



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HANMI OCCUPANCY AT 15% IN SEPTEMBER 2025

SAIPAN, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS – The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands (HANMI) reported 14.87% average occupancy rate among 11 member hotels for September 2025, 35% lower than 43.02% in September 2024 and the lowest occupancy rate recorded since 1992, excluding a year and half at the height of the coronavirus pandemic.

A total of 9,203 of 64,905 available room nights sold during September 2025 compared to 27,065 of 62,915 available rooms sold in September 2024. The average room rate was \$113.69, a drop from \$130.88 last September and the lowest September room rate in 12 years.

Visitor arrivals to The Marianas continue to decline in the face of fierce flight competition from the primary source market of Korea, an unfavorable currency exchange rate, an oversupply of air seats to neighboring Guam, a global shortage of new aircraft due to Boeing delivery delays, loss of destination competitiveness, and other factors.

“It is a perfect storm of factors working against our destination right now – from currency exchange, to airline issues, to geopolitical relations,” said HANMI Chairman Dennis Seo. “HANMI is working closely with the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), airlines, travel agencies, and the administration to keep every air seat we can and to keep our doors open.”

The Marianas continues to struggle with the effects of an oversupply of air seats to Guam starting in August from the top source market of Korea. The Korea Fair Trade Commission had approved the merger of Korean Air and Asiana Airlines in late 2024 with strict requirements, including a 90% seat supply mandate on routes deemed important, such as the Guam route. As a result, Korean Air and its LCC affiliate Jin Air began doubling flights on the Seoul Incheon-Guam route in August, eventually operating at six times a day to meet the mandate.

“The merger mandates are having a devastating effect on rates, making travel to Guam from Korea much, much cheaper than travel to Saipan, even as low as \$180 to \$250 roundtrip,” said Seo. “Our understanding is that the Korean Community of Saipan is filing an official request for reprieve from the Korean Fair Trade Commission due to the devastating effect this is having on local businesses. In line with this, HANMI will work

together with the leaders of the Korean Community in the Marianas on a letter supporting their petition, and all affected companies and agencies are encouraged to join this letter-writing campaign.”

Unstable air service to The Marianas is forecasted to continue throughout FY 2026 if not remedied.

[Current International Airline Schedule]

Airline	Route	Period	Remark
Jeju Air	Seoul-Saipan Nighttime Flight	10/09/2025 ~ UFN	*Suspension
	Seoul-Saipan Daytime Flight	Currently daily service	In Service
T'way Air	Seoul-Saipan Nighttime Flight	10/14/2025 ~ 11/22/2025	*Suspension
		11/23/2025 ~ 03/14/2026	Resumption
		03/15/2026 ~ UFN	*Suspension
	Busan-Saipan Nighttime Flight *Seasonal Charter	12/23/2025 ~ 02/28/2025 (Every Thursday, Sunday)	Under Negotiation
United Air	Narita-Saipan Night Flight	Weekly 3 flights (Every Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday)	In Service
Hong Kong Airlines	Hong Kong – Saipan Night Flight	Weekly 2 flights (Every Thursday, Sunday)	In Service

Note: UFN “until further notice”

“Our hotels understand that financial situation of the government and the difficult decisions that had to be made with this year’s budget, as we have also had to reduce operations, reduce hours, and let people go. It’s very difficult,” said Seo. “Stabilizing air service is to the top priority of all stakeholders right now.

“Second to that, and simultaneously, we need to work on improving what visitors experience when they are here. How are we connecting them with authentic culture, our food, our unique heritage and way of life? What can they experience here that might make them choose The Marianas as a better experience than Danan, Hawaii, or even Guam? It would be a good positive stop to bring back the Garapan Street Market for visitors to enjoy.”

Several HANMI member hotels are now in discussion with air carriers and the MVA to find ways to ensure no further loss of flights, including purchasing air seats through hard block agreement - which may involve financial penalties for unsold seats - or offering special benefits to consumers in Korea who purchase Saipan travel products. Negotiations for winter seasonal charter flights from Busan-Saipan route are still

underway to bring twice weekly flights during the period. Twice weekly flights from Hong Kong resumed on Sept. 21, and twice weekly flights from Hong Kong by Hong Kong-based carrier Greater Bay Airlines are under consideration to begin in the winter 2025-2026 season.

To further bolster the local tourism economy, HANMI is also seeking the reinstatement of Annex VI under the US Department of Transportation's "US-China Air Transport Agreement," provided an exemption for The Marianas from the cap on the number of scheduled US-China flights. However, Seo said that even with Annex VI, airline and travel agency partners are concerned about the stability of the EVS-TAP immigration program that allows non-visa holders to enter the CNMI. He added that full endorsement from the government and all concerned parties is critical.

Hotels included in HANMI's monthly statistical report are Aqua Resort Club, Aquarius Beach Tower, Century Hotel, Coral Ocean Resort, GrandVrio Resort Saipan, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Kensington Hotel Saipan, LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Saipan World Resort, and Surfrider Resort Hotel.

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands was established in 1985 as a professional forum for the hospitality industry of The Marianas.

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