

## Travel News Desk

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### **Flights24.com: Return flights to Europe increasingly expensive / 4,887 Euros for a one way ticket from Tokyo – Munich / First Class 20,000 Euros**

#### **Clever customers can still save money**

Frightened tourists in Japan desperate to return to Germany have to pay a heavy price – up to 8,200 Euros for an economy ticket. These shocking results were found in an evaluation by the leading British flights website [flights24.com](http://flights24.com). Those who prefer to leave the current Japanese crisis in style and comfort must pay as much as 20,000 Euros or more for a first class ticket from Tokyo to Munich. The cheapest first class option, had it still been available, would otherwise have cost 9,300 Euros. While German airline Lufthansa is currently only offering flights to cities such as Osaka and Nagoya, 20 other airlines are operating with limited aircraft in Tokyo and are offering flights to Europe as scheduled. The excessive average prices correspond to the unusually high demand - leaving cheaper tickets sold out – automatically forcing customers into more expensive ticket categories. All offers are for economy class, effective March 17<sup>th</sup>.

Not only are the prices for tickets booked at the last minute high, those who wish to escape Japan also have to reckon with gruelling flight times, as flights from Tokyo back to Europe can involve changes in Moscow, London, Helsinki, New York or Chicago. Therefore, up to 25 hours or more should be planned for journeys. Under normal circumstances, direct flights take around 13 hours. However, the situation is not without hope for those who desperately want to leave Japan. For example, had a customer booked a flight on March 17<sup>th</sup> to leave on the 19<sup>th</sup>, 42 aircraft are scheduled to leave Tokyo for Munich with 155 remaining seats available. Of those, only one is a direct flight, costing 5,379 Euros. All other flights are via Vienna, Paris, Amsterdam, London, Dubai, Frankfurt, Chicago, Helsinki, New York or Zurich. Even these flights cost an average of 4,887 Euros. Just as expensive are flights back to Hamburg. Residents of the northern German city can choose from 21 flights to return home (based on March 17<sup>th</sup>), but only by changing in Vienna, London, Paris, Frankfurt, New York or Munich. Travellers who want to book one of the remaining 83 seats have to pay a current average price of 6,092 Euros.

Those hoping to return to the German capital, Berlin, have only 5 flights to choose from for March 19<sup>th</sup>, from airlines Aeroflot, ANA or Austrian Airlines. On average, these flights cost 4,422.51 Euros. The cheapest ticket, via Moscow, costs 1,250.33 Euros with Aeroflot. The catch: At time of writing on March 17<sup>th</sup>, only one available seat remained. Flights to other European capitals are not much cheaper. Italians hoping to return from Tokyo to Rome on March 19<sup>th</sup> have to pay an average of 4,397 Euros. As of March 17<sup>th</sup>, 130 seats to the Italian capital were still available. Again, the cheapest ticket is available again from Russian airline Aeroflot, via Moscow, and costs 958 Euros. However, only one seat remains available. The most expensive offer costs 7,008 Euros – and even in this price category, only 7 seats remain. Currently, the following airlines are offering flights to Rome: Aeroflot, Austrian Airlines, Finn Airlines, Air France, KLM, Virgin Atlantic, Thai Airways, ANA Airlines, United Airlines, Japan Airlines, Air Canada, American Airlines and British Airways.

French travellers trying to return to their beautiful capital, Paris, have to pay an average of 4,265.55 Euros for an economy ticket. In total, 139 seats are still available to Paris for March 19<sup>th</sup>. The following airlines are currently offering service from Tokyo to Paris, with 47 aircraft: Cathay Pacific, British Airways, Austrian Airlines, Japan Airlines, Finn Airlines, Air France, KLM, ANA, United Airlines and American Airlines. Flying home won't be cheap for the Spanish, either. On average, the price for one of the remaining 175 tickets from Tokyo to Madrid on March 19<sup>th</sup> is 4,711 Euros. In total, 43 aircraft will fly to Madrid on that day, but not without transfers or lengthy stopovers in other cities. British citizens trying to get back to London currently have to pay 4,526 Euros. A total of 85 aircraft with 242 free spaces are available from Tokyo.

For many tourists, business travellers or students who find themselves in Japan, each day they stay looks set to cost them more. Fluege.de estimates the situation will remain the same until all nuclear danger has been ruled out. However, there are some tricks available to avoid the expensive one way ticket prices. Fluege.de recommends travellers to check whether a return flight may be cheaper before booking a one way ticket. The customer can then simply forfeit the return leg of the journey. For instance, a Tokyo to Munich flight, via Amsterdam, costs only 1,084 Euros leaving on March 19<sup>th</sup> and returning on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Flying with ANA from Tokyo to Madrid on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March (with the return leg on

June 30<sup>th</sup>) is a little more expensive, with tickets available for 3,200 Euros. The cheapest simple return flight via Moscow would cost “only” 958 Euros with Aeroflot. With Finnair, the ticket is priced at 2,004 Euros. In this case, booking a return flight to Madrid is not a sensible option. A similar situation exists for Hamburg – those aiming to fly from Tokyo to Hamburg on March 19<sup>th</sup> with a return leg on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, would currently have to pay 1,776 Euros. From Tokyo to Berlin (via Amsterdam) on the same dates, the tickets cost 1,081 Euros.

Incidentally: If a customer had booked a simple ticket to Munich for March 19<sup>th</sup> on March 17<sup>th</sup> from another Asian metropolis such as Beijing, the cheapest price would have been 708 Euros. On average, tickets are 1,510 Euros. From Bangkok, the cheapest available ticket Germany booked at such short notice would have cost 364 Euros for the 17<sup>th</sup> of March. The median price however is 1,789 Euros. That still means that flights from Bangkok are measurably cheaper than those from Tokyo. Currently, thousands of Europeans are in the Tokyo-Yokohama region, including around 1000 Germans. The British government is organising flights for British citizens who cannot afford a commercial ticket from regular airlines. Additionally, Chinese companies are chartering aircraft in conjunction with carriers to get their staff home.

### How tourists who urgently want to leave Japan can save money: The seven flights24.com tips

- Travellers should not restrict their return flight to a certain city, but check for possibilities all across the country and throughout Europe. With luck, you may be able to save a few thousand Euros.
- Travellers should use online comparison engines like fluege.de to find the cheapest flights and not waste time visiting individual airline websites. Fluege.de, for example, offers over 700 airlines with millions of flight connections. Within a minute, visitors can see an overview of the available options.
- Travellers should try to keep their departure date flexible by a few days, even when the flight is urgent. Waiting one or two days could reduce the ticket cost by more than 1.000 Euros.
- Travellers should stay calm and book their flight with a clear head and not panic and buy the first offer they find. Whether the cost of the flight is 7.000 or 2.000 Euros will make a big difference once you are home.
- Travellers should pay attention to flight duration. From Japan to Germany, for example, some flights take 10 hours longer than others.
- An alternative to consider is the city of Osaka. From here, much cheaper flights can be booked – with luck, one way to Europe for less than 1000 Euros with Lufthansa, for example. At the time of writing (March 17<sup>th</sup>, 21.11) only for 6 seats were available for a flight on March 19<sup>th</sup> from Osaka to Frankfurt via Munich. When those tickets are gone, the cost of flights to Frankfurt will climb above 3.000 Euros. The reason: Only 26 seats remain across all airlines for March 19<sup>th</sup>. These offers and availability change by the minute\*.

\* All information is supplied without guarantee and is subject to change. The sample test date for all ticket prices was March 17<sup>th</sup> between 13.00 and 21.15. The basis was ticket prices in economy class. This also applies to average ticket price estimates. The stated amount of remaining seats available reflects only the amount displayed on flights24.com at the time of the sample test. As a result of the automatic airline booking process, the amount of remaining seats as well as ticket prices change by the minute. The figures are therefore only a reflection of the results of the sample test. Therefore, all figures, particularly the cost of flight tickets and the amount of remaining seats, are given without any guarantee. Only the current results displayed to the visitor, for instance on flights24.com, at the time of booking are valid.

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