

Main features of japan for tourism

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Did you know that every day over eight million people travel by plane? It's a massive statistic, but, in this day and age, it's hardly surprising. Japan has an enormous population, with three major cities: Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka.

Around 19.7 million people visit Japan each year, and that number is only going to grow. Part of that growth is making the country easier for tourists to visit, with QANTAS Economy return flights from only \$716.

Japan has many things to do and sights to see. There are historical temples and grounds, loved by tourists and locals alike. The oldest temple in Japan, the Horyuji Temple in Ikaruga, is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the country. Mark Rigoni, who has been travelling domestically and abroad regularly for over twenty years, has said that this was one of the best things about Japan. "The best thing was definitely exploring the history behind Japan and seeing all of the temples. The maps showed me around and pointed me towards things I wouldn't have found on my own".

Other popular sites for tourists include scaling Mount Fuji, a very famous and beautiful UNESCO Heritage site, viewing cherry blossoms, called hanami, and shopping at Takeshita Street.

As for experiencing and appreciating Japanese culture, a lot differs between Eastern and Western cultures. In Eastern societies, more emphasis is placed on people and relationships, rather than events and time. If you need to meet your mother for lunch, but your friend who lives abroad spontaneously drops by, you don't spend less time with your friend to get to lunch, trumping the event that was supposed to take place. In Western cultures, the opposite is almost always true: We place more emphasis on time and

events and would hurry up our friend's visit, even though we might want to see them more because we made a commitment to meet our mother for lunch.

Japanese culture also places more significance on eating than Western cultures do. Japan is the world's largest eater of seafood, ingesting about 17 million tons per year. This is a big difference in comparison to Western cultures, where families typically quickly whip up some two-minute noodles or go out and get fast-food at least once a week. In Japan, fast food is a rarity, as healthy food is accessible and very affordable, as it is part of life. "The food was excellent", Mark says. "It was so fresh and ready to go. There were vending machines on every street corner where you could buy packaged sushi for really good prices".

On paper, Japan sounds incredible. The history, emphasis on people and food culture are all enticing. However, there are certain things that prospective travellers should take into account before making the trip.

A big trouble in Japan is the language barrier. Many people can speak only Japanese, with a rare few bi-lingual. Mark notes, "With a decreasing population, Japan is becoming more and more insular". Most people in the hotel industry can speak English, but they are of little help on the streets. This is crucial information when planning a trip, something that tourists should definitely bear in mind when planning a trip.