

Travel AND Tour TM

Volume:13, Issue: April 2021

W O R L D

Meetings Point

Antalya

Perfect Meeting Spot Amid Nature



Special Feature

GHST TOURS OF NEW ORLEANS

06



17



25



06- Meetings Point: **Antalya** is an ancient city now noted for magnificent hotels and convention venues. This place is also a popular holiday destination and you will surely find this place ideal for vacation after your hectic meeting schedule.

17- Destination Diary: Easter is considered to be a time of fun, good cheer and some amazing spring vacations. It is the perfect time to spend the weekend with close ones enjoying the blooming flowers, fun activities, numerous festivals and countless celebrations. Read this piece to know some of the best **Easter weekend destinations** across the world.

25- Special Feature: Deeply rooted in mystery and dark tales from the past, New Orleans is known as America's most haunted city. The region now capitalizes on its history of horrors and ghastly adventures and offers some of the **best ghost tours** in the country.

33



41



37



33- Cover Story: Read this article to know about the relationship with **VR** and modern world travel industry that saw a huge loss due to the spread of COVID-19.

37- Travel Tendency: A perfect packing is necessary for every successful trip. However, people often tend to do some very **common mistakes while packing**. Read on to know about some of the most common packing mistakes so you avoid them while preparing for your next trip.

41- Tech It: Like other sectors of tourism, the global cruise industry is largely embracing various technological advancements. Take a look at some of the contemporary **cruise technologies** and know how they can change the future of the cruise industry.

Interview Zone: 12

Travel News: 15

World Festivals: 46

Show Review: 52

Calendar of Events: 54

Dear Readers,

The festival of Easter is around the corner and soon the world will be celebrating new beginnings, the coming of spring, the festive spirit and enjoy some fun holidays with their close ones. Therefore, in this issue, our Destination Diary features some of the best places in the world that are ideal to experience a fun Easter weekend getaway. In this edition, our Cover Story discusses the age of virtual reality and its impact on the tourism industry. On the other hand, our Special Feature highlights the highly popular ghost tours of New Orleans and talks about the dark and mysterious history of the city.

Next, our Tech It sheds light on the some of the latest innovations and most contemporary cruise technologies and explains its impact on the future of the cruise industry. Lastly, Travel Tendency lists the most common packing mistakes every traveller does in order to help them avoid such mistakes while packing for their next trip.

Editor-In-Chief

Mr. Anup Kumar Keshan

Editorial Desk

President & Editor-In-Chief
Mr. Anup Kumar Keshan

Vice President & Editor
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Known as the fifth most populous city in Turkey, Antalya is a historical city now noted for luxury hotels and posh convention venues. Also termed as popular holiday destination, this charming city has magnificent turquoise coast. Antalya is as popular among the couples, who are looking for a romantic getaway as it is among the families looking for that unforgettable holiday together. So, it's definitely the right place to enjoy a holiday after a hectic professional life.

Antalya

Perfect Meeting Spot Amid Nature



Convention Centres & Hotels

Nest Congress and Exhibition Centre

Nest Congress and Exhibition Centre opened in Antalya, Belek with Turkey's largest pillar-free meeting hall, Nest Congress and Exhibition Centre which is expected to bring Turkey's event industry to a new level. Offering infra and upper structures designed to accommodate meetings, congresses, fairs, concerts, galas, launches and all types of events, Nest Congress and Exhibition Centre provides a total indoor area of 15,000 m² along with a 6,000 m² Main Hall.

Antalya Expo Center

Antalya Expo Center Fair and Congress Center was opened in 1999 by ANFAŞ - Antalya Fuarçılık İşletme ve Yatırım A.Ş. After the renovation works in 2016, it has an exhibition area of 60,000 m² with a closed area of 40,000 m² and an open area of 20,000 m² with an enlargement of 100% from the usage area of 20,000 m².

Crowne Plaza Antalya

Crowne Plaza Antalya is a hotel & resort situated in Antalya, Turkey. Some of the top organizers hosting events at Crowne Plaza Antalya include Academic Fora, Akademika Nusa Internsional, Animh, Hacettepe University, Society of Computer and more.



WOW Topkapi Palace Hotel

The WOW Topkapi Palace Hotel in Turkey has a unique charm and ambience that resemble the old Ottoman empire of the region. Built after the famous Topkai Palace of Istanbul, this hotel offers exclusive living and dining experience to the guests.

Limak Limra Hotel & Resort

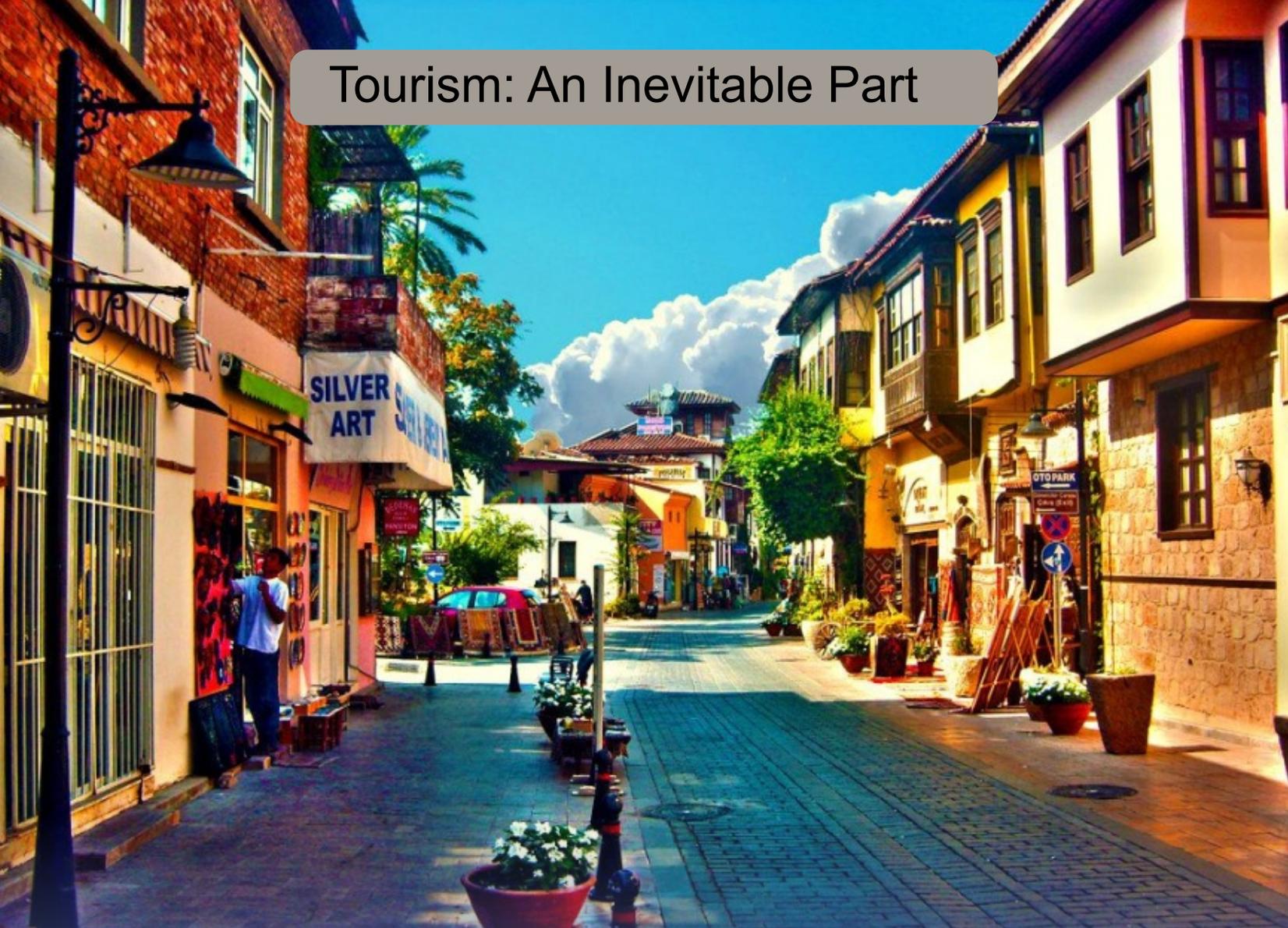
A picturesque and enthralling location on the seaside resort of Kemer in Antalya, the Limak Limra Hotel offers an apt setting to both the corporate travelers and the vacationers. While for the business clients it will be meeting facilities coupled with the refreshing location that will attract them to this location, for the travelers, it will definitely be the mesmerizing beach with all the wonderful sights and the water sports activities that will encourage them to plan a long vacation.

Miracle Hotel

Miracle Hotel is a Hotel & Resort situated in Kemerağzı Köyü, Turkey. Events being organized at the venue are of Education & Training, Business Services, Biotechnology etc.



Tourism: An Inevitable Part



Most part of Antalya tourism is the rich past of the province. As Antalya had been a part of Byzantine, Ottoman, Greek and Roman Empires over the course of history, the tourist destinations here share a rustic past from the time they were built. There are remnants of ancient cities that give a lively feeling of how these cities of ancient Antalya had flourished once. There are various museums that exhibit the excavation findings from these sites in a sophisticated manner in order to simplify the otherwise complicated history of Antalya. The Old town, Kaleici is particularly a major attraction of Antalya as it is a blend of the primeval Ottoman Empire as well as modernity.

Besides the natural beauty and historical places, Antalya also has an enthusiastic nightlife. The city comes alive with the beats of music in clubs, bars and pubs as the sun sets.

If you want to experience the spirit of Turkey then you must visit the local bazaars of Antalya that keep buzzing with the locals and vendors. Since, Antalya experiences a large number of tourists every year for various reasons, the city has got some most eloquent resorts and hotels which is why it is also known as the resort city.



Republic Square

The perfect starting point for your explorations around Antalya, Republic Square is at the very heart of the city. This is the place where any big public events and celebrations take place and, on regular days, it's just as good for sitting back and people watching, too.

Kaleiçi

Without a doubt one of Antalya's biggest attractions, the city's Old Town (Kaleiçi) is fascinatingly historic and unflinchingly charming. Allow yourself to get lost in the narrow, cobbled streets and take in the unique Ottoman houses as you go.

Hadrian's Gate

Easily one of the most iconic spots in the whole city, the unmistakable Hadrian's Gate is the main entrance into Kaleiçi, Antalya's picturesque Old Town.



Antalya Museum

Delve into Turkey's fascinating history at the vast and comprehensive Antalya Museum. The museum showcases artefacts and findings from the Stone Age and Bronze Age, right through to the days of the Byzantine Empire.

Antalya Bazaar

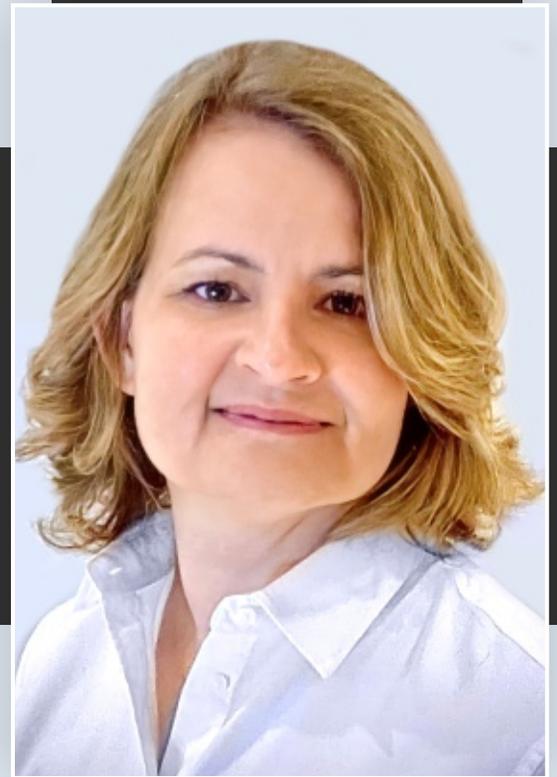
Visiting the historic Antalya Bazaar will give you a fascinating insight into local culture and the Turkish way of life, as visitors and locals mingle and strike a deal on the best prices for food, clothing, jewellery and arts and crafts.

Düden Waterfalls

Located just outside the city of Antalya, the Düden Waterfalls showcase Turkey's stunning natural beauty and are a mesmerising sight to be seen.

INTERVIEW ZONE

In an exclusive interview with Travel And Tour World, **Kerry Prince, Brand Director in Reed Exhibitions** reveals on how Reed Exhibition is planning to overcome the challenges they are facing in post COVID-19 time.



Travel And Tour World: What are the challenges right now the United Kingdom is facing in the MICE industry? Tell us about how to overcome these challenges.

Kerry Prince: Reed Exhibitions is a leading global events business. We combine face-to-face meetings with data and digital tools to help customers learn about markets, source products and complete transactions at over 400 events in 22 countries across 43 industry sectors, attracting more than 7 million participants. The exhibitions industry contributes £11BN to the U.K. economy, and the sector has been effectively closed for the last 12 months and faces several more months of restrictions. Since the beginning of the pandemic in Europe, we have been working closely with the UK Government providing all information and lobbying in favour of the exhibition industry to bring organised events back safely.



Feb 2021, the U.K. government published the 'COVID-19 Response – Spring 2021' document setting out the roadmap for England and conference centres and exhibition halls, including for business events, will be returning on May 17th (with capacity limits) and all being well, all events will be allowed by 21st June.

Travel And Tour World: Tell us about the 2021 Arabian Travel Market. What will our objective for promotion in the 2021 Arabian Travel Market?

Kerry Prince: Our overall aim is to keep the tourism industry connected and deliver positive business and networking opportunities to the travel and tourism community. ATM 2021's spotlight theme, '**A new dawn for travel and tourism,**' aims to deliver a message of recovery and look closely into the industry's current state and, more importantly, what the future holds.

It will also be integrated into all show verticals and planned activities. A host of seminars on the show floor is designed to look at the emerging trends and how innovation can drive the industry forward. This year's show will be in a hybrid format, running an in-person event from 16th to 19th May and the following week, a three-day virtual show from 24th to 26th May, to complement and reach a wider audience than ever before.

Indeed, with the vaccines being rolled out across the world, it is with an air of optimism that we look forward to welcoming travel professionals from around the world in May, with a positive outlook that we can address whatever issues the '**new normal**' presents to us.

Travel And Tour World: How are you planning to promote the meeting industry in post-pandemic time?

Kerry Prince: Meetings post-pandemic are going to look a lot different. We can expect to see more hybrid events going forward. However, even with the growing trend towards more virtual interactions due to the pandemic, human interaction remains essential. There is nothing like meeting face-to-face, particularly in an industry like ours.



The travel trade is about human contact and experience, and there are things you cannot do virtually. Meeting someone in person also ensures a deeper level of trust and understanding. Forging meaningful bonds sometimes starts with accidental meetings, which doesn't happen as often during virtual events.

Travel And Tour World: What are the steps you have taken to host the physical event successfully?

Kerry Prince: From an ATM perspective, we work closely with the team at the Dubai World Trade Centre and with Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) to provide a safe, touchless and seamless experience for all. The show will strictly adhere to the stringent health and safety guidelines set by the venue. The team at DWTC are working hard to ensure that all events run safely and have implemented a range of measures, including an enhanced cleaning regime, improved air circulation, multiple hand sanitiser stations and temperature checks.



Travel And Tour World: What are the new technological updates to host a safe event?

Kerry Prince: This past year has changed the way we look at events and meetings. The pandemic has caused a dramatic acceleration of technology adoption and digitalisation. It's no secret that the whole industry has adopted virtual events, and it's clear that the future of the industry is hybrid.

With these new exhibition types comes a greater opportunity to reach and engage with new audiences larger than ever before. For the physical events, contactless, for instance, has become a familiar concept in the exhibition industry, and the pandemic has added to the interest and take-up as a way to reduce the spread of the virus by reducing surface transmission.

Cyprus set to welcome vaccinated Brits from May

As per local authorities, Cyprus has decided to open its borders to vaccinated Britons from the start of May. However, U.K. government travel restrictions will still be in force, with Prime Minister Boris Johnson announcing that travel will not be permitted until May 17 at the earliest.

The Cypriot government said that individuals that have received both the COVID-19 jabs could travel to the country without restrictions from May 1. Cyprus deputy Tourism Minister, Savvas Perdios, said the country would allow Britons who had been given vaccines approved by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) the right to enter without the need for a negative test or to quarantine. However, he mentioned that tourists would be required to have had their second dose at least seven days before travelling.



Thailand likely to reopen for international tourists starting July 1

Thailand Tourism has recently introduced a campaign trying to persuade the countrymen to welcome overseas tourists back by July.

The campaign '**Open Thailand Safely**' aims at welcoming tourists from across the globe by July 1, 2021. The date has been chosen to give enough time for prospective travellers to get vaccinated. The tourism reopening plans are also gaining momentum as authorities are rolling out a national inoculation program and looking into coronavirus vaccine passports and quarantine waivers. Organisers are expecting that Thai medical authorities will also be able to vaccinate their frontline staff and vulnerable citizens by July 1. It would also allow the tourism industry, including airlines and hotels, enough time to prepare to welcome tourists from abroad.

ABTA welcomes extension of general business support measures

ABTA has responded to the Chancellor's Budget statement, welcoming the extension of general business support measures, but saying that travel companies without retail premises must also be eligible for financial support.

Mark Tanzer, Chief Executive of ABTA – The Travel Association said that they are pleased to see the Government has responded to many of their calls to extend furlough, business rates relief and VAT reductions. This will help to support jobs and businesses over the coming months. However, the Chancellor must move beyond the Government's blind-spot concerning the impacts of international travel restrictions, and make support available to all travel companies whose business has been effectively closed by public health policy.



Japan introduces Circular Economy Collaboration with World Economic Forum

Attaining a circular economy needs transforming policy and business. Also, it will need a new way of approach to alliances and partnerships.

At this week's Japan Circular Economy Roundtable, the Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOEJ) and Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) has declared the introduction of the Partnership on Circular Economy. This Roundtable was hosted by the World Economic Forum.

This new association will attract business leaders and government together to get the circular economy faster in Japan. In this public-private partnership, best practices will be combined and distributed to broader stakeholders in Japan within the supply chain, including domestic and international consumers. The association is hoped to develop with the help of this collaboration with the World Economic Forum's Circular Economy Initiative.



Best Easter Weekend Destinations

Easter is around the corner and soon the world will be celebrating the festive spirit and the coming of spring. Considered to be one of the most celebrated weekends, Easter allows people to enjoy festivities, blooming natural landscapes, fun activities, and delicious brunches as well as amazing weekend getaways. Read on to know about some of the best destinations across the world to spend a memorable Easter weekend.



Washington D.C.

Considered to be a hotspot for Easter celebrations in the country, Washington D.C. hosts everything from commercial egg hunts to traditional services and scrumptious Easter brunches. The U.S. capital is also recognised for The White House Egg Roll, an Easter tradition dating back to the 19th century. The President invites families to the White House lawn where children take part in a race to roll a hard-boiled egg across the field as a part of the tradition. The ticket for the event is available through a lottery that opens a few weeks before Easter. Additionally, several other parks, hotels, museums and country farms also organise Easter Egg Hunts and other fun activities, the most recognised being Eggstravaganza at Tudor Palace, Smithsonian National Zoo and Green Meadows Petting Farm. You can also attend the hour-long traditional service on Easter Sunday around 6:30 am at Lincoln Memorial. Moreover, you can also witness the city's landmarks covered in blooms of pink as the cherry blossoms peak around this time.



Fredericksburg, Texas

Located just 90 minutes from Texas' capital Austin, Fredericksburg celebrates Easter weekend in the most unique way. Everyone in the town dresses for the Easter pageant the night before Easter Sunday and at one particular time of the night all the lights over the town goes out. Visitors can then marvel at the sight of the lights of the fires that spring up from above the surrounding hills and witness the exceptional Fredericksburg Easter Fires while enjoying some delicious food and drinks offered throughout the town during the festival. You can also see the beautiful flowers at Wildseed Farms, the nation's largest working wildflower fair during the Easter weekend and even celebrate Easter in the traditional German way dating back to 1915 at the Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm.



Charleston, South Carolina

Often known as “the Holy City” for its tall and iconic church steeples, Charleston is another great venue to spend the Easter weekend. During this time, the city blooms with vibrant flowers and natural greenery and allows visitors to experience spring at its finest. Every year on Easter Saturday, it hosts the popular “Eggstravaganza” event, where children can take part in egg hunting, egg decorating, egg tossing and egg rolling races. On Easter Sunday, visitors can watch the annual Easter Promenade along the Broad and Meeting Streets in downtown Charleston as well as enjoy a memorable Lowcountry Easter brunch.



St. Augustine, Florida

Ever since its inception back in 1956, St. Augustine has been hosting the recognised annual Easter parade, known as the 'Parade of Horses and Coaches.' Visitors can be a part of the incredible tradition on Easter Sunday and enjoy the marching parades, bands and live music, decorative floats, classic cars, drill teams and carriage horses, all decked up in Easter attire. Guests can also head to one of the many restaurants offering delicious Easter brunches. You can also visit the Easter Promenade at The Plaza de la Constitucion dressed in their Easter best.



Prague, Czech Republic

The perfect destination to enjoy Easter in Europe, Prague hosts one of the most popular Easter markets, the Prague Easter Market in Old Town Square. Starting on April 1, the market lasts for 3 long weeks offering traditional Easter items, delicacies and craftworks. During the Easter season, the city is adorned with colourful and dazzling decorations with people engaged in making Easter goodies underneath the orange-tinged roofs. You can also visit the Easter Mass in the gothic Cathedral at Prague Castle and indulge in some Czech Easter cuisine specifically planned out for each day throughout the Easter weekend. Prague is also known for its tradition of decorative Easter egg shells that can be taken home as a souvenir.



Sedona, Arizona

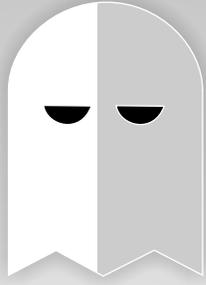
Visitors travelling to Sedona for Easter can experience the spectacular Easter Bunny Express, one of the most popular and distinctive Easter celebrations in Arizona. The Easter special train ride is offered only once a year on Easter Sunday. The Easter Bunny Express takes passengers on a picturesque ride along the Verde Canyon Railroad and allows visitors to spend some time with the Easter bunny on the platform, who arrives with plenty of yummy treats! People can also experience some fun face painting and photo opportunities in the platform. While adults indulge in some fancy drinks and delicacies, children can enjoy fun activities like jellybean counting contests.



Santa Monica, California

Santa Monica is a great place to enjoy the Easter weekend, especially for athletes and sports lovers as the city organises the Happy Easter 5k, 10k and 15k and Half Marathon every year. Meanwhile, others can enjoy farmers' markets, egg hunts and plenty of other Easter events happening throughout the weekend. Visitors can also make sure to check out the annual Easter Hopping to enjoy bouncy houses and other Easter games or take part in the iconic Peter Rabbit Day at Douglas Park for fun Easter activities and photo opportunities with the Easter bunny.

GHOST TOURS OF



Often cited as the most haunted city in America, New Orleans has a history deeply rooted in mystery and dark tales from the past. There are numerous tales of ghosts, spirits, vampires, witchcraft and voodoo, all of which are believed to be born from the slave trade in the U.S. The city has encountered uncountable haunted mysteries over the years and some even believe that the hauntings continue to the present day.

The city has now started capitalising on its mystery and horror and is a heaven for adventurous souls, paranormal investigators and history lovers. New Orleans offers some of the best ghost tours in the country with the perfect ounce of thrills and chills and allows tourists to delve into the world of the unknown and unravel the spine-chilling mysteries.

NEW ORLEANS

French Quarter Ghosts and Legends Tour



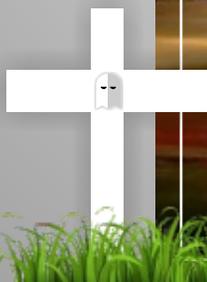
Considered to be one of the most popular in the city, the two-hour haunted history ghost tour takes tourists to the French Quarter's most eerie and infamous locations that are hotspots for paranormal investigators and historical photographers or videographers. The local guide narrates fascinating tales of the French Quarter's haunted history while taking you along the ghastly documented sites found in paranormal investigations, city archives and police records. Immerse in the history of the city that unravels several stories of misfortune, gruesome deeds of slave owners, diseases and disasters leaving behind the unquenched spirits and ghosts walking along the streets. Tourists can learn about the haunting at the Andrew Jackson Hotel, Ursuline Convent and Muriel's Jackson Square as well as Marie Laveau and the events of the yellow fever pandemic. Deeply rooted in history featuring engaging stories, this tour is a combination of historic research and documentation on the haunting across the city's oldest neighbourhood and the ancient art of storytelling.



Dead of Night Ghosts and Haunts Nighttime Bus Tours



Another popular ghost tour in New Orleans, this tour highlights the reason behind the Big Easy being one of the most haunted places in North America. Hop aboard the comfortable and air conditioned night bus along with your tour guide and travel into the darkness in some of the most haunted locations outside the French Quarter. You will cross one of America's most mysterious streets, often known as the “port of the missing men” while your guide details you the stories of murder, betrayal and some of the most spine-chilling urban legends that made New Orleans famous as a haunted hotspot. You can relax and enjoy the thrill along the ride or try capturing the haunted spots on the way.



Haunted Pub Crawl



If you love to experience adventure, fun and thrill, the famous New Orleans Haunted Pub Crawl is perfect for you. After the two-hour long walking tour along the French Quarter, you can go a mile and discover plenty bar shops with their own haunted history. Grab a drink and visit the Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop and the LaLaurie Mansion, popularly known from the “American Horror Story: Coven”. The guides will continue to keep you engaged with their lively storytelling and present the tales of murder and crimes of passion while allowing adult guests to taste the unique beverages made popular by some of the most infamous characters in New Orleans' history.



New Orleans Voodoo History Tours



Explore the city's most gruesome voodoo history and dive into the mysterious world of voodoo in New Orleans. This tour takes you beyond the Hollywood image and stereotypes of voodoo and tells you about the origin of the cult, its culture in New Orleans, the practices and mysteries as well as where it stands today. This tour also takes you to exclusive locations where you can see actual voodoo altars and meet voodoo practitioners. You also get to know how voodoo in New Orleans is different from that of Haiti and Africa and learn about a hysteria that took over the city for more than 100 years. Your guide also highlights the stories of the Voodoo queen Marie Laveau and other stories surrounding dolls, potions and dark magic. You may also get a chance to visit the New Orleans Voodoo Museum and other modern Voodoo shrines. This tour is only recommended for adults and helps them to dispel the myths and mysteries surrounding one of the most feared and misunderstood religions in the world.



Ghost and Vampire Tours



Enjoy a double dose of spooky fun in the two hours of the Ghost and Vampire Walking Tour where professional guides take you into the world of the undead and present a memorable journey through the darkest corners of the city. Relish the stories of the famous vampires of New Orleans, both real and fictional. Find out the real tale of the Octoroon Mistress, know why people are afraid of the Mad Butcher and explore the story of Madame LaLaurie's love for torture. The tour also takes you to locations associated with the creatures of the night, one of them being a former Vampire Tavern!



The 3-in-1 Cemetery Tours



If you are looking to have three combined experiences of the French Quarter, the cemeteries of New Orleans and the voodoo mysteries together, this tour is ideal for you. Starting from the banks of the Mississippi River all the way up to St. Louis Cemetery No. 1, your guide provides you an immersive experience about the mystical tales and afterlife in New Orleans. You can learn about the city's cultures, traditions, myths and superstitions and visit some of the most famous time-worn tombs while knowing about the city's unique interment process. You may also hear about the history of voodoo and its relationship with New Orleans and get a chance to visit Congo Square in Louis Armstrong Park.



The 5-in-1 Ghosts and Mystery Tour



Lastly, if you are looking forward to experience the major ghost tours of New Orleans all together, the 5-in-1 Ghosts and Mystery Tour gives you a collective experience where you can learn about the city's most famous paranormal happenings, visit haunted sites and know about ghosts, spirits, vampires and occults the city is famous for. Guides take you through the most thrilling spots of the French Quarters as they narrate the tales of the unexplained mysteries. If you only have the time to take up a single tour and want to experience two hours of chills and thrills, this tour is perfect for you.



Age of Virtual Reality in Tourism

Virtual Reality in tourism sector is one of the most popular topic in this industry. For as long as commercial tourism has existed, it has been a primitive form of VR. In its most popular form, commercial tourism involves tourists being shepherded around carefully curated landmarks, landmarks which bear only a fading historical connection to the nations in which they're physically located. In other words, tourists mostly see heavily managed, artificial environments rather than the environments in which a nation's people live, work, play and evolve.





Artificial Environment

Likewise, Virtual Reality involves placing people in heavily managed, artificial environments. As such, it comes as no surprise to learn that the travel industry and various tech companies are increasingly experimenting with ways to use VR to give people the same basic experience of tourism.



Impact of VR

Virtual Reality is set to have a big impact on the travel and tourism industry in the next few years. VR needs to be categorized into two basic types: those which simulate tourist experiences that anyone with enough money could experience for real and those which simulate experiences that aren't possible.

Sometimes, VR attractions enable tourists to see and feel what it would be like to fly over Paris in a jetpack. This is the more exotic end of the VR tourism spectrum, yet there's an expanding roster of experiences which simply recreate more mundane tourist experiences, as if to remove the need to actually get on a plane. Japan-based First Airlines began offering offers its customers a chance to fly to a number of popular destinations in a mock aircraft in VR, something which might be of particular interest to anyone with a fear of flying.

The senior citizens began a VR travel club at the Ebenezer Tower Apartments in Minneapolis, allowing them to visit famous tourist spots without leaving the building. And more recently, South Carolina State Parks opened a VR experience where people can hike to the top of Table Rock Mountain, saving not only time, but also potentially the environment.



Digital Marketing

It is unlikely that most of the companies pushing through VR tourist experiences intend to replace physical tourism. For the most part, they'll be aiming to have their cake and eat it too, in that VR tourism will be harnessed as yet another digital marketing device.

Virtual travel experiences will be used to promote actual travel experiences, both directly and for collecting data about users who will be profiled through their VR preferences and targetted with relevant travel-focused ads.

COMMON PACKING MISTAKES EVERY TRAVELLER DO

Planning a trip and travelling to your desired destination is such a stress buster. For any trip to be successful, a perfect packing is a mandatory requirement. Packing is extremely boring and the most nerve-racking thing to do. No matter how careful you are, something or other misses your eyes and you discover it only when you hit the road. In this article, we bring you some of the most common packing mistakes every traveller do so that you avoid them while packing for your next journey.



OVERPACKING

Overpacking is considered to be one of the biggest mistakes travellers often do. Travelling light is the best way to enjoy a trip. According to experts, a person should not carry more than 10% to 15% of their total body weight. Heavy luggage not only makes it difficult for you to carry around while you are on the road, but also often increases your excess baggage fees. Arriving at your destination and realising that you have brought too many things can weigh you down and hamper your travel comfort. Therefore, make sure to avoid packing a lot and get an average sized bag to limit your packing to a medium level.



TAKING TWO LUGGAGES

Another similar packing mistake travellers tend to make is carrying two backpacks or two suitcases. Especially rookie travellers can often be seen holding double backpacks or two suitcases each in one hand. Carrying two different luggages creates a lot of hassle for the travellers as they try to make their way

through crowded airports, busy streets or crowded public transports. If you want to carry two bags, try to pick a small suitcase or stroller and a smaller duffel bag or backpack that can also serve as a carry-on. It will not only make the whole process of travelling much easier and comfortable but also keep one of your hands free.



FOLDING CLOTHES

One of the golden rules of minimalist packing is rolling your clothes rather than folding. However, many travellers make the mistake of folding their clothes while they pack. Rolling your clothes makes it easier to fit them into every corner of your backpack or suitcase and gives you much more space. Folding often creates creases on the clothes but rolling them helps prevent all the wrinkles. You can also use rubber bands over the rolled items to stay more organised and compressed. Place your shoes in the bottom of your bag and put the rolled clothes in packing cubes over them to be ready with a compact package.

CARRYING TOO MANY SHOES It is always advisable to carry minimum number of shoes as too many of them can make your luggage heavy as well as stink your luggage. Shoes cannot be rolled or folded and nothing can be done to make shoes take less space. Depending on the destination you are travelling to, you can carry a maximum of two or three pairs of shoes like semi-casual sneakers or some comfy sandals that can be used in multiple purposes. Also, make sure to avoid carrying sky-high heels as those are not package friendly.



PACKING MANY MEDICINES

Although carrying a small first-aid kit or emergency medications is important, it is not necessary to carry too many items or a large medical kit. Some common medications and basic medical support is enough to sustain you through an entire trip. In case there are major medical needs during trips, you can always find hospitals, clinics, doctors and other modern medical support at the destinations.



CARELESSNESS IN HANDLING LIQUID ITEMS

While packing for their trip, travellers often make mistakes that violate the TSA regulations. One such mistake is not adhering to the 30oz/100 rule while packing liquid items. Several people bring along shampoo, conditioners, hair sprays, body wash, lotions, sanitisers and big bottles of toothpaste among others in large numbers that exceeds the liquid package limits. Travellers should not only limit the number of such items to a basic level but also be careful while packing anything that comes in liquid, gel or paste form to prevent spills and leaks.

NOT CARRYING COPIES OF ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Travelling requires people to carry various kinds of documents for both official and safety purposes. Identification papers, passports, medical certification or any other informative or instructive documents are a must these days. However, while packing the necessary papers, people often forget to carry a photocopy of all documentations. It is highly essential to keep a copy of all your necessary documents that can come in handy if you lose or misplace your original documents and also give you an additional backup and a sense of security.



IGNORING LOCAL CULTURE

It is always necessary to respect the local culture of the destination you are visiting. While packing, people sometimes forget to keep the local culture in mind. Therefore, it is essential to do a little research on your next destination while packing for your trip, to know more about the right dress codes of the venues that you will visit so that it can help you to pack your outfits accordingly. Taking appropriate clothing in your desired destination will not only make you feel at ease amid the locals but also help you to integrate better in the society.



With the advent of the digital era, the global cruise industry is rapidly embracing technological advancements like other sectors of tourism. Cruises are now using next generation technologies. This sector is advancing by introducing unique and enhanced onboard experiences for guests. Take a look at some of the contemporary technologies that have been introduced by some major cruise lines and will be revolutionising the future of the cruise industry.



TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF CRUISE INDUSTRY



FACIAL RECOGNITION AND VIRTUAL CHECK-IN

Almost every traveller is aware that cruise ship embarkation is highly exhausting. Thousands of passengers checking in at the same time make the process extremely time-consuming and tiring. However, the advent of facial and biometric recognition enables virtual check-in that makes the whole embarkation procedure at cruise terminals much easier and faster. Royal Caribbean's Celebrity Edge has already embraced the technology and has successfully eliminated the long queuing process. According to the cruise line, the process that used to take up around 60-90 minutes now gets done by 10 minutes with the help of facial recognition technology. Passengers can simply walk into the cruise avoiding all security checks and queues just by uploading a scanned copy of their passport and a selfie. As more cruise ships undertake facial recognition facility and allow virtual check-in in the coming years, the future of ID verification and embarkation process in cruises will not only be seamless but also efficient and extremely rapid.

AI ROBOTS AND VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

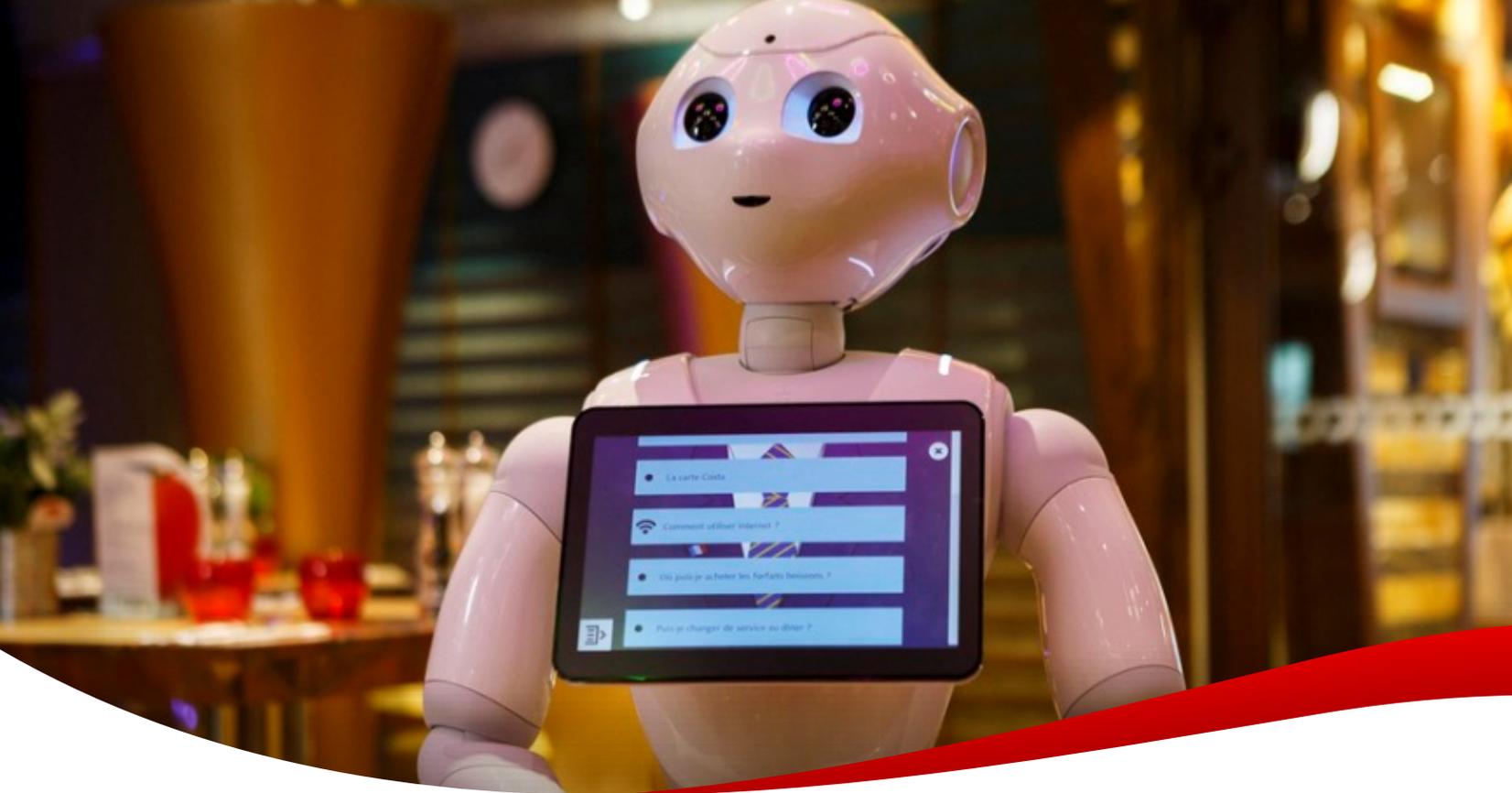
Considered to be a more advanced form of Artificial Intelligence, chatbots, AI robots and virtual assistants are the latest technologies that are likely to take over the cruise industry in the near future. MSC Cruises has already introduced the first virtual cruise assistant, named Zoe, a free, voice-enabled chatbot installed in every cabin. Zoe can answer hundreds of questions about life at the sea with just a simple "Ok Zoe" command and help passengers to reserve bookings, trips, restaurants, check their bills and much more. Zoe can speak around seven different languages and has been programmed to keep learning with every interaction in order to serve guests better.



Zoe can speak around seven different languages and has been programmed to keep learning with every interaction in order to serve guests better. Back in 2018, Carnival Corporation's AIDA Cruises and Costa Cruises launched humanoid robots called “Pepper” that welcomes and guides passengers upon embarkation and assists them throughout their voyage. Similarly, Royal Caribbean's Bionic Bars have several mechanical robotic arms that work as bartenders and serves drinks to passengers. The day is not far when almost every passenger will sail with AI companions as more and more cruise lines launch their own robotic hosts.

WEARABLES

Wearable technology is recently being largely accepted at the sea and is the next big revolution in the cruise industry. For years, guests had to carry a cruise card while onboard to access rooms, pay for meals and basically for every other activity. However, the latest wristbands and medallions technologies provide guests a more personalised and smarter onboard experience. It was back in January 2017 that Carnival Corporation introduced the Ocean Medallion marking the beginning of the inclusion of IoT (Internet of Things) in the cruise industry. The medallion looks similar to a circular pendant and can be worn as a necklace, bracelet or carried around in bags or pockets. It is specific to every passenger and interacts with nearly 7000 sensors and smart devices on the cruises' deck to provide personalised experience like food delivery, easy payment, navigations and assistance on almost every onboard activity. It also allows keyless cabin entry, delivers virtual concierge service and helps guests track other family members across the ship.



Meanwhile, Royal Caribbean, MSC Cruises and Disney offer RFID wristbands that can also be used as cruise cards. MSC's wearable bracelet interacts with the 'Msc For Me' app to provide around 130 smart services. It allows passenger to store personal and important information, allows tracking and navigation, provides card and paperless entry and food delivery as well gives them entertainment recommendation based on their activity pattern. The band can also control light and temperature of the room. Similar services are also provided by Royal Caribbean's RFOD wristband as well as the RFID bag tags than can provide accurate update about the location of the luggage.

As other cruise lines gradually introduce wearable technologies onboard over the coming years, passengers will be in for a more seamless, customised and advanced experience all throughout their journey on the sea.

VIRTUAL AND AUGMENTED REALITY

Another highly advanced technology that is becoming increasingly popular in the cruise industry is virtual reality and augmented reality. Royal Caribbean has introduced a virtual balcony concept, an 80-inch floor to ceiling, wall to wall, high-definition LED screen that shows real-time video of the ocean and other views inside the ship. Disney Cruise Line has also previously launched virtual porthole windows showing live footage of the ocean combined with Disney animation characters.



Norwegian Cruise Line's Norwegian Encore has launched a 10,000 sq. ft. gaming and virtual reality complex that provides a virtual-reality racing experience in a retrofitted GT car and an escape room challenge with interactive and AR activities. Royal Caribbean also introduced an augmented reality adventure called Expedition Two70 that allows guests to play four immersive AR games. The Norwegian Bliss has also started offering virtual view games with solo cabins. The interior rooms provide window-sized virtual views of the ocean.

The introduction of VR and AR facilities in the cruise industry showcases a future where guests will be immersed with several sources of entertainment presented to them through the most contemporary technologies. It will keep them more engaged during their voyage and the new innovations might even attract more travellers towards cruising.



World Festivals



Coachella Valley Music And Arts Festival

Date: 9 April – 18 April, 2021 | Place: Indio, California

Coachella festival is a huge annual music festival that brings in people from all over the world, and large numbers of the world's top artists, across different genres come together for a weeklong celebration of music.



Water-Splashing Festival

Date: 13 to 15 April, 2021 | Place: Thailand

The Water-Splashing Festival marks the beginning of Buddhist New Year all over Thailand. The images of Gautama Buddha are bathed in water, and younger Thai people show respect to monks and elders by sprinkling water over their hands.



Laos New Year

Date: 14 to 16 April, 2021 | Place: Luang Prabang, Laos

Laos New Year, sometimes known as Bun Pi Mai celebrates everywhere in Laos – from Luang Prabang to Vientiane. This is also the Buddhist New Year offering their own version of the festivities. In Luang Prabang, parties and processions can go on for up to 10 days, so it's certainly a lively time to visit.

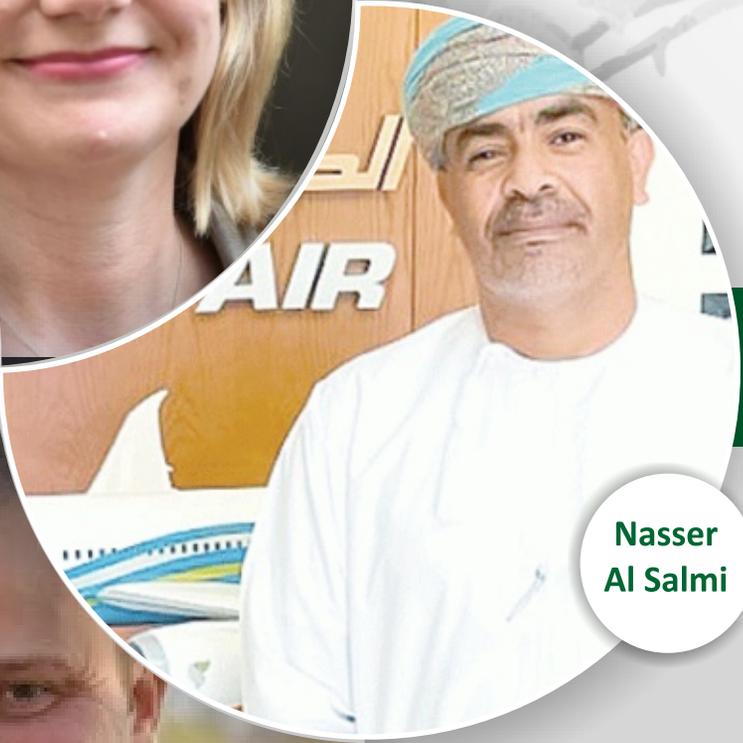
New Faces



**Justine
Greening**



**Maria
Manlulu-
Garcia**



**Nasser
Al Salmi**



**Felix
Murillo**

Justine Greening appointed Non-Executive Director at On the Beach Group

Former transport secretary Justine Greening has been appointed to the board as a Non-Executive Director at On the Beach Group with immediate effect. After leaving the government in 2018, most recently, Greening founded the Social Mobility Pledge campaign to drive grass roots change through business and higher education. Three years on, over 550 companies and 75 universities have committed to strategically drive social mobility through their respective organisations' engagement with local communities.



Nasser Al Salmi appointed Chief Operating Officer of Oman Air

Nasser Al Salmi has been appointed the Chief Operating Officer at Oman Air. An accomplished leader and fixture in the local aviation sector, Al Salmi brings more than three decades of hands-on industry experience to the role, including pivotal operational expertise from his most recent role as Chief Operating Officer at Gulf Air.



Four Seasons Resort Tamarindo, Mexico welcomes general manager Felix Murillo

Four Seasons Resort Tamarindo, Mexico welcomes General Manager Felix Murillo, who has spent almost three decades in various positions at Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts worldwide. Murillo will lead this oceanfront oasis through pre-opening and its opening, slated for late 2021. With a plethora of knowledge from opening award-winning hotels and resorts in the brand's portfolio, Murillo brings a breadth of luxury hospitality experience, a deep respect for the undiscovered destination and an intimate understanding of the community to his new role.



Novotel Manila Araneta City announces its new appointments

Seasons Hoteliers announces its new appointments. Much has transpired in the previous year for the hospitality industry and there's so much to look forward to as year 2021 unfolds and as the good old saying goes, 'With each sunrise, we start anew'. One exciting news in the industry is the appointment of Ms. Maria Manlulu-Garcia as the very first female General Manager for international brand Accor in the country and the appointment of Mr. Darwin Labayandoy as Resident Manager, both filling up the said positions in Novotel Manila Araneta City at the City of Firsts.



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TTF Kolkata came to a close on February 28, after three days of activity at Uttirno in Alipore. Hosted at a brand new venue this year, the show lived up to its expectations of marking an important moment in the restarting of physical travel trade shows and rekindling hope for the travel & tourism industry. Over 140 exhibitors and 15 states were present at the show this year and saw a footfall of more than 1,633 trade visitors along with over 1,611 general visitors. All three days of TTF Kolkata were abuzz with activity.



The show was inaugurated by Chief Guest Nandini Chakravorty, Principal Secretary, West Bengal Tourism along with stalwarts from the travel trade and state tourism board officials. Speaking at the show, the Principal Secretary said that TTF Kolkata is a significant step forward, not only for West Bengal but also for the entire country. She mentioned that it sends the right signal for the travel & tourism industry which contributes to economic growth and mentioned that reopening with 15 state representations is phenomenal. She stated that the organizers have taken a very courageous and important step, and congratulated them for their efforts

Panel Discussion on Domestic Tourism: An extremely insightful and detailed panel discussion on Domestic Tourism: Leading the way in reviving travel and tourism in India followed. The speakers comprised Nandini Chakravorty, Principal Secretary, West Bengal Tourism; Dr Manisha Arora, RAS, Additional Director Tourism, Rajasthan; Debjit Dutta, Chairman, ADTOI & IATO West Bengal; Koushik Banerjee, Chairman, ETAA Eastern Region and Shibojyoti Bhowmick, Vice President, TAAB. Sanjiv Agarwal, CEO & Founder, Fairfest Media Ltd moderated the panel which concluded that Indian destinations have come into focus, courtesy COVID and will continue to attract tourists from all across the country in the coming day. ADTOI & IATO Chairman Debjit Dutta said in his statement that India has emerged as the biggest source market for India. He mentioned that every crisis comes with an opportunity, and said the country is going through a transformation. He shared that COVID gave the country an opportunity to see domestic tourism in a new light and said that now is the time to make the most of it.



Travel and Tourism Fair

Date: 26-28, February 2021

Place: Uttirno, Kolkata, India



Sukriti Sambyal, General Manager, Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation added that COVID has forced Indians to look at otherwise unexplored destinations and that is why local tourism has an incredible opportunity to prosper. She shared that people have to offer the best of the destination, the best of facilities to domestic tourists and keep the momentum going for domestic tourism. The panelists concluded that time have come to make the most of it by leaving behind the memories of 2020.

Rajasthan Tourism Roadshow at TTF Kolkata: Rajasthan Tourism also conducted an informative roadshow exclusively for travel trade and media. Dr Manisha Arora, Additional Director, Rajasthan Tourism made a vibrant presentation on the latest offerings from the colourful state of Rajasthan. She emphasized that Rajasthan has always been very close to the hearts of the Bengalis and Rajasthan is very proud of this fact. She also informed the travel agents and local media about the new tourism policy announced by the State government. Launched by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, who also happens to hold the charge of tourism, the policy aims at mitigating

the adverse impact of COVID on the tourism industry and giving impetus through various incentives and promotional strategies. She said it has been a long time since people have come out of their homes due to the pandemic, so the Government of West Bengal and the organisers have taken a great initiative by hosting a physical show as everybody eagerly awaits the reopening of domestic tourism.



Ending note: The three-day show came to a rousing conclusion with the Valedictory and Awards Function where participants were awarded in various categories like booth design, eco-tourism, safe destination, best value product, best leisure product, best innovative product and others. Dr Manisha Arora, RAS, Additional Director, Rajasthan Tourism and Sanjiv Agarwal, Chairman and CEO, Fairfest Media, Organisers of TTF Kolkata, gave away the awards. Sukriti Sambyal, General Manager, Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation, and Kamal Kishore Joshi, PRO, Uttarakhand Tourism, also spoke on the occasion. It is safe to say that TTF Kolkata has successfully set the wheels of travel & tourism in motion again, not only in Eastern India but all over the country.

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AgroTravel 2021
Targi Kielce, Poland
agro.travel/en/k/fairs



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KITF 2021
Almaty, Kazakhstan/
[//kitf.kz/en](http://kitf.kz/en)



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Balt Tour 2021
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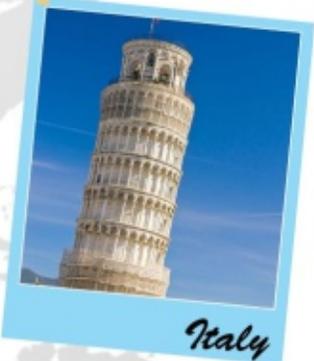
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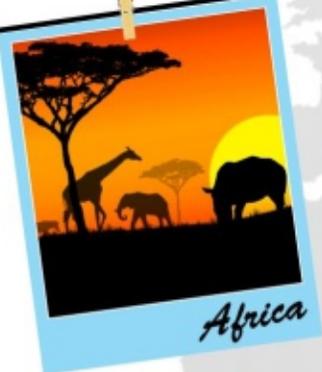
Egypt



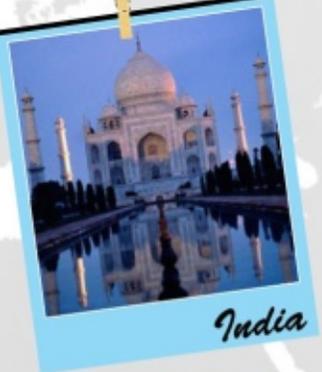
Brazil



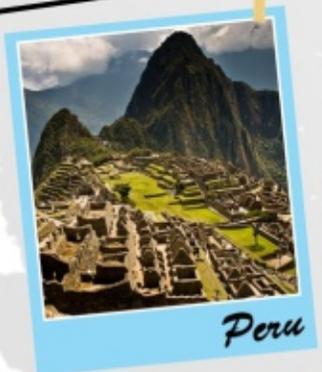
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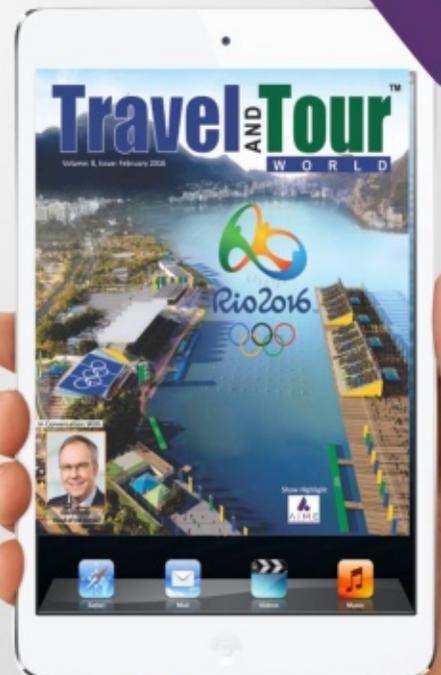
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