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Why are Korean Travelers Flocking to Japan?

ConsumerInsight compares 2023 overseas
travel destination resource & environment evaluations

- Japan offers world-leading travel content including food and shopping
- The quality of infrastructure, such as prices and cleanliness, is also high, making it the best in terms of satisfaction
- The cost of travel is not much higher than the average of Asian countries
- Japan's attractiveness poses a threat to the future of Korea's domestic tourism industry

This report is the "Topic of the Month" prepared as an appendix to the "Monthly Domestic & International Travel Trends Report (January 2024)" published by ConsumerInsight on February 28th.

○ Japan is becoming an explosively popular destination for Korean overseas travelers. Korean travelers have rated Japan as the top country in the world in terms of travel content and travel environment. The cost of traveling there is also considered affordable, being on par with the Asian average. The rising popularity of Japan poses a threat to the Korean domestic tourism industry.

□ The travel research firm ConsumerInsight conducts an annual study on satisfaction with overseas travel destinations every September. The firm inquire 9,375 individuals who have traveled abroad in the past 1 year (from September 2022 to August 2023) about the satisfaction with their destinations, the quality of travel content, and infrastructure. The results were then compared to assess the

competitiveness of travel destinations across 27 countries. The evaluation detailed five aspects of travel content (To have fun, To eat, To see, To buy, and To rest) and six aspects of infrastructure (Transportation, Prices, Cleanliness, Convenience facilities, Safety, Culture & Language).

■ **Japan ranked 6th in overall satisfaction worldwide.**

○ Japan was ranked 6th out of 27 countries for overall travel destination satisfaction. It followed Switzerland, Spain, Australia, Italy, and New Zealand, making it the highest-ranked Asian country (Refer to "[Satisfaction with overseas travel destinations for Japan increased and the USA fell.. why?](#)") **[Table 1]**.

○ The satisfaction with a travel destination is determined by its resources (content) and environment (infrastructure). Japan ranked among the top in travel infrastructure comfort level (2nd worldwide) and was considered upper-middle tier (10th place) in terms of the appeal of its travel content **[Table 1]**. However, in an evaluation of 11 detailed aspects (5 for content, 6 for infrastructure), Japan demonstrated formidable competitiveness by ranking first in 4 categories, including two ties for the first place.

[Table 1] Comparison of Satisfaction with Overseas Travel Destinations in 2023 (Overall, Resources, Environment)

(Unit : Points)

| Country | No. of Cases | Overall Satisfaction [Out of 1,000 pts.] | Rank | Attractiveness [Out of 100 pts.] | Rank | Comfort level [Out of 100 pts.] | Rank |
|-------------|--------------|--|------|----------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|
| Total | (9,375) | 735 | | 70.2 | | 62.1 | |
| Switzerland | (88) | 833 | 1 | 75.4 | 4 | 68.2 | 3 |
| Spain | (86) | 810 | 2 | 75.6 | 3 | 63.5 | 10 |
| Australia | (175) | 799 | 3 | 76.5 | 1 | 67.4 | 5 |
| Italia | (90) | 778 | 4 | 73.0 | 8 | 55.9 | 24 |
| NewZealand | (76) | 775 | 5 | 74.9 | 6 | 61.3 | 12 |
| Japan | (2,302) | 767 | 6 | 72.3 | 10 | 72.5 | 2 |
| Portugal | (66) | 764 | 7 | 75.3 | 5 | 66.7 | 8 |
| Singapore | (225) | 763 | 8 | 73.0 | 9 | 74.1 | 1 |
| Indonesia | (172) | 753 | 9 | 74.7 | 7 | 60.7 | 15 |
| Guam | (241) | 752 | 10 | 71.4 | 11 | 67.9 | 4 |
| Canada | (104) | 744 | 11 | 69.8 | 16 | 59.5 | 19 |
| Thailand | (698) | 741 | 12 | 71.1 | 13 | 60.9 | 14 |
| Hawaii | (106) | 738 | 13 | 76.3 | 2 | 59.3 | 20 |
| UK | (91) | 731 | 14 | 65.9 | 24 | 60.2 | 17 |
| Taiwan | (364) | 727 | 15 | 69.2 | 17 | 65.8 | 9 |
| Germany | (81) | 726 | 16 | 67.8 | 21 | 66.9 | 7 |
| Vietnam | (1,495) | 723 | 17 | 68.5 | 18 | 59.2 | 21 |
| Turkiye | (73) | 721 | 18 | 69.9 | 15 | 60.3 | 16 |
| France | (88) | 717 | 19 | 71.4 | 12 | 51.2 | 27 |
| USA | (264) | 708 | 20 | 70.5 | 14 | 58.2 | 22 |
| Saipan | (98) | 706 | 21 | 67.5 | 22 | 67.2 | 6 |
| Mongolia | (124) | 705 | 22 | 62.6 | 25 | 61.3 | 13 |
| Malaysia | (215) | 697 | 23 | 68.0 | 20 | 62.0 | 11 |
| Philippines | (539) | 694 | 24 | 66.7 | 23 | 56.7 | 23 |
| HongKong | (127) | 674 | 25 | 68.4 | 19 | 60.1 | 18 |
| Cambodia | (83) | 665 | 26 | 61.3 | 26 | 55.0 | 26 |
| China | (265) | 632 | 27 | 58.9 | 27 | 55.2 | 25 |

■ Asia ■ Europe ■ NorthAmericas ■ Oceania

- Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with your 'main travel destination' as a travel destination?
- Q. How likely are you to recommend the 'main travel destination' to others?
- Q. How excellent/poor were the 'overseas travel destinations' as destinations 'to have fun/to eat/to see/to buy/to rest'?
- Q. How much stress did you experience during your visit to 'overseas travel destinations' due to 'transportation environment/cost of living/cleanliness-hygiene/facilities-convenience/safety-security/language-local culture'?

Note 1) Base: The number of cases of overseas travel experiences over the past year is 9,375 in 2023.
 Note 2) Detailed countries are only presented for sample sizes of 60 cases or more.
 Note 3) Overall satisfaction, resource attractiveness, and environmental comfort level averages were calculated for the 27 countries included in the data.

* Source: Consumer Insight Overseas Travel Satisfaction Survey

■ **Travel Content Attractiveness: Highest satisfaction with things 'To eat' and 'To buy', that involve spending on-site**

○ In the overall evaluation of content attractiveness, Japan ranked 10th, placing in the upper-middle tier. Japan trailed behind travel powerhouses like Australia, Hawaii, Spain, and Switzerland, as well as some Asian countries such as Indonesia and Singapore. However, among the five categories of content, Japan ranked first in two categories—things 'To eat' and 'To buy'—which are the biggest contributors to local spendings [Table 2].

[Table 2] Evaluation of Travel Destination Attractiveness in 2023 (Top 5)

(Unit : Point)

| Rank | Attractiveness (Out of 100 pts.) | | To Eat (Out of 10 pts.) | | To Buy (Out of 10 pts.) | | To Have Fun (Out of 10 pts.) | | To See (Out of 10 pts.) | | To Rest (Out of 10 pts.) | |
|------|----------------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-------|
| | Country | Score | Country | Score | Country | Score | Country | Score | Country | Score | Country | Score |
| 1 | Australia | 76.5 | Japan | 7.6 | Japan | 7.0 | Hawaii | 7.6 | Switzerland | 8.8 | Switzerland | 8.3 |
| 2 | Hawaii | 76.3 | Portugal | 7.5 | France | 7.0 | Australia | 7.5 | Italia | 8.6 | NewZealand | 8.1 |
| 3 | Spain | 75.6 | Taiwan | 7.4 | Australia | 6.9 | Indonesia | 7.3 | Spain | 8.5 | Indonesia | 8.1 |
| 4 | Switzerland | 75.4 | Hawaii | 7.4 | Hawaii | 6.8 | NewZealand | 7.2 | Australia | 8.3 | Australia | 7.9 |
| 5 | Portugal | 75.3 | Thailand | 7.3 | Portugal | 6.8 | Guam | 7.1 | Portugal | 8.1 | Guam | 7.9 |

Q. How excellent/poor were the 'overseas travel destinations' as destinations 'to have fun/to eat/to see/to buy/to rest'?

Note 1) Base: The number of cases of overseas travel experiences over the past year is 9,375 in 2023.

Note 2) Detailed countries are only presented for sample sizes of 60 cases or more.

Note 3) Resource attractiveness averages were calculated for the 27 countries included in the data.

* Source: ConsumerInsight Overseas Travel Satisfaction Survey

○ Food (To eat) and shopping (To buy) are crucial contents where almost the entire amount is spent locally, significantly impacting travelers' value for money evaluation. This outcome demonstrates that the Japanese travel industry offers tourists from Korea a cost-effective tourism experience. Furthermore, it provides locals with profitable business opportunities, and operates as an ideal business model in harmony with local governments. ([Refer to "Top Countries for Value for Money in Overseas Travel: Japan and Thailand, Where Does Korea Stand?"](#))

■ **Infrastructure comfort level: Japan ranks within the top 4 in all 6 categories**

○ Japan secured the second-highest rank worldwide in terms of infrastructural comfort for traveling [Table 3], only trailing behind the city-state of Singapore but ahead of travel environment powerhouses like Switzerland, Guam, and Australia. In detail, Japan was tied for first place with Germany in Prices and Singapore in the Cleanliness, respectively. Japan ranked second in Convenience facilities and Safety including third in Culture & Language and fourth in Transportation. Japan stood as a strong contender within the top 4 across all 6 categories.

[Table 3] Evaluation of Travel Destination Comfort level in 2023 (Top 5)

(Unit : Point)

| Rank | Comfort level (Out of 100 pts.) | | Prices (Out of 10 pts.) | | Cleanliness (Out of 10 pts.) | | Convenience Facilities (Out of 10 pts.) | | Safety (Out of 10 pts.) | | Culture/Language (Out of 10 pts.) | | Transportation (Out of 10 pts.) | |
|------|------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|-------|---|-------|----------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------|
| | Country | Score | Country | Score | Country | Score | Country | Score | Country | Score | Country | Score | Country | Score |
| 1 | Singapore | 74.1 | Germany | 7.3 | Singapore | 7.4 | Singapore | 7.6 | Singapore | 8.1 | Singapore | 7.2 | Singapore | 7.2 |
| 2 | Japan | 72.5 | Japan | 7.3 | Japan | 7.4 | Japan | 7.2 | Japan | 7.6 | Guam | 7.1 | Guam | 7.0 |
| 3 | Switzerland | 68.2 | Mongolia | 7.2 | Switzerland | 7.3 | Australia | 6.9 | Switzerland | 7.3 | Japan | 7.0 | Switzerland | 7.0 |
| 4 | Guam | 67.9 | Singapore | 7.1 | Australia | 6.7 | Saipan | 6.6 | Taiwan | 7.3 | Saipan | 7.0 | Japan | 6.9 |
| 5 | Australia | 67.4 | Portugal | 7.0 | Portugal | 6.7 | Taiwan | 6.6 | Saipan | 7.0 | Germany | 6.9 | Australia | 6.8 |

Q. How much stress did you experience during your visit to 'overseas travel destinations' due to 'transportation environment/cost of living/cleanliness-hygiene /amenities/safety-security/language-local culture'?

Note 1) Base: The number of cases of overseas travel experiences over the past year is 9,375 in 2023.
 Note 2) Detailed countries are only presented for sample sizes of 60 cases or more.
 Note 3) Resource attractiveness averages were calculated for the 27 countries included in the data.

*Source: ConsumerInsight Overseas Travel Satisfaction Survey

○ Japan offers the ideal conditions to enjoy the world's top-level travel content within the best infrastructure for traveling. Notably, the fact that Korean travelers rated Japan as the world's number one in terms of 'Prices', a controversial issue in domestic travel destinations, is significant. This is the result from Koreans experiencing the best 'cost-benefit ratio' during travel in Japan.

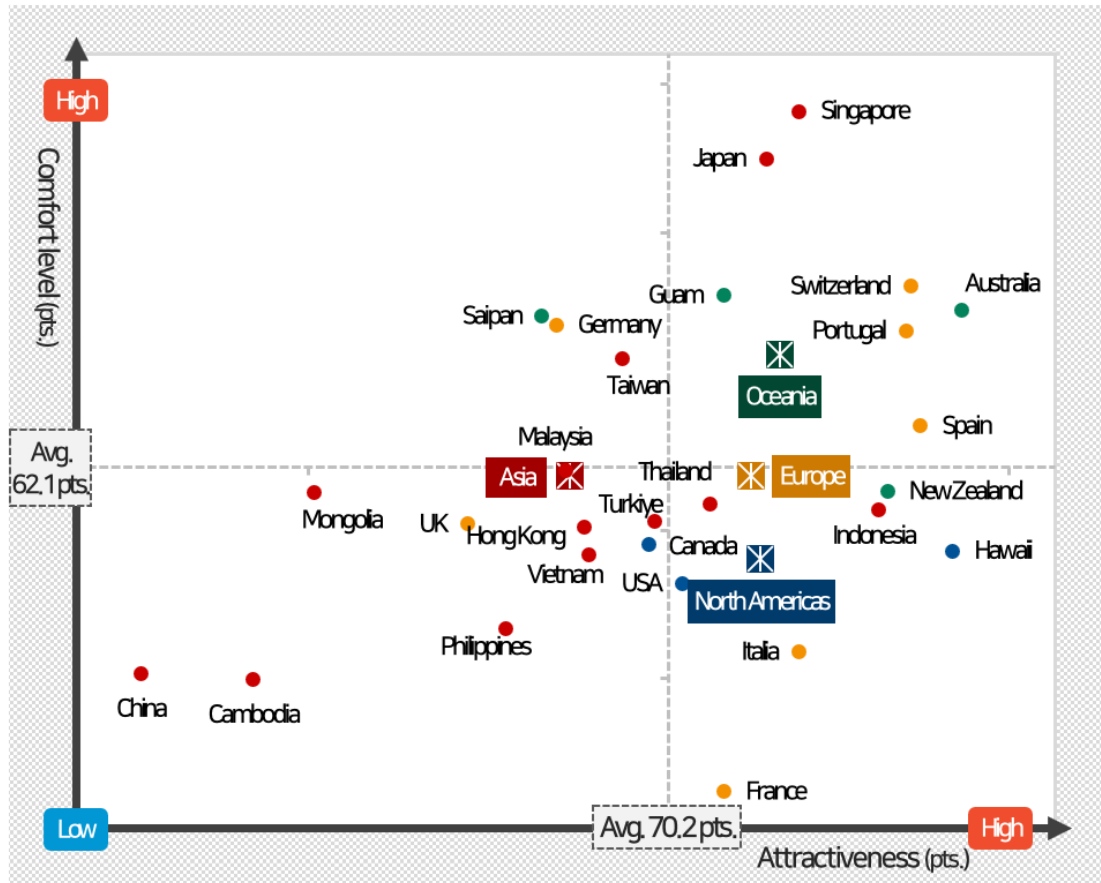
■ World-class culinary delights and shopping experiences with low travel budget

○ Considering only travel content and infrastructure, the top three destinations for Korean travelers are Australia, Switzerland, and Singapore. However, when factoring in both 'value for money' and 'Cost-benefit ratio', Japan undoubtedly leads the pack.

○ The average daily cost in Japan is 251,000 KRW, which is not significantly different from the overall Asian average of 231,000 KRW. Spending just an additional 20,000 KRW per day to enjoy the world's top culinary delights and shopping experiences makes Japan an undeniable 'tourist paradise'. Moreover, the exceptional 'Cost-benefit ratio' provided by Japan's excellent travel infrastructure, including Cleanliness and Prices, has always been highly sought after. Being able to indulge in these luxuries in Japan, a rival to Korea and advanced country, is indeed a privilege.

○ Koreans are flocking to Japan for many reasons, including time efficiency, cost-effectiveness, enjoyable food and shopping, and cultural similarities, to name a few. Japan presents a formidable competitive alternative to Korea's domestic tourism industry and is also a key factor in Korea's significant tourism deficit.

[Attached] Comprehensive Comparison of Resource and Environmental Satisfaction with Overseas Travel Destinations in 2023



● Asia ■ Europe ▲ North Americas ◆ Oceania

- Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with the 'main travel destination' as a travel destination?
- Q. How likely are you to recommend the 'main travel destination' to someone else?
- Q. How excellent or lacking was the 'overseas travel destination' in terms of 'to have fun/to eat/to see/to buy/to rest'?
- Q. How much stress did you experience at the 'overseas travel destination' due to 'transportation environment/living cost/cleanliness-hygiene/amenities/safety-security/language-local culture'?

Note 1) Base: The number of respondents with overseas travel experience in the past year is 9,375 for 2023.

Note 2) Only countries with a sample size of 60 or more cases are presented.

Note 3) Overall satisfaction, resource attractiveness, and environmental comfort averages were calculated for the 27 countries included in this data.

* Source: ConsumerInsight Overseas Travel Destination Satisfaction Survey

ConsumerInsight provides **professional and scientific research services** across various industries such as **automotive, telecommunications, shopping/distribution, tourism, and finance**, utilizing a **large-scale online panel** that is **efficient** for **non-face-to-face surveys**. We enhance the value of data by integrating **panel research data** with **various big data** sources, focusing on applying it to various industries. Particularly, we recently launched the "**K-Panel**," a survey platform with a **100% mobile-based** approach and **nationwide representativeness**, which is **open for use by anyone in the research industry**.

This report is based on the "Annual Overseas Travel and Travel Product Satisfaction Survey," conducted by the ConsumerInsight Consumer Trends Research Institute, which targets over 25,000 travel consumers every September. The survey results and analysis reports, updated annually, can be viewed at www.consumerinsight.kr/eleisure-travel, where summaries of the survey results from 2016 to 2022 are also available for download. ([Download Report](#))

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