

The Asian traveller calendar

The cultural moments that shape Asian outbound travel, and what they mean for your restaurant, bar or café.

Asian travel does not run on a European calendar. It follows festivals, harvests, and new years that shift each year. Each cultural moment has a significant impact on European travel, sending a variety of different guests to the continent, many of whom are ready to spend. **But to make the most of them, you need to plan forward.**

Let's explore those key dates in the calendar, what they mean for European restaurants, bars and cafés, and when and how to prepare for their arrival.

- Japanese New Year
- Lunar New Year
- Hong Kong and The Philippines Easter break
- Songkran
- Japanese Golden Week
- Indonesian mid-year school holidays
- Japanese summer holiday / Obon
- Korean Chuseok
- Mid-Autumn Festival and Chinese Golden Week
- Indian wedding season
- Christmas and European winter shopping

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The welcome begins now

Omotenashi begins before the guest does anything. Every date, moment, and detail here is a chance to anticipate, to prepare, and to welcome each visitor as though you had been waiting for them. The moments are set; the time to be ready is yours to use. Your JCB account manager is always happy to help you make the most of it.

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Japanese New Year

When

26 Dec 2026 – 3 Jan 2027

Japan's most important holiday, and one of its biggest outbound travel windows.[1]

Markets

Japan

Who it brings

Couples and families taking the long New Year break abroad. Travellers who often value quality, calm and careful detail.

When to act

Lead time 4–5 months. Japanese travellers book early, and the dates clash with European New Year demand, so be bookable in accurate Japanese by early autumn.

What they spend on

A special meal out to see in the New Year. Considered, high-quality dining rather than volume. An occasion, not an everyday one.

Quick wins

- → Offer a New Year touch to mark Oshogatsu: a special dish or set menu
- → Provide clear information in Japanese: menu, location and how to book
- → Keep service quiet, attentive and unobtrusive across the holiday

1 - https://selfguidejapan.com/blog/japanese-new-year-2027

Lunar New Year

Hong Kong and The Philippines Easter break

Songkran

Japanese Golden Week

Indonesian mid-year school holidays

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→ Japanese New Year

↓ Lunar New Year

When

6 Feb 2027

Celebrations run around 15 days, to the Lantern Festival on 20 Feb[2]

Who it brings

The year's biggest outbound wave.[3] Multi-generational families, travelling to be together, with money to spend.

When to act

Lead time 2-3 months. Have a Lunar New Year set menu, translated listings and large-table availability ready by November/December, while families are deciding where to eat.

What they spend on

Away from the family reunion back home, these travellers mark the New Year with a celebratory meal out. Think a festive group dinner rather than a night in. It's a narrower, more selective opportunity that favours Chinese and other Asian restaurants (although in major cities, a nod to the date is no bad thing). Auspicious dishes still resonate: think fish (abundance), dumplings (wealth), longevity noodles (long life), and nian gao (growth).

Quick wins

→ Build a shareable, round-table set menu for a group, not a plate per person

→ Put a few traditional Lunar New Year dishes on the menu and highlight their cultural significance.

→ Be prepared for one guest to settle the bill on behalf of the group, as this is common in many Lunar New Year celebrations.

→ Longer table bookings to accommodate large, celebrating groups

2 - https://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/festivals/when-chinese-new-year.htm
3 - https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-lunar-new-year-travel-rush-is-worlds-biggest-annual-migration-2026-02-16/

→ Hong Kong and The Philippines Easter break

→ Songkran

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→ Lunar New Year

↓ Hong Kong and The Philippines Easter break

When

25 – 29 March 2027

days near the European Easter weekend.[4,5]

Who it brings

A small, affluent, quality-led window. Couples and small groups on a compact city break.

Markets

Hong Kong, The Philippines

When to act

Lead time 2-3 months. Have your Easter-period menu and English listings live from the new year, when they research where to eat.

What they spend on

Considered, fine dining on a short trip. A memorable meal or two rather than volume; café culture by day, a standout dinner by night.

Quick wins

→ Lead with quality and a clear signature dish

→ Cater for small groups and families, with flexible menu options suitable for sharing.

→ Note any Easter or Holy Week specials: Filipino diners often mark the occasion, while Hong Kong visitors may be receptive to seasonal menus and visually appealing dishes that are easily shared on social media.

4 - https://publicholidays.ph/easter/
5 - https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202605/15/P2026051400300.htm?fontSize=1

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↓ Songkran

Quick wins

- → Offer shareable, family-style plates built for a table, not individual covers
- → Make large-group reservations and late, sociable sittings easy
- → Give them a photogenic dish or setting worth sharing



When

13-15 April 2027

Fixed dates each year.[6]

When to act

Lead time 2-3 months. Have group menus and easy large-table booking ready by February, before they lock down their plans.

Markets

Thailand

What they spend on

Sociable group meals. Shareable plates, a lively atmosphere and something worth photographing.

Who it brings

Thai New Year. Sociable groups of friends and extended family, travelling as a unit.

6 - https://www.visitthailandtoday.com/guides/songkran-festival-thailand

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→ Lunar New Year



→ Hong Kong and The Philippines Easter break



→ Songkran

↓ Japanese Golden Week

Quick wins

- → Be exact on allergens and ingredients: precision is expected, not optional
- → Train staff on quiet, attentive, unobtrusive service
- → Show JCB acceptance clearly. It's the preferred, front-of-wallet card for many Japanese travellers.



When

29 Apr-5 May 2027

A run of public holidays; the exact span shifts slightly each year.[7]

Markets

Japan

Who it brings

Japan's busiest outbound week.[8] Travellers who often value quality, attention to detail and a well-organised experience.

When to act

Start preparing the menu, marketing and events 3-4 months ahead. Have an accurate Japanese menu and reservations open by January-February; Japanese diners tend to plan and book early.

What they spend on

Precise, high-quality dining. Seasonal specials, careful presentation and attentive service; quality over quantity.

7 - https://www.nippon.com/en/japan-data/h02794/
8 - https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2026/04/03/japan/golden-week-travel-abroad-increase/

→ Indonesian mid-year school holidays



→ Japanese summer holiday / Obon



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↓ Indonesian mid-year school holidays

Quick wins

- → Offer clearly labelled halal dishes, and flag halal status up front
- → Have good alcohol-free options (juices, mocktails, teas), not an afterthought
- → Cater for families and mixed-age tables (children's options, larger tables to book)
- → Have chilli or hot sauce like Sambal on hand. Many Indonesian diners like more heat than European menus offer, and will ask.

When

Mid-June to mid-July 2027

Dates are set regionally and confirmed each year.

Markets

Indonesia

When to act

Lead time 3–4 months. Have halal options and family-friendly menus clear on your listings by spring, before the June school break.

Who it brings

Indonesian families, major long-haul travellers over the summer school break. Multi-generational and planning-led, travelling for a longer trip.

What they spend on

Family meals over a longer stay. Comfortable, unhurried dining that works for mixed ages, with halal a deciding factor.

→ Japanese summer holiday / Obon

→ Korean Chuseok

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When

10-17 Aug 2027

Mid-August; observed dates vary slightly by region.[9]

Who it brings

Summer family travel around Obon. Unhurried, multi-generational, detail-conscious.

Markets

Japan

When to act

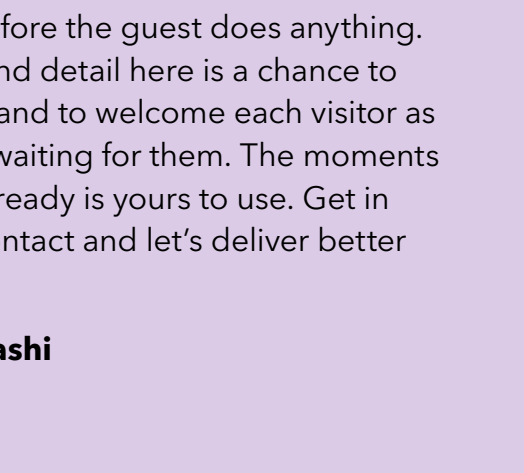
Lead time around 3 months. Have summer menus, accurate hours and Japanese listings live by May, before plans firm up.

What they spend on

Relaxed family dining across generations. Considered choices, comfort and ease for travelling with elders or children.

Quick wins

- → Offer dishes and seating that suit mixed-age, multi-generational tables
- → Provide clear Japanese menu information and accurate opening hours
- → Make it easy to travel with elders and children: accessible, unhurried, low-fuss
- → Show JCB acceptance clearly; it is the preferred card



9 - https://modernlivingjapan.com/en/blog/obon-in-tokyo-what-every-foreign-resident-needs-to-know

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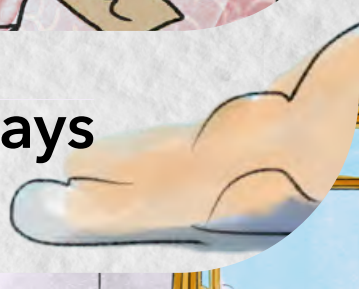
→ Japanese Golden Week



→ Indonesian mid-year school holidays



→ Japanese summer holiday / Obon

↓ Korean Chuseok

When

14-16 Sept 2027

(Chuseok 15 Sept): Three-day national holiday.[10]

Who it brings

Korea's biggest outbound window. Mobile-first and well-researched, they put a premium on payment convenience.

Markets

South Korea

When to act

Lead time around 3 months. Be discoverable on Korean apps and mobile-ready by early summer, before September.

What they spend on

Well-researched, mobile-led dining bookable via online apps / restaurant's website. Trend-aware diners who choose on reviews and photos, and expect a fast, wallet-first table.

Quick wins

- → Be present and well-reviewed where Koreans plan (e.g. Naver)
- → Make your menu photogenic and shareable: they choose on images
- → Accept Korean mobile wallets (Kakao Pay, Naver Pay) and show it at the table

10 - https://www.wanderlustmagazine.com/inspiration/chuseok-south-korea-harvest-festival/



→ Mid-Autumn Festival and Chinese Golden Week

→ Indian wedding season



→ Christmas and European winter shopping

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When

Mid-Autumn 15 Sept
Golden Week 1-7 Oct 2027

A gift festival rolling into the national travel week.[11,12]

Markets

Mainland China (Mid-Autumn also marked across the region).

When to act

Lead time 3–4 months. Have festival and set-menu options, in Chinese, live from June–July, before the fixed October peak.

Who it brings

A gift festival rolling into China's October travel peak. Premium, brand-literate, destination-led.

What they spend on

Premium group and celebration dining. Mooncakes and gifting around the festival, then landmark, brand-name meals during the October travel peak.

Quick wins

- → Offer a mooncake or gift touch around Mid-Autumn
- → Build premium set menus for groups and a standout, landmark experience
- → Price a group set menu or add-on at a flat, lucky figure (e.g. €88): 8 signals prosperity[13]

11 - https://publicholidays.cn/mid-autumn-festival/
12 - https://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/festival/national.htm
13 - https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/the-science-behind-behavior/201901/why-are-prices-ending-in-the-number-8-so-popular-in-asia

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Quick wins

→ Offer a genuine vegetarian range, and understand Jain and no-onion-no-garlic requests

→ Consider avoiding beef in celebration menus, and be clear about what is halal

→ Be ready for honeymoon couple bookings with requests like quiet corners or romantic set-ups

When

Nov 2027-Feb 2028 peaking Jan-Feb

Auspicious muhurat dates set the peaks each year.[14]

Who it brings

A long, premium window of weddings and the travel around them. Celebrating couples, serious budgets.

Markets

India

When to act

Lead time 3–4 months. Have special menus and dietary options clear on your listings by late summer, before the season opens.

What they spend on

Honeymoon couples looking for once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

14 - https://www.drikpanchang.com/shubh-dates/shubh-marriage-dates-with-muhurat.html?year=2027

→ Christmas and European winter shopping

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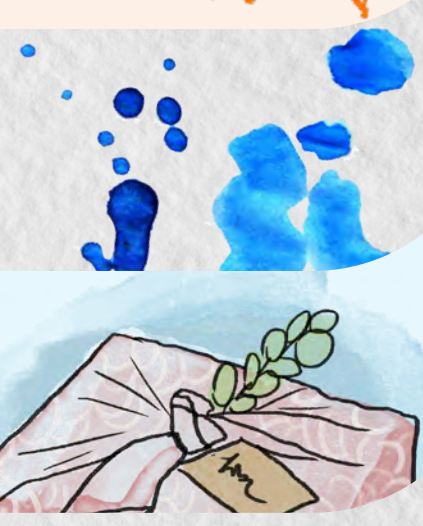
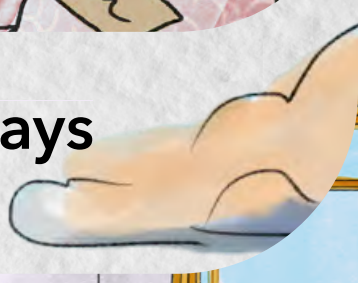
→ Hong Kong and The Philippines Easter break



→ Songkran



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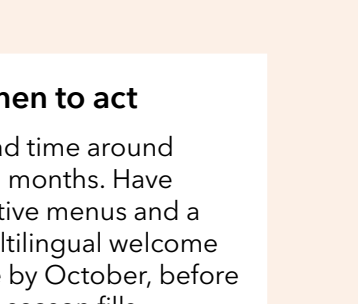

→ Mid-Autumn Festival and Chinese Golden Week

→ Indian wedding season

↓ Christmas and European winter shopping

Quick wins

- → Offer a festive set menu that delivers the European Christmas they came for
- → Take group and walk-in family bookings between shopping and sightseeing
- → Clear opening hours and dates on the website, search engines and social channels
- → At festive markets, use QR-code menus in the relevant languages and label dishes clearly (vegetarian, allergens, what's in them); it's not always obvious to visitors
- → Lean into the things they came for: festive decorations, and seasonal desserts like Christmas pudding and mince pies.

When

Nov 2027 - Jan 2028

A long retail window across the festive season.

Markets

Multi-market - many Asian countries and territories visit for it.

Who it brings

The European Christmas pulls Asia in – markets, lights, sales, atmosphere.

When to act

Lead time around 2–3 months. Have festive menus and a multilingual welcome live by October, before the season fills.

What they spend on

Festive dining as part of the experience. A European Christmas meal, warming seasonal dishes, and a table between the markets and the shops.



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