



1,384 companies and organizations exhibited from 80 countries and overseas regions and all 47 prefectures of Japan.



Upper photo: Commemorative photos with official character MYAKU-MYAKU at the booth from Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. Lower photo: The 60th anniversary booth for the liberalization of overseas travel also attracted attention.

Countries Show Increased Participation, High Expectations for Japanese Outbound Market Active Discussions on Collaboration for Recovery, Engaging Youth, Sustainability

Tourism EXPO Japan (TEJ) 2024 has returned to Tokyo this year after Osaka hosted in 2023. This year's event explores the future of tourism under the theme "Travel, an Encounter With New Value Awaits," and focuses on expanding tourism exchange, sustainable community development through digital transformation (DX) strategies, and reviving overseas travel. With exhibitions from 80 countries and regions, as well as all 47 Japanese prefectures, overseas participants comprised over 40% of the total, highlighting the high expectations for the resurgence of Japan's outbound tourism market.

The event features 1,624 booths, surpassing that of 2023, showcasing innovative approaches from various countries. To celebrate Japan's 60th anniversary of travel liberalization and U.S.-Japan Tourism Year 2024, a student-led symposium featuring a U.S. Travel Planning Contest for university students was held to stimulate travel demand among young people. The Hawaii booth welcomed visitors with game-like attractions, including VR balloon tours, while first-time participant Morocco charmed visitors with traditional music and tea.

TEJ 2024 also played a role in supporting disaster-affected areas, particularly in the Hokuriku region. Ishikawa Prefecture showcased local specialties, while Nippon Travel Agency ran a lottery offering Hokuriku products, demonstrating collaboration between travel companies and

local regions in recovery efforts. The event also served as a preview for Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, with Osaka City promoting its Expo Green Challenge initiative for the UN sustainable development goals and decarbonization.

Addressing the declining interest in travel among young people, a pressing issue for the tourism industry, the TEJ Executive Committee invited 4,500 students studying tourism to the event on September 26th and 27th. A record 14 educational institutions exhibited in the academy corner. A professor from Wakayama University, which has a graduate school for tourism studies, emphasized the event's potential to inspire students, stating, "Students who dive in with questions about solving regional issues are active in various fields beyond tourism. The scope of tourism is wide, and this TEJ will likely serve as a stepping stone."

Themed symposiums covered critical topics such as developing digital tourism talent through DX, advanced tourism destination management, and the preservation and utilization of World Heritage Sites for tourism.

The next TEJ is scheduled to be held in Aichi Prefecture for the first time, from September 25th to 28th, 2025. It is expected to address the diversification of travel destinations for the inbound market, support for the recovery of the earthquake-stricken Noto Peninsula, and promotion of united tourism efforts by the Chubu and Hokuriku regions.

Domestic Tourism Symposium Organized by Japan Travel and Tourism Association

Theme **Regional Tourism Digital Transformation Strategies**
 ~Sustainability and Development through Tourism Promotion~

Keynote Speaker **Panelists**



Mr. Tetsuo Shimizu
 Professor, Department of Tourism Science, Faculty of Urban Environmental Sciences, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Specially Appointed Professor, The Frontier Institute of Tourism Sciences, Kanazawa University (Cross Appointment)



Mr. Junichi Akimoto
 Special Officer, Office of Director for Tourism Industry Competitiveness, Japan Tourism Agency



Mr. Naoya Numata
 Tourism and Industry Division, Kutchan Town, Hokkaido



Mr. Takayuki Hatanaka
 Director, OPEN TONE Co., Ltd.



Mr. Shin Osuka
 Director, Regional & Human Resources Development Department, Japan Travel and Tourism Association

Tourism Enhancing Local Collaborations, Engagement, and Growth Through Data Utilization

In the keynote speech, Tetsuo Shimizu addressed the significance of tourism data management platforms (DMPs) and three major challenges related to them. Using the example of the Japan Travel and Tourism Association (JTТА), Shimizu noted that users tend to lack understanding of the pros and cons of various data sources incorporated into the DMP. Moreover, some regard DMP as a magic wand and do not have concrete ideas about its purpose for their organization. Finally, there is room for more training and consultation for better utilization of DMPs. He also spoke about hands-on training for tourism professionals.

The panel discussion on tourism strategies for digital transformation (DX) followed, with moderation by Koji Tsurumoto. Junichi Akimoto gave an overview of tourism DX and the government's six projects this year, emphasizing the importance of tourism in regional revitalization and growth due to depopulation across Japan. Akimoto stressed that using DX effectively can lead to increased consumption and greater productivity. Next, Naoya Numata introduced examples of DX used in Niseko, Hokkaido, a destination with four ski resorts, which results in the number of tourists fluctuating between seasons. Making real-time data more accessible has contributed to smoother transportation operations, and data on seasonal tourism fluctuations has helped local businesses manage purchasing and staff rosters more efficiently.

Shin Osuka spoke about the differences between destination marketing/management organizations (DMOs) in North America and Japan. In North America, economic impact is analyzed for each campaign and DX is considered the key to ensuring accountability and

transparency. DMOs consider local residents to be an important group of stakeholders, and there is great fervor for community engagement among DMOs, where DX tools are used for better communication with all stakeholders to boost the cycle of "Visit, Live, Work, and Invest."

Lastly, Takayuki Hatanaka spoke about JTТА's DMP from the perspective of the developer. He introduced examples from three prefectures in Japan, showing how users analyze visitor data for better PR strategies, use reservation data to improve policy planning efficacy, and combine qualitative and quantitative data to enhance the appeal of tourism destinations.

Tsurumoto asked for final words from each panelist on the future of DMPs. Akimoto discussed how data can contribute to regional growth while Numata stressed that local challenges such as seasonal fluctuations can be better countered with effective data usage. Osuka reiterated that tourism stakeholders can learn from frontrunners in North America, and Hatanaka closed with the prospect of sharing lessons learned.



Facilitator



Mr. Koji Tsurumoto
 President, Travel Voice Japan Ltd; Member, Japan Travel and Tourism Association Digital Platform Consortium

Overseas Tourism Symposium

Theme **The U.S. - Japan Tourism**
 "The U.S. Travel Planning"



University Students' Innovative Sparking Dreams of Travel Among

To commemorate the 60th anniversary of Japan's greater opening up of overseas travel and the U.S.-Japan Tourism Exchange Year 2024, the Japan Association of Travel Agents hosted a U.S. Travel Planning Contest. Participating students designed trips to promote exchanges between Japan and the U.S. The final round of the contest, held today, had six finalists.

Hannan University's "Father and Son Space Travel Plan: Mission to Become a Dad's Boy" won the Grand Prix. Aimed at fathers and Generation Z sons, the plan includes a simulated space travel experience to space centers in Texas and Florida, where participants can watch a rocket launch.

Presenting the award, Wataru Takaku, Travel Industry Director at Brand USA Japan Office, said, "There were many high-quality travel plans, so it was a close competition, but we judged the high level of originality from a professional perspective. I believe the content can be applied not only to sons but also to daughters."

The second Grand Prix went to Atomi University's "The American Dream of 60 Years Ago Revived: A 'Dream-Packed' American Journey for Modern College Women." This experience offers fun activities

Organized by Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA)

Year 2024 Contest



Tourism Plans Win Acclaim, Youth

around Los Angeles.

The Special Jury Award went to University of Marketing and Distribution Science's "Experience Baseball: Watch, and Interact; A Trip to Fall in Love with Chicago." The plan combines watching baseball and sightseeing in the city.

The event venue brimmed with the energy of students dreaming of travelling abroad.

Marking the U.S.-Japan Tourism Year 2024, the U.S.-Japan Tourism Exchange Year Working Group held a U.S.-Japan Tourism Exchange Symposium today. The group aims to increase bilateral tourism exchange through cooperation between both governments and the tourism industry. U.S. suppliers and Japanese tourism officials described plans to increase demand among Japanese tourists.



A symposium related to the U.S.-Japan Tourism Year 2024 was also held at a separate venue.

Symposium by Japan Tourism Agency Organized by Japan Tourism Agency/Japan Central Heritage Regional Cooperation Association
Co-organized by Japan Travel and Tourism Association

Theme The 11th World Heritage Summit in EXPO

Moderator **Panelists**



Mr. Takashi Shimakawa
Professor, Faculty of Cross-Cultural and Japanese Studies, Kanagawa University



Mr. Yukio Aoki
Mayor of Hiraizumi, Iwate Prefecture



Mr. Shoichi Konakawa
Mayor of Nikko City, Tochigi Prefecture



Mr. Shigeru Horiuchi
Mayor of Fujiyoshida City, Yamanashi Prefecture



Mr. Akimoto Nakai
Mayor of Yoshino, Nara Prefecture

Riding the Tide of Inbound Tourism Surge While Promoting Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage Sites

Mayor Horiuchi spoke about the negative impact of the surge in climbers of Mt. Fuji. "Bullet climbers," who race against time by sometimes compromising safety, start climbing at night to witness the sunrise from the peak. They are a concern because of the serious health risks they pose to themselves and other climbers, and for the possible environmental damage to the mountain. Starting this year, the city has controlled the number of climbers with gates and restrictions, making it safer for all.

Mayor Nakai said Yoshino is renowned for its sacred religious sites and forests. Depopulation and aging in the region has made it more difficult to preserve local culture for the future but there is work to be done so that the region can receive more visitors. Public-private partnerships have helped preserve natural treasures and the local way of life while promoting tourism.

Lastly, Kobayashi spoke about Sado, an island whose gold and silver mines are the newest UNESCO World Heritage Site in Japan. He remarked that local residents' positive reception of their community being more widely recognized through this achievement has brought great joy and relief. The first half of the summit was concluded by Councilor Tsuruho, who spoke about his hopes for improved tourism and enhancement

of the tourism industry in Japan.

The Mayoral Conference comprised the second part of the session. Mayors Konakawa and Aoki joined Mayors Horiuchi and Nakai in addressing achievements, as well as concerns about the environment, traffic, and safety. Overtourism, the preservation of natural resources, and engaging with the local community were among the common topics addressed. Promoting walking trips and fostering local pride were recurring themes. Shimakawa, as moderator, closed by calling for continued appreciation of Japan's spiritual and cultural sites.

Panelist



Mr. Daigo Kobayashi
Director of the Tourism Promotion Department, Sado City, Niigata Prefecture



Upper house member Yosuke Tsuruho, who is also the initiator of the World Heritage Summit, rushed to the venue and greeted the attendees, saying, "We must create dynamic strategies so that the Japan Tourism Agency evolves into the Ministry of Tourism in the future."

Asia's leading tourism trade show

2025

SEP.25 Thu - SEP.28 Sun

VENUE

Aichi Sky Expo (Aichi International Exhibition Center)

ORGANIZED BY

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and Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)
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