

# OAG Executive Flight Guide

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## Contents

- 2 Bahasa Melayu
- 2 日本語
- 3 한국어

- 3 華語
- 4 简体华语
- 4 ไทย

Valid 01 May - 31 May

Red paper umbrellas in bamboo grove, Japan  
Decorative paper umbrellas are used nowadays to create a traditional Japanese atmosphere at events such as Japanese Tea Ceremonies



iii



viii



x



xii



xiv



xvi

## Executive Travel

### News

- iii ANAatomy of a seat: learning curve
- vi OAG Airline of the Year Awards: announcing the prizewinning readers who voted in this year's poll
- xvi What's on where: events around the world during May and June

**Plus** Your letters to the Editor: iv

### Features

- vii Hotels: Shangri-La makes its Australian debut
- viii Airline briefing: getting a better deal
- x Airport briefing: Kuala Lumpur's co-ordinated efficiency
- xii Destination briefing: Osaka - where you could be singing karaoke for your business supper
- xiv Travellers' briefing: playing safe in a dangerous world

### 1 Planning your flight

- 4 How to plan your flight

### 20 Flight schedules

#### 591 Information to help you choose your flight

- 592 Airline codes
- 595 Airline code share carriers
- 600 Aircraft codes
- 603 State codes
- 604 Connecting city/airport codes
- 606 Building your own connections

- 613 Minimum connecting times

- 618 Airport terminal codes

#### 621 Reference

- 622 City index and airline reservation numbers
- 660 Bank closures and public holidays
- 667 International time calculator
- 671 Time zone map
- 672 Calendar
- 673 OAG offices and general sales agents
- 676 Customer services/How to advertise



# Publisher's letter

Against a backdrop of heightened tension around the world, there is a need for increased vigilance on the part of everyone who travels, whether on business or for leisure reasons. The growing number of travel alerts in recent weeks — threats of increased terrorism, the health scare relating to the deadly flu-like virus (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) — serve as a constant reminder that personal safety is not something one can ever take for granted. This is not a time for complacency, and companies, as well as individual travellers, have a responsibility to take all reasonable precautions.

The fact remains that the wheels of business continue to turn and for many that means an ongoing need to travel, often to areas that might be regarded as less than safe. There is plenty of advice available from a wide range of sources, including government bodies and private sector professionals. While some destinations are very much off-limits, others may only have localised trouble spots, which can be avoided. As with most things in life, much of the advice is no more than simple common sense.

It is a topic we examine in this month's *Travellers' Briefing*, looking at corporate responsibility and culpability should things go wrong, as well as providing a practical checklist of survival hints for the traveller. And while many of the world's airlines are also struggling for financial survival, we look at what cost-saving measures travellers can sensibly take during this period of corporate belt-tightening.

Elsewhere, we visit Osaka, where you will need a fairly generous expense account if you are not to finish up singing karaoke for your business supper, and we look at KLIA, Malaysia's showcase gateway, which is rapidly becoming one of the favoured transit points for the region as a whole. Plus our usual news round-up, a look at the worldwide hotel scene and a list of global events this month and next. And, as always, we want to hear from you, our readers: drop us a line, fax or e-mail us with any comments or suggestions you may have about our products or services. Your feedback is vital if we are to continue to enhance and improve our service to you — all designed to help speed the traveller on his or her way. Have a safe journey.

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# News



executive travel

## Learning curve...

More first class passengers have an opportunity to discover the benefits of ANA's new premium cabin, which is being introduced this month on daily non-stop flights between Tokyo and New York. Featuring what is claimed to be the widest sleeper seat in the sky — 33 inches wide and 76 inches long when reclined — it offers total privacy. Other features include an individual 15-inch personal TV — again the largest available — and digital audio and video on demand (AVOD) with 58 channels of interactive entertainment, all via noise-reducing headsets. There is also a universal power port for laptop and notebook computers, a personal telephone, and meals are served at a time specified by the passenger. The new cabin was first introduced in December on the Tokyo-London route.

## Flu and war take their toll

The war in Iraq and the effects of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in Asia have forced many airlines to cut services. Qantas is trimming up to 20% of its services until mid-July, when the situation will be reviewed. Singapore Airlines, which had already cancelled 65 flights because of the conflict in the Middle East, also saw a downturn in business as a result of the SARS scare. Cathay Pacific announced temporary reductions to a number of its regional flights until the end of May, while Thai International suspended some services to China.

Air New Zealand reported a sharp downturn in bookings on its Hong Kong and Japan routes and has announced 21 cancellations for May and June. As well as reducing services, Qantas deferred the launch of its Chicago flights, which had been due to start at the end of March. There have also been extensive cutbacks in flights to the Middle East by a number of airlines.

## No-shows showdown?

The days of travellers making multiple bookings in an effort to secure a seat on the first available flight at the end of a business trip could be numbered as a result of new software.

NameHunter, developed by US technology company Language Analysis Systems, searches airline reservation systems to find identical or similar names, thus identifying passengers who make duplicate bookings. It compares new passenger name records with existing PNRs in the airlines' databases to establish whether there are duplicate or non-chronological itineraries. It could save carriers millions in lost revenue and help put an end to the practice of overbooking to offset no-shows.

## News in brief

**In a major** relaunch of its Executive Club loyalty programme this summer, British Airways is to allow members to use BA Miles for upgrades and a combination of miles and cash for the purchase of tickets. Discounted fares will also qualify for miles for the first time.

**Qantas** has opened new first and business class Club lounges at Bangkok airport.

**First and business** class passengers flying with Korean Air are being offered individual DVD players, with a wide selection of movies, to supplement the in-flight entertainment programme. The service is already available on flights from Seoul to Sydney, Auckland, London, Rome, Los Angeles and Washington DC.

**Economy class** passengers travelling with Air India can now select seats at the time of reservation, a facility previously available only to first and business class passengers.



## TravelPostings



### Your letters to the Editor

#### Weather beaten

I fail to see the point of international weather forecasts aimed at the general public. You aren't going to change your plans just because it's raining at your destination, are you?

Business travellers probably wouldn't have the option anyway. "I want you there by noon on Friday, Smithers." "But sir, it'll be raining."

The worst forecasts are those by CNN and the like, where you get inane statements like: "It's cloudy over Eastern Asia with a chance of rainfall towards evening." The weather pattern of the biggest continent on earth is summed up in a few vague sentences. It's no use to the people who are already there or to those who intend going, so why bother?

John Lockhart  
London E12

#### Farewell to BA

British Airways will no doubt breathe a sigh of relief that almost certainly I have written to it for the last time. I have decided I am too old and weary to battle against arrogance and stupidity and have just completed my final long-haul flight with the flag carrier.

I have just cancelled the 16 bookings I had made for flights to and from Denver and 12 provisional return flights to Buenos Aires. I wrote to BA at the end of last year, regarding a forthcoming return flight from Singapore to London, asking if it would be possible to pay for an upgrade on this final sector of my trip. I

asked again at Heathrow on departure, and once more at the BA office in Sydney, having also rung the airline in Cairns and Singapore.

On every occasion, the answer was negative, "since your ticket was issued by Qantas". I had, in fact, booked with the airline as I had a number of Australian internal flights. In any case, I thought that as a member of the Oneworld Alliance, Qantas was working with, not against, BA.

On checking in at Singapore, I was told my seat, 42D, was by a bulkhead. It wasn't. So I had to suffer 14 hours cramped into a seat with 66cm (26 inches) between the back of the one in front and the squab of mine. This despite the fact there were a considerable number of empty seats in Club. Without doubt, BA is the worst of all the major airlines in terms of economy class legroom.

Anthony Rosen  
Stockbridge, Hampshire, UK

#### Case dismissed

I have recently bought a carry-on case only to discover that its weight is almost two-thirds the allowance I am permitted to take on board. That leaves me just over 2kg for contents — my laptop weighs more than that.

Karsten Jensen  
Esbjerg, Denmark

#### Flu farce

I have just returned from Guangzhou, where, allegedly, news of the outbreak of the latest deadly flu virus was suppressed on the grounds it might damage the image of the city and deter potential visitors. This is outrageous — I, and no doubt many other travellers, could have been exposed to the virus and unwittingly carried it around the world. What on earth does the World Health Organisation do these days to justify its existence?

Patrick Fenton  
Singapore

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# Travel advisory...

Kenya has been added to the list of potential terror targets, along with Ethiopia and Djibouti, according to the latest UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice update. The FCO website states that the advice has been changed to underline the continued threat from terrorism: "The Foreign Office continues to receive information that Westerners are at risk from terrorist attacks in areas frequented by foreigners. In particular there is a potential threat against western interests in Nairobi, Kenya."

It warns visitors to all three countries to be highly vigilant in areas frequented by foreign visitors, including hotels, nightclubs, shopping centres and restaurants. However, it has stopped short of advising against all non-essential travel.

The advice also extends to the Gulf region, where there is perceived to be an increased threat. "Given the heightened tension in the Middle East region and the increased threat from global terrorism, visitors should be

vigilant, particularly in public places frequented by foreigners," states the FCO.

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office is advising against ALL travel to the following destinations. Check its website for the latest update: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/>. Burundi, Central African Republic, Iraq, Israel and the Occupied Territories, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Kuwait, Liberia and Yemen. Unless on essential business, it advises against travel to: Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, East Timor, Haiti, Indonesia, Lebanon, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone and Syria.

## Health Alert

The World Health Organisation is recommending travellers consider postponing non-essential travel to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Guangdong Province as a result of developments in the multi-country outbreak of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). Check the WHO website for the latest information: [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)



## Congratulations

to all this year's winners

There will be a review of the event in next month's issue of Executive Travel. In the meantime, full details and pictures are on the OAG website at [www.oag.com](http://www.oag.com).

## PrizeDraw for voters

**Congratulations** to the winner, business traveller R. Petty from Puerto Rico, who has chosen a luxury watch as his prize.

Runners-up prizes of a stylish executive desk clock go to:

M Acaster, UK; S Kuriyama, USA; T Murnane, USA; J Reele, USA; E Uehling, USA;

**Congratulations** to travel arranger R M Steuer from the USA, who has won a 2-night hotel stay.

Runners-up prizes of a stylish desk clock to go:

C Alexis, UK; V Carr, UK; B Faulkner, USA; C R Harris, USA;

J Holzheimer, USA; L Keohane, UK; W MekTrkarn, Thailand; P Payne, USA; S Uhl, USA;

All winners have been notified.



# Hotels



executive travel

## Shangri-La makes its debut in Australia

Upmarket Far East hotel group Shangri-La is expanding into Australia with a management contract to operate a 561-room property located in a prime position in Sydney's Rocks district between the Opera House and the Harbour Bridge. Formerly the ANA Harbour Grand, the 5-star hotel — within walking distance of the city's Central Business District — has 81 Horizon Club rooms on six floors. Extensive meeting facilities include 14 function rooms and boardrooms, and the hotel is one of the best equipped video-conferencing venues in the southern hemisphere.

The move into Australia is part of a major expansion programme, which includes openings in Dubai, Oman, the Maldives and China.

### New Hong Kong hotel

Kowloon's first new 5-star hotel for more than a decade is due to open in July next year. An innovation at the 700-room Langham Place, in the heart of Mongkok, will be a novel integrated work-and-play area, complete with a business centre featuring the latest hi-tech facilities, such as a complimentary broadband Internet lounge and a fully equipped business centre, alongside a bar with live entertainment. Additionally, there will be wireless laptop facilities in the hotel's public areas. Owned by the Hong Kong-based hotel group that also operates the Great Eagle Hotel, the new property is named after London's legendary Langham hotel, which it also owns.

### Female-only floor opens

A controversial women-only floor has been opened by a leading London hotel. The Hilton on Park Lane, where the number of lone women travellers has more than doubled in the past decade and now account for around 10,000 of its customers a year, has designed it

for women looking for extra security, discretion and comfort.

The entire 22nd floor addresses security needs with double locks on bedroom doors and increased CCTV cameras in corridors. It also offers private check-in and discretion from staff when issuing room keys.

Rooms feature extra floral furnishings and more relevant magazines, replacing the usual reading matter, and bathrooms have additional toiletries and more powerful hairdryers, with improved make-up mirrors and lighting.

According to general manager Gianni Riatsch, the aim is for female travellers who have concerns about travelling alone to feel secure, comfortable and discreetly catered for. However, critics — mainly female — argue women do not want to be singled out for special treatment and merely want to be treated the same as their male counterparts.

### News in brief

**Radisson** is to open its first hotel in Bangladesh at the end of the year. Part of a major expansion programme in the Asia/Pacific region, the 211-room 5-star Water Garden in Dhaka will be three miles from the airport.

**Le Meridien** is to manage a 722-room, 5-star property scheduled to open in Shanghai's Nanjing Road by mid-2005. It will be the hotel group's first foray into the China market.

**Wireless** broadband Internet access is now available at Oberoi hotels in New Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Bangalore, as well as the Trident hotel in Chennai. All that guests require is a wireless LAN card, available from the hotels' butler service.



# Getting a better deal

At a time of corporate belt-tightening, private and public sector organisations are under pressure to cut costs. Sheriden Rhodes examines some of the options

With anticipated further economic slowdown as a result of the war in Iraq, many organisations are looking at ways of cutting costs. And as travel and entertainment is a company's second largest controllable expense after salaries (according to research undertaken by American Express), this is likely to be one of the first areas to come under the corporate microscope.

According to travel managers, savings can be achieved for all sizes of organisation, as long as corporate travellers take a flexible approach to itineraries and use the services of a savvy travel management company. Compliance with travel policy is also essential if companies want to manage and reduce their travel expenditure. Small- to medium-sized organisations (SMEs) appear to gain most benefit from the savings offered by low-cost, no-frills carriers such as Virgin Blue in the Australian market. Buying a fully flexible fare — one that allows changes — on a low cost carrier, can achieve significant savings when compared with a full priced fare on a full-service airline such as Qantas. Most travel managers agree they can cut costs by booking in advance. Further savings can also be made by taking advantage of air passes for multi-destination itineraries.

As with most things, however, there is a trade-off, and the majority of multi-destination air passes restrict travel to off-peak periods. While improving, the still relatively weak Australian and New Zealand dollars have also taken the shine off air passes because they are priced in local currency.

Chief executive officer for the Australasian Business Travel Association, Glenn Buckingham, says business travellers can access discounted international air fares, although they are not generally available in business class, especially on long-haul services, nor on direct flights.

"You can get good cheap business class fares to Europe from Australia on Garuda, but you probably have to make three or four stops to get there," says Buckingham. He says many of the issues surrounding business travel costs for international travel also apply to domestic fares. "Virgin Blue, for example, bases its entire marketing strategy on price, and while that suits some private and public sector organisations, only a small percentage of the overall market finds it meets requirements." Buckingham adds that the key ingredients for business travellers are the ability to change

flights without penalty, to book up to 24 hours prior to departure, national and regional coverage, and access to business travel services such as e-ticketing and executive lounges at airports. He suggests most frequent travellers want the ability to change flights to fit their schedules, particularly those involving multi-sector international bookings.

Although small- to medium-sized enterprises make up the majority of air travel spend, Buckingham points out they are not the organisations airlines want to talk to. "They have to go out and search for good deals and have to travel on low-cost carriers. SMEs would most benefit from securing the services of a good travel agent, who can seek out cheap business class fares to Europe and the Americas."

While Buckingham believes travel agents are the key to achieving cost cuttings for international business travel, domestically, he says frequent travellers can save money by booking direct via an airline's website or through an online travel agent. "There is a market for low-cost carriers and for online travel agents but business travellers need to change their travel patterns in order to benefit. If you are working as a consultant for someone like Price Waterhouse Coopers you are at the client's beck and call, and you do not have that luxury."

Buckingham, and sales and marketing manager for Flight Centre's corporate travel division, Glen Dixon, believe the best way for organisations to make savings on travel expenditure is to implement a travel policy, or manage it better. Dixon says companies and individual travellers can also make significant savings by booking through a travel manager, rather than trying to source flights and accommodation themselves. "Travel managers have deals at their fingertips and can recommend two or three options," says Dixon, adding that airlines that service long-haul destinations direct are invariably at the top end of the price tree.

Smaller businesses are more able to take advantage of short-term deals because they do not have all their travel bundled in with one

carrier, he says. "A managing director travelling on behalf of a small outfit is usually paying the fare because they are often the owner of the business as well. Those working for larger organisations are not as cost conscious because they are not picking up the tab personally. Their main priority is generally comfort and being able to spend the least possible amount of time away from home."

### It pays to shop around...

Thai International currently has a 'buy one, get one free' promotion for first and business class travellers on most of its international routes. And Virgin Atlantic Airways has intensified its efforts to attract business class passengers to its daily code-share flights from Sydney to London by offering two nights' free accommodation at Sydney Airport — one at each end of the journey. Business class passengers holding tickets on the service, in conjunction with service Malaysia Airlines, can choose either 5-star accommodation at the Stamford Sydney Airport, or a free return limousine transfer between home and airport. The deal also provides departing passengers with up to 22 days' free parking — 11 days with each free night — and shuttle transfers to and from the Sydney International air terminal.





# Kuala Lumpur

Co-ordinated efficiency

Destination  
(KUL)

**KLIA has the distinction of being Asia's only airport to have adopted the 'integrated for ease' concept for passengers and airlines. Leon Barber reports from the Malaysian capital**

The aim of any major international gateway is to provide the quick and easy transfer of passengers, an objective that many airports around the world fail to meet. Admittedly, it is easier for the latest generation of terminals built with the future in mind, rather than those that have simply evolved and been added to over the years in an effort to keep pace with growing demand.

Since its opening almost five years ago, Kuala Lumpur International has matured into a model airport and is fast emerging as the gateway of choice for the region. With rapid access via the KLIA Express, which completes the 34-mile journey from the city centre in just 28 minutes, 216 check-in counters and two aerotrains that ferry passengers between the Main Terminal Building and the Satellite Building in under three minutes, the process for both departing and arriving passengers is about as painless as it gets. The seamless nature of the service extends to baggage handling — the KLIA Express has an IATA-designated destination code which enables travellers to check baggage all the way through from the city centre.

Occupying a 25,000-acre (or 100sq km) site in Sepang, south of the capital and even closer

to Putrajaya, the country's new administrative centre, it is one of the largest airport sites in the world. KLIA is part of Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), a catalyst centre created for global research and development, which also includes the Petronas Twin Tower, Cyberjaya and Putrajaya.

Surrounded by greenery, it is often referred to as the 'airport in the forest, forest in the airport', with thousands of trees having been planted in and around the terminal, replacing those felled to make way for the new building.

KLIA handled approximately 16 million passengers last year, up by more than 2 million, partly due to an increase in tourist arrivals and partly as a result of the transfer of domestic operations from the former international terminal at Subang. It is a good transfer point for long-haul travellers on flights between Europe, Australasia and South Asia, as well as long-haul routes to and from the Americas.

Travellers arriving at KLIA can't fail to be impressed by the space and scale of the facilities. The main terminal building is linked by a peoplemover to a satellite, where there is an airside Transit hotel, with 80 well furnished rooms, showers, a fitness centre with a gym,

lounge, cafe and bar, plus a business centre. Here travellers can rent workstations and computers, access e-mails and the Internet. There is also a business centre in the main terminal and another located in the award-winning Pan Pacific hotel, recently named as Asia's best airport hotel for the second time in three years.

### At a glance guide

**Location:** 55km (34 miles) south of Kuala Lumpur, in Sepang

**Transport links:** The KLIA Express rail link completes the journey between the airport and KL City Air Terminal in 28 minutes, operating at 15-minute intervals. Express and local buses provide a frequent service to the city centre and there are taxis and limousines. Taxis charge around RM70 ringgit (US\$18.50) including surcharge and highway toll charges. There is also a 50% surcharge for taxis between midnight and 06.00

**Minimum connecting times:** 60min (domestic and international)

**Airlines:** Air Asia, Air India, Air Maldives, Air Mauritius, ANA, Asiana, Biman Bangladesh, Cathay Pacific, China Airlines, China Southern, China Yunnan, Emirates, EVA Airways, Garuda Indonesia, Gulf Air, Indian Airlines, Iran Air, Japan Airlines, KLM, Korean Air, Lauda Air, Lion Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, Merpati, Nusantara, Myanmar Airways International, Pakistan International, Qatar Airways, Royal Brunei, Royal Jordanian, Royal Nepal, Saudi Arabian, Singapore Airlines, Sri Lankan Airlines, Thai Airways International, Turkish Airlines, Uzbekistan Airways, Vietnam

Airlines, Xiamen Airlines, Yemenia Yemen

**Executive lounges:** KAL (Korean Air, Air France, Alitalia, Air China, China Northern, Garuda, China Hainan, Malaysia, Mongolian, Philippine, Aeroflot, Vietnam, Krasel, Air Kazakstan); Asiana (Asiana, China Southern, Uzbekistan, Sakhalinsk, KLM, China Eastern, Qantas, Turkish, China Yunnan, Cebu Pacific); Sakura (JAL); Silver Kris (Singapore Airlines, Air Canada, Lufthansa, ANA, Thai, United); Cathay Pacific; Northwest (Northwest, JAS)

**Facilities:** Transit hotel (80 rooms) located in the Satellite, with fitness and business centres; Plaza business centre in Main Terminal Building and a third centre, with meeting rooms, located in adjacent Pan Pacific hotel; wireless Internet connections; SMS text service providing updated flight information; range of duty-free retail outlets, including perfumes and cosmetics, confectionery, gold and jewellery, liquor and tobacco, fashion, books and magazines and various speciality shops; choice of restaurants, cafes and fast food outlets; exchange bureaux; 24-hour clinic; pharmacy; nursery/baby changing facilities; smoking rooms

**Airport hotels:** Airside Transit Hotel (within airport); Pan Pacific

**Car rental desks:** Avis, Budget, Hertz, National, Thrifty

**Departure tax:** RM45 (passenger service charge) included in airline ticket price; RM6 (domestic)

**Website:** [www.klia.com.my](http://www.klia.com.my)





# Osaka

## Style obscured by uniformity

You'll need a hefty expense account to survive a trip to Japan's second city — or you could finish up in a karaoke bar singing for your business supper, says Jonathan Hart

Destination  
(OSA)

**Currency:** yen (Y1=US\$0.008; US\$1=Y118)

**Tipping:** not expected — hotels and restaurants generally add 10% service charge to the bill

**Time:** GMT+9

**Electricity:** 110 volts (flat 2-pin plugs)

**Public holidays 2003:** May 3, 4, 5; July 20, 21; September 15, 23; October 13; November 3, 23, 24; December 23, 31; (2004) January 1, 2, 3, 13; February 11; March 21; April 29

**Climate:** four distinct seasons with mild-to-cold winters, warm and humid summers, and pleasant springs and autumns. Rain is common between March and October

**Airport:** Kansai 50km/31miles. Japan Railways' Airport Express operates at half-hourly intervals, with a journey time of 30 minutes to Tennoji (Y1,760), 45 minutes to Shin-Osaka (Y2,470), and 1hr 45 minutes to Kyoto (Y2,980). JR Kansai Airport Rapid Service trains also operate at 30-minute intervals, completing the journey to central Osaka in 65 minutes (Y1,160). Nankai Rapid links the airport with Namba station in downtown Osaka with a 30-minute service (Y1,390). Airport Limousine buses serve a number of

major hotels and railway stations in Osaka (average journey time 50 minutes/Y1,500). Taxis are expensive, charging Y18,000 for the one-hour journey to central Osaka

**Business hours:** 09.00-17.00 Monday-Friday, although people often work much later

**International dialling code:** 00 81

**In emergency:** 110 (police), 119 (fire and ambulance)

### Business do's and don'ts

**Do** wear a suit; although younger Japanese dress more casually, the older generation remain conventional

**Do** make appointments and turn up on time — late arrival does not go down well

**Do** take the trouble to get your business cards translated and present them with both hands

**Do** speak clearly — misunderstandings occur because the Japanese are reluctant to admit they may not have understood

**Don't** raise your voice as this can be perceived as intimidating behaviour

**Don't** be deterred by red tape and bureaucratic nonsense



If you like your cities big and zesty, you'll be in clover. If you are seeking visual character, you won't. Surprising, perhaps, that Osaka's seemingly endless sea of bland architectural sameness conceals arguably Japan's most stylish city.

This is home to the international rag trade. It is where celebrated designers and artists gather; where commerce and marketing are as cutting edge as Kansai International Airport, floating on a man-made island off the port's ever-expanding waistline and spreading into the bay like a morass of concrete lava.

Japan's economic strife of recent years has failed to halt Osaka's propensity to enormity. It boasts the biggest of everything, from the choicest of fun places, including the giant Universal Studios Japan and massive Hankyu Entertainment Plaza, to the fattest of wallets. You will need a bulging wallet to enjoy it. But it is likely you will not get your bearings first time round because so much of the city looks and feels the same; you will be as locked into captive uniformity as you will be in the back of one its thousands of identical taxis. Also to be expected, are vain attempts to find the correct one of a dozen or more exits from subterranean stations that are topped by vast office and shopping complexes.

Yes, a river runs through the outer fringes and there is a network of canals. Occasionally you will spot a small park or open space, or a street lined with ginkgo trees. But otherwise, it is all

the same, noteworthy only for its castle, a 20<sup>th</sup> century concrete recreation; and the twin-towered Sky Building, both of which provide good views of the sprawl below.

Best to concentrate on two districts — the northern Umeda, or Kita-ku, for business, and the southern Namba, or Minami-ku, for entertainment. The Limousine Bus from the airport will deliver you to either in about an hour, the same time as a taxi or train, but cheaper than either at ¥1,500.

The top ranked Hilton and good value Hotel Granvia, both with bustling lobby bars, share pride of place for business rendezvous adjacent to the city's main station, through which seemingly the whole world passes. Other hotels in Kita-ku include the elegant Ritz-Carlton, with a fine dining and excruciatingly expensive French restaurant; the Westin adjacent to the Umeda Sky Building; and the Hankyu International, topping a highrise with an excellent choice of Japanese speciality eateries, and worth it for the view alone.

If you want to stay in Minami-ku, where shoulder-to-shoulder bars, jazz clubs, karaoke lounges, taverns and kebab houses proliferate in an unrivalled neon-lit blaze, the Nankai South Tower and Holiday Inn hotels are within steps of the action. Be prepared to sing karaoke for your business supper and beware being caught between the two districts in the early hours. The only way home is by taxi. The fare will be enormous. And you will be locked in.



# Playing safe on business

A female employee travelling on business has her handbag stolen and is injured in the attack. Not your problem? Think again. This scenario cost one Australian company \$575,000 in damages. It could even land a company director in jail. Sheriden Rhodes reports

With the terrorist attacks of September 11, Bali bombings and subsequent war in Iraq, risks associated with corporate travel have never been greater. The need for organisations to provide adequate duty of care to mitigate the dangers are paramount, not only to ensure employee safety but to remove the potential for litigation. And organisations and individuals are being urged to take measures to reduce the risks associated with corporate travel domestically and internationally, in the wake of the Iraq conflict.

International SOS, which monitors trends and risks associated with corporate travel, confirms that companies worldwide need to accept that the spectrum of risk has increased, and random acts of terrorism could now occur anywhere and at any time. Marcus McRitchie, the organisation's regional security director for Asia Pacific, says events in the US and subsequent bombings in Bali have taken the risk environment to a whole new level. "Particularly as these outrageous, random acts of terror have occurred in places like downtown New York or in a nightclub — areas that were traditionally seen as low risk," he says.

Organisations and companies worldwide feel they have an increased duty of care to ensure their travellers and expats are protected, argues McRitchie. Those that fail to take adequate duty of care are risking not only legal

action but also their reputation and standing in the community, he says.

He cites as an example a high profile case involving an Australian employer that was successfully sued for failing in its duty to offer appropriate means of protection and advice before sending a female employee to Papua New Guinea on business. While in Port Moresby, the *Yellow Pages* employee had her bag stolen, was punched twice and forced to the ground. The judge ruled that at the time of the incident there was a high level of 'lawlessness' in the capital and that the woman's employer, Pacific Access, had failed to take sufficient precautions in light of the dangers. She was awarded A\$575,000 in damages.

McRitchie says there were many other cases of employees that had sued or threatened to take their company to court over incidents while travelling. In the majority, settlement was out of court. "Companies everywhere are being caught out," he adds.

Under Australian and New Zealand law, for example, a company director can be found culpable and responsible for an employee being injured or hurt while travelling. "They cannot hide behind a corporate structure, the buck stops with that person. If criminal charges are brought to bear, a company director could well be facing a jail sentence."

McRitchie says the trend towards employees' taking legal action against employers was accelerating in line with the increase in risk. As a result, says International SOS, ever larger numbers of organisations want to know what can be done to minimise the dangers. "Everyone from board level down to the individual traveller wants to understand more about what is going on in the country they are travelling to, and whom to contact if something goes wrong."

McRitchie advises organisations to go through a due diligence process and compile a journey management plan for each traveller. "First, the traveller needs to be fully briefed and given a risk profile for the location they are travelling to — whether it's crime, civil unrest, scams or corruption. Secondly, a company needs to log the traveller's itinerary so they can be tracked down at short notice if something goes wrong. And thirdly, the employer needs contingency plans for an emergency response to any potential incident," maintains McRitchie. Both the traveller and his or her company should know what to do in given circumstances.

Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) state director Annabel Anderson says threats to traveller safety include health risks, crime, political upheaval and terror, and are similar for travellers throughout the Asia/Pacific region.

DFAT issues advice for 125 different countries overseas, covering a range of issues. Anderson says travel managers and corporate travel agents should share the information they have with clients/employees as they prepare to travel. "Suppliers such as Qantas have taken the step of ensuring that passengers have access to our travel advice even when such advice might cut across their short-term commercial benefit."

She says given the current environment, it is also important to keep things in perspective. "We are not trying to kill travel as a legitimate business activity," says Anderson. "The spirit of the times and the nature of the conflict, that often continues below the surface, demands that this is the underlying contract between us and the travelling public."

## Travellers' safety checklist

- Make it easy to be screened
- Get to know airline policies
- Register with your embassy, consulate or high commission
- Arrange to be met at the airport by hotel taxi or shuttle service
- Use cars driven by trained chauffeurs
- Lock car doors and close windows
- Carry a 'robbery' wallet at all times
- Carry enough cash in your front trouser pocket so you do not need to use your wallet in public
- Be aware of day-to-day activity such as politically motivated strikes, demonstrations and funerals — they are often events where violence begins
- Attempt to conduct night time entertainment at your hotel to reduce the need to travel after dark
- Ensure your hotel room has a key-chain, deadlock and spy hole
- Use hotel safety deposit boxes to secure valuables
- Carry a photocopy of your passport with you and leave the original in the hotel safety deposit box
- Remain prepared to depart at short notice
- Learn the language, or at least a few phrases
- Remember, in many countries you may be perceived as a symbol of wealth, making you a prime target for criminals and terrorists
- Keep a low profile

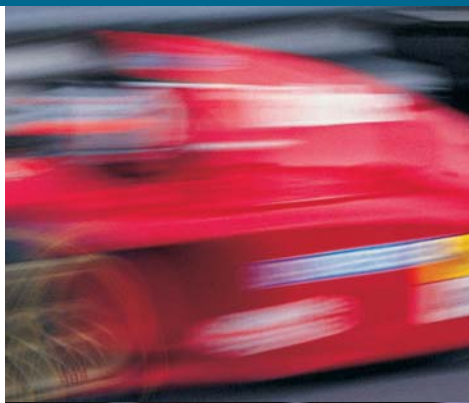
Source: International SOS

# What's on

A selection of major conferences, exhibitions, sporting, cultural and other events around the globe during May and June

## May

- 4 Saudi Arabia Cup (horse-racing), Tokyo
- 4 Spanish F1 Grand Prix (motor-racing), Barcelona
- 4-9 Australian Fashion Week, Sydney
- 6-9 Arabian Travel Market, Dubai
- 9-11 Asia Dive Expo (ADEX), Bangkok
- 15 Computer Expo 2003, Hong Kong
- 15-17 Global Travel & Tourism Summit, Vilamoura, Portugal
- 17 Singapore Airlines International Cup (horse-racing), Singapore
- 18 Austrian F1 Grand Prix (motor-racing), Spielberg
- 20-22 EIBTM (exhibition), Geneva
- 20-23 Chelsea Flower Show, London
- 26 The Tokyo Yushum (Japanese Derby)
- 31-1/6 Singapore International Dragon Boat Festival



## June

- 1 Monaco Grand Prix (motor-racing), Monte Carlo
- 1 French Derby (horse-racing), Paris
- 1-9 World Book Fair, Singapore
- 4 Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival
- 7 Vodafone Derby (horse-racing), Epsom, UK
- 9-13 3G World Congress (Global Wireless business event), Hong Kong
- 14-15 Le Mans (motor-racing), France
- 15 Canadian Grand Prix (motor-racing), Montreal
- 15-22 Paris Air Show, Le Bourget
- 23-6/7 All England Lawn Tennis

