester school year has now reached ten percent, forming an environment that enables parents to travel with their children and thus encouraging the trend to take an autumn holiday. TIJ is currently running an "Autumn Holiday" campaign with the hope of firmly establishing autumn holidays.

Autumn Weekends Followed by a Holiday

9/12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Fri	Sat	Sun	NH	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	NH

10/10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Fri	Sat	Sun	NH	Tue	Wed	Thu

10/31	11/1	2	3	4
Fri	Sat	Sun	NH	Tue

10/21	22	23	24	25
Fri	Sat	NH	Hol	Tue

Note : NH stands for National Holiday. When the National Holiday falls on a Sunday, the next day (Monday) is designated a holiday.

Travel Trends as Shown in the Figures for September

With the greater acceptance of autumn holidays, the trend was to take days off immediately before or after the long (three day) weekend for travel.

Actual departures for September show that the long weekend was used effectively, taking days off either before or after it, with the tendency to choose departure dates associated with more affordable prices.

- For overseas travel, the 23rd was the peak for both actual numbers and growth over the previous year (recovering fully to 100% of the levels reached before the recent sharp declines). Last year, most departures occurred on the first day of the three-day weekend, September 14.
- The clustering around the 23rd was particularly strong for Asian destinations. Special-offer packages combining stays in prestigious hotels with modest costs were very popular, such as "Three days at the Grand Hyatt in Hong Kong" (for ¥49,800 or approx. US\$453 at a nominal exchange rate of ¥110/US\$) and "Five days in Phuket at the JW Marriot" (for ¥74,800 or US\$680 similarly both here and below).

Travel Trends as Shown by Monthly Bookings for October and November

1. Long weekends, and the days just before and after them, are also popular in October and November. For domestic travel, the increases over the previous year were from ten to over twenty-five percent, a favorable trend maintained from the summer. For overseas travel, demand recovered to 80% of what it had been the year before, with more bookings immediately before and after the long weekend.

	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.
Domestic (Japanese)	111%	109%	117%
Overseas	78%	83%	88%

2. The most popular destinations overseas were Europe, Oceania and Hawaii. Within Japan, it was Okinawa. After October, bookings for Oceania and Hawaii grew rapidly.

	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.
Okinawa	127%	163%	132%
Oceania	95%	96%	115%
Hawaii	94%	87%	111%
Europe	90%	104%	98%

New Overseas Tours Planned After October

By taking days off before and after a long weekend, effective use can be made of ordinary weekdays, and high quality travel can be enjoyed at reasonable prices. This is particularly true of destinations in Asia, where there is a rich variety of choice, and autumn travel is recommended.

New packages arranged by JTB have encouraged this trend, with many taking spending "4 nights, 5 days On Foot in Kuala Lumpur" encountering Malaysian culture for themselves. Other attractive offerings include "4 nights, 5 days in Singapore at the Raffles Hotel" (offering a stay in one of the courtyard suites of Singapore's most famous hotel at a modest cost). "Five nights, 6 days in the Grand Hyatt Bali" has also proven popular, with unusual "perks" both in Bali and back in Tokyo (including a ¥5,000 or \$45 voucher for use at the Tokyo Grand Hyatt!).

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