

travelbulletin

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AGENT BULLETIN

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ESCORTED TOURS

Small groups and sustainability in the spotlight

ADVENTURE & ACTIVITY

Get back to nature in stunning Scandinavia



MEDITERRANEAN MAGIC

Booking idyllic island escapes for your clients

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TIMINGS

2:00 pm Far East Webinar Welcome	2:05 - 2:45 pm Supplier Presentations	2:45 pm Live Q&A and Prizes	3:00 pm Webinar Ends
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EUROPE OPENS UP

While there is still concern about whether British travellers will be able to enjoy a European summer holiday this year, the good news is that borders are starting to reopen.



Will sun-starved Brits be able to enjoy the Spanish sun this year?

WHILE THERE has been much caution in regard to reopening European borders to visitors from the UK, there is some positive news for travel agents with customers keen to book summer holidays for this year.

The Holiday Extras Deckchair Index is keeping track of which destinations are ready to welcome tourists from the UK, and they have reported that 37% of our favourite holiday destinations will have re-opened by next month.

Updated fortnightly, the index saw a huge boost last week as the Spanish prime minister announced that Spain would re-open to European visitors – including

the UK – from June 21.

Because the UK government is still advising against all non-essential travel, the index starts from July, when Italy and Spain, among others, should be able to welcome back British tourists keen for a summer holiday after lockdown.

“Spain is far and away the most popular holiday destination for Brits looking forward to a week or two in the sun. It accounted for 22% of all trips in 2018, and last week – even before the country officially announced a re-opening date – 35% of our bookings were for Spain,” said Ant Clarke Cowell, associate brand director at Holiday Extras.

“So it’s good news for holidaymakers and good news for our industry to see the Deckchair Index head up to 37% while we all wait for the UK’s own lockdown to ease.”

“Our latest poll of UK travellers – carried out at the weekend before Spain made its big announcement – showed that 52% of British holidaymakers plan to fly overseas before the end of the year. 30% have already booked a trip to look forward to once the corona lockdown ends. So there’s plenty of demand out there for a holiday this summer, and it’s great to see Spain stepping up to meet that demand,” Mr Clarke Cowell added.

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Scenic seeks to sell secure sailings for 2021

SCENIC HAS unveiled its 2021 European all-inclusive luxury river cruise collection and 'Book with Confidence' programme. Enabling guests to change their travel dates or itinerary up to 90 days before departure.

New for 2021 are visits to WWI sites in Ypres and Passchendaele, and two culinary journeys highlighting French gastronomic delights on the Garonne itineraries.

The new culinary cruises include an on board dinner prepared by Michelin star chef Didier Goiffon and a cooking class at three-star Michelin chef Georges Blanc's restaurant. For those seeking a shorter getaway, the brand has unveiled a four-night sailing from Vienna to Budapest cruising the Danube. Prices for this



The Scenic Sapphire sails through Avignon, France.

four-night itinerary start from £1,570 per person based on an April 25, 2021 departure.

Bookings made before July 31, 2020 will attract guaranteed savings of £1,200 per couple, complimentary private door-to-door chauffeur transfers, and Scenic's new Deposit Protection Plan included. An additional Early Payment Discount of £125 per person

is available on 2021 bookings paid in full by October 31, 2020.

Scenic's 2021 European River Cruising brochure launches 17 June 2020 and will be available online immediately. For more information on Scenic's Deposit Protection Plan or to download an interactive e-brochure, visit www.scenic.co.uk.

Hong Kong launches global tourism forum online

THE HONG Kong Tourism Board is presenting an online travel industry forum, in which top leaders will discuss new trends on tourism from Hong Kong to mainland China and to and from Asia in the post-COVID era.

The theme of the virtual event is 'Beyond COVID-19: Global Tourism's New Normal' and it is scheduled for June 24 from 8am-10am for those logging in from the UK.

Speakers include: Gloria Guevara, president & CEO, World Travel & Tourism Council, who will speak about safe travel in the 'new

normal'; Steve Saxon, partner, McKinsey & Company, on understanding your customers; and Hermione Joye, sector lead, travel and vertical search, Asia-Pacific, Google, on data-driven insights for businesses. Dr Pang Yiu-kai, Chairman of Hong Kong Tourism Board will deliver the opening remarks.

To register for the event, log on to <https://onlinexperiences.com/scripts/Server.nxp?LASCmd=AI:4;F:QS!10100&ShowUUID=ABC3688D-5064-4F68-82CA-1222C186581A>

Making travel easier in Egypt after the government steps in

EGYPT'S GOVERNMENT ministries have relaxed visa rules, discounted historic attraction prices and made it more affordable for tour operators and airlines to do business, to encourage tourism and create a knock-on effect with competitive prices which agents can offer their clients.

Border control authorities will forego tourist visa fees up until October 31. For more information about tourist visas, visit www.visa2egypt.gov.eg/



Once in Egypt, it will be cheaper for visitors to see major historic sites until July, with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities offering a 20% discount on all museum and archaeological site tickets which are under the Supreme Council of Antiquities' jurisdiction, as well as visitors' permits for travellers who use EgyptAir and Air Cairo flights.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources is discounting aviation fuel, and the Ministry of Civil Aviation is discounting major services for international flights until October 31.

Report by Vinita Tiwari



Socially distanced thrills at Italy's Gardaland

EARLIER THIS month, Gardaland re-opened, the first Italian amusement park to do so. The park has launched a 'reboot' in safety mode designed to protect all employees of the park and its visitors. The Gardaland Guidelines include an online booking system where visitors must specify the date of their visit as part of the limited admission numbers policy; body temperature scanning for guests and employees before entry; compulsory wearing of masks for all visitors over the age of six; PPE for employees; ongoing disinfection of common areas and attractions after each ride; and the removal of some seats on rides for social distancing.

The welcoming seas of Tahiti and French Polynesia

PAUL GAUGUIN Cruises is resuming its Tahiti and French Polynesia small-ship voyages next month, with extensive safety protocols in place, as French Polynesia re-opens to international tourism on July 15.

The first voyage to welcome local and international guests will be the 10-night Society Islands & Tuamotus voyage, which departs on July 29 from Papeete, Tahiti. In addition to the islands of Huahine, Bora Bora, Motu Mahana, and Moorea, this itinerary calls at the atolls of Rangiroa and Fakarava in the Tuamotu Archipelago which are known for their lagoons.

From August 2020, Paul Gauguin Cruises resumes its seven- to 14-night Tahiti,



French Polynesia, and South Pacific sailings.

The small size of The Gauguin, the medical infrastructure and teams on board, protocols and the professionalism of crew, ensured that there were no cases of COVID-19 contamination during the lockdown period.

To prepare for the resumption of activity, Paul Gauguin Cruises is collaborating with the Institut Hospitalo-Universitaire Méditerranée Infection of Marseilles, one of the world's leading centres in the field of infectious diseases.

www.pgcruses.com

Hays Travel hits the high streets again

HAYS TRAVEL is gradually reopening its high street stores with new safety measures in place, such as social distancing protocols, screens and hygiene measures in its branches across England.

Entry to the shops will be limited, with customers able to book appointments by phone. Services will still be available online via phone, video chat and email, as has been the case during lockdown.

John Hays, the company's managing director reports that many customers are already booking holidays for later this year or 2021.

He added that popular destinations include Greece, the Balearics and the Canaries.

Global groups join forces to promote sustainable tourism

SIX ORGANISATIONS have formed The Future of Tourism Coalition with the global mission to place destinations at the centre of recovery strategies – the Centre for Responsible Travel (CREST), Destination Stewardship Centre, Green Destinations, Sustainable Travel International, Tourism Cares, and the Travel Foundation, with the guidance of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). According to the group, decades of unfettered growth in travel have put the world's treasured places at risk – environmentally, culturally, socially, and financially. The travel and tourism industries face a precarious and uncertain future due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, with international tourist numbers projected to fall 60-80% in 2020. As tourism moves forward and recovers, re-centring around a strong set of principles is vital for long term sustainable and equitable growth.

The Coalition has put forth Guiding Principles that outline a bold vision for tourism's path forward and is calling on tourism agencies, travel companies, governments, investors, non-governmental organisations, and destination communities to commit to them. Twenty-two founding signatories who represent a diverse cross-section of industry stakeholders have committed thus far. They are influencers in the movement, demonstrating leadership and adherence to the Guiding Principles in their product and business practices.

The signatories will provide guidance to the coalition as plans are put in place to support travel and tourism entities. Those signatories include Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA), G Adventures, Global Ecotourism Network, Hilton, Innovation Norway, Intrepid Travel, Jordan Tourism Board, Lindblad Expeditions, MT Sobek, Palau Bureau of Tourism, Seychelles Ministry of Tourism, Slovenian Tourist Board, Tourism Council Bhutan and the World Wildlife Fund.

Travel industry professionals can join as signatories by visiting www.futureoftourism.org

Become a Florida Keys Destination Specialist.

The Keys are now open and it's time to register to become a Florida Keys & Key West destination specialist. Become a graduate of The Key Lime Academy. Complete our on-line course before August 1st and receive a Florida Keys Goodie Bag.

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come as you are®

Key West Big Pine Key & The Lower Keys Marathon Islamorada Key Largo

More airlines restart flights and reopen routes

WITH MORE borders opening up and travel restrictions gradually being lifted, more air routes are opening up across the globe.

Norwegian has announced that, as a result of increased customer demand, the airline will begin to operate flights between London Gatwick to Oslo, London Gatwick to Copenhagen, Edinburgh to Oslo and Edinburgh to Copenhagen from July 1.

London to Oslo will be operated seven times a week, London to Copenhagen six times a week, Edinburgh to Oslo and Copenhagen twice a week.

Fiji Airways has outlined its plan for a return to flying with enhanced safety protocols, while it awaits approval from Fijian authorities and its international markets. At this



Norwegian is resuming flights from July 1.

stage, the airline is grounded until the end of July.

Emirates, meanwhile, resumed the operation of flights between Manchester and Dubai twice a week, as of last week.

Air Transat will resume flights and tour operations from July 23. The airline will offer a new flight schedule to 22 destinations in Europe, the United States and

Canada until October 31. Customers who booked on or after March 4 this year can make the same changes at no charge up to 24 hours before departure. If they prefer to cancel their trips instead, they will get a travel credit valid for 12 months.

Additional reporting by Unique Pattnaik and Vinita Tiwari.

London City Airport aims for business as usual

ON JUNE 21, the first flights to resume at London City Airport will serve domestic routes, providing connections to cities and regions around the United Kingdom as the country begins its recovery.

Flight BA 3287 between the Isle of Man and central London is expected to become the airport's first flight since it suspended operations at the end of March in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Brand new routes will begin between central London and Teesside in the North East

and Dundee in Scotland on July 6. These will be operated by Eastern Airways and Loganair respectively. Additionally, it is expected that staples of London City Airport's Anglo-Irish route network, including Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dublin, will return in July.

With an airport survey showing nearly half of customers planning to travel for leisure in the next three months, flights to popular destinations such as Ibiza, Florence, Málaga and Palma are expected to return to London City Airport in the coming weeks.

Israel to begin opening borders from August onwards

ISRAEL IS preparing to welcome back tourists, with the first international guests due to begin arriving from Greece on August 1. The announcement follows a visit of Greece's Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, to Israel. In the meantime, Jerusalem is beginning to reopen to domestic tourists with attractions, restaurants and hotels already opening their doors.

These venues are reopening in line with strict health regulations which have been enforced by Israel's Ministry of Health.

These measures follow recent research which studied the behaviour of 200 countries around the world during the Covid-19 crisis and listed Israel in third place on the list of safest countries,



according to the latest research from Deep Knowledge Ventures.

Jerusalem is restarting events, with the Jerusalem Art Festival, Leonard da Vinci 500, and the internationally renowned film festival coming up in July and August, and the annual Open Restaurants Festival taking place from October 29-31.

<https://en.citiesbreak.com>



Barbados "cautiously" restarts tourism operations

WITH ALL businesses in Barbados operating as normal, the country's tourism board is taking a "cautious" approach to reopening to tourists. In a statement, Barbados Tourism Marketing said that air space is set to reopen to commercial flights within the first two weeks of July. This week, the government of Barbados will meet with various partners to discuss the next phase which covers border reopenings and protocols. Mia Amor Mottley, prime minister of Barbados said that the government will be launching a series of initiatives to spruce up Barbados and ensure the country is ready to welcome visitors to a pristine island.



THE WASHINGTON monument, pictured here with spring blossoms, is one of the iconic sights of the US capital. See below to learn more about how to sell holidays to this historic destination.

AGENT MOTIVATION

THE ADVANTAGE Travel Partnership has launched Advantage Hot Offers on Facebook. The Facebook page is a closed group for Advantage members to view offers from their partners. Members can use them on their websites, email and social media channels. There is a range of great deals designed to inspire consumers to book a holiday when restrictions are lifted.
www.facebook.com/groups/3067353103491258/

EUROPEAN WATERWAYS is inspiring “virtual wanderlust” with a new digital series, while the cruise industry is on hold. Virtual tours include the Palace of Fontainebleau and Scotland’s Cawdor Castle, which inspired Shakespeare’s Macbeth. The company’s hotel barge cruise director and tour guide, Matthew Price, hosts this armchair travel series, which can be viewed at:
www.europeanwaterways.com/blog/virtual-tours/

SANDALS IS hosting the following virtual fams, all at 7pm:
 June 19: Bahamas and Turks & Caicos –
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4235058613245221648>
 June 22: St Lucia –
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/625668703000781584>
 June 23: Grenada, Antigua and Barbados –
<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6899676664648769296>

EARLIER THIS month, Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation broadcast an extended Facebook Live video event to more than 85,000 viewers. For those who missed the ‘Sunny Side of Life’ event, it can be watched on demand by logging on to
www.facebook.com/visitmaldives/videos/1039388789797465/
 – and for more information on the Maldives, visit
www.visitmaldives.com.

AGENT TRAINING & PERKS

- **DESTINATION DC (DDC)**, the official destination marketing organisation for Washington, DC, has launched its global travel agent training programme titled Washington, DC Special Agent Academy. It is an online programme designed to train DC special agents so they can match travellers’ interests and travel styles with a personalised DC experience. The initial launch consists of three courses, or “operations,” with several missions covering a variety of topics. The first operation covers the city’s captivating monuments, memorials, museums and historic neighbourhoods. Later operations dive deeper into the US capital, covering sports, dining, educational tours and the unique offerings available in the greater Capital Region. For more information and to start training as a DC special agent, go to www.washington.org/special-agent-academy
- **SANDALS RESORTS** has extended travel agent programmes including Chairman’s Royal Club membership and Sandals Specialist benefits through to 2021, to help support the trade. Individual agents who hold Chairman Royal Club membership or Sandals Specialist statuses will automatically carry the accolade through to 2021 without having to requalify. The company’s Sell & Go rewards programme, where agents earn their own free nights to redeem against stays at Sandals and Beaches Resorts, has also been extended to give agents longer to use them as they are currently unable to be processed. Agents with any unused nights from 2018 can use them up until December 31, 2020, while those earned in 2019 can be used until December 31, 2021. Any nights earned in 2020 will also be valid until December 31, 2022. To learn more details on Sandals and Beaches Resorts’ Travel Agents Programmes and for a full list of benefits available to agents, visit www.sellingsandals.co.uk.

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COMPETITIONS

Win one of 3 bottles of Taittinger Champagne with Hummingbird.

A 7 night stay for 2 people at the Steingerber Golf Resort El Gouna is up for grabs.

For all competitions visit
www.travelbulletin.co.uk/competitions

SUDOKU

Win a £50 M&S voucher in the **travelbulletin** Su Doku prize puzzle A

Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, column and each of the 3 x 3 squares contains the digits 1-9.

Once you have completed the puzzle, simply identify the numbers that relate to the letters, A, B, C and D then e-mail the solution, with your name, company name, and full postal address plus phone and ABTA number if applicable to:

competition@travelbulletin.co.uk

Closing date for entries is Thursday, July 2nd. Solution and new puzzle will appear next issue.

**The winner for June 5th is
Laraine Angel, Spear Travels in Romford.**

June 5th Solution: A=1 B=6 C=8 D=9

	8	1	4			3		7	5	
		3		7	5			6	4	
		7				9				
B				3				9	7	
		5			2			1		
C	9	6				7				
				6				8		
	5	2			9	8		3		
D	7	9		1				4	5	6



WHERE AM I?

Construction on this trio of landmark skyscrapers started in 2007 and was completed in 2013. The tallest tower is 182 metres and, as well as containing offices and residential apartments, one of the towers has a Fairmont hotel with 250 rooms.

CROSSWORD

Fill in the crossword to reveal the mystery location highlighted by the green squares.

1		2			3	4		5		
				6						
		7								8
9										
		10					11			
					12					
13		14			15			16		
				17				18		
19										
20							21			

Across

- Hotel brand, part of Accor (4)
- Flag carrier of Australia (6)
- Ancient Athens citadel (9)
- Honolulu international airport code (3)
- English city, home to the National Railway Museum (4)
- Famous New York Street (4)
- The bird ascending by Ralph Vaughan Williams (4)
- A country in the South Pacific made up of 333 islands (4)
- Perth international airport code (3)
- BBC1 Quiz show where zero is the score to aim for (9)
- State capital of South Dakota (6)
- Continent (4)

Down

- Editor of Private Eye. Often seen on Have I Got News for You (3,6)
- European country (5)
- Mountain range, runs through 2 Down and beyond (4)
- Oklahoma's second city (5)
- Cornwall's capital and county town (5)
- Luxury cruising company with HQ in Monaco (9)
- Famous Mount overlooking Grindelwald (5)
- The historic city of Koblenz is on the banks of this river (5)
- Lively resort on Corfu (5)
- Airline alliance (4)

Mystery Word: PARIS Where Am I? - Flame Towers, Baku, Azerbaijan

Solution: Across: 1. IBIS, 3. QANTAS, 7. ACROPOLIS, 9. HNL, 10. YORK, 11. WALL, 13. LARK, 15. FIJI, 18. PER, 19. POINTLESS, 20. PIERRE, 21. ASIA. Down: 1. IAN HISLOP, 2. ITALY, 4. ALPS, 5. TULSA, 6. TRURO, 8. SILVERSEA, 12. EIGER, 14. RHINE, 16. IPSOS, 17. STAR.



ESCORTED TOURS

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

As escorted tour operators seek to reopen for business as travel restrictions are eased, the trends include smaller groups, sustainability and new safety protocols. Georgia Lewis reports.

ESCORTED TOURS will certainly look and feel different for your clients in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The days of crowded buses and crowded tourist locations are over, at least for now, and escorted tour customers will have to adjust to a new normal.

Bruce Poon Tip, CEO of G Adventures, has, over the last few months, spoken at length during live webinars on the changing face of group travel.

"Travellers create the demand of change," Mr Poon Tip said in one of his webinars during the period of lockdown.

He said travellers will have to make changes and suggested choosing lesser-known destinations. He gave Malawi as an example of an alternative African destination for those seeking an escorted tour with incredible wildlife and natural wonders. On a micro-level, he urges travellers on group tours to choose small, local shops and food and beverage outlets over large international chains, and to look differently at their idea of luxury by considering accommodation options such as homestays and

locally owned hotels, moving away from traditional Western ideas of luxury.

John Worthington, a senior analyst at Mintel, a global market research company, said in the Touring And Adventure Holidays: Inc Impact Of COVID-19 report, which was released last month: "When travel restrictions begin to ease, consumers will be more cautious about group-based touring formats than other holiday types. The market will have to adapt, at least in the interim, and possibly in the longer term. Adaptations should include smaller group sizes incorporating the 'new normal' of social distancing, private escorted tours and self-guided touring for closed groups of family and friends."

Mr Worthington is optimistic about the future of the escorted tour sector post-pandemic: "In the longer run, the touring and adventure holiday market had strong future growth prospects prior to the COVID-19 crisis, and is likely to bounce back, helped by the wanderlust and relative affluence of an expanding over-55 population."

Kuoni is one brand which

has jumped on the small group trend for escorted tours with the launch of a collection of small group itineraries for 2021 and 2022. The collection includes updated itineraries for Peru and Vietnam and six new tours in Italy, Portugal, India, South Africa, Myanmar and Vietnam.

Citing the example of the revised Peru itinerary, Claire Ross, head of specialist products at Kuoni, commented: "Previously we joined lots of tourists leaving Cusco or the Sacred Valley for a day trip to the ancient citadel [of Macchu Pichu] with just a few hours to take in the beauty of the place. By including the extra night, it means we travel there at less crowded times and visit the citadel on two occasions before and after the bulk of the day trippers."

When escorted tours restart, Ffestiniog is keen to emphasise the importance of sustainability with its itineraries, including taking travellers to lesser-visited areas and using rail travel wherever possible.

"Ffestiniog Travel has always been eco and carbon friendly, using rail as the predominant form of

transport, however this unique range of tours really demonstrates our responsible travel credentials," said Maria Cook, general manager of Ffestiniog Travel. "We try to subscribe to the ethos of 'take only pictures, leave only footprints', particularly in the way our tours and profits benefit local communities."

Safety will be a big priority for escorted tours moving forward, and agents will be keen to reassure their clients that the tour operators will be taking precautions.

Sue Lobo, operations manager for The Travel Corporation (TTC), wrote on the company blog that all coach drivers have been trained in hygiene protocols such as cleaning and sanitising frequently touched surfaces at least once daily, including handrails, door handles, tables, seats, air-conditioning filters and overhead lockers. Travellers will be asked to bring their own washable face mask and gloves, and TTC will only be working with partners, such as hotels, restaurants and attractions, that meet their hygiene standards.

THE SUPER 'STANS

Wendy Wu is keen to encourage bookings to Central Asia, with the five 'Stan nations, plus neighbouring Georgia, reporting low numbers of COVID-19 cases and opening back up to tourism.



CENTRAL ASIA, featuring the five 'Stans' – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan – along with nearby Georgia, which borders southern Russia, have recorded very low rates of coronavirus infections and, as such, are welcoming tourists back.

Wendy Wu Tours is offering tours so travellers can experience the history and culture of these regions with expert guides.

The Central Asia tours include the 27-day Journey Through Central Asia, priced from £6,390pp, which takes travellers through all five 'Stan countries with a strong focus on the famous Silk Road route.

The 22-day Road to Samarkand tour, priced from £4,290pp, takes travellers through Uzbekistan with a strong focus on Islamic architecture, bazaars which thrive to this day, and spectacular mountain landscapes.

Meanwhile, the 23-day Eurasia Explorer tour, priced from £4,060pp, takes in Georgia

on an east-meets-west adventure through the Caucasus. Gergety Trinity Church in the Caucasus is pictured above.

Along with the mountain scenery for which the area is famous, the tour includes fine food and wine, churches, mosques, temples and ancient fortresses. A highlight of this tour is Yanardag Fire Mountain, also known as Burning Hill, where natural gas has been ablaze for centuries.

The tour operator is currently having a Worldwide Earlybird Sale, which lets your clients save up to £500pp on all 2021 tours. For additional peace of mind, Wendy Wu is offering a flexible booking guarantee so travellers do not have to pay the final balance until six weeks before departure, and can make one amendment to their itinerary free of charge, before paying the final balance.

For more information and brochures, log on to www.wendywutours.co.uk or call 0800 239 5707.

Reassurance for escorted staycations

AGENTS SEEKING to reassure customers who are looking to book escorted tours in Britain can look to the Institute of Tourist Guiding for advice on how UK tourist attractions are protecting visitors from exposure to COVID-19.

The institute has worked closely with medical professionals to develop guidelines to ensure safe visits to British tourist attractions.

"We're lucky to have guides who practised as medical doctors, before training as guides, to create this guidance," said Marilyn Collis, president, Institute of Tourist Guiding. "They've also kindly issued COVID-19 related public health advice to all our members. Whether we're using our well-honed group management skills or the latest technology to maintain social distancing, we'll be there playing our part in rejuvenating this vital industry."



Image credit: Danny McL/Flickr



Go west for California dreaming with Titan Travel

TITAN TRAVEL is offering a 14-night tour of California and America's "golden west" in a coach tour priced from £2,849pp. This is one of the tour operator's longest-running itineraries and it is expected that it will retain its popularity as travel restrictions are lifted. Travelling in a loop around California, with forays into neighbouring Nevada and Arizona, it includes Los Angeles, Las Vegas and San Francisco, drives along Route 66 and the Pacific coastal road, Yosemite National Park and two nights in Flagstaff, gateway to the Grand Canyon (pictured). Other attractions included in the tour include the Hoover dam, the historic mining town of Calico, a tour of Hollywood and a wild west-inspired visit to Williams Depot for a shoot-out re-enactment. www.titantravel.co.uk

MEDITERRANEAN ISLANDS

SAFETY FIRST

Islands, by virtue of their geography, are at an advantage when it comes to preventing the spread of viruses. This is good news for Mediterranean island bookings, but the destinations are taking a cautious approach to reopening. Georgia Lewis reports.

ISLANDS ACROSS the Mediterranean are getting ready to open up to tourists, with low rates of COVID-19 during the period of international lockdown and many being declared coronavirus-free. Additionally, there are Mediterranean destinations which are offering extra incentives to attract visitors.

In Cyprus, for example, where there have only been 17 recorded deaths in the southern part of the island, the government has offered to pay the bills of any tourists who test positive for COVID-19 while on the island.

Savvas Perdios, the deputy tourism minister, said: "We will cover the cost of hospitalisation of those who test positive during their holiday. And pay for their families and close contacts to be accommodated in quarantine hotels."

In Sicily (pictured), meanwhile, the regional government is planning to pay for one of every three nights in hotels in a £45 million scheme to attract visitors, including tourists from abroad.

However, agents will have to ensure their clients are aware of any travel restrictions, particularly on bookings for the coming months. With flights opening across all Greek airports from July 1, new protocols will be observed nationwide, including the islands. The UK is on the list of countries Greece has deemed "higher risk". As such, during phase 2 of reopening, all arrivals from the UK will be tested on arrival for COVID-19 with a week's quarantine for those with negative tests and two weeks for those with a positive test.

Before Spain fully reopens to tourists on July 1, the Balearic islands are taking part in a two-week trial to ensure tourists can be welcomed back safely to Spain. The archipelago of islands in the Mediterranean has allowed thousands of German holidaymakers to fly in for the trial, which started on June 9. The trial has been conducted via an agreement with Tui, other tour operators and multiple airlines to bring in up to

10,900 Germans, who will stay for a minimum of five nights.

Francina Armengol, president of the Balearics, said the region will be the first in Spain to open up to tourists, with Germany being chosen for the trial because it took similarly strict lockdown measures to the island group.

The trial involves a health questionnaire for the visitors, an exemption from the 14-day quarantine period, temperature checks and information on social distancing and mask-wearing rules on arrival, and contact-tracing for suspected cases and their close contacts.

In Malta, Prime Minister Robert Abela announced that the airport will reopen as from July 1. However, the UK is not part of the first group of destinations which will be reopened for travel to the central Mediterranean island country. More destinations are expected to be announced in due course, once clearance from health authorities is received.



IBIZA IS BLESSED

The Palladium Hotel Group is gearing up for a sensational Spanish summer with multiple reopenings across the island of Ibiza next month.



PALLADIUM HOTELS is planning to reopen five hotels in Ibiza next month.

The Grand Palladium Palace Ibiza Resort & Spa and Grand Palladium White Island Resort & Spa will start their summer season on July 3. The family properties, located on the golden sands of Playa d'en Bossa, offer the hotel group's Infinite Indulgence programme, which provides guests with a high-end all-inclusive service.

Nearby, Hard Rock Hotel Ibiza will open its doors on July 10, combining modern décor with the energy of the Hard Rock brand and a high level of service.

Food and beverages will be in focus with restaurants such as The Beach or its rooftop The Ninth offering exquisite dishes and premium drinks and cocktails, personalised service and magnificent views of the Mediterranean Sea.

Further north in Ibiza, in the exclusive Cala

Nova area, Bless Hotel Ibiza (pictured) will welcome guests from July 10. Opened in 2019 under a concept of 'hedonistic luxury', Bless has 151 rooms, and exceptional cuisine including signature restaurant Etxeko by Spain's leading Michelin star chef Martín Berasategui, as well as a spa, two infinity pools and a vermutería (a neighbourhood bar which specialises in vermouth and tapas).

For clients seeking a more low-key experience, without sacrificing comfort and luxury, Agroturismo Sa Talaia reopens from July 8. This exclusive rural property is ideal for those seeking seclusion, privacy and complete relaxation in a natural setting. The property is located in the surrounding hills of San Antonio in the east of the island, a world away from the party scene.

www.palladiumhotelgroup.com

On target to be pristine and plastic-free on Paros

THE GREEK island of Paros is on track to becoming the first Mediterranean island to become free of plastic waste, thanks to the Clean Blue Paros initiative, which is part of a larger project called Clean Blue Alliance.

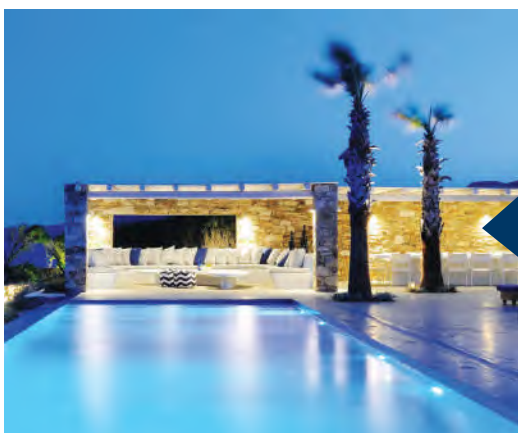
The Clean Blue Alliance selected Paros as a leader for this project because it met a specific set of criteria. During the island's high season for tourism, Paros experiences a 350% increase in waste, and its landfill sites are almost full. The aim is to overcome Paros' waste challenges as an opportunity to explore and deliver systemic solutions that can be replicated and scaled across other islands, particularly those with a vibrant tourism industry.

The project involves identifying the major waste issues, and involving local businesses across Paros to sign up to go plastic-free with 40 businesses already involved in the project.



To eliminate single-use water bottles, the island is rolling out refill stations, particularly aimed at use by tourists.

www.commonseas.com



Bright, blue and blissful in the Greek islands

BRIGHT BLUE Villas, a luxury villa rental company in Greece, is offering more than 160 carefully selected villas, across 15 Greek destinations, complete with a concierge service. The company's villas have been chosen for their locations, ambience and commitment to excellent design and are aimed at visitors seeking privacy and prestige. All villas are located across some of Greece's most renowned islands, including Mykonos, Paros, Antiparos and Port Heli, as well as lesser-known destinations such as Kea, a small island also known as Tzia, which has not been heavily developed and is known for its mountainous areas and secluded beaches.

www.brightbluevillas.com

Chill out with Malta for World Wellness Week

WITH WELLNESS tourism expected to surge post-lockdown as holidaymakers seek to relax after the stresses of coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) is looking to inspire bookings by getting involved in World Wellness Week (June 22-26).

For its part, the Malta Tourism Authority is showcasing a range of wellness initiatives which can be experienced online as a taster for future holidays.

On June 22, MTA is teaming up with Paola's Body Barre for a workout session inspired by yoga, Pilates and 'floor barre'. The workout will be live on IGTV, so agents can take part and then learn more about the



Malta is hopeful of wellness break bookings in the future.

Maltese archipelago, including a new retreat in Malta to take place in 2021. To join the class, go to www.instagram.com/visitmaltauk/?hl=en either live or on demand afterwards.

Later this year, Malta's Corinthia Hotel will be opening a new spa. The Athenaeum Spa has been

created by interior designers Goddard Littlefair. Inspired by the relaxed charm of the Mediterranean, its design evokes a sense of calm and serenity. In partnership with skincare brand ESPA, the spa will offer luxury products and holistic treatments to enhance physical and emotional wellbeing.

CV Villas a safe option for post-COVID travel

VILLA HOLIDAYS could prove popular after lockdown as a safe alternative to crowded hotels, particularly for increasingly popular inter-generational holidays. For example, CV Villas is offering a property ideal for big family groups on Corfu. Kalokairi Beach House is a spacious, contemporary villa with direct access to sandy Kalamaki Beach. It has seven bedrooms, each with private bathrooms. An activity room features a pool table and table tennis, while outside there are two pools and extensive outdoor living space. A week's stay costs from £4,463, with daily maid service included.

www.cvvillas.com

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Adventure destinations to beat lockdown cabin fever

THE DESIRE to get to the great outdoors after months of limiting our activities could prove a boon for the adventure and activity travel sector, particularly for destinations a world away from the traditional fly-and-flop holidays.

Exodus Travels has two new blog posts highlighting holidays for the seriously adventurous, especially those keen to avoid the overcrowded tourist-heavy sites.

Ruwan Balasooriya, the company's local Sri Lankan guide, recommends visiting



UNESCO-listed Knuckles Mountain Range (pictured); climbing Adam's Peak; trekking Ravana Ella Falls; going on safari in Yala

National Park; and taking in the seemingly endless vista at the World's End Viewpoint.

Bikash Tamang, a guide in Nepal for Exodus, features on

the blog with his insights into visiting the Himalayas. His top two favourite trekking routes in the famous mountain range are the Everest Base Camp Trek and the Everest & Gokyo Lake Circuit. The base camp trek includes staying at the Everest View Hotel, which offers spectacular scenery, and the Gokyo Lake trek allows travellers to see Ngozumpa Glacier, the longest in Nepal, as well as four of the seven highest peaks in the Himalayas.

To read the full blog posts, go to www.exodus.co.uk/insights

What is the most adventurous thing you've done on holiday?



Jeanette Ratcliffe

Publisher
jeanette.ratcliffe@travelbulletin.co.uk
Cheered on Manchester United in a Spanish bar as they beat Barcelona!



Matt Gill

Senior Account Manager
matt.gill@travelbulletin.co.uk
Driving up to Cervinia ski resort on an icy cliff-edge road with no visibility.



Georgia Lewis

Managing Editor - News
news@travelbulletin.co.uk
Accidentally drove through a military shooting range on an island in the Indian Ocean.



Bill Coad

Account Manager
bill.coad@travelbulletin.co.uk
Tried to stay sober...



Mariam Ahmad

Assistant Editor - News
news@travelbulletin.co.uk
Skiing.



Sarah Terry

Account Manager
sarah.terry@travelbulletin.co.uk
I ended up on a jungle trek with a huge snake while trying to find a restaurant in Thailand and had to swim back to the hotel!



Simon Eddolls

Sales Director
simon.eddolls@travelbulletin.co.uk
Cured a colleague's hiccups in Cairns.



Hannah Carter

Events Coordinator
hannah.carter@travelbulletin.co.uk
Driving a boat through the Grand Canyon on the Colorado River.



Tim Podger

Account Manager - Far East
tim.podger@travelbulletin.co.uk
Horseback riding in Pamplona.



Ashweenee Beerjeraz

Events Assistant
ashweenee.beerjeraz@travelbulletin.co.uk
Sea trek helmet diving.

EVENTS

events@travelbulletin.co.uk

PRODUCTION

production@travelbulletin.co.uk

CIRCULATION

circulation@travelbulletin.co.uk

A very Scandinavian summer for adventurous souls

FOR CLIENTS who cannot wait to travel again, a wilderness adventure in one of the nearby Scandinavian destinations could be a summer holiday with a difference for 2020. With Sweden not placing any entry restrictions on UK visitors, Norway looking to open up by July 20, and Iceland open with either a two-week quarantine or a test on arrival, these could be more realistic options than other parts of Europe for travelling this year.

With that in mind, Scandinavia Only is offering a range of summer tours which run until September 2020, and the focus is definitely on adventure.

The Swedish Countryside Retreat & Bear Watching tour



Brown bears can be seen in Sweden and Norway.

includes guided bear-watching, a self-guided canoe experience, a road trip, four-star accommodation and a spa package with an outdoor hot tub and lakeside sauna. It is priced from £1,495pp, including flights and car hire.

The Norway's Western Fjords: Hardanger, Sogn, Nord & Geiranger tour offers a fjord-cruising, visiting villages and a hike to Trolltunga, a rock formation jutting out 700 metres above Ringedalsvatnet lake. Prices start from £2,775pp,

including flights, car hire, accommodation, breakfast, car ferry transfers and maps.

The Highland Bus Journey Across Iceland tour makes it easy to experience hard-to-reach parts of Iceland without having to hire a car. The adventure begins in Reykjavik for three nights, with a tour of South Coast attractions, such as Skógafoss waterfall and Reynisfjara black beach. The bus then goes to Akureyri, the largest city in north Iceland. Finally, the Diamond Circle Tour showcases the highlights of the North, stopping at Goðafoss waterfall and Lake Mývatn. This trip is priced from £1,990pp including flights, transfers, accommodation, breakfast and all excursions.



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or call our reservation team on 01274 875199

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