

Travel AND Tour™

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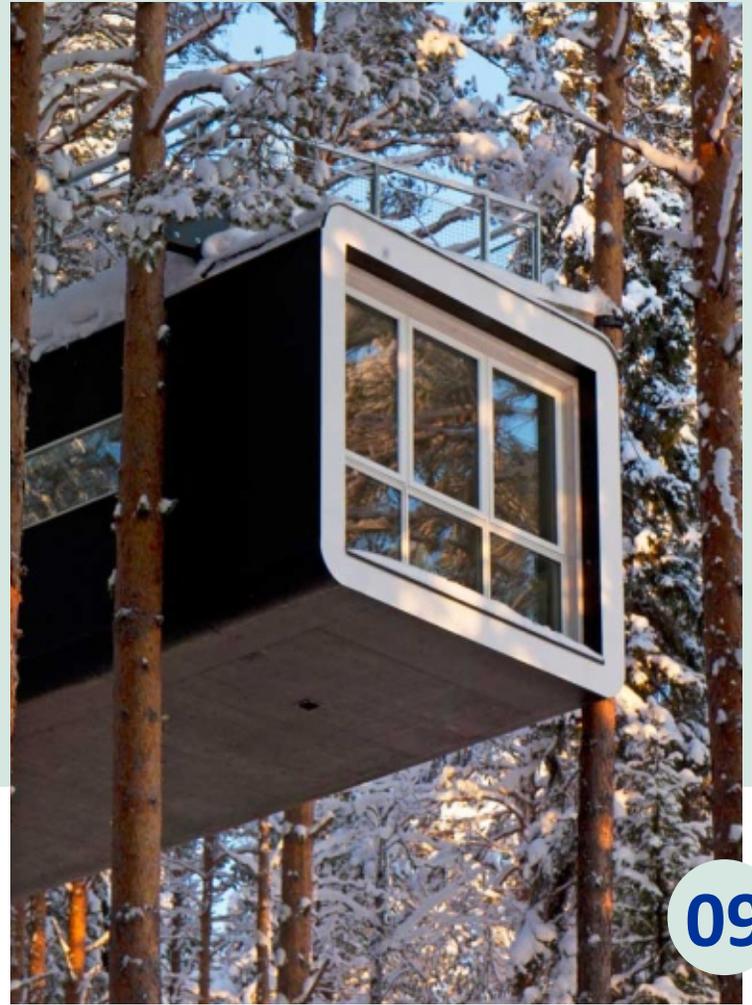


Offbeat Places
in Germany



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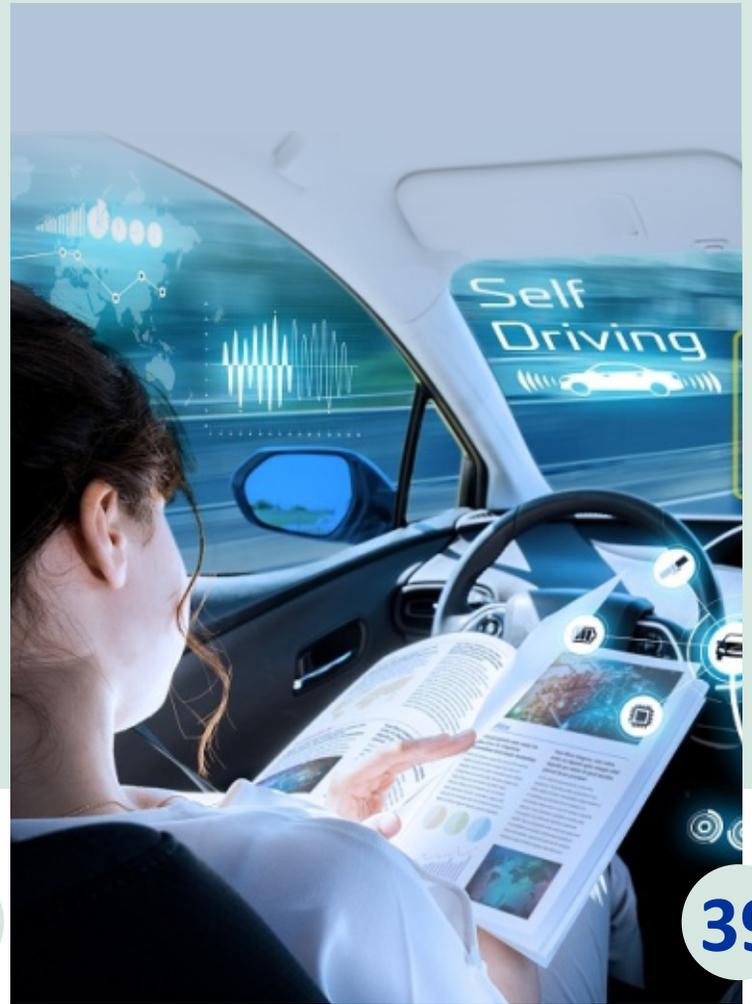
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Dear Readers,

The COVID-19 pandemic has rapidly changed the travel industry. As the world is slowly recovering from pandemic and international borders are about to open, travel industry takes a different shape in operation. In this issue, we are talking about your new plans for 2021 travel. Our Cover Story explains some of the world's most ancient ruins serving as the most popular destinations. Next, in our Meetings Point, you can get to know more about Okinawa, Japan's most highlighted city in business and events. Our Tech Talk highlights vehicle automation and future of travel industry. Here you can see the application of autonomous vehicle which are still in the research phase.

In this edition, Travel Tendency discusses one of the most debated topics- Travel Myths and its Truth. It comes with thoughts and ideas that travel is expensive, unsafe and most difficult. But today with the advent of new technologies and certain behavioural changes travelling to any place is easy and you go in an inexpensive way also.

Our Destination Diary focuses on the offbeat places in Germany that still allures tourists for its scenic views. These are known as hidden gems: all of those places are stunning and well-deserving. Then comes to Special Feature that deals with the most unique and unusual accommodations around the world for your perfect staycation.

Editor-In-Chief
Mr. Anup Kumar Keshan

Editorial Desk

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

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Okinawa is often referred to as the Japanese Hawaii. Consisting of 160 large and small islands, including 47 inhabited islands, Okinawa ranges over encompasses a vast ocean area covering approximately 400 kms north to south and 1,000 kms east to west. Here the coral reefs, crystal-clear blue seas, pristine white sand beaches and gorgeous natural landscape coalesce to form spectacular and diverse natural habitat across the archipelago.

Okinawa Convention Center

Located in the seaside area, Ginowan city, on the west coast of central Okinawa Island, Okinawa Convention Center (OCC) is the largest multi-function complex in the prefecture with a theatre, exhibition hall and 12 large and small conference rooms. This theatre offers a unique space for presenting classical concerts, musicals, and live concerts, as well as dramatic performances, ceremonies and employee award events that create long-lasting memories. The OCC has an exhibition hall, with a maximum capacity of 5,000 people, that can be used for product fairs, exhibitions, major conventions, large receptions, concerts and sporting events.

Best Islands

Okinawa Main Island is rich in beautiful scenery and unique to the semitropical ocean climate. Yanbaru, with its mysterious aura, is a semitropical jungle inhabited by rare creatures. The outdoor activities such as camping and eco tours are often held here.



Yanbaru: “Yanbaru” is a treasure trove of natural greenery and abundant life. The semitropical old growth forest extends almost to the coastline, while the thick evergreen broadleaf forest is home to a unique tropical ecosystem.

Motobu Peninsula: Motobu Peninsula is a fixture among Okinawan sightseeing destinations. Visit the Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium and you will meet whale sharks and mantas leisurely swimming in the huge world-class water tank, while Nakijin Castle, registered as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, is famous as the largest Gusuku in Okinawa prefecture.



Kerama Islands : Kerama Islands consists of over 20 large and small islands spread 30-40 kms west of Naha City. The clarity of the water in the ocean here is world class, and the color of the ocean is known as “Kerama blue”. An abundance of tropical fish swim between colourful coral reefs.

Kume Island: Kume Island is approximately 30 minutes by air from the main island of Okinawa. During the dynastic era of the Ryukyu Kingdom, Kume Island was regarded as one of the most beautiful islands and was called as “Kumi no Shima (Island of Ryukyuan Beauty)” for its abundant nature.

Miyako Region: Miyako Island is located approximately 300 kms southwest of Okinawa Main Island. It takes about 50 minutes to get there by airplane. The island is also located in the centre of the Miyako archipelago, consisting of eight large and small islands, and is formed by coral uplifting. Miyako Island, which has the largest land area among the islands, is located in the centre and is connected to the Irabu island and the Ikema Island by long bridges built upon coral reefs.



Iriomote Island: Iriomote Island is the second largest island in the prefecture after Okinawa Main Island and is part of the Yaeyama region, which is located 450 kms southeast from the mainland of Okinawa. It takes about one hour to reach here by airplane. Ishigaki Island lies at the centre of the Yaeyama region and includes Hateruma Island, Hatoma Island and Yufu Islands and many more islands, which together constitute the southernmost archipelago of Okinawa.

Special Feature

Unusual

Accommodations

around the World

There are some hotels around the world which are popular for their odd architecture or its unique services. TTW brings to you some of the hotels where you will find your exceptional adventure. Sleep under the magical northern lights or have a dinner with octopus.

So, here is the pack of excitement.

Living in a treehouse may be a dream for every kid. Revive your childhood dream at Sweden's remarkable Treehotel, which consists of seven living pods suspended in tall pines up to 20 feet above the forest floor. The guests can get charmed views of the woods, the Lule River and the Aurora Borealis.

Treehotel, Sweden



The Conrad Maldives Rangali Island is an extraordinary place to stay. Debuted as a two-story, three-bedroom undersea residence with a modern, domed design and 24-hour butler service, this unique hotel has the most impressive feature in its full, glassy immersion in the Maldives' mesmerising ocean life. Some of the world-class architects and engineers teamed up to construct the unique hotel room in Singapore; they then transported it to the Maldives, anchoring it in the middle of the Indian Ocean.



Sweden has the most remarkable Icehotel and its frozen brethren. So head to Finland for a stay at Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort, 150 miles north of the Arctic Circle. It has the rows of glass-domed “igloos,” which are eminently worthwhile in and of themselves, particularly for their unobstructed view of aurora borealis.

Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort, Finland



This is exactly what a company called Yays did with a retired Figee—it commissioned the Dutch designer Edward van Vliet to create a stylish interior for a three-story apartment with vertiginous views over the IJ River. The crane operator's box was left intact, so guests can still hear his recorded stories play. Apparently, transforming cranes into hotels isn't a one-off thing to do in the Netherlands: There's also the 164 feet high Crane Hotel Faralda, as well as the Harlingen Harbour Crane, whose movement you can control yourself.

The Yays Crane Apartment, Netherlands



In Canada, Edmonton's Fantasyland Hotel is in a shopping centre, but that's hardly the most unique thing about it. True to its name, Fantasyland offers 120 fantasy-themed rooms, and you choose your surroundings. Options at this novelty hotel include rooms that look like a spaceship, a gas station, Polynesia, Rome, the Arabian desert and a prison cell. Plus, the attached mall has a waterpark, thrill rides, miniature golf and a bowling alley.



There are plenty of cave hotels to choose from in Cappadocia, including the lovely Seraphim Cave Hotel, but Ottoman Cave Suites, in a town called Goreme, is perhaps the most unique hotel of the bunch. Its dramatic, Ottoman-themed rooms feature velvet furnishings, Turkish art, and—the distinguishing feature—scalloped stone walls and ceilings of cool, hollowed-out volcanic stone.

Ottoman Cave Suites, Turkey





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HKTB launches global engagement programme to boost tourism recovery

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has announced that it has decided to organise its first global fan-engagement programme, “Hong Kong Super Fans”, to accelerate its promotional efforts as part of the post COVID-19 tourism-recovery plan it has been developing over the past year. In a time when international travel is facing unprecedented challenges and the world is waiting to roll out vaccines in the hope of resuming normality, the HKTB is harnessing the power of community to remind people why they love Hong Kong as well as to drum up excitement about visiting the city once borders reopen.



Bulgaria signs 2.4 mln euro to upgrade railway section

Bulgarian state-owned National Railway Infrastructure Company (NRIC) recently made it official that they will redesign the railway section

with a local tie up. And for the modernisation they have signed a 4.7 million leva (\$2.9 million/2.4 million euro) deal to upgrade the railway connecting Dragoman to the border with Serbia.



Greece is considering welcoming incoming tourism this spring

The government of Greece is making plans to initiate incoming tourism this spring, provided that the infection rate in the country becomes stable and stricter measures are avoided. For the plans to be put into effect are the course of the pandemic in Greece and the progress of Israel's efforts to vaccinate its entire population via mass vaccination. For the moment, Israel is the pilot not only for the plans of the Greek and other governments, but also for pharmaceutical multinationals that have been granted access regarding details of the population's infection rates in exchange for more vaccines to Israel.

Israel issues “green pass port” certificates to reenergize tourism

Israel is hoping that its world-leading vaccination programme will allow it to resume tourism later this year and is talking to Greece and Cyprus about reopening their borders. The country, which has vaccinated a higher proportion of its citizens than any other, started to issue “green passport” certificates that show holders have been given two full doses of the vaccine, one of its diplomats in China said.



\$1.3 trillion revenue loss for international tourism in 2020

The revenue loss in the international tourism sector in 2020 caused by a decrease in travellers crossing borders is estimated at \$1.3 trillion, on the back of strict travel bans imposed by countries amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Last year's international arrivals fell by one billion, or 74 percent, from 2019, ensuring that the overall estimated damage was over 11 times larger than in 2009 in the wake of the global financial crisis,

according to a recent press release by the World Tourism Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations. Due to the economic fallout from the virus spread, 100 to 120 million people have been put at risk of losing their jobs in the tourism industry, the Madrid-based body said, adding that many of them are from small and mid-sized business operators.



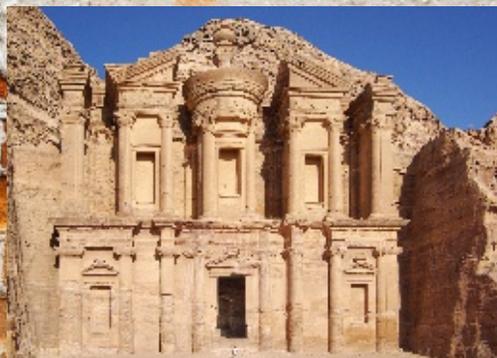
Maldives will vaccinate 10,000 tourism workers against COVID-19

Abdulla Mausoom, the Maldives Minister of Tourism has explained that the country will vaccinate almost 10,000 tourism workers against COVID-19, as reported by local media. Minister Mausoom has explained that the decision to vaccinate the workers of tourism was made by President Ibrahim Solih and the vaccination program was key to keep the tourism sector afloat. Mausoom also explained that the borders of the country will not remain closed for tourism in spite of the recent increase in virus affected cases, noting that in January, only 0.08 percent of tourists tested positive for COVID-19.

WORLD'S MOST AMAZING ANCIENT RUINS



Exploring ancient ruins and the deepest historical mysteries of the world is always a magical experience. The world is home to various such sites that sheltered many flourishing civilisations before fading away into the pages of history. Take a look at some of the world's most fascinating ancient ruins that also serve as great tourist destinations at present.



Stonewall of Theopetra Cave, Greece

Considered to be the oldest ruin in the world, the Stonewall at the entrance of the Theopetra Cave in Greece is the earliest man-made construction ever found. Archeologists are of the opinion that the wall dates back to early 23,000 years and that the wall was made by the inhabitants of the cave for protection from the cold outside. Radio carbon evidence states that people have inhabited the cave for nearly 50,000 years. The cave was opened to the public in 2009 and later again in 2016 but was closed again due to safety concerns.



The 15th century Inca ruins located in the Machupicchu district in Peru is also known as the lost city of Incas. Currently standing as one of South America's most spectacular sites, Machu Picchu consists of three focal areas- Intihuatana, a ritual stone similar to an astronomical clock; the Temple of the Sun, a sacred worship site; and the Room of the Three Windows that offers stunning views of the sunrise. The citadel of Machu Picchu, one of the key political, religious and cultural centres of the Inca Empire, was created by joining enormous stone blocks without using mortar at the top of the mountain. The magnificent stone complex is also home to hundreds of buildings, temples, baths and an intricate water delivery system.

Petra, Jordan

Known as one of the world's most spectacular archeological sites and Jordan's key tourist attraction, Petra is a city built around 4th century BCE that continued to thrive until a massive earthquake destroyed much of the city in 4th century AD. It was around 1812 that the Swiss explorer Johannes Burckhardt rediscovered the site, after which it was opened to the visitors. Petra is half built and half carved into rock and its remains consists of tombs, channels, tunnels, dams and temples. The site is also known as the “Rose-City” due to the pink hue of its rock-cut architecture.



Ruins of Ayutthaya, Thailand

The second capital of the Siamese Kingdom, the historical city of Ayutthaya was built back in 1350 by King Ramathinodi. Destroyed by the Burmese Army in 1767, the city was majorly restored in 1935 after a small-scale restoration by King Mongkut between 1854 and 1868. Ayutthaya was mainly built of wood and currently features Buddhist monasteries, remains of large palaces, temples, statues of Lord Buddha and a unique water management system. The remaining ruins of Ayutthaya show a combination of different architectural styles from Japan, China, Persia, India and Europe.

Stonehenge, England

Another of the world's most recognised pre-historic ruins, Stonehenge, is located in Wiltshire, England. It is likely that the monument was constructed around 3000 through 1500 BCE and spans a history of nearly 4500 years. The unique construction is made up of two different types of stones, a smaller bluestone and larger sarsen, both of which have been arranged concentrically. The purpose of the ruins is unknown to the day and remains shrouded in mystery, with several theories suggesting it served as an ancient burial ground, solar calendar or a site for Pagan worship.



One of the most famous and most visited ruins in Mexico, Chichen Itza was built by the Mayan people of the Yucatan Peninsula around 6th century AD. Built over thousands of years, Chichen Itza was home to dozens of ancient pre-Columbian cities. It also served as a thriving metropolis with a population of nearly 50,000 people. It is also home to El Castillo, the popular Mesoamerican step-pyramid that served as a temple to the Kukulcan God. However, the reason behind the abandonment of Chichen Itza is still shrouded in mystery and unknown to the day.

Tikal, Guatemala

One of the largest excavated sites in the Americas and the most popular landmark in Guatemala, Tikal is an ancient Mayan city that served as an important urban and cultural centre of Guatemala. Majority of the buildings were constructed around 8th century AD when Tikal stood as the greatest Mayan city. It was built using limestones. The Tikal ruins are currently encircled with 222 square miles of jungle and consist of number of palaces from the pre-Columbian Mayan civilisation as well as temples, small pyramids, residences, tombs and other monuments.



Acropolis of Athens, Greece

Recognised as one of the greatest ruins of the world, the Acropolis of Athens is an ancient citadel situated above the city of Athens on a rocky outcrop and contains the ruins of various prominent primeval buildings including the famous Parthenon, the ancient temple dedicated to the goddess Athena. The ancient buildings and monuments have mostly been built using limestone rock and hold great architectural and historical value. These buildings are also associated with the ancient history of Athens. The Acropolis has witnessed several wars, attacks and natural calamities over the years and was marked as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987.

Volubilis, Morocco

The largest ancient Roman ruins in Morocco, Volubilis was inhabited for more than thousands of years, abandoned in 11th century and destroyed by a massive earthquake in the 18th century. The ruins of Volubilis show that different civilisations thrived here in different time periods. At present, the remains feature a 2.6 km long ancient Roman wall, the Capitoline temple, basilica and major parts of a triumphal arch built to honour the Roman emperor Caracalla back in 217. It consists of several small houses and decorated palaces that were mostly constructed using grey-blue limestones.



Moai Statues Easter Island, Chile

Often considered to be one of the most intriguing mysteries of the world, the inception and collapse of Easter Island and its Moai Statues is still unknown to mankind. Believed to be built between 1200 and 1650 AD without the use of wheels or animals, nearly 1000 of these statues are scattered throughout the island. It is also said that 95% of the moais were carved out of the volcano Raraku. Theories suggest that these statues were made to honour chieftains and other important people. Common beliefs go as far as stating that the statues were made by aliens.

In an exclusive interview with Travel And Tour World, **Edyta Peszko, Director of Sales & Marketing, Seaside Finolhu Maldives** shares about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Maldives' Hospitality Industry, the measures undertaken for reopening and the way ahead.



Face to Face

Travel And Tour World: How did the hospitality industry of Maldives deal with the impact of the COVID-19 crisis?

Edyta Peszko: Given the deep impact of this unprecedented situation, the Maldives acted incredibly well with its preparedness and implementation of enhanced health and safety measures that led to the reopening of the borders on July 15, 2020. Since then, we are seeing many positive signs of recovery for tourism in the country. It is worth noting that since the reopening, we have seen a total of 27,217 tourists arrive in the Maldives during the first three months. In the first half of October 2020, there were 8,350 inbound visitors, with the main source being Russia (over 2,300 arrivals), while there were also good numbers from

Germany, the USA, India and the UAE as well. As the country proved itself to be a safe destination, British Airways recommenced direct flights on October 17, 2020, which is wonderful news as it will add another connection to the USA. So far, only Qatar and Emirates have been serving those main routes. In addition, from October 22, 2020, the U.K. government removed the Maldives from the list of countries from which people entering the U.K had to go through quarantine. Then on October 27, Lufthansa restarted direct flights, while Aeroflot is already operating direct flights 4 times per week. There are many positive signs and I think the Maldives will be a destination in high demand this year (2021) due to its natural isolation and of course its irrefutable beauty.

Travel And Tour World: What were the biggest challenges faced by the Maldives' hospitality industry due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Edyta Peszko: It was hard retaining talents during the closure time when the resorts had no cash flow. On top of this, we had and yet had to maintain the property real estate, look after the house staff who were stranded and unable to fly back to their countries, arrange deliveries of supplies and the shipping of goods from overseas, and many other issues. However, the biggest challenge was definitely making decisions related to employment and salary reductions in order to keep costs sustainable and yet still be ready for restarting operations at some point. Not everyone was able to sail through this storm and some resorts may not reopen, however many are already in operation and will see many more openings for business in the coming days.

Travel And Tour World: What are the major steps undertaken by Seaside Finolhu to maintain the safety of guests and staff upon opening in the post-pandemic world?

Edyta Peszko: Seaside Finolhu has implemented a number of enhanced health and hygiene measures to ensure that the wellbeing of both guests and our team is fully protected as the resort begins welcoming guests again. We have partnered with Ecolab, a world leader in hygiene and cleaning technologies and services, and have enhanced and

expanded our cleaning procedures with additional COVID-19 protocols and best practices to reflect the recommendations of the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, and local public health authorities in the Maldives. For our food and beverage services, all training, audits and verification inspections are conducted under the auspices of Nsure, a recognised leader and partner in food safety, health and safety, and sustainability in the Maldives. Additional measures include full PPE worn by F&B staff, digital menus and display boards in place of manually-handled menus, reduced capacity operations to enable social distancing, and contactless delivery for in-villa dining. Anti-Covid approved disinfectants are applied by electrostatic aerosol sprayers which enable touchless disinfection. Our team also undergoes extensive training focused on educating and empowering them to deliver our enhanced health and safety program with complete understanding and confidence so that they are able to pass on this care to each and every guest.



Travel And Tour World: Do you think it is possible to revive traveler confidence in hospitality and tourism as a whole to the pre-pandemic levels?

Edyta Peszko: It might be challenging to revive the same level of confidence, yet in the long term, certainly the destination is going to bounce back. Many people are not overly concerned about the virus itself but rather with the medical and travel restrictions. Once these measures are reduced and eventually no longer necessary, the destination will flourish again.

Travel And Tour World: What does the future of hospitality in Maldives look like?

Edyta Peszko: The future for the Maldives is bright and 2021 may see unprecedented demand for island destinations now that many people are desperate for a holiday. Its natural isolation makes it easy to manage the borders and keep the country safe, while its natural beauty makes the Maldives the perfect destination for those who are seeking a refreshing getaway.



Travel And Tour World: What are the latest changes that have been undertaken by Seaside Finolhu in order to resume operations once again?

Edyta Peszko: The resort has undergone an exciting transformation to reveal a brand new Finolhu. Guests are treated to a whole new barefoot chic experience that reflects the resort's focus on style and escapism. We have completed both aesthetic and functional upgrades right across the resort to create special places in which our guests will experience unique moments of excitement, wonder and bonding. Every aspect of the guest experience at Seaside Finolhu has been transformed to reflect this philosophy.

From the style and comfort of the resort's 125 villas, including the new Beach Pool Villa category, and the evocative culinary journey served up by the eclectic selection of international dining options, to the sheer indulgence of the new spa concept and the sense of tropical island adventure provided by the many water sports on offer, every detail has been carefully crafted to create a lifestyle resort that caters to the discerning affluent traveller of today.

From the new design focus and the upgraded facilities, to the exciting activities and rejuvenating wellness treatments, the underlying theme of Seaside Finolhu's transformation is fun. This is amplified by the stellar entertainment, performances and the exhilarating themed parties for which Finolhu is well known.

The idea of travelling is highly appealing and joyful. However, it also comes with a lot of thoughts, opinions, theories and beliefs. Even today many people believe that travelling is expensive, unsafe and difficult. Therefore, it is necessary to know about some of the most common travel myths and find out the truth behind them before setting out for your next planned trip.

TRAVEL

MYTHS

&

TRUTHS

Travelling is expensive

Perhaps the most common myth associated with travelling is the factor of affordability and the concept that travelling is always expensive. Definitely, luxury tourism costs you a fortune but if you travel smart you can live on the road with an expense close to your daily life. With so many destinations around the world, there is always a venue that aligns with your budget. From cheap flights to alternative budget accommodations, there will always be a myriad of options to help you organise a 'budget trip.' Of course, everything costs a price and so does travel but that does not mean one needs to be rich to travel. With a bit of planning, creativity and setting out the right priorities, you can take a step towards your next dream trip.



Solo travelling is boring

Contrary to popular opinion, solo travelling is probably the most rewarding and exciting experience one can have in their lifetime. In fact, the idea of boredom never comes close when you are travelling alone. Solo travelling provides you the best insight to your true self and also boosts your confidence to a great extent. Going on the road all by yourself gives you more chance to explore, allows you to have the freedom to do whatever you want and creates once-in-a-lifetime memories that you can treasure for a lifetime.

Female travel is unsafe

Female travelling is often considered to be unsafe and even deemed impossible. Today, the world is full of independent, powerful and confident women who travel all alone time and again. Of course, the world is not free from hazards and maliciousness but it is also not completely shrouded in darkness as it often might appear to be. Certainly, safety should be prioritised irrespective of your gender and with proper precautions, awareness, responsibility and carefulness, solo travelling for female gender is fun and enriching.



Language is a barrier

Language is often considered to be a barrier when you are travelling to a place where your mother tongue is not used and where English is not a popular means of communication. However, lack of multilingual abilities should never stop you from exploring a destination. The advent of several language translating applications have already made it easier for people to understand at least the basics of an unknown language. Moreover, there are always guides or locals who can serve as the common link for interactions and help you get familiar with your destination even without ample knowledge of the local language.



Travel insurance is not necessary

While many people might think that travel insurance is not necessary especially for short trips, it is not true. The reality is anything can happen anywhere in the world, no matter near or far. Irrespective of the destination and the duration of your trip, make sure to get your travel insurance to maintain security and safety while you are away from home. Travel insurances can be helpful for

any kind of trouble or incident while on the road. In fact, many destinations have already made travel insurance mandatory in the post-pandemic world.



Remote working is impossible

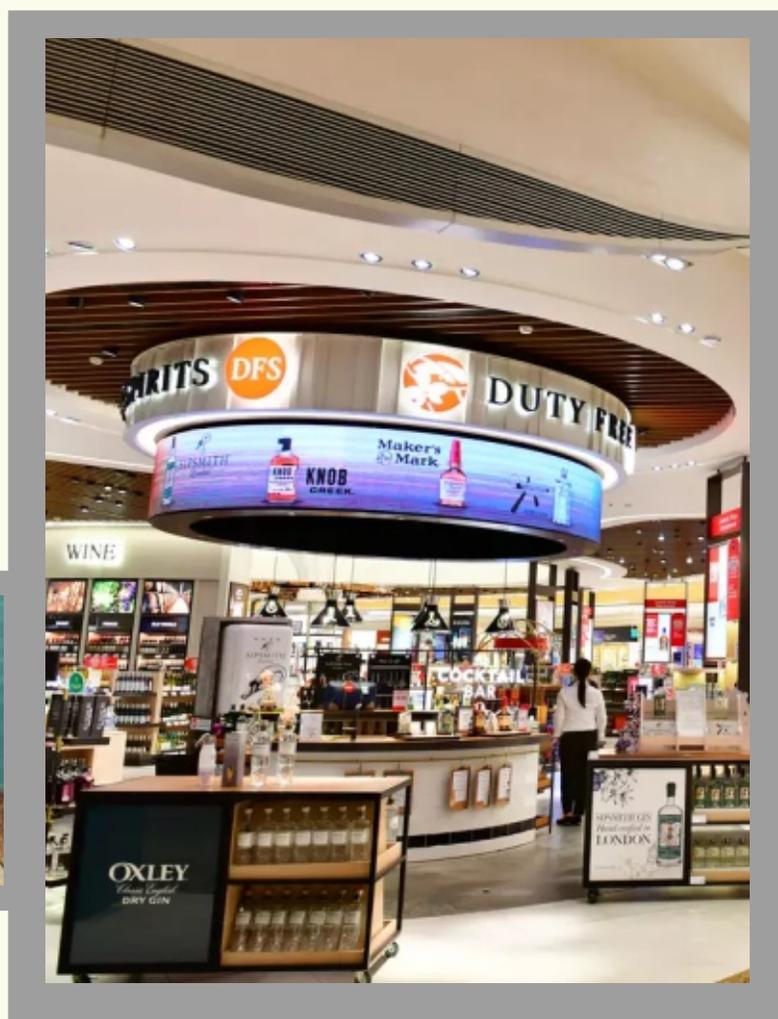
The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly busted the myth that working remotely while you are overseas or away from home is impossible. It can now be said that with the prevalent work-from-home pattern, anyone can work from any corner of the world. All you need is a portable internet connection and a laptop and you are good to go

Duty-free shopping is cheaper

Travellers often have the idea that duty-free shopping is cheaper. It is likely that duty-free options are highly tempting and might make you think that they are extremely pocket-friendly but in reality, it only means that the items come without taxes. It does not necessarily mean that they are lower in prices or offers the best deal out there. Moreover, duty-free items often tend to miss the authentic charm that you can easily find in local markets.



Travelling adventures have an age-bar It is often a common notion that most travelling experiences and adventures comes with an age-bar and majority of backpackers are probably the youth. Gone are the days when the ideal picture of a traveller would be limited to a young individual. It should be known that travellers belong from every age-group and comes from different walks of life. Age is never the restriction when it comes to travelling. Especially in the recent years, a considerable increase of travelling rate has been noticed in baby boomers and generation X travellers. You will often come across any seniors even with families backpacking around the world as travelling is never bound by age-restrictions.



Guidebooks provides the best advice

Although many travellers initially take the help of guidebooks on the road, over the course of travelling they realise that guidebooks don't always provide the right kind of travel advice. Most importantly, the information in guidebooks is often out of date as a lot of time passes between writing and printing period. During the course of time, rates, tourist attractions, accommodations, routes and options undergo various changes and appear different from what is mentioned in the book.

Offbeat Places in Germany

Germany is filled with mesmerizing scenery and marvellous historical buildings, towns and villages. While some are rather obvious like the Alps or the innumerable landmarks found in the nation's capital, Berlin there are plenty of offbeat places that elude even its own citizens.



Basteibrücke: Basteibrücke, or Bastion Bridge, near the German-Czech border functions as a different kind of juncture altogether, albeit no less beautiful. The sandstone bridge was built in 1851 and stands at over 194 m above the Elbe River. It is surrounded by huge rock formations and trees, which only adds to its fantastic appeal.



Harz Mountains : Harz Mountains have three narrow gauge steam railways. The Harzquerbahn runs from Nordhausen to Drei Annen Hohne with many curves and steep grades, providing views of forest and deep valleys. The Brockenbahn runs from Wernigrode to the summit of the Brocken, the highest mountain in the Harz, while the Selektalbahn runs from the very picturesque, half-timbered town of Quedlinburg to Eisfelder Talmühle. There are numerous special arrangements, with hiking, restaurant meals and outdoor grills, which can be booked in conjunction with a ride on one of the old puffers.

Black Forest : Germany's Black Forest located in the country's southwestern region near the French border, it houses countless legends featuring sorcerers, witches, werewolves, wizards and more. The views within the forest are, indeed, alluring and captivating.



Externsteine : The Externsteine, located in the Teutoburg Forest in North Rhine-Westphalia, is certainly stunning in its own right. The arresting landscape has long drawn visitors – not all of them welcomed. The Nazis placed particular interest in these jagged sandstones, which were used as nationalistic propaganda under the Third Reich and still draw neo-Nazi visitors to this day.



Obersee Lake: Obersee Lake in Bavaria is one of most scenic destination in South Germany. Find it in Berchtesgaden National Park, close to the Austrian border. The lake is known for its clear, serene waters, which reflect the surrounding mountains.



Meersburg: Meersburg in Baden Württemberg is an astoundingly quaint and picturesque village dating back to medieval times that still maintains its historic charm, as it is reserved for pedestrians without being totally overrun with tourists. What's more is that this town is located on the gorgeous Lake Constance, or Bodensee, across the intersection of the German, Swiss and Austrian borders, making it a perfect detour on any European trip.

Gorge, Walkway Garmisch-Partenkirchen : Germany's many natural landscapes promise breathtaking hiking experiences overlooking rivers, forests, mountain ranges and even the occasional medieval castle. Yet, one of the most unique natural features just waiting to be explored is found in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, a ski resort in Bavaria. The Gorge Walkway looks like something out of "Lord of the Rings". The winding creek is surrounded on either side by steep precipices that form the 'walls' of the corridor.



Linderhof Palace : Most tourists are drawn to the Neuschwanstein Palace, but you can also check out the smaller summer abode of the same King Ludwig II. Linderhof Palace was his lavish baroque summer home and it is outfitted with impressive gardens, Romanesque statues and fountains. It was the only residence commissioned by the king, which he actually lived to see the completion before his mysterious, untimely death.

Deer Path Inn Appoints Patrick Lacassagne New General Manager



The award-winning Deer Path Inn proudly announces the appointment of Patrick Lacassagne as general manager/innkeeper. In his new role, Lacassagne will lead the historic 57-room boutique property, known for marrying the traditions of English innkeeping with exceptional service.

Lacassagne brings more than a decade of hospitality experience to Deer Path Inn from hotels all over the world. At Deer Path Inn, Lacassagne will blend his culinary and hotel management background to evolve the hotel's acclaimed food and beverage program, which includes the distinguished English Room, White Hart Pub, The Bar, Afternoon Tea service and in-room dining. He will use his platform as innkeeper to build on the inn's hallmark "home-away-from-home" experience that has resulted in the hotel's unmatched guest satisfaction ratings.

Mehmet Nane elected Chair of Audit Committee at IATA

Mehmet Nane, Chief Executive, Pegasus Airlines has been elected as Chair of the Audit Committee of the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The decision was undertaken by the members of the IATA Board of Governors. Nane will serve in the role for a three-year term. Founded in 1945, IATA today represents 290 member airlines from 120 countries, or 82 percent of total air traffic. Nane was first elected as a member of the IATA Board of Governors in 2019. Speaking on his appointment Nane said that the global aviation industry is experiencing its most challenging period, unprecedented in its history. He said that he is proud to have been chosen for the important role and to carry the great responsibility during such a period.



Kerry Prince appointed as the new brand director of UK-based Reed Exhibitions



Reed Exhibitions has announced that Kerry Prince, has been appointed as the new brand director of UK-based Reed Exhibitions. The newly formed brand team is the consolidation of the company's B2B and Reed Travel Exhibitions divisions and will be responsible for the curation of the portfolio of well-established event brands, including Arabian Travel Market (ATM).

Prince said that she is looking forward to leading this new team. B2B and the travel and events industries have faced enormous challenges since the start of the pandemic but we are looking forward to planning for a post-COVID recovery period. This year, our priority is to deliver physical events that are as COVID safe and secure as possible and also offer 'exhibitor not present' and or remote access options for our audience who cannot join us in-person.



Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) appointed Santi Sawangcharoen as Director of TAT New York Office

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) announces the appointment of Santi Sawangcharoen as the Director of TAT New York Office. With more than 30 years of tourism industry experience, Director Santi previously held many leadership positions within TAT supporting the organization's international marketing efforts. As the warm and welcoming destination prepares for a full reopening in the months ahead, Director

Santi will oversee many of TAT New York's initiatives to continue cultivating a resilient community of Thailand travel lovers.



WHAT IS VEHICLE AUTOMATION?

Vehicle Automation can be defined as the use of Artificial Intelligence, mechatronics and multi-agent system to provide assistance to a vehicle's operator. A vehicle relying solely on automation maybe referred to as robotic or autonomous. Driverless cars or self-driving vehicles are some typical examples of vehicle automation that will completely revolutionise the tourism industry. The recent years saw the conceptual development phase of automated vehicles.

It was back in 2009 that Google started its self-driving car project with the goal of driving autonomously over ten uninterrupted 100 miles routes. After joining hands with the autonomous driving company, Waymo, the project acquired the same title. Waymo has already invited the public to experience the first public trials of autonomous vehicles operated by the Waymo Driver and introduced its first fully automated driverless cars on public roads. Although the company

aimed to make autonomous vehicles a norm by 2020, the technology is still in a research phase with a few trial prototypes in operation. Waymo and several other companies claim that once the technology is completely established it will revolutionise the way people travel.

Vehicle transport is often considered to be one of the integral services in the travel and tourism industry as it involves transfers, cab and car hires as well as vehicle-based sightseeing. Replacing such services with autonomous vehicles will completely change the face of the industry. According to a recent academic research from the U.K., self-driving vehicles are likely to have unexpected impact on the tourism sector. The innovative future technology can create new tourism experiences and opportunities. However, it poses threats to jobs and leads to several security issues within the industry.



VEHICLE AUTOMATION AND FUTURE OF TOURISM INDUSTRY

IMPACT OF VEHICLE AUTOMATION ON TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

It is likely that during its initial days of operation, autonomous vehicles can serve as a tourist attraction in itself and tourists may undertake driverless automated rides to gain a whole new experience of travelling on the road. The technology will give birth to new class of sightseeing tour or automatic tour. Over the course of time, tourists may develop a tendency to use automated vehicles instead of traditional transports for transfers and sightseeing among others. Fully automated vehicles will eliminate the need of a driver and tour-guide as these vehicles will be equipped with media systems full of information required by travellers.

Replacement of drivers and traditional transportation will not only change the business model but also cause job losses. Every existing sightseeing company may want to adopt vehicle automation technology once it is fully established. Airport transfer business will also be affected as autonomous taxis and shuttles will potentially reduce prices once the cost of the driver is removed.

If these vehicles take the shape of mobile restaurants and similar experiences on the go, it will open a whole new array of competition in not just the transportation but also the hospitality industry.



ROLE OF AUTOMATED VEHICLES IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

Automated vehicles will result in low traffic congestion and most importantly, decrease emissions from the burning of fossil fuels and open a greener and environment friendly choice of transportation. With comparatively fewer cars on the road, the parking load will also be reduced. It will create the possibility of emergence of new public urban spaces.

Itineraries will be tech-driven and involve algorithmic generation instead of being pre-set by humans. It will allow the availability of multi-day tours as easily as day tours because travellers will be able to go from one place to another on a multi-day route. Tourists will no longer need to maintain a particular order of sightseeing according to proximity of a venue. Instead, they can visit destinations in any order as they like.

Therefore, automated vehicles will result in personalisation of tours. Travellers will also be able to begin and end tours anytime according to their convenience for any duration they prefer as automated vehicles will not be limited by specific time limits and duration. The timings will also be highly reliable as it will be generated automatically.

Autonomous vehicles will also provide an alternative for traditional private space and give major competition to hotels-by-the-hour, airport pods and even small meeting rooms. All of these facilities can be accommodated inside the automated vehicle. These changes can urge traditional businesses to embrace the latest technological advancements.



World Festivals

Food and Fun

Date: 1-5 March 2021

Place: Reykjavik, Iceland

Co-founded by Iceland's celeb chef Siggí Hall, this food festival was established to motivate people to combine the nation's outstanding cuisine with the region's outdoor adventure and Reykjavik's vibrant nightlife.



The Night of the Witches/Noche de Brujas

Date: March 6, 2021

Place: Catemaco, Mexico

While it might be impossible for mere Muggles to enroll in Hogwarts, there's always the option of visiting the mystical town of Catemaco, Mexico's witchcraft capital. The annual weekend of witchcraft and sorcery kicks off the first Friday of March with plenty of witches, shamans, and healers in attendance.



Las Fallas

Date: March 15 – 19, 2021

Place: Valencia, Spain

This five-day festival in the Andalusian city leads up to and concludes on St Joseph's Day. Las Fallas, which means “the fires”, celebrates the patron saint of carpenters, a tradition that dates as far back as the Middle Ages.



Bali Spirit Festival

Date: 19-26 March 2017

Place: Ubud, Bali

This celebration of yoga, dance, music and wellbeing is now in its eighth year, having proven popular each time it returns. World renowned teachers lead yoga, dance and meditation workshops throughout the day, with seminars for those wanting to gain an understanding of a range of topics from nutrition to Mayan astrology.





India International Travel Mart

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IITM SCHEDULE 2021

IITM PUNE
23,24 FEB 2021

IITM BENGALURU
12,13 MAR 2021

IITM HYDERABAD
16,17 MAR 2021

IITM CHENNAI
30,31 MAR 2021

IITM KOLKATA
9,10 APR 2021

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Date: 4 – 5 February 2021

Place: Cochin, India

Date: 23 – 24 February 2021

Place: Pune, India

As the tourism world slowly gets on recovery mode, IITM hosted its first event of the calendar. The pandemic has affected the tourism industry hugely and as the industry attempts to get back into business mode, they were happy to add value to the recovery of the tourism industry.



Sphere Travelmedia & Exhibitions successfully hosted 123rd edition of its 'India International Travel Mart', to be held from 4 – 5 February 2021 at Taj Gateway Hotel, Marine Drive, Cochin. With this year's edition of 'IITM' in Pune, Sphere Travelmedia & Exhibitions completes twenty-two years of providing the travel industry and discerning buyers from the travel – trade and

corporate sector an opportunity and a consistent platform to add value to their businesses. 'India International Travel Mart' showcased a variety of destinations from different spheres such as pilgrimages, adventures, culture & heritage, beaches, hills and much more. The event had over 50 participants from over 5 Indian states. The participants include Travel Agents & Tour Operators, DMC, Hotels & Resorts, National Tourist Organizations, state tourism boards, hotel guest amenities etc. The event was inaugurated by Smt. Sandhya Haridas, Asst. Director, India Tourism, Sri. UC Riyaz, Governing Board Member, Indian Convention Promotion Bureau and Kerala Travel Mart Society, Mr. Shine, CEO – KTM Society and Sri Paulose K Mathew, Chairman – Kerala Chapter, Travel Agents Federation of India. The two-day event showcased glimpses from the travel, tourism and hospitality industries. The time for IITM Cochin focuses on the upcoming summer holiday season in India, long weekends as well as round-the-year travel, vacations and business plans.

Boost for Domestic Tourism: The event showcases travel and hospitality products from every part of the country, making it one of the biggest congregations of travel-trade in the country. The event provides unmatched networking opportunities to interact with Travel-Trade and Corporate Buyers alike.

Mr Rohit Hangal, Director, Sphere Travelmedia spoke 'domestic travel as the backbone' of India's tourism portfolio and with an estimated 561 million domestic tourist visits. This segment is probably only second to China in terms of sheer size. With the rapid economic development taking place in the country and availability of greater disposable income combined with affordable holiday packages, tourism in India is increasing steadily and acts as a catalyst for the furthering the economic growth in view of its wide-ranging linkage effects and multiple impacts. The participants from the states of Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, and many more destinations did aggressively marketing of their products and there with their travel and tourism stakeholders.

Highlights:

- Gujarat Tourism is the 'Partner State' at 'India International Travel Mart' this year.
- Himachal Pradesh Tourism is the 'Feature State' at the event.
- Other states being represented include Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka
- Diverse Tourism segments on display such as Pilgrimage Travel, Adventure, Cultural pursuits, shopping tours, etc.
- The event is being supported by 'Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India'.

The 'India International Travel Mart' provides an ideal 'marketing opportunity' and 'excellent backdrop' to enhance the participant's 'brand-equity' in the eyes of the discerning end consumer

and the travel-trade. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Sanjay Hakhu, Director, Sphere TravelMedia said that India is one of the earliest destinations to recover, in spite of the present prevalent business environment and is fast emerging as one of the most interesting and productive markets for the travel trade industry both for leisure and business travel. The visitor profile is on a B2B format like had over 2000 Travel Agents and tour-operators' buyers over two days.



Cochin



Pune

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

TTF AHMEDABAD

4 -6 March 2021

Place: Ahmedabad,
www.ttfotm.com/



MITT 2021

16-18 March 2021,
Crocus Expo, Moscow,
<https://mitt.ru/Home>

OTM 2021

19 - 21 March, 2021

Bombay Exhibition Centre,
Mumbai, India

<https://otm.co.in/>



Ukraine International Travel and Tourism Exhibition

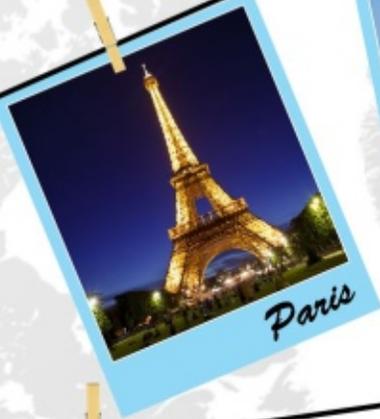
24 - 26 March 2021

Ukraine, Kyiv

www.uitt-kiev.com/en-GB/



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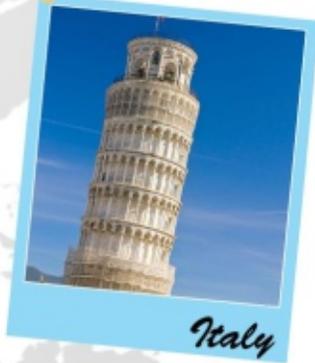
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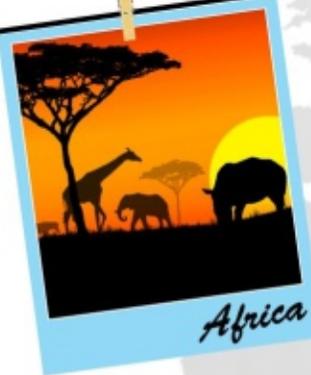
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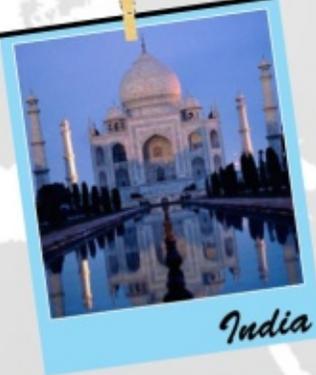
Brazil



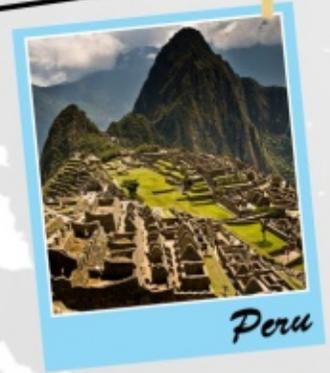
Italy



Africa



India



Peru



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