



New Year Greetings from Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)

A very happy New Year to you all! We hope that you are having a peaceful start of a new year.

On behalf of the Japan National Tourism Organization, I would like to express my deepest appreciation for relief supplies and heart-warming moral support after the unprecedented magnitude of natural disaster in Japan. International travelers are already coming back to Japan.

As the winter goes into the high season, Japan has a lot to offer even in winter: Capped with world class quality of snow, northern and mountainous regions are great for winter sports and seasonal festivals. Regional winter cuisine is also not-to-miss. Tokyo and Kyoto are located where the mountain range blocks snow system, which makes easier for travelers to cruise around the urban areas.

In addition, a time-limited "Japan Big Welcome Campaign" is currently welcoming international visitors with around 8,000 retailers participating nationwide. While traveling Japan, don't miss this campaign and take advantage of special prices and complimentary gifts offered by the participating stores. (<http://www.visitjapan.jp/eng/top.html>)

After the winter is the beautiful cherry blossom season in Japan: Starting at the end of January in south most Okinawa until early May in north most Hokkaido, thousands of cherry trees blossom in such an ephemeral yet spectacular color, impressing visitors with unforgettable natural beauty. Cherry blossom has been well known and respected internationally, attracting many foreign visitors to Japan from all over the world.

I would like you to enjoy the best of Japan's winter and flowery spring with cherry blossom. We would like to welcome all of you to Japan with our utmost hospitality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "R. Matsuyama". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ryoichi Matsuyama
President, Japan National Tourism Organization
January 2012