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 TOM TOM ENGLISH



Why don't people visit Japan?

VOCABULARY

Big hit =

Something that is very popular

Bring in =

To produce, to earn

Accommodation

=

A place to stay e.g.
hotel, house,
apartment

Workaround =

A method used to
bypass a problem; a
solution

Discussion questions

1. Would you like more foreign visitors to visit Japan? Why? Why not?
2. Do you think the Japan Tourist Association has done a bad job of promoting Japan. Why? Why not?
3. Do you think that Japan is expensive for tourists? Can you think of any "workarounds" for this problem?
4. What do you think about foreign language signs? Do you think we need more?
5. Can you think of any other ways to make Japan more attractive for foreign visitors?
6. Have you had any of these problems in other countries? Which ones? How did you overcome them?

VOCABULARY

A pain =

Casual expression for an irritating or uncomfortable situation

In a bind =

To be in a tight or awkward situation

Few and far

between =

Scarce, infrequent, rare

SIM =

A smart card for use with mobile phones

A country like Japan should be a **big hit** with tourists. But Japan is not such a popular destination.

Tourism from abroad **brings in** around 900 billion yen per year for Japan. By comparison, France makes around 5 trillion, the UK 3 trillion and Germany 3.7 trillion. So why is this beautiful country an unpopular holiday destination?

Publicity problems

Firstly, Japan needs more and better quality advertising. Japan needs to explain to the world why people should visit Japan.

Thailand has its resorts and backpacker culture. Cambodia has its historical ruins. China has great size. People visiting Asia for the first time have so much choice, so proper promotion is extremely important. Right now, Japan isn't promoting itself well.

Skytree-high costs

The top reasons people from Europe and the USA don't come to Japan are:

1. it's too far.
2. It's too expensive.

We can't do anything about number 1.

But maybe we can find some **workarounds** to number 2.

Accommodation and transport are expensive so many people will choose cheaper countries in Asia.

Lost in translation

It's difficult to visit Japan if you can't speak Japanese. Most Japanese people

don't speak good English. Outside of the big cities, many sightseeing spots don't have signs in English.

Also, it's difficult for travellers to look up written words in dictionaries. So, the average traveler can't even read restaurant menus or the names written on signs at train stations.

Japanese-only convenience

Japan is often said to be an incredibly convenient place, but it can be very inconvenient for travelers.

Firstly, getting into the city can be a **pain** because Narita airport is quite far away from central Tokyo. Then, when you want to pay for your train or bus ticket you might be **in a bind**. Japan is still a mostly cash society and there are many places that do not accept credit cards. Also ATMs that accept foreign cards are **few and far between**. And often you can't check your route or research places to visit online because there are still very few places with Wi-Fi. You also can't buy cheap mobile phones with disposable **SIM** cards, so keeping in touch with other members of your group is difficult.

These factors mean that people will not want to come and visit unless they already have an interest in Japan.

With the 2020 Olympics coming, the country will have many more foreign visitors. Is Japan ready for them?