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TOM TOM ENGLISH



Tourist agency to survey onsets on tattoo policy

VOCABULARY

Nationwide =

Throughout the whole
country

Admittance =

To enter a place,
building or institution
(usually includes some
cost)

Bar =

Prevent or prohibit
someone from doing
something or going
somewhere

Discussion questions

1. Do you have any tattoos? Why? Why not?
2. Do any of your friends/family have tattoos? What do you think about them?
3. Young people in the West view tattoos as art, or as a personal expression. Is this attitude growing among young Japanese people? Why? Why not?
4. What do you think about onsets who ban customers with tattoos? Is this a good idea? Is it fair?
5. Do you think that tourists with tattoos should be allowed to use onsens, even though they have a no-tattoos policy?
6. What do you think about the comments from the foreign people? Which ones do you agree/disagree with?

VOCABULARY

Bewilderment =

A state of complete
confusion

Turn away =

To stop someone from
entering a place

Syndicate =

A group of individual or
organisations who work
together for common
interests

Patron =

A customer (especially
a regular customer)

The Japan Tourism Agency has conducted a **nationwide** survey of onsens regarding their policy on tattoos, due to the increased number of foreign tourists.

The survey, which was sent to 3,700 operators of inns and other facilities with onsens, asks them: “Do you refuse **admittance** to people with tattoos?” and “Would you accept someone with tattoos if they cover them with stickers?” and “Do you know the reason for the custom of **barring** people with tattoos?”

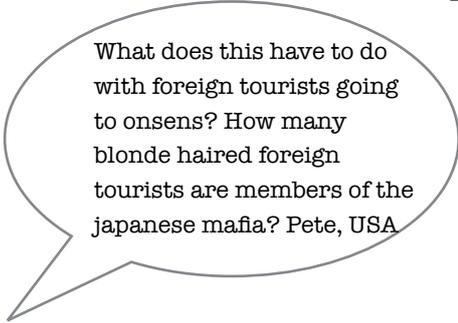
According to the agency, in 2014, one-third of foreign tourists indicated onsens as one of their main reasons for visiting Japan, behind Japanese food and shopping, Sports Nippon reported Friday. However, the agency said tour operators had received feedback from visitors expressing their disappointment and **bewilderment** at being **turned away** from onsens due to their tattoos.

In Japan, tattoos are associated with yakuza organized crime **syndicates**, and many public institutions bar people who have them as a way to keep gangsters out. Many Japanese onsen operators are apparently unaware of the role of tattoos in some cultures.

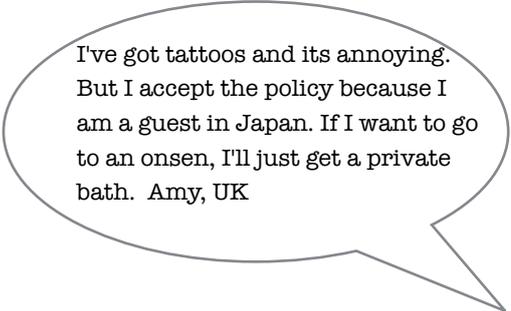
In 2013, the issue gained a lot of media attention after a Maori woman was **barred** from a public bath in Hokkaido because of her traditional face tattoos.

The spa has a ban on people with body art.

After the incident, an official from the public bath said the decision had been made to avoid making other guests uncomfortable. “Even if it is traditional culture, it is difficult to expect other **patrons** to understand the



What does this have to do with foreign tourists going to onsens? How many blonde haired foreign tourists are members of the Japanese mafia? Pete, USA

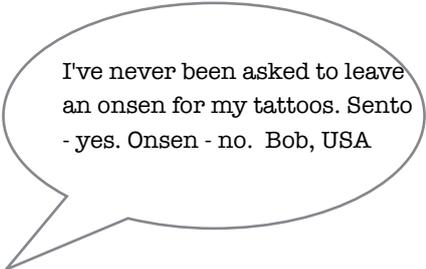


I've got tattoos and its annoying. But I accept the policy because I am a guest in Japan. If I want to go to an onsen, I'll just get a private bath. Amy, UK

difference between one tattoo and another. A typical person cannot judge the context behind the tattoos,” the official said.

Japan is aiming to have 20 million tourists visit annually by 2020. Tourism officials say how businesses accept other cultures is crucial for the industry.

The tourism agency said it will release the results of the survey at the end of June.



I've never been asked to leave an onsen for my tattoos. Sento - yes. Onsen - no. Bob, USA