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FORTY YEARS
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Uncertain seas for Crystal Cruises

What's next for Crystal? Sailings in limbo
until at least mid-spring


pg. 9



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Agents have their say: Ontario's Staycation Tax Credit **6**

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What if I test positive in-destination? What about trip cancellation insurance? Top travel insurance providers share their Q&As

By Kathryn Follitt

TORONTO — Some 700,000 Canadians flew back home from trips abroad in December 2021, according to Statistics Canada.

And no doubt at least 699,999 of them asked plenty of questions about travel insurance before they embarked on their trip.

Travel insurance is more top-of-mind than ever these days, almost two years into the pandemic.

Until the travel advisory lifted, after 20 months, the vast majority of Canadians were deferring their travel plans.

In fall 2021, when the advisory was dropped for two all-too-brief months, bookings ramped up.

And when the advisory came back in mid-December, there were cancellations, but many Canadians decided to push on with their travel plans regardless.

StatsCan's December 2021 data shows the willingness of a growing number of Canadians to travel at this stage of the pandemic - especially as many anticipate COVID-19's pandemic status evolving to endemic.

Meanwhile travel insurance, always a smart purchase, has become a must-buy and questions abound about coverage in cases of testing positive in-destination, trip cancellation coverage, and more.

Travelweek touched base with Manulife, Allianz Global Assistance and Blue Cross Ontario, to get the most-asked questions (and responses) from agents and travellers.

MANULIFE

Here are the top three Q&As from Manulife. Manulife reminds travellers and agents to check travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories for the latest information on travel advisories for Canadians. And for complete coverage information, agents and travellers are asked to read each policy for full terms, conditions and limitations.

Q. If I want to travel during the current 'Avoid non-essential travel' and 'Avoid all cruise ship travel' adviso-



ries, what plan(s) should I consider purchasing?

A. "The Manulife COVID-19 Pandemic Travel Plan offers emergency medical coverage for expenses related and unrelated to COVID-19, as well as quarantine benefits if you test positive while in destination. Cruise passengers must be fully vaccinated to be covered for COVID-19 related expenses on their trip. We also recommend that travellers be familiar with their destination's entry requirements.

"These days, most risks centre on contracting COVID-19, before or during a trip."

"In addition, travellers should also consider purchasing our Premium Protection Plan or Non-Medical Plan to protect their financial investment and other components of their trip."

Q. What happens if I test positive for COVID-19 while in destination? What is covered?

A. "If you test positive for COVID-19 and need to extend your stay beyond your scheduled return date, the Manulife

COVID-19 Pandemic Travel Plan's quarantine benefits provide up to \$200/day for meals and accommodations, as well as up to \$500 for return airfare. The plan also includes up to \$5 million for emergency medical expenses (both related and unrelated to COVID-19)."

Q. How do I submit a claim through Manulife?

A. "There are a few ways to submit a claim, but the quickest and most efficient way is through the TravelAid mobile App, which can be downloaded for free from the App Store or Google Play. Helpful information regarding claims can be found in the 'How to submit a claim' section in your policy."

ALLIANZ GLOBAL ASSISTANCE

Q. What are the added risks traveling during the pandemic and can I buy coverage for these situations?

A. "These days, most risks centre on contracting COVID-19, before or during a trip. Allianz Global Assistance recommends travellers review Government of Canada travel advisories and understand the risks for their destination. While it's important to choose coverage based on individual needs, our COVID-19 Insurance and Assistance Plan offers additional emergency med-

ical and trip interruption quarantine coverage for those needing to travel to destinations still under an advisory.”

Q. How can I make sure I have everything I need to make sure my trip goes smoothly?

A. “Because the travel landscape continues to evolve, it’s important travellers do their research before they leave. Talk to a travel professional, review government recommendations, and make sure you understand testing and vaccination requirements for your destination, as well your return to Canada. At Allianz, we offer a service called Pre-Trip Assistance. Customers can call us to get a better understanding of, or connection to, resources for travel requirements, government advisories and what to expect in their destination country. With constant change, our customers are finding this service more valuable than ever.”

Q. How do trip cancellation or trip interruption policies work while travel advisories are in place?

A. “In most cases, because COVID-19 remains what’s called a ‘known event’, any Trip Cancellation or Trip Interruption claims related to any Government of Canada travel advisories connected to COVID-19 will not be payable.

“Trip Cancellation coverage will remain eligible if the traveller becomes ill due to COVID-19 in Canada before their departure and they need to cancel their trip as a result. Trip Interruption coverage is eligible if the traveller becomes ill due to COVID-19 while on their trip, and needs to interrupt their trip as a result, provided a COVID-19 travel advisory to avoid non-essential (Level 3) or avoid all travel (Level 4) was not in place on the effective date of coverage.”

BLUE CROSS ONTARIO

Q. Is the Omicron variant covered by my travel insurance?

A. “We would like to reassure all our clients regarding their travel insurance coverage. The Emergency Medical Care benefit covers COVID-19 and its variants, including

Omicron, unless it is considered a pre-existing condition prior to departure.”

Q. Do you cover the costs for quarantine?

A. “Subsistence allowance does not cover the costs associated with a preventive or compulsory quarantine before returning to the country, on site or upon arrival at the destination. Subsistence allowance costs may be covered when a traveller must postpone their return due to a medical emergency, including a medical emergency related to COVID-19. A medical emergency involves the person suffering from serious symptoms that require medical attention and possibly repatriation. We do not cover the quarantine costs imposed when returning to the country.”

Q. What changes have been made to your policies or requirements based on the opening or closing of borders?

A. “We are monitoring the developments of the Government of Canada and the World Health Organization guidelines, as well as the global situation on the spread of the virus. We recommend that our clients follow government and health authority recommendations at all times.

“Emergency Medical Care travel insurance automatically covers COVID-19 unless it is considered a pre-existing condition prior to departure. It is important to know that trip cancellation due to the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer eligible for reimbursement because it is considered a known situation since March 12, 2020.”

Q. I need written proof of your insurance coverage for COVID-19. What do I need to do?

A. “You will find written proof of your insurance coverage for COVID-19 in the last section of your travel insurance certificate.”

WHAT CLHIA IS SAYING

We also caught up with the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association (CLHIA), a trade association whose member companies account for 99% of Canada’s life and health insurance businesses.

CLHIA is getting a lot of inquiries about testing positive in-destination. For many travellers, it’s the number one concern.

“Make sure you purchase travel insurance that includes coverage for the costs of being required to extend your stay at your destination, in this case for self-isolation purposes,” says CLHIA. “Insurance will provide a daily accommodation and food stipend. As well, if you have purchased trip interruption insurance, any costs to reschedule your flight may also be reimbursed.”

Travellers also ask CLHIA if benefits plans or travel insurance will cover the cost of COVID-19 testing: “Your travel insurance will not cover the cost. Your benefits plan may, if you have a healthcare spending account. The healthcare spending account covers the costs of medical expenses as defined by Canada Revenue Agency. Part of the definition mandates that the test must be prescribed by a regulated healthcare practitioner.

Another top ask: trip cancellation insurance. As insurance providers have noted above, the Canadian government’s reinstated travel advisory is a major factor. “Because of the global travel advisory recently re-imposed by the federal government, there is currently very little trip cancellation insurance available,” says CLHIA.

CLHIA’s tips for travellers who still want to travel? “You may wish to wait to purchase your trip until the global travel advisory is once again updated and removed. At that point, you can book your trip and purchase trip cancellation insurance. Alternatively, you can seek a travel package that includes the ability to reschedule and/or cancel without penalty.” TW

Got a story idea? Questions or comments? Write to us at editorial@travelweek.ca



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We asked agents how Ontario's Staycation Tax Credit will impact business in 2022

BY CINDY SOSROUTOMO

TORONTO — “What about us?” has been a common refrain among travel agents throughout the pandemic. From dealing with commission recalls to seeing limited access to government financial programs like Bill C-2, which does not extend to independent agents, the list of challenges that travel professionals have faced for close to two years has been long and relentless.

And now a new challenge is upon them: Ontario's Staycation Tax Credit, which launched Jan. 1 and runs until Dec. 31, 2022. Billed as a first-of-its-kind initiative that aims to help revive Ontario's tourism industry, the credit provides Ontario residents with a 20% refund of eligible 2022 accommodation expenses of up to \$1,000 for individuals and \$2,000 for families, for a maximum credit of \$200 or \$400, respectively, for vacationing in Ontario this year.

This, of course, is great news for consumers. But for travel agents who have typically not been used to book domestic trips on their clients' behalf, the Tax Credit is yet another hurdle in their road to recovery. With no incentive to book with a travel professional, agents are now worried that they'll be shut out of the booking process entirely and, consequently, some much-needed commissions.

“My initial reaction upon hearing about the tax credit was, why couldn't it be for any travel arrangements made through a travel advisor to help support agents or agencies that are struggling?” says Cindy Gaudet, COO, Fareconnect Travel, Winnipeg. “Anything that promotes travel is a good thing but most agents book little domestically. Most Canadians feel comfortable booking within Canada so I feel this trend would continue with the travel credit. It would actually support the bigger online businesses more than smaller agencies and agents.”

Lise Archambault of Algonquin Travel & Cruise Centre – TravelPlus in Ottawa, who tells Travelweek she has “zero interest” in the tax credit program, says that the current climate makes travel to any destination, even ones in Canada, very difficult, thus minimizing the program's impact.



Niagara Falls, Ontario

“For travel outside your province where air is required, airlines are either cancelling or changing routes daily without notice, meaning the client could be stuck with penalties. Also, some provinces like Newfoundland and P.E.I. have quarantines. Travel is just too unstable right now to book with confidence,” says Archambault. “I see nothing in it for us agents personally, unless it's a very high-end property that actually pays commission although many don't.”

“My reaction was, why couldn't it be for any travel arrangements made through a travel advisor, to help support agents or agencies that are struggling?”

Many in the travel industry had high hopes for some real recovery in 2022 now that the majority of Canadians are fully vaccinated (78.2% according to Our World in Data, as of Jan. 17, 2022). However, as Zeina Gedeon, CEO of TPI, argues, programs like these, coupled with ongoing travel restrictions, may actually deter Canadians from traveling at all this year.

“A similar program would have been

a great benefit to our advisors and an incentive for their clients back in 2020 or even 2021, when travel was more localized and customers wanted staycations,” says Gedeon. “But travel advisors are disappointed because now that clients are vaccinated and ready to travel, the Ontario Government is incentivizing them to stay local while at the same time penalizing the clients who want to travel outside of the country by requiring a negative PCR test upon their return to Canada.”

Currently, the federal requirement requires Canadians returning home from abroad, regardless of trip duration, to show proof of a negative PCR COVID-19 test to re-enter the country.

Is the demand there?

When asked whether they've seen an increase in inquiries and/or bookings for Canada travel since the Ontario government first announced the Staycation tax program last November, Both Gaudet and Archambault tell Travelweek that so far, clients have shown little to no interest.

“Not one client has asked me about the Staycation Tax Credit,” says Archambault. “They are itching to travel outside of Canada.”

Gaudet, whose host agency has agents located throughout Ontario, says that “surprisingly, we have not heard anything from our advisors or clients [about the Tax Credit],” and that considering the lack of interest about the program, she does not believe many clients

will be taking advantage of it.

Hotels, similarly, are reporting slow-growing numbers for Canada bookings. Beata Cieplik, Regional Vice President Canada, Marketing Commercial and Revenue Management of InterContinental Hotel Group, tells Travelweek that “due to the recent rise of restrictions again, we are not able to see any significant numbers yet” for Ontario hotel bookings, though she remains hopeful that they will pick up in late spring.

CAN THE STAYCATION TAX CREDIT BE A BENEFIT TO AGENTS?

Although selling domestic trips may be more of a challenge for travel agents, Ontario’s Staycation Tax Credit does present a unique opportunity for them to more easily sell Ontario. Gaudet thinks agents can definitely take advantage of the program, telling Travelweek that she would “advertise that using this Staycation Tax Credit with an advisor is supporting local businesses.” Gedeon also agrees, adding that TPI advisors can use the program as a selling tool when booking staycations and promoting local tourism in Ontario, and that any tourism program can be capitalized by agents to help increase sales.

Heidi Hurst, a TPI agent in Calgary who started a Commission Recall Petition in 2020 that was eventually tabled in Parliament in January 2021, tells Travelweek that the Tax Credit is a good idea, though it should be used in a way that encourages booking with a travel advisor to include small local businesses. However, this would require training and education for agents who are unfamiliar with Canada products, something Hurst says few are willing to undertake given the lower sticker price of domestic trips.

“I know many advisors who didn’t feel they knew enough about Canada to accept the challenge of spending more time on research than they would be paid for,” says Hurst. “And oddly enough, domestic suppliers are less adept at working with travel agents and there are very few booking channels that provide commission.”

Hurst adds that she would encourage the government to use domestic booking options “to get away from a reliance on multinationals.”

Says Hurst: “A lot of Canadian suppli-

ers were having trouble while it seems that those travelling without an advisor were on the OTAs. There was a real disconnect. We need more people, suppliers and advocacy to break the myth around travel agents ‘no being a thing anymore.’ I feel credits like this one have a great ability to generate domestic economic momentum.”

IHG hotels to book in Ontario

IHG’s Cieplik says that she’s excited about the Staycation Tax Credit, which she believes will be vital to the survival of the travel industry. She notes that in 2021, IHG saw domestic travellers return to its hotels, an encouraging sign for what may come in 2022.

“Canadians have an appetite to explore their backyard and stay close to home because of the uncertainty and challenges of travelling abroad,” says Cieplik. “It’s too early in the year to see if there has been a positive impact of the Ontario Tax Credit, however, we know that it has started up the conversation about local travel again for 2022 and created awareness amongst guests.”

HERE ARE A FEW IHG ONTARIO HOTELS TO CONSIDER FOR 2022:

Holiday Inn Kingston – Waterfront: Located in the historic downtown area of Kingston, this hotel is situated within a five-minute walk from the Kingston waterfront, the K-Rock Centre as well as an array of locally-owned shops and boutiques.

Crowne Plaza Niagara Falls – Fallsview: Perfect for dream weddings, this hotel’s close proximity to the Falls is its top selling point, not to mention its newly renovated lobby, elegant accommodations and popular Prime Steakhouse.

Holiday Inn Express & Suites Collingwood: Located just two kilometres from downtown Collingwood and 15 minutes from Blue Mountain Resort, this hotel offers complimentary Express Start Breakfast, a fitness centre and an indoor pool and whirlpool.

Holiday Inn Ottawa Dwtm – Parliament Hill: History abounds at this hotel, which is located within walking distance to Ottawa’s most iconic landmarks, including the Senate of Canada Building and House of Commons at West Block.

For more information go to <https://www.ihgagent.com/web/tcc/ihg-commission-services>.

Celebrity’s ‘Journey WonderFULL’ returns to South America in 2023



MIAMI — Starting in December 2023, Celebrity Cruises passengers sailing onboard Celebrity Eclipse will experience bucket-list itineraries that take them to some of the wonders of the world while immersing them in the richness of the culture that is South America.

Celebrity Eclipse is scheduled to spend four months, December 2023 – April 2024, visiting 16 destinations, offering a 14-night Antarctica cruise and a 12-night Argentina and Patagonia sailing.

Travellers can cross off some must-see bucket list destinations, like Valparaiso, Chile; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and even the tip of Antarctica. They can get up close to Chile’s Osorno Volcano, go whale watching on Argentina’s Playa El Doradillo, take in a tango show or surf the beaches of Montevideo, Uruguay.

Clients who have longed to visit Machu Picchu are a good bet for the 16-night repositioning cruise from L.A. to Chile which includes two overnights in Lima.

“The power of travel expands our horizons, introduces us to other cultures, and opens us up to truly fulfilling experiences. Celebrity takes its guests to far reaching corners of the globe, while enjoying unrivalled luxury travel adventures,” said Lisa Lutloff-Perlo, President and CEO of Celebrity Cruises.

“We have so much planned in 2023, and we’re really looking forward to sharing the culture and charm of the world with our guests as they Journey WonderFULL with us,” she added.

WiFi, drinks, and service charges are now ‘Always Included’ on every Celebrity cruise. More information on these Celebrity itineraries and more is at celebritycruises.com/2023-2024-cruises.

DESTINATIONS

The **UK** is eliminating coronavirus travel testing requirements for the vaccinated. The move takes effect Feb. 11. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that “to show that this country is open for business, open for travellers, you will see changes so that people arriving no longer have to take tests if they have been vaccinated, if they have been double vaccinated.” Transport Secretary Grant Shapps added that “border testing of vaccinated travellers has outlived its usefulness.”

Canada is now off the list of countries recommended by the **European Council** for restriction-free travel into the EU, however each EU member state is free to set its own rules for entry to its borders. As per the European Council’s site, “Following a review under the recommendation on the gradual lifting of the temporary restrictions on non-essential travel into the EU, the Council updated the list of countries, special administrative regions and other entities and territorial authorities for which travel restrictions should be lifted. In particular Argentina, Australia and Canada were removed from the list.” The list is updated every two weeks.



Aruba has updated its entry requirements. Residents from Canada and the U.S. will have the option to take an antigen test one day prior, or a PCR test up to two days prior to travel to Aruba. Visitors 12 and older who have tested positive using a molecular COVID-19 test by nasopharyngeal swab between 10 days and 12 weeks prior to their travel date to Aruba, and do not show any symptoms, will be exempt from the requirement of providing a negative COVID-19 test result. In addition to testing, all visitors including children must be properly insured to visit Aruba. The Aruba Visitors Insurance is a mandatory insurance that helps protect visitors against incurred medical and non-medical expenses if testing positive for COVID-19 during their stay.



HOTELS

Accor is set to open its first MGallery Hotel & Residences in Mexico in 2024. Upon its debut, the Mayaliah Tulum Hotel & Residences – MGallery Hotel Collection will be an ultra-luxe, eco-chic jungle oasis featuring 45 rooms as well as branded residences. Poised for further growth with over 50 hotels in varying stages of development, the MGallery brand is expected to open an additional 30 properties worldwide within the next two years. Most recently, it celebrated the opening of Hotel Belmont Vancouver in early December 2021, and Berkeley Park Hotel in Miami in March 2021. Accor currently has 32 properties in Mexico, with over 10 properties in the pipeline across several of its brands.

AVIATION

Michael Friisdahl is leaving his post as President and CEO of MLSE at the end of February 2022 to become executive chairman of Signature Aviation, a British-based multinational aviation services company. Friisdahl has been with MLSE since 2015, after three years as President and CEO of Air Canada Leisure Group. Prior to joining the Air Canada executive team, Friisdahl was CEO of Thomas Cook North America. He was previously COO of Thomas Cook Canada and later North America.

CRUISING

The **WTTC** has called on the CDC to stop “singling out” the cruise industry with what it calls harmful and unnecessary measures. The CDC’s Framework for Conditional Sailing Order expired earlier this month and cruise lines can opt in to the health and safety protocols. “While we welcome the expiration of the CDC’s conditional sail order, its decision to continue elevated travel health notices is nonsensical. The cruise industry has proven time and again that its enhanced health and safety protocols consistently achieve significantly lower rates of COVID-19 occurrence than onshore,” said Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO.

Crystal suspends sailings until spring 2022, shuts down call centre

TORONTO — One of the best-known brands in luxury cruising has been forced to temporarily suspend operations in the wake of bankruptcy filings for its parent company.

Crystal Cruises is suspending operations for its ocean and expedition ships through April 29, 2022, and river cruises through the end of May 2022.

The cruise line's parent company, Genting Hong Kong, part of the Genting Group, has filed for bankruptcy protection.

Crystal has also temporarily shut down its call centre. Earlier this week one of its ships, Crystal Symphony, was anchored in the Bahamas and avoiding U.S. authorities over an unpaid fuel bill reportedly worth up to US\$4 million.

On its site Crystal lists several email addresses in lieu of the call centre, including this one for travel agent bookings: Guestsupport@Crystalcruises.com.

SUSPENSION OF OPERATIONS

Speculations about Genting's financial stability have circled for years, even pre-COVID.

Genting Hong Kong's holdings also include Germany-based shipyard MV Werften, which has also filed for bankruptcy. Crystal vessels built at MV Werften include river cruise ships Crystal Bach and Crystal Mahler.

"Suspending operations will provide Crystal's management team with an opportunity to evaluate the current state of business and examine various options moving forward," said the cruise line.

Crystal Cruises President, Jack Anderson, added: "This was an extremely difficult decision but a prudent one given the current business environment and recent developments with our parent company, Genting Hong Kong. Crystal has been synonymous with luxury cruising for more than 30 years and we look forward to welcoming back our valued guests when we resume operations. We wish to thank our guests and travel advisors for their incredible support during these ongoing challenging times."

Agents and clients impacted by the cancellations are currently being no-



tified. Crystal says it will provide a full refund of cruise fare paid, which will be processed automatically to the original form of payment so there is no further action on the guest's part. If the cruise was paid via a Future Cruise Payment or Credit, the full value will be returned to their Crystal Society profile account.

CRYSTAL'S LONG HISTORY & RAPID EXPANSION

Crystal Cruises has been a favourite in the luxury cruise space for more than 30 years, and for the longest time sailed with just two ships: Crystal Symphony and Crystal Harmony. A third ship, Crystal Serenity, arrived in 2003.

Genting's acquisition of Crystal Cruises in 2015 brought rapid expansion, including a fleet of river cruise ships, and later an expedition ship.

After the entire cruise industry, and the travel industry at large, came to a halt due to the pandemic, on March 11, 2021 Crystal announced that Crystal Serenity would set sail in July 2021 with all-Bahamas itineraries.

The news made Crystal the first ocean-going cruise line to offer 2021 sailings in the Americas amid the pandemic.

TRAVEL AGENT REACTION

Jennifer McPherson with Turnkey Travel - Travel Only in Brantford, ON, says she didn't sell a lot of Crystal and neither did many of her colleagues. While other cruise lines made efforts to prioritize the Canadian market and Canadian travel agents, and offer Canadian dollar pricing, "[Crystal] always sold in USD so they were not that focused in adapting to a Canadian market," says McPherson.

Sandra McLeod of Red Door Travel in

LaSalle, ON, says she has sold Crystal Cruises for many years, including before the river cruise days. "In fact my first 'real' cruise was on Crystal - before I was in the travel industry - on the Symphony. I loved it then and the experience continues to be one of the best in the industry for customer service. My clients who have sailed on them loved the experience and had only great things to say about the ships, service, quality of food, entertainment, the entire experience."

McLeod adds: "I personally think they expanded too fast and too far - with river ships, yachts and air (I am pretty sure this is gone now). They wanted to replicate the ocean experience on the river ships and yachts."

McLeod also notes that without the years of experience of some of its competitors, Crystal's river cruise operations sometimes faltered when it came to dealing with low water levels during dry European river cruise seasons, a chronic problem for the industry. "On the river [sailings] they didn't have the years of experience that others do so my clients had a few issues with low water levels (not Crystal's fault) which were taken care of - after some letters."

McLeod says Crystal has always been easy to work with, and paid commissions early, fixed any issues - "until the pandemic. I could see a problem coming and have been concerned for a while - they still owe me commission for a cancelled cruise - where they protected the commission (I will probably never see it now)."

She says her clients' upcoming river cruise with Crystal "is not immediately impacted by the temporary suspension - so we will see."



“The current situation of travel restrictions is a mess”: IATA’s Walsh

GENEVA — As omicron case loads begin to plateau in many countries, IATA is stepping up its calls on governments to speed up the easing of travel restrictions.

COVID is evolving from pandemic to endemic, says IATA, and that means travel restrictions should evolve too.

IATA’s call-to-action for governments includes removing all travel barriers (including quarantine and testing) for travellers who are fully vaccinated with a WHO-approved vaccine; allowing quarantine-free travel for non-vaccinated travellers with a negative pre-departure antigen test result; removing travel bans; and accelerating the easing of travel restrictions in recognition that travellers pose no greater risk for COVID-19 spread than already exists in the general population.

IATA’s Director General, Willie Walsh, said that the billions of dollars spent testing global air travellers would be far more effective if allocated to vaccine distribution or strengthening health care systems.

“With the experience of the omicron variant, there is mounting scientific evidence and opinion opposing the targeting of travellers with restrictions and country bans to control the spread of COVID-19. The measures have not worked. Today Omicron is present in all parts of the world. That’s why travel,

with very few exceptions, does not increase the risk to general populations,” said Walsh.

GETTING TO ENDEMIC

Thanks in large part to the omicron variant, COVID-19 is now so prevalent that all indications point to COVID-19 becoming an endemic condition—one that humankind now has the tools to live and travel with, bolstered by growing population immunity, says IATA.

“A New Year’s resolution for governments should be to focus on building population immunity and stop placing travel barriers in the way of a return to normality,” says IATA’s Director General, Willie Walsh

Walsh notes that this aligns with the advice from public health experts to shift the policy focus from an individual’s health status towards policies focusing on population-wide protection.

“The current situation of travel restrictions is a mess,” says Walsh. “There is one problem—COVID-19. But there seem to be more unique solutions to managing travel and COVID-19 than there are countries to travel to.”

He adds: “We have two years of experience to guide us on a simplified and coordinated path to normal travel when COVID-19 is endemic. That normality must recognize that travellers, with very few exceptions, will present no greater risk than exists in the general population. And that’s why travellers should not be subject to any greater restrictions than are applied to the general community.”

IATA’S 2021 STATS

According to IATA’s recently released full-year global passenger traffic results for 2021, demand for travel was up in 2021 - at least compared to 2020 - and that’s even with the omicron surge at the end of the year and renewed travel restrictions in many countries, says IATA.

However compared to 2019, global air travel still has a very long road back to recovery.

Demand fell by 58.4% compared to 2019. But it’s an improvement compared to 2020, when demand was down 65.8% versus 2019.

Total traffic for the month of December 2021 was 45.1% below the same month in 2019. That was up from the 47% contraction in November, as monthly demand continued to recover despite concerns over omicron. Capacity was down 37.6% and load factor fell 9.8 percentage points to 72.3%.

“A New Year’s resolution for governments should be to focus on building population immunity and stop placing travel barriers in the way of a return to normality,” says Walsh.

Slight gains for global tourism in 2021 but still far below 2019: UNWTO

MADRID — It’s been a slow and uneven pace of recovery for travel and tourism, says UNWTO, with 2021 seeing a slight improvement in global tourism rates but below-level international tourist arrivals.

According to the first 2022 issue of the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, rising rates of vaccination combined with easing of travel restrictions have all helped release pent-up demand. Global tourism experienced a 4% up-

turn in 2021 compared to 2020 (415 million versus 400 million), however, overnight visitors were still 72% below the pre-pandemic year of 2019. This follows the worst year on record for tourism in 2020, when international arrivals decreased by 73%.

International tourism rebounded moderately during the second half of 2021, with international arrivals down 62% in both Q3 and Q4 compared to pre-pandemic levels. According to limited data, international arrivals in December were 65% below 2019 levels.

RECOVERY BY REGION

Europe and the Americas recorded the strongest results in 2021 compared to 2020 (+19% and +17% respectively), but both were still 63% below pre-pandemic levels.

By subregion, the Caribbean saw the best performance at +63% above 2020, though 37% below 2019. Southern Mediterranean Europe (+57%) and Central America (+54%) also saw a significant rebound but remain 54% and 56% down on 2019 levels, respectively.

North America (+17%) and Central Eastern Europe (+18%) also climbed above 2020 levels.

Meanwhile, Africa saw a 12% increase in arrivals in 2021 over 2020, though still 74% below 2019, and the Middle East arrivals declined 24% compared to 2020 and 79% over 2019. In Asia Pacific, arrivals were still 6% below 2020 levels and 94% when compared to pre-pandemic values.

OUTLOOK FOR 2022

According to the latest UNWTO Panel of Experts, most tourism professionals (61%) see better prospects for 2022. While 58% expect a rebound this year, mostly during Q3, 42% foresee a potential rebound only in 2023.

A majority of experts (64%) now expect international arrivals to return to 2019 levels only in 2024 or later, up from 45% in the September survey.

The UNWTO Confidence Index shows a slight decline in January-April 2022. A more widespread vaccination rollout, followed by a major lifting of travel restrictions and more coordination of travel protocols are the main factors for an effective recovery of international tourism. UNWTO scenarios indicate that international tourist arrivals could grow by 30%, to 78% as compared to 2021. However, this is still 50%-63% below pre-pandemic levels.

Stepping into Athens: Walking along its Historic Route



TORONTO — Athens fits an impressive number of cultural marvels in a small outdoor area, making it easy to enjoy a morning walk or jog that showcases the city's past and breathtaking views.

So much of Athenian life is lived outdoors throughout the year, and as such, This is Athens has created several of these leisurely routes, including accessible ones for those with mobility impairments. While taking in city life, visitors can marvel over historic sites that stand out like jewels of the past.

Whether they're looking to simply stretch their legs, squeeze in a quality workout, or enjoy a scenic stroll with the entire family, Athens has a safe, sustainable outdoor route that caters to all fitness levels and preferences.

HISTORIC ROUTE: CITY CENTRE AND ACROPOLIS

This route, located in the heart of downtown Athens, is ideal for everyone and takes anywhere from 1-2 hours to a full day to complete. Visitors will pass through some of Athens' oldest and most vibrant neighbourhoods, like Plaka and Monastiraki, and past notable sites like the recently upgraded Omonia Square and the National Archaeological Museum. There are also a number of popular sunset spots around the Acropolis where visitors will find young Athenians gathered at Areopagus Hill. They can also opt to catch incredible views atop an eponymous hill at the Philopappou Monument.

For years, Athenians have been

talking about the 'Great Athens Walk,' a series of major projects launched by the City of Athens that aims to limit traffic, create pedestrian streets and establish more accessible routes across the dense city centre.

It's a new name for what is essentially a very old idea. Since the first prehistoric settlers set up camp in caves around the Hill of the Acropolis, people have continuously inhabited the area that's known today as the Historic Centre of Athens. The area was known for walking, and was home to many wandering philosophers such as Socrates. Today, visitors will find many of the city's most famous ancient sites, including the Parthenon, the Temple of Olympian Zeus, the Ancient Agora and much more.

During Athens' post-war development, many of these sites became isolated from one another. The landscape was carved up by the busy roads of the modern metropolis. Athens is now focused on its journey towards sustainability and accessibility, reconnecting all 129 of its neighbourhoods as part of a network of green spaces.

Today, visitors will find a wide paved walkway that curves around the Acropolis, while an extension is currently underway from the Arch of Hadrian towards the Panathenaic Stadium. Upon completion, the series of projects will include a route that links all of Athens' major cultural stops and features restored water fountains, wider sidewalks and hundreds of new trees.

For more information on travel to Athens, go to ThisIsAthens.org.

THE OMICRON FACTOR

The recent rise in COVID-19 cases and the Omicron variant are expected to disrupt the global tourism recovery and affect traveller confidence through early 2022 as some countries reintroduce travel bans and restrictions. At the same time, an uneven vaccination rollout, mostly in Asia and the Pacific, as well as a challenging economic environment (ie. surging oil prices, inflation, high debt volumes, etc.) could put additional pressure on effective recovery of international tourism.

According to UNWTO, domestic tourism will continue to drive recovery of the sector in an increasing number of destinations, particularly those with large domestic markets. Among the major travel trends for 2022 are open-air activities, nature-based products and rural tourism, all of which will continue shaping tourism this year.

TICO waiving registrant fees for third year

TORONTO — TICO is waiving registrant fees for the third straight year as a way to help Ontario's travel agencies and wholesalers navigate through the ongoing financial challenges of the pandemic.

The fee waiver, says TICO, was made possible through a temporary funding arrangement with the Ontario government, which allows the organization to

continue its operations in support of consumer protection.

"Since the beginning of the pandemic, TICO has worked closely with the Ontario government to find ways to support our registrants," said Richard Smart, TICO's CEO and Registrar. "We appreciate the government's continued assistance and funding through these unprecedented times. While there are many challenges ahead, TICO remains committed to its mandate of strong consumer protection and the recovery of Ontario's travel marketplace in the years ahead."

TICO has offered fee waivers to registrants for the last two fiscal years, beginning on April 1, 2020. The second fee waiver period was set to expire on March 31, 2022.

According to TICO, the fee waiver allows registrants to focus on their priority business needs without the added financial stress of meeting certain payment obligations with TICO.

Travel agencies and wholesalers will receive a fee waiver for annual registration renewal fees and Travel Industry Compensation Fund payments (Form-1) owed to TICO from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. The waiver applies to all registrants registered with TICO as of March 31, 2022.

Registrants are still required to complete and submit their Registration Renewal Form (without payment) and their Form-1 (without payment) by the filing deadline.

Any questions can be directed to tico@tico.ca or 1-888-451-TICO (8426).

Travellers can still connect to SVG via Barbados, says SVGTA

TORONTO — The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Authority (SVGTA) is reminding Canadian travel agents, and their clients, that any travellers looking to vacation in SVG this winter can still do so via Barbados.

Connectivity to the islands from Canada took a hit earlier this month with the news that Air Canada and ACV were temporarily suspending service to St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It was one of 14 sun destinations in ACV's Jan. 6, 2022 announcement, impacted by weakened demand due to omicron and the Canadian government's ramped up travel restrictions.

Glenn Beache, CEO for the SVGTA, says: "While the suspension of Air Canada's direct flights from Toronto to St. Vincent is certainly disappointing, we want to remind Canadians that alternatives are available, including via Air Canada's weekly direct service from Toronto (YYZ) and Montreal (YUL) to Barbados (BGI)."

As Beache notes, upon arrival in Bridgetown "it's a quick 45-minute flight to Argyle International Airport, with lots of departure options available on regional airlines."

Resort options abound too, he added, including the brand new five-star La Vue Boutique Hotel and Beach Club St. Vincent. The new property just opened in December 2021 with 19 guestrooms, three restaurants, several bars, a gym (with squash court and sauna), a spa, and tennis court. The hotel is also fully wheelchair accessible.

Other top picks include Sandy Lane Yacht Club & Residences on Canouan, Petit St. Vincent Private Island Resort and Beachcombers Hotel.

With St. Vincent and the Grenadines' updated COVID-19 protocols, fully vaccinated travellers must arrive with proof of vaccination and a negative PCR test completed no more than 72 hours or three days before arrival. These travellers will not be retested during their stay, nor will they have to complete any mandatory quarantine upon arrival.

PEOPLE

Diorio is Virgin Voyages' new VP Sales, North America

Virgin Voyages has promoted John Diorio to Vice President of Sales for North America. Prior to his new role, Diorio is credited with assuming the entirety of the North American field sales and managing influential relationships with key partners like CLIA and the American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA). Virgin Voyages celebrated the launch of its first ship, Scarlet Lady, at the end of 2021. In March 2022, Valiant Lady will make its debut in Portsmouth, UK before moving to its homeport of Barcelona in Bay for seven-night Med voyages. In August 2022, Resilient Lady will hit the high seas, launching from Athens with itineraries through the Adriatic Sea.



WestJet consolidates 20% of flights for February 2022

CALGARY — No airline is immune to omicron's impact and that includes WestJet. The airline is in the process of consolidating 20% of its scheduled flights for the month of February.

The airline cites omicron's impact on staffing levels as well as the Canada's travel restrictions as the reasons for the cuts. WestJet had already been forced to consolidate 15% of its January flights.

Harry Taylor, Interim WestJet Group, President & CEO says: "As we continue to navigate the unpredictability of the Omicron variant on our staffing levels along with the ongoing barriers to international travel, we are making every effort to proactively manage our schedule in order to minimize disruption to our guests' travel plans."

Taylor added: "To our guests impacted by these additional consolidations, we sincerely apologize for the disruption and appreciate your continued un-

derstanding and patience."

He says national alignment and standardization for the sector remain urgently required.

"We continue to advocate for the elimination of cumbersome travel rules that are unnecessarily impacting Canadians and prolonging the recovery of the travel and tourism sector," says Taylor. "Canada remains one of the only countries in the world requiring multiple molecular tests for fully-vaccinated travellers — these testing resources should be redeployed to our communities."

All of Canada's major carriers have been forced to cancel flights or temporarily suspend destinations in the wake of omicron and the federal government's recently reinstated travel advisory.

WestJet is notifying impacted travellers of changes to their itineraries by email. Still dealing with hours-long wait times for its call centres, WestJet is encouraging travellers to use self-serve options prior to calling for assistance. Flexible change and cancel guidelines and schedule change refund policies remain in place.

"He was a true leader": Uniglobe Travel (Eastern Canada)'s Frank V. Dennis

TORONTO — Uniglobe Travel (Eastern Canada) past owner and CEO, Frank V. Dennis, passed away earlier this month. He was 80 years old.

"There are three of us at the office that worked for him for over 25 years and he was not only a great boss, he was also a friend," Sonia McKeon, Director of Marketing & Supplier Relations, tells Travelweek.

Frank purchased and owned the franchise rights to the Uniglobe Eastern Canada Region from 1991 to 2016, after a successful career in the food industry.

In a statement issued this morning, Uniglobe lauded Frank's drive, hard work, inspiration and spirit: "He will be missed but never forgotten."

Frank was instrumental in growing the Uniglobe Eastern Region over the years.

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He also had the distinction of being the first Chairperson of TICO's Board of Directors in 1997.

"Frank was instrumental in setting TICO's Vision and Mission for a strong and fair consumer protection mandate while supporting and embracing a vibrant travel sector," said TICO. "Recognized as a pioneer in the travel industry, Frank will be remembered for his many accomplishments as well as the legacy he leaves for the next generation of leaders. We share our heartfelt condolences with Frank's family and friends."

Frank's charisma and warm personality made him a well-known and much-loved figure in the industry, from the boardroom to the golf course, where he was a mainstay at the travel industry's many tournaments.

"He was a true leader," says McKeon.

Many in the industry have shared their memories of Frank at Uniglobe Travel (Eastern Canada)'s Facebook page and LinkedIn page.

Full COVID vaccination now needed for U.S. land border crossings

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Canadians crossing into the U.S. at land borders and ferry terminals now need to show proof of full vaccination for COVID-19.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security posted the update on its site.

"Beginning on January 22, 2022, DHS will require non-U.S. individuals seeking to enter the United States via land ports of entry and ferry terminals at the U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Canada borders to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and provide related proof of vaccination, as COVID-19 cases continue to rise nationwide," says the DHS.

"These updated travel requirements reflect [our] commitment to protecting public health while safely facilitating cross-border trade and travel that is critical to our economy."

The DHS adds that the new restrictions will apply to non-U.S. individuals who are traveling for both essential and non-essential reasons.

"These updated travel requirements reflect the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to protecting public health while safely facilitating the cross-border trade and travel that is critical to our economy," says DHS Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas.

According to the DHS site, non-U.S. individuals traveling to the United States via land ports of entry or fer-

ry terminals, whether for essential or non-essential reasons, must:

- Verbally attest to their COVID-19 vaccination status; provide proof of a CDC-approved COVID-19 vaccination, as outlined on the CDC website;
- Present a valid Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI)-compliant document, such as a valid passport, Trusted Traveler Program card, or Enhanced Tribal Card; and,
- Be prepared to present any other relevant documents requested by a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer during a border inspection.

The DHS site notes that COVID-19 testing is not required for entry via a land port of entry or ferry terminal.

Transat seat sale on now, and Faro is back from YYZ, YUL

MONTREAL — Transat has launched its Spring Seat Sale featuring flights to Europe starting at \$699.

The sale is valid on new individual bookings made by Feb. 14, 2022, and applies to flights to Europe for travel March 1 - June 30, 2022 (exceptions apply).

Featured offers include roundtrip fares from Toronto to Dublin starting at \$549, to London from \$643 and to Paris from \$734. From Montreal, flights to Lisbon start at \$622 and \$699 to London, while flights from Calgary to Paris start at \$932 and \$957 to Glasgow. Vancouver-London is priced from \$654, while Quebec-Paris starts at \$719 and \$848 from Quebec-Bordeaux.

Air Transat has also brought back its flights to Faro, Portugal following months of forced suspension due to COVID-19.

The airline's first flight from Toronto to Faro (TS232) departed Jan. 18 and will operate year round, once a week.

Air Transat's complete schedule of direct flights to Portugal this winter and summer includes Montreal - Lisbon and Toronto - Lisbon, Toronto - Porto and Toronto - Faro for winter 2021-2022, and for summer 2022, the same lineup plus Montreal - Porto.

PEOPLE

Two additions to AMR Collection's Canada BDM team

AMR Collection has expanded its Canada Business Development Manager team with two new additions. Scott Reid has rejoined the AMR Collection team as Business Development Manager of the Central Canada region, effective immediately. Reid will manage the Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Western Ontario regions and can be reached at sreid@amresorts.com. Brian Joseph has also returned to AMR Collection as Business Development Manager of the Toronto, Greater Toronto Area, Eastern Ontario and the Niagara regions, effective immediately. He can be reached at bjoeph@amresorts.com. Rounding out the team in Canada are Orelbys Vigoa, BDM, Eastern Canada, Quebec and Atlantic Canada, and Carlo Trinidad, BDM, Western Canada, B.C and Alberta.





Rocky Mountaineer's new promo includes complimentary service upgrade

TORONTO — Rocky Mountaineer is offering travellers a complimentary service upgrade with its new limited-time promotion.

The offer, which applies to eligible routes booked between Jan. 17-31, 2022, includes a free service upgrade from SilverLeaf to GoldLeaf, a value of \$1,500 per couple.

GoldLeaf Service includes: bi-level glass-dome coaches equipped with spacious seats and unobstructed views; exclusive outdoor viewing platform; gourmet breakfast and lunch offerings made from locally sourced ingredients and prepared by the Rocky Mountaineer culinary team; and day-light travel for optimal nature viewing.

To give travellers peace of mind when booking, Rocky Mountaineer is also offering a full travel credit for use to the end of the 2023 season to those who cancel within 60 days of their trip for any reason.

TICO to launch new study manual for certifications

TORONTO — TICO is enhancing its Education Standards Program with a new digital study manual that highlights changes in legislation.

In partnership with education provider Oliver's, the new flipbook manual

will launch in February 2022 as part of Travel Counsellor and Supervisor/Manager certifications. It will feature updated content as well as a more modern appearance and user experience.

Effective Feb. 28, 2022, TICO exams will be based on the newly revised study manual.

In the future, TICO also has plans to launch new fully interactive online education and continuing education programs that focus on having students apply the program's regulatory content.

TICO plans to launch new fully interactive online education and continuing education programs that focus on having students apply the program's regulatory content.

"Enhancing the education program will strengthen travel professionals' knowledge as they enter the industry, which in turn will benefit the consumers they guide in their travel purchases," says TICO.

All students who are currently registered for TICO's Education standards Program have received information about the transition process to the new study manual and exams.

The deadline to write the Travel Counsellor and Supervisor/Manager exams using the current study manual is Feb. 27, 2022. After this deadline, students will automatically switch over to the new study manual and exams.

Air France adds Quebec City - Paris CDG service starting May 2022

MONTREAL — Starting May 17, 2022 Air France will fly from Paris (CDG) to Quebec City (YQB), with three weekly flights on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Flights will be operated by A330-200s equipped with the aircraft's new travel cabins, with a capacity of 224 seats (36 in Business, 21 in Premium Economy and 167 in Economy).

Flight AF0353 departs Quebec City at 5 p.m., arriving at Paris-Charles de Gaulle the following day at 5:45 a.m.

On the return leg, flight AF0352 leaves Paris-Charles de Gaulle at 1:10 p.m., arriving in Quebec City at 2:40 p.m.

"We are very proud to introduce this new direct flight from Québec City to Paris, bringing the number of Air France Canada destinations to four," says Catherine Guillemart-Dias, Vice-President and General Manager of Air France KLM Canada.

"We are delighted about this new service and the expanded opportunities it will foster for customers on both sides of the Atlantic to connect with family, cultural experiences and tourism options."

This new nonstop route is in addition to Air France's daily bus service linking Montreal's Pierre Elliott Trudeau airport to Quebec City, available free of charge to all customers connecting from an Air France flight.

Air France currently links Paris-Charles de Gaulle to Montreal (Air France's 2nd international destination with up to 4 daily flights), Toronto (up to 2 daily flights) and Vancouver (up to 1 daily flight) year-round.

This summer, Air France's capacity to and from Canada will be 25% higher than before the pandemic, and the airline will be the leading European airline in terms of capacity between Europe and Canada.

Air France is currently and until Feb. 28, 2022 offering fully modifiable tickets for travel until June 30, 2022. Travellers can change their reservation free of charge, or request a refundable credit voucher if they no longer wish to travel. If the flight is cancelled by the airline, customer have the choice of postponing their trip, requesting a full ticket refund or requesting a credit voucher, which is also refundable if not used.



TruTravels launches first-ever FitVentures tours

TORONTO — TruTravels has launched a brand new 'FitVentures' collection that includes wellness-focused tours departing from May 2022.

Exploring both Indonesia and Thailand, the company's first-ever fitness-oriented getaways come with a 'workout schedule' and Muay Thai classes, as well as beachfront bootcamps and volcano hikes. Other highlights include scenic island bike rides, sunset paddle boarding, spa days and healthy cooking classes that take a holistic wellness approach.

According to Mark Pope, co-founder of TruTravels, the launch of the new collection capitalizes on the health and wellness trends that emerged in 2021.

"Over the past two years, we've seen a huge rise in home workouts and people getting active, a trend that looks set to continue into 2022 as they keep up healthy new habits," he says. "With the misconception that youth travel is purely party holidays, we wanted to support the personal wellbeing theme and develop a collection of tours that brings together the best of adventure travel and all-round wellbeing, while

still appealing to younger travellers."

All small group social adventures offered by TruTravels are led by a TruNinja (tour guide) who also acts as a 'social director' for the group.

The new FitVentures tours that are on sale now for bookings made before Jan. 31, 2022 include the nine-day Thailand Energize, and the eight-day Bali Energize.

TruTravels first launched in Canada in April 2021 with a commitment to sell via the Canadian trade. The U.K.-based small group operator caters to millennial and Gen Z travellers and offers four distinct trip styles: Classic, FitVentures, SailVentures and Flashpacker.

Earn bonus commission with Windstar's Wave Season offer

SEATTLE — Windstar is rewarding travel advisors with a bonus commission and allowing cruisers to pick their own perk for this year's Wave Season offer.

Valid through Feb. 28, 2022, the cruise line's 'Pick Your Perk' savings options include: up to US\$1,000 onboard credit per stateroom, or up to two free Easy Stay hotel nights with included trans-

fer between hotel and yacht, plus full breakfast, Wi-Fi, resort fees and taxes.

Clients can pick one complimentary perk, which vary in exact amount depending on the length of the cruise and room category.

In addition, Windstar's returning guests, known as Yacht Club Members, can earn double the referral credit of \$200 when referring a friend.

Travel advisors booking new-to-Windstar guests will receive a \$100 per booking bonus commission, or a \$100 Visa gift card.

"We have been tracking consumer sentiment from the start of this pandemic and one consistent theme is that people want to travel as soon as they feel safe," said Windstar President Christopher Prelog. "Windstar guests are very comfortable in booking their favourite destination on our small ships. We see a tremendous pent-up demand for travel, particularly amongst those who are used to travelling internationally every year."

Prelog added that he anticipates cruises to sell fast and encourages clients to book early.

"Our cruises in the end of 2022 and into 2023 are booking extremely well so my advice for travellers interested in smaller ships like Windstar's is to not wait to book. Space likely will be difficult to find."

"Our cruises in the end of 2022 and into 2023 are booking extremely well so my advice for travellers interested in smaller ships like Windstar's is to not wait to book. Space likely will be difficult to find," he said.

Windstar's Beyond Ordinary Care health and safety program requires everyone aboard to be vaccinated. Upon arrival at the yacht, each guest is given a complimentary COVID-19 antigen test.



UIA resuming flights from YYZ, JFK in June 2022

TORONTO — Ukraine International Airlines has announced plans to gradually reinstate long-haul routes, including service from Toronto and New York (JFK).

UIA's direct flights out of Toronto and New York are scheduled to start June 2, 2022.

For onward travel, passengers from Canada will be able to book a single ticket with a connecting point at Boryspil Airport

Flights will operate on B777-200ER aircraft in a three-class cabin layout.

Passengers from Canada will be able to get to the regions Ukraine by booking a single ticket with a connecting point at Boryspil Airport. UIA operates its own domestic flights and covers all major Ukraine urban centres: Odesa (ODS), Kherson (KHE), Kharkiv (HRK), Dnipro (DNK) and partner flights from / to Lviv (LWO) & Ivano-Frankivsk (IFO).

UIA also offers transit flights via KBP to / from Tel Aviv (TLV), Baku (GYD), Yerevan (EVN), Tbilisi (TBS), Chisinau (TBS), Chisinau (KIV), Cairo (CAI), Warsaw (WAW), Dubai (DXB), Istanbul (IST),

Rome (FCO), Budapest (BUD) and Delhi (DEL).

In addition, UIA throughfares from 50+ U.S. and Canadian cities are available via Toronto (YYZ T3) with interline partners (WS/AC), including from / to Montreal (YMQ), Ottawa (YOW), Vancouver YVR, Winnipeg (YWG), Boston (BOS), Los Angeles (LAX), San Francisco (SFO), Miami (MIA), Seattle (SEA), Chicago (CHI) and other cities.

Flight schedules can be found via GDS or UIA's site. UIA is represented and supported in Canada by Airlinepros.

New Travelport+ tools now available to travel agency customers

LANGLEY, UK — Travelport has released new Travelport+ tools and functionalities.

Travelport's agency customers using the latest version of Travelport's desktop tool, Smartpoint, can now access new itinerary enhancements, including Trip Quote, to customize itinerary quotes, and Assisted Ticketing capabilities.

Additionally, Travelport has launched a new Trip Manager portal on Travelport+, offering self-service for travellers to carry out fast, easy transactions for their trip on the go and continues its Intelligent Storefront mission by making it easier for agents to understand offers and compare brands with similar attributes on a like-for-like basis.

Agencies using Travelport can also better manage the hotel bookings they sell with a simple self-service rules engine, the Content Optimizer, says the company.

Travelport is the first and only GDS to sign NDC content distribution deals with all of the three major European airline groups (Air France-KLM, International Airlines Group (IAG), and Lufthansa Group). The company says it continues to expand its NDC connections as the evolution of Travelport+ tools and agency capabilities help to modernize travel retailing.

55% looking to spend more on travel: Expedia Group Traveller Value Index

SEATTLE — Results from Expedia Group's Traveller Value Index: 2022 Outlook, based on proprietary data and a new survey of 5,500 adults across eight countries, including Canada, indicate that more than nine out of 10 travellers (91%) plan to take a leisure trip in the next six months.

Other findings include ...

- Nearly 3 in 4 (72%) Canadian travellers expect to take a trip by car over the next 12 months, with nearly 1 in 5 (19%) expecting to take a trip by cruise or ship

- More than half (54%) of Canadians say they are willing to pay extra fees so that their trip can be more sustainable

- More than half (55%) of Canadians say they will spend more on travel than prior to COVID-19.

"Travel is about to experience a year unlike ever before as people plan purpose-driven trips, value vacation time more, and up their investment in unique experiences," said Ariane Gorin, President, Expedia for Business.

"Still, travellers are preparing themselves for possible trip changes as COVID-19 persists, and they want an array of options at their fingertips. Travel companies that prioritize safety and wellbeing, innovative solutions, and transparent communication will be the clear leaders as the entire industry shifts from survival mode into accelerated demand and growth."



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Family fun at Grand Palladium Jamaica and Grand Palladium Lady Hamilton

Caption

Grand Palladium Jamaica Resort & Spa and Grand Palladium Lady Hamilton Resort & Spa, both located between two of Jamaica's most popular tourist towns, Lucea and Montego Bay, offer memorable getaways the whole family can enjoy. Part of the Palladium Hotel Group, both properties are welcoming travellers back with family-friendly amenities and exciting offerings.

At Grand Palladium Jamaica, there's fun to be had for all ages with five pools, including one awarded "Best pool in Jamaica" by 'Islands', water parks for children, and an infinity pool overlooking the beachfront. Guests can partake in a variety of activities led by Palladium's team of professionals, POP entertainment, live shows daily and nightly, a children's clubs for babies, kids and teenagers, local excursions, and sports and water activities such as snorkelling, windsurfing tennis and more.

There are 537 luxury rooms at Grand Palladium Jamaica, including 449 Junior suites with whirlpool baths, and 88 suites featuring separate living rooms and a terrace/balcony with a hammock. Guests looking for even more relaxation can

check out the Zentropia Palladium Spa & Wellness centre, which provides access to hydrotherapy areas that include Jacuzzis, a pool, sauna and a steam bath, in addition to an extensive list of spa treatments.

Over at Grand Palladium Lady Hamilton Resort and Spa, guests can stay in one of 390 Junior suites, 74 suites, and 48 Honeymoon Villa suites. The adults-only Villa suites feature ocean views, a private entrance, Jacuzzi, a terrace with hammocks, and an outdoor shower for guests to enjoy. The resort also features unforgettable architecture that pays homage to the surrounding natural environment.

With the 'Dine Around' program, guests have the opportunity to sample all 10 restaurants between the two properties, including seven à la carte and three international restaurants with themed stations and show cooking.

There's plenty to do at the two Palladium Hotel properties - the opportunities are endless for guests of all ages and interests.

For more information go to palladiumhotelgroup.com.

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A new look at Trump International Beach Resort Miami

Trump International Beach Resort Miami located on Sunny Isles beach has started the new year with an array of updates, including a renovated front lobby and spa and a Winter Flash sale that runs until Jan. 31.

“It was important for us to pause, reflect and flex our creative muscles on how we could lead, innovate and inspire. We are eager to welcome guests back safely”

The resort’s redesigned lobby provides a more open and expansive environment while simultaneously creating smaller, intimate spaces for guests to naturally social distance. The new arrival experience was done by Carolina Keimig of Ba-Haus/Knf, who was part of the original lobby design more than two decades ago. Elevating the arrival experience is the resort’s Go Hotel Life App, which allows guests to easily make dining reservations, housekeeping requests, spa and salon appointments, recreation bookings, car rental

requests, ride share services and more.

Jim Monastrá, Director of Marketing, says, “It was important for us to pause, reflect and flex our creative muscles on how we could lead, innovate and inspire. We are eager to welcome guests back safely and to show them all of our new offerings and technologies that will further enhance their stay.”

Part of the new look at Trump International Beach Resort Miami is its sea-inspired Aquanox Spa, which includes a newly dedicated spa pool cabana for outdoor treatments and extended spa treatment lengths. Guests can celebrate the spa’s makeover with the new “Welcome Back” special offer, which includes 15% off a 60-minute Swedish massage, plus a complimentary beverage at Gili’s Beach Club or Pool Bar and

complimentary valet parking. Groups of five or more enjoy a special spa day with 15% off a 60-minute Swedish massage, a bottle of Trump champagne and complimentary valet parking. Those who wish to stay longer can take advantage of discounted suite packages for overnight stays with a US\$100 spa credit.

Trump International Beach Resort Miami is also promoting its Winter Flash sale where guests can book before Jan. 31 to receive up to 25% off accommodations, plus \$25 in daily resort credit to use on in-room dining, breakfast at the resort, or at Gili’s Beach Club & Pool Bar and the revamped Aquanox Spa.

For more information go to trumpmiami.com.



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