

# News story: Visits from Japan to the UK expected to grow in 2019

- National tourism agency VisitBritain expects visit numbers from Japan to reach 270,000 in 2019, a 9% increase on 2017.
- Spending by Japanese visitors in the UK is expected to reach £285 million this year, up from £250 million in 2017.

Nationals from Japan will be able to use ePassport gates to enter the UK from summer 2019 as part of the government's commitment to develop a new global immigration system as we leave the EU. ePassport gates, which are currently available for British and EU nationals, provide a faster route through the border as they allow eligible passengers to be processed quickly and securely.

Growing airline connectivity with a new direct, non-stop route from Osaka to London scheduled for April 2019 by British Airways is also expected to boost visitor numbers.

The news comes as the PM is set to welcome the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Downing Street tomorrow (Thursday 10).

Michael Ellis, UK Tourism Minister, said:

The UK and Japan have strong cultural, artistic and sporting ties and this is translating into increased visitor numbers to our shores.

Tourism is good for our understanding of each other's cultures and can help strengthen our economies. With thousands of Brits expected to travel to Japan for the Rugby World Cup this year and the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, our continued close relationship will benefit both nations.

VisitBritain Director Patricia Yates said:

Japan is an important market for VisitBritain and we want the UK to be the number one destination in Europe for Japanese visitors, so it is encouraging to see the expected growth this year. A passion for rugby is a strong connection between our countries and the Rugby World Cup in Japan this year also provides us with a valuable opportunity to promote Britain internationally as the 'home of rugby' and our associated destinations and tourism experiences.

Tourism is a fiercely competitive global industry and we continue promote the message of welcome and value, working with partners to make it easier to travel here and promote the amazing experiences

that Japanese travellers can only have in Britain.

VisitBritain's global campaign "[I Travel For...](#)" that launched in Japan last year is also shining the spotlight on unexpected experiences and less explored destinations across the UK alongside its globally renowned and iconic landmarks and attractions to drive tourism from Japan. [VisitBritain](#) is working with travel trade and content partners to amplify its marketing reach in Japan and convert the inspiration to visit Britain into bookings.

Visitors from Japan spent, on average, £1,011 per visit in the UK in 2017, compared to the all market average of £625.

Last year, the Prime Minister and Prime Minister Abe announced an arts and culture programme of UK in Japan in 2019-20, bringing together British and Japanese artists, technology experts and businesses to continue to build creative links between the two countries.

The programme, run by the British Council, will provide UK artists and their Japanese partners with opportunities to share state-of-the-art digital technology and showcase the best of UK and Japanese creativity in the run-up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics.

To coincide with this, Japan will also stage a parallel cultural programme in the UK.

Japanese perceptions of the UK as a visitor destination are strong. Japan ranked the UK fourth out of 50 nations for its overall brand in the 2018 Anholt Nation Brands Index, and up one place on 2017. Japan also rated the UK highly for its vibrant cities and urban attractions and historic buildings and monuments.

Culture is one of the key attractions for tourists from Japan who enjoy visiting the UK's museums and art galleries, sightseeing at famous monuments and buildings and visiting castles or historic houses.

## **ENDS**

- In the first six months of 2018, there were 119,000 visits from Japan to the UK, up 10% on the same period in 2017.
- The UK was Japan's fifth most popular destination in Europe in 2017.