

## **Japan gears up to exhibit its flower power this** **‘Sakura’ season**

National, XX April, 2019: ‘Sakura’, commonly known as the *cherry flowers* are witnessed in Japan during the months of spring every year wherein the country is painted in the hues of pink and white due to the mesmerizing flower bloom. The celebrations are marked by tree viewing and picnicking along with closed ones, which in Japanese culture is referred to as ‘Hanami’. It is one of the peak seasons for Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) to welcome millions of travelers across the world to experience this natural exuberance.

Owing to the geographical spread of the blossom, the Hanami are seen in different parts of the country over a period of three months. The **southern subtropical islands of Okinawa enjoy cherry blossoms as early as January**, while on the **northern island of Hokkaido, the flowering happens towards the end of May**. In major cities which are located centrally, such as Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka, the season typically takes place in April. There are **more than 650 viewing spots all over the country**, including parks, temples, shrines and other attractions. Citizens and tourists tap these spots and cherish the flower harvest with food, beverage and day long activities throughout the tenure of the flowering.

Apart from the cultural aspects and festivities, the cherry blossom festival is also a boon to Japan’s tourism. As the entire country becomes a photographer’s paradise, tourists flock from across the world to make the most of this visual treat of mother nature. Over 5.5 million tourists from all over the world visited Japan in March and April of 2018.

The cherry blossom festival is one of the core attractions highlighted in the ‘*Japan Surprises*’ campaign and to ensure the ease of inbound travel in Japan, the government has also recently declared flexible on-arrival visa options. Travelers who are keen on experiencing cherry blossom **this year may visit Aomori and Sapporo to witness the last two flowering scheduled on 22<sup>nd</sup> April and 2<sup>nd</sup> May respectively.**

### **About Japan National Tourism Organization:**

The Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) was founded in 1964 with the mission of enticing foreign travelers to Japan. Affiliated with the Japan Tourism Agency of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, JNTO has effectively functioned as the Japanese government bureau of tourism. It has a total of 21 tourism-promotion-oriented offices across the world, and a large network of suppliers for tourism and event services in Japan. The Japan Convention Bureau (JCB), within JNTO, gathers professionals dedicated to attracting international conferences and incentive tours to Japan, located in 6 strategic offices.

Website: <https://www.jnto.go.jp/>.

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