

Travel AND Tour TM

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W O R L D

Meetings Point

PROVIDENCE

CITY WITH MULTIPLE MEETING OPPORTUNITIES





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Dear Readers,

Pandemic has changed a lot in travel industry. From hand sanitisers at the hotel or airport entrances to PPE kits when flying; from local weekend lockdowns and restrictions to touch tracing applications all across, travelling to any country right now comes with all new accessories. Travelling in both domestic and international came to standstill last year and even now also (in some countries) as a result of border closures and cancellation of flights. Even the meetings industry has seen a lot of changes. Virtual meetings which was only an option previously, now becomes an inevitable part. The hotels, convention centres, cruise companies and airports are taking severe measures and maintaining COVID-19 health protocol to overcome the hazards.

Now people are planning for travel, event managers are planning to host events as the lockdown lifted. Some were travelling for work while others were taking vacations after being cooped up in their homes for almost a year. The travel agents, convention centres and hotels promised utmost safety and sanitisation and vacationing was on the cards for so many. So travel with all hygienic kits and maintain strict social distancing.

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Mr. Anup Kumar Keshan

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PROVIDENCE

CITY WITH MULTIPLE MEETING OPPORTUNITIES

The capital city of Rhode Island, Providence is the oldest city in the United States. Providence brims with service sector industries, textile manufacturing and subsequent machine tool, jewellery, and silverware industries. So, arranging meetings here is a great decision.



Convention Centres and Hotels

Rhode Island Convention Center

Nestled in the heart of downtown Providence, the Rhode Island Convention Center has a spacious Dunkin' Donuts Center, and historic venue. Rhode Island Convention Center is ideal for trade shows, receptions, meetings and more. The RICC and Dunk are connected by a striking glass structure and are linked via skywalk to the 564-room Omni Providence hotel and the Providence Place Mall.



Homewood Suites By Hilton Providence

Homewood Suites by Hilton Providence provides rooms in Providence near Dunkin Donut Center and The VETS. The property offers a 24-hour front desk and room service, along with free WiFi. Private parking is available on site.

Dunkin' Donuts Center

The Dunkin' Donuts Center is an indoor arena located in the downtown of the city. It was built in 1972, as a home court for the emerging Providence College men's basketball programme, due to the high demand for tickets for their games in Alumni Hall. Also, the centre was the a home arena for the then-Providence Reds, who played in the nearly 50-year-old Rhode Island Auditorium.



Residence Inn Providence Downtown

Set within 0.8 mi of Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art and 1.1 mi of Brown University, Residence Inn Providence Downtown offers luxurious rooms in Providence. The 3-star hotel has air-conditioned rooms with a private bathroom and free WiFi.

Omni Providence

Omni Providence is connected to the Rhode Island Convention Center and the Providence Place Mall. This hotel features an indoor pool and a business centre. The hotel has a small gym with cardio equipment and free weights. The hotel features 25 meeting rooms. Guest rooms at the Providence Omni feature a flat-screen TV with internet and cable access. Some rooms have a view of the State Capitol building. Guests at the Omni can dine at the Flemings Prime Steakhouse, which serves seafood and American cuisine. The hotel also features the Centro Restaurant and Bar, which serves Northern Italian cuisine.

Vacationing

Rhode Island's capital city Providence is magnificently compact, diverse, and eccentric. Its long history, from its founding by dissidents escaping Puritan Massachusetts to its colorful contemporary politics, may explain the eccentricities.

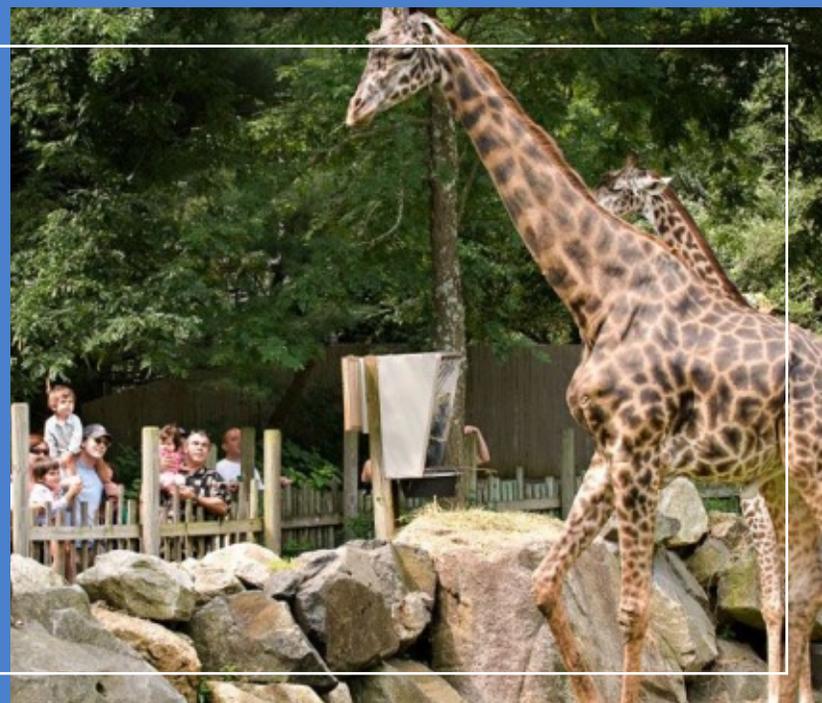
Roger Williams Park Zoo

The 40-acre Roger Williams Park Zoo is not only one of the oldest zoos in the country, but also a paragon of modern zoo design and concept. At this kid-friendly and largely cage-free place, you can meet a snow leopard, giraffe, elephant, zebra, wildebeest, alligator, kangaroo, and red panda. You can climb into the treehouse or go for a camel ride.

RISD Museum of Art

The Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), one of America's top art colleges, reflects its own wide range of specialties in the objects chosen for its museum.

Needlework and textiles, ancient and contemporary sculptures, Asian artworks, videos, furnished Federal period rooms, and galleries of priceless paintings comprise dozens of individual collections.

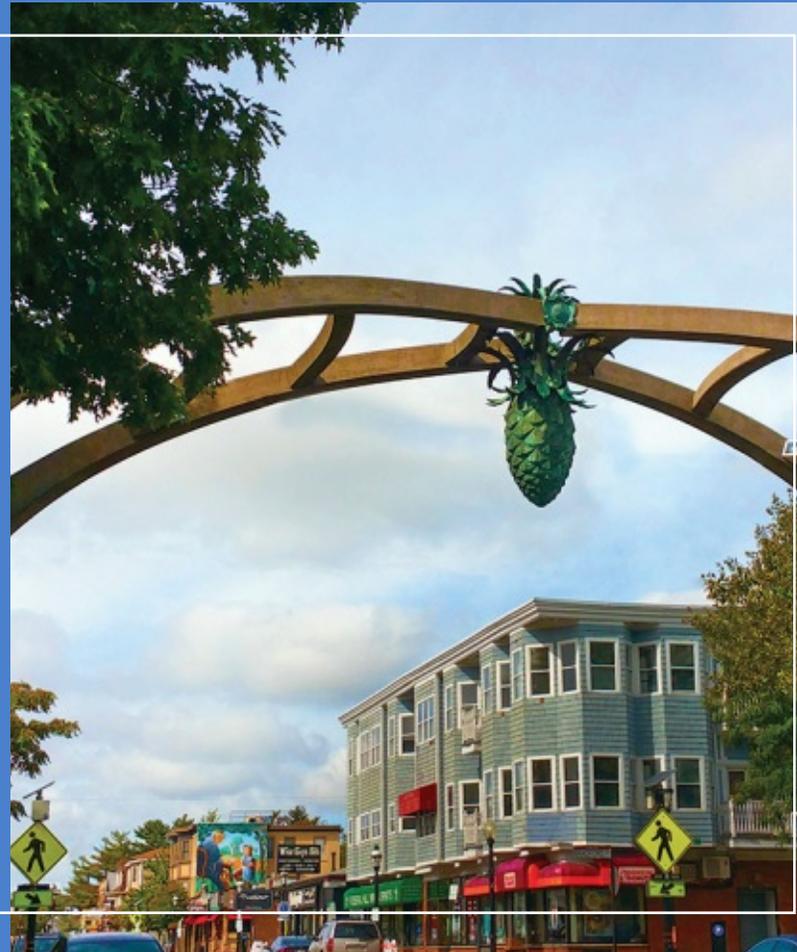


Rhode Island State Capitol

A Providence landmark, the white marble Rhode Island State Capitol dominates the city with the world's fourth largest self-supported dome. The neoclassical building was designed by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White, and completed in 1904. You can visit the building on your own or with a free guided tour. You'll see the painting entitled "The Four Freedoms" by James Allen King, inside the dome, and Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington. There's also a gun from the battle of Gettysburg and a replica of the Liberty Bell.

Federal Hill

Atwells Avenue crowns Federal Hill, the hill that rises to the west of Downcity, and is the vibrant heart of Providence's large Italian American community. This community now spreads throughout the city. The concentration of restaurants, cafés, and shops selling Italian foods along Atwells Avenue and its adjacent streets and squares stems from the days when immigrants grouped closely with others who shared their language and traditions.



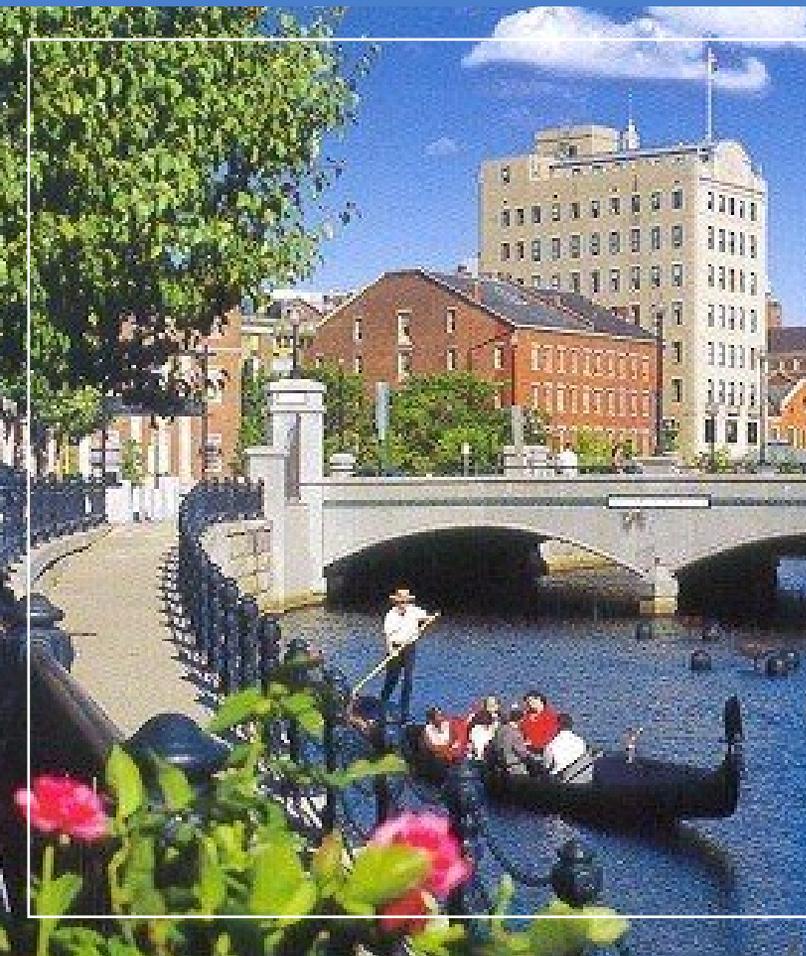
Waterplace Park

People still have trouble pronouncing the names of the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket, two narrow rivers that wind through Providence, but at least they can see them now. This was not always true - for decades they were hidden by what may have been the world's widest bridge, until they were once again revealed in the 1990s.

Providence Performing Arts Center

A prominent feature on lively Weybosset Street for nearly a century, the Providence Performing Arts Center occupies the former Loew's Movie Palace. The stunning Beaux Arts theatre was designed by George and C.W. Rapp of Chicago, who designed many of the most opulent theatres of the time.

The interior is as spectacular as it was when it opened in 1928, with marble columns, detailed plaster work, a richly ornamented ceiling, and crystal chandeliers. Periodic renovations have modernized its facilities without losing out on the opulent interior.



THE UNDERGROUND CITY OF BEIJING

Dixia Cheng: The Complex

Dixia Cheng or Beijing's Underground City, constructed from 1969 to 1979, stands as an artifact of the 1969 Sino-Soviet border conflict built in light of a nuclear paranoia with the purpose of military defense. Consisting of numerous networks of tunnels, the underground city is located beneath the Chinese capital covering an area of 85 sq. kms., nearly 26-59 feet under the surface.

Also known as the “Underground Great Wall” due to its vastness and similar construction purpose, the complex was dug by nearly 300,000 citizens including school children throughout the 1970s to serve as a safe shelter during bombing, nuclear attacks, invasions and air raids. During the time of its completion, the city had around 90 entrances - all of which were hidden behind shops and houses along the main street of Qianmen.

It was believed that the underground city could shelter 40% of Beijing's population in case of an attack. It is said that almost every house in the neighbourhood once had a secret trap door leading to tunnels. The subterranean city was equipped with several facilities like stores, clinics, restaurants, factories, a grain and oil warehouse, barber shops, schools for children as well as theatres, roller skating rink and reading rooms for entertainment purpose.

The complex even had areas for growing sunless crops like mushrooms and spaces were prepared for digging wells. More than 2300 detailed ventilation shafts were installed inside the city alongside gas and waterproof hatches to protect people from chemical and radioactive attacks. It also consisted of thousands of anti-air raid structures. Centuries-old city walls and towers were obliterated in order to supply raw materials for building the underground city.

History

It was back during the peak of the Soviet-Chinese tensions in 1969 that Chinese Communist Party Chairman, Mao Zedong ordered to build the **12 TTW World**

underground city as the border conflict over the Zhenbao Island in the Heilongjiang River worsened. Designed to withstand any biochemical, nuclear or similar other attacks, the complex was created to protect Beijing's population and help the government evacuate the city in case of a conflict or attack.

Although no official disclosure has been made about the actual extent of the complex, it has often been speculated that the tunnels may link together various landmarks and important government buildings of Beijing. It was initially planned that in case of an attack half of Beijing's population would be shifted in the underground city and the other half to the Western Hills. Back in the day, government officials claimed that Dixia Cheng's tunnels could accommodate all of Beijing's six million individuals upon completion.



After Chairman Mao died in 1976 and the Sino-Soviet tensions lost political importance, the government's Office of Civil Defense instructed citizens to commercialise the tunnels for profit in order to prevent the wastage of construction efforts. In 1996, the government passed the Civil Air Defense Law that required new building to contain underground

defense shelters. Several Beijing residents started living in the cramped subterranean city and were addressed by locals as the “rat tribe” or *shuzu*. However, in 2010 the Beijing municipal authorities declared that usage of residential underground spaces would be illegal by the end of 2012 due to safety hazards.



Tourist Attraction

At present, there is an existing air of mystery surrounding the tunnels with many believing that the tunnels are used for unknown purposes. However, the rumours are consistently dismissed as untrue. Since its completion, the complex has been used by locals in various ways with some portions refurbished into hotels, shops and even theatres. Fortunately, the underground city was never used for its intended purpose but was not completely abandoned either.

The complex was officially opened to tourists in 2000

but was closed for renovation in 2008 following a safety inspection. Visitors are allowed to tour only a small portion of the complex but can certainly get a taste of the Cold War history of the East. Upon entry, visitors can see a tablet of “Beijing Underground City” and signposts of major landmarks in Beijing like the Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, all of which can be accessed using the tunnels. Tourists can also see several chambers labelled with their original functions like arsenals, hospitals and cinemas. There are still rooms with bunk beds and decayed carbonated water purifiers in areas where tourists are not permitted.



Visitors can also notice a portrait of Mao Zedong amidst murals showcasing locals digging the tunnels as well as inscriptions of fading slogans like “For the People: Prepare for War, Prepare for Famine” and “Dig Deep, Store Grain, Don't Claim to be an Emperor.” One can also notice many old photos and army relics from the 1960s. There are also several

rooms full of tools that remained unused for the anticipated nuclear attack. Official tours allow visitors to see the silk farm and factory and witness the process of silk extraction from silkworm cocoons. Several craftwork shops have also been opened now and tourists can even get a chance to buy souvenirs.

International tourists in Spain dropped 93.6 percent in Feb in the midst of COVID restrictions

In Spain, in February 2021, tourist arrivals have reduced to 93.6% as visitors kept away from all bars and beaches in usually the second most visited country in the world.

In 2020, international tourism in Spain dropped 80% to 19 million visitors. This is the lowest level since 1969 as Covid restrictions took their toll. In the first two months of 2021, this trend was constant; data from the national statistics institute on Tuesday have shown the same. It's a further bad news for a country that got over a tenth of its gross domestic product (GDP) from tourism.



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FITUR 2021 will focus on generating business and support

industry for revival

FITUR 2021 which will be held from the 19th to 23rd May, at Feria de Madrid and with in-person format, with the challenge of being a turning-point and to contribute to the recovery of the tourism industry. A major international event, organised by IFEMA, that focuses on generating business and is adapting to the current context and to the needs of companies, countries and destinations that, with their support and participation, back FITUR as a platform for professional meetings and for reviving the tourism industry.

FITUR will bring together members of the international professional tourism community who represent the entire chain of value regarding offer and demand in the sector, with the participation of destinations, transportation, accommodation, solutions and services for the industry, as well as brokers, travel agents and tour operators.

Sustainable tourism holds the key to tourism recovery

With the global travel and tourism sector continuing to combat the COVID-19 health crisis, it is important to look at the bigger picture. The tourism industry was experiencing shifting winds even before the pandemic hit. Target 8.9 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aims to devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism which creates jobs, and promotes local culture and products by 2030. SDG 12.B further stresses the importance to develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism. The UNWTO narrative to restart tourism urges for responsible recovery of the sector, in keeping with the priorities outlined in the SDGs.

ITB India Virtual 2021 concluded successfully this year

With more than 400 buyers from MICE, Corporate and Leisure sectors, 150 international sponsors and exhibitors, the inaugural ITB India closes with a resounding success. ITB India Virtual 2021 took place as an entirely virtual event, hosted on ITB Community in Asia (ITB Community). With its virtual show floor, video streaming of keynotes and speeches and intelligent matchmaking tools, the platform offered the best opportunities for successful trade show results.

Katrina Leung, Managing Director of Messe Berlin (Singapore) said that they are very pleased that the

first ever ITB India has been so well received by the travel industry. She shared that even though in person meeting is not possible in these challenging times,' it is even more important to build the bridge to the Indian and South Asian travel markets and provide a virtual meeting place where the global community can come together and exchange ideas in order to rebuild travel.

Crete expecting 2 million tourist arrivals this year

Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO) Secretary General Dimitris Fragakis informed in a recent press statement that Crete has always been one of the flagships of Greek tourism and in the unprecedented crisis of the coronavirus, it managed to keep its reputation at a high level and to offer high quality services to the tourists who visited it last summer.

Fragakis underlined that this summer will be much better than the previous one, adding that the country has more weapons for a safe opening of tourism. He emphasized that Crete is one of the strongest “brands”, and estimated that the course of vaccinations and the timely adoption of stable rules for the opening of tourism will lead to an increase in bookings.

According to the president of the Rethymno Hoteliers Association, Manolis Tsakalakis, June is the key month to achieve the goal of 40% of arrivals in 2019, which translates to about 2 million arrivals in 2021.

Train journeys have a different charm, especially when you are travelling by train in the United States. America offers some of the most iconic train rides in the world, that offer spectacular views of picturesque landscapes covering mountains, oceans, forests, valleys, towns and even some of the most popular sites in the country. Take a look at some of the best train rides that America has to offer.

The Top Train Rides of America

Great Smoky Mountains Railroad

Another railway experience popular among tourists is offered by the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad that takes passengers across the majestic mountain range and allows them to experience the scenic remote countryside of Western North Carolina and parts of the Great Smokey Mountains National Park. The train departs from Bryson City and traverses through valleys, carved mountains, meadows, tunnels and river gorges. It covers nearly 53 miles including two tunnels and 25 bridges. However, as it is often difficult to cover whole of the gigantic mountain railroad, passengers are offered two different options. They can book the 44-mile Nantahala Gorge Excursion for a journey across the Tennessee and Nantahala Rivers and Fontana Lake or the 32-mile Tuckasegee River Excursion that covers the lush green valleys, historic bridges and the quaint town of Dillsboro. Passengers can select First Class Cars with private attendants or the Open Air Gondola and also experience special trains for Easter, the fall and the winter season.

Coast Starlight

One of Amtrak's most popular long-distance rides, the Coast Starlight drives across the West Coast for nearly 35 long hours covering a distance of nearly 1,377 miles from Los Angeles to Seattle. The train passes by Portland, Sacramento, Santa Barbara, the San Francisco Bay Area and drives past lush green forests, waterfalls, majestic cliffs, valleys and the Pacific shoreline as well as the iconic snow-covered peaks of Oregon's Cascade Range, Mount Rainier, Mouth Shasta and Puget Sound. The train has a bi-level coach class and features sightseer lounging, dining cars and Superliner sleeping options with floor-to-ceiling windows offering panoramic views.



Grand Canyon Railway

Considered to be one of the most popular train rides in America, the Grand Canyon Railway takes passengers to the famous Grand Canyon National Park. Offering a peek into the 1901 heritage (when the railway was introduced), the ride departs from Williams in Arizona and

covers 65 miles to arrive at the South Rim in 2 hours and 15 minutes. Along the way, the railway covers the dense forests of Northern Arizona that have enormous stretches of prairies and pine trees before entering the high desert plateau. It speeds past the Native American reservations where passengers can spot the California condor, bald eagles, elks, antelopes and even wild horses. On the way, guides and crews narrate tales from the history of the Wild West and cowboys play authentic traditional songs to keep tourists entertained. Passengers can take a ride in Grand Canyon Railway's historic cars pulled by the "French Fry Express" a converted locomotive from 1923 that now runs on recycled waste vegetable oil.



The four-and-a-half hours round trip from West Virginia offers 11 miles of heritage ride through the Cass Scenic Railroads with spectacular views of mountains and surrounding greenery. The locomotives that were once used to transfer lumber to mine in Cass now take passengers to Whittaker Station, a restored logging camp where people can walk around enjoying scenic views and finally to Bald Knob, the state's third highest view point. Tourists can experience unforgettable scenic views from about 4,842 feet and capture some mesmerising photos. Passengers can also watch the steam-driven train stopping at a spring so that it can store more water to fuel the steam power. The best time to experience the ride is around October when the fall foliage season is at its peak.

Empire Builder

The epic Empire Builder is also another of Amtrak's longest routes that runs every day from Chicago to Seattle for a journey of 46 hours, one-way. The road traces parts of the Lewis & Clark Trail from America's heartland to the Pacific Northwest and rides past iconic places like the Mississippi River, the Glacier National Park, Montana's Big Country Sky, Gassman Coulee Trestle, the skyline of Minneapolis and St. Paul, North Dakota Plains, Whitefish and several mountain ranges. The train also passes through a 7-mile tunnel cut through the Cascade Mountains. Passengers can book a dining car, lounging car or sleeping car according to their own comfort and can also experience local cuisine. They can also walk around in the 20-minute stop that they will be given along the way. During the spring and summer months, a volunteer from National Park Service boards the train to share information and facts about the sites, landscapes, habitat and history.



California Zephyr



The California Zephyr uses a combination of Transcontinental Railroad routes and takes passengers in a memorable excursion covering 2,300 miles for 51 long hours starting from Chicago and ending in Emeryville, California. Often considered to be one of the most scenic train rides in the country, the route covers picturesque Rocky Mountains, the snowcapped Sierra Nevada, the rugged red rock country in Utah and the endless prairies of Nebraska. It also makes major stops in Omaha, Denver and Salt Lake City and passes through Ruby Canyon, Donner Pass and the San Francisco Bay. It offers dining cars, sightseer lounge and Sleepliner cars with roomettes and bedroom suites.

Cape Cod Railroad

This route presents the most beautiful vistas from New England and passes through the salt marshes, cranberry bogs, oceanfront trails, the towns and bustles along the bay starting from Hyannis and West Barnstable Massachusetts to Buzzards Bay, covering a total of 27 miles. Passengers can either select the sightseeing tour with informative narrations from guides or the dinner train to enjoy fine dining on board. Both the rides offer sights that can only be seen via train. . .



Napa Valley Wine Train



The Napa Valley Wine Train is ideal for anyone who loves wine and vintage aesthetics. The 36-mile round trip is covered in century-old railcars that travel through a 150-year-old rail corridor and rides across the beautiful and scenic wine country of the northeast Bay Area. People get intoxicated by the beauty of nature while tasting the local red wine, the signature drink of the area. The journey begins from the McKinstry Street Station at downtown Napa and passes through the old industrial section of Napa, iconic farmlands, and tons of wineries before heading into the scenic wine country up to St. Helena.

New Faces

Marcus Banks been appointed as the Board of Directors of International Franchise Association (IFA)

Marcus Banks, Senior Vice President of Litigation, Employment Law, Government Relations & Information Management, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts have been appointed to the Board of Directors at International Franchise Association (IFA). The announcement has been made by Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, the world's largest hotel franchising company with over 8,900 hotels across 95 countries. Prior to Wyndham Hotels & Resorts' spin-off from Wyndham Worldwide Corporation (WWC) in 2018, Banks served as Senior Vice President – Litigation, Employment Law and Intellectual Property, for WWC. Banks started his franchise career at the Hospitality Division of Cendant Corporation in May 2001. He has written and spoken about various franchise law topics, including litigation management, vicarious liability defense, bankruptcy and mediation.



Haitham Mattar appointed as the MD for India, ME and Africa at IHG Hotels & Resorts”

Haitham Mattar has been appointed as the Managing Director for India, Middle East and Africa (IMEA) at IHG Hotels & Resorts. Mattar is a well-known industry leader in the IMEA region, with over 25 years of experience in hospitality and tourism and an outstanding network across the industry. Haitham Mattar joins IHG Hotels & Resorts from the Saudi Ministry of Tourism where he served as Senior Advisor and a Member of the Executive Leadership Committee and contributed to the development and implementation of a sustainable tourism strategy.

Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts appoints Marc Speichert as Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer

Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts announces the addition of Marc Speichert to its executive leadership team in the role of Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer.

John Davison, President and Chief Executive Officer, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts said that Marc is an outstanding marketer and strategic business builder – a digital innovator with a global outlook who understands the evolving needs of the luxury consumer. His experience and vision will be fundamental to the path forward for Four Seasons, driving continued customer growth, revenue and brand recognition.



Mark Purcell appointed Senior Vice President, Development, North & Central America at Accor

Mark Purcell has been appointed as the Senior Vice President, Development, North & Central America at Accor. Purcell is a seasoned professional with an extensive hospitality background focused in the areas of development, acquisitions and finance.

He has been a key contributor in Accor's record-breaking growth in the region since joining the company in 2017, with notable projects such as Raffles Boston, the first Raffles Hotel & Residences in the U.S., slated to open in 2022; the conversion of the iconic El San Juan Hotel in Puerto Rico to the Fairmont brand in early 2020; and most recently the signing of Faena Hotel Miami Beach, among others.

Exploring Spanish National Parks

Eco-tourism and sustainable tourism took off in Spain in the last two decades and has been growing in popularity ever since. More and more visitors are opting for eco-tours and are embracing environmental awareness during their vacations in Spain.

Picks de Europa National Park

The mountains are the major geological feature of Picks de Europa National Park. Hiking is one of the main attractions here. A wide range of flora and fauna welcomes tourists. On the lower parts of the mountain, you can see roe deer and wild boars roaming freely. On the higher elevations, mountain goats and Cantabrian Chamois can be seen. The park received UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status in 2002.



Doñana National Park

Doñana National Park is a medley of ecosystems that houses an exclusive biodiversity in Europe. Its main highlight is the marshland which is a safe refuge for thousands of European and African migrating birds that come here for breeding. Species in serious danger of extinction like the Iberian imperial eagle and the Iberian lynx live here. Doñana is at the junction of a set of ecosystems which gives the area its unique personality.



Sierra Nevada National Park

Sierra Nevada National Park is a theatrical, rugged and extensive mountain range. The protected area of Sierra Nevada National Park covers 213,024 acres of torrential rivers, sheer-sided gorges, stony steep slopes and glacial lakes between snowy summits. Hiking and biking are the main activities here which offer plenty of opportunities to admire the park's flora. The park is home to more than 2,100 species, 116 of which are categorized as endangered. The park houses 60 species found nowhere else on the Earth.



Montfrague National Park

Montfrague National Park features the largest and best-preserved Mediterranean forest worldwide. The park is an abode to thousands of birds of prey and is one of the best places in Spain for bird watching. About 280 species inhabit the park and host the world's largest colony of Eurasian Black Vultures as well as the highest concentration of imperial eagles in the world.



Cabañeros National Park

Cabañeros National Park is an exclusive place in the world and features the best Mediterranean forest on the Earth. The visitors can see unique and rare flora in an excellent state of preservation. In its landscape of mounds and forests, large mammals live such as the Spanish Ibex, the imperial eagle and the cinereous vulture. Ordovician fossils and cabins of coal miners are only a small part of the park's appeal.





Hvar Island

The City With Nautical Elegance

Located on the Adriatic Sea, Hvar Island allures huge number of tourists with its clear blue waters and pristine beaches. This Croatian island is the queen of the Dalmatian islands. It is famous since ancient times because of its important strategic and nautical position, of various historical periods, culture and natural monuments and literature.



Mraska Bay

While separation from the mainland can sometimes be a handicap, still it proves helpful as it provides protection from factory chimneys and other misfortunes which come with civilisation. There are vast fields of lavender, ancient olive trees and vineyards that strike harmony between man and nature. There are wine and olives, so a guest wishing to get closer to nature can stop at a small inn (Hvar "*konoba*") rather than a top-quality restaurant.

Stari Grad

Whatever you are looking for in your vacation, you will find it here; - night life and cultural attractions of cosmopolitan Hvar town, boat excursions to Pakleni Islands, sandy beaches near Jelsa, the ancient town Stari Grad in which past centuries mingle with modern tourist facilities, heavenly beaches under pine trees in Zavala, exotic atmosphere of south cliffs in Ivan Dolac, Sveta Nedjelja or Milna, the "little Venice" ambient in Vrboska, lavender fields near Zastrazisce, Gdinj and Bogomolje, peaceful secluded bays near Sucuraj.



Zavala

Rich cultural and historic heritage of Hvar, that dates back to pre-historic times, unique gastronomy, beautiful beaches and bays , crystal blue sea, high quality accommodation in apartments and rooms at private houses, hotels, and the hospitality of the local people are the guarantees of a holidays in Hvar you will always remember.



Malo Zarace Beach

Located in a secluded bay, with cliffs on one side and unique rock formation on the other, Malo Zarace is a little slice of heaven.

Zaraće

Zaraće is located around 30 minutes drive from Hvar Town, off the main road to Stari Grad.



Pakleni Islands Archipelago

Exploring the nearby Pakleni Islands is an awesome experience. Setting off early, tourists can navigate through the narrow Hvar strait before arriving at an unbelievably clear, turquoise bay for first swim.



ROBOTIC TECHNOLOGY & THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

The advent of robots and robotic technology has gained immense popularity in the travel industry in recent years. Several sectors of the travel industry have turned to automated and AI-enabled professionals and assigned several responsibilities to robotic staff to provide travellers a more advanced, efficient and futuristic travel experience.

Application of Robotic Technology in the Travel Industry:

HOTELS

The hotel industry is one of the first segments of the travel and tourism sector to embrace robotic technology. The Henn-Na Hotel in Nagasaki, Japan is the first hotel in the world to have fully robotic staff. Guests are welcomed at the reception either by dinosaur robots or humanoid robots which are completely fluent in English. After being assisted by a check-in robot, another cart-shaped robot carries the luggage to the assigned rooms where the guest is accompanied by a concierge robot and a personal assistance device.

Throughout the process, guests at the Henn-Na hotel never have any human interaction. Several other hotels are turning to robotic staff like Hilton's concierge robot Connie, Marriot's receptionist robot Mario, Crowne Plaza's delivery robot Dash, Aloft's butler robot or Botlrant Yotel's delivery robot Yobot. Almost every renowned hotel brand is turning to personal AI assistance systems. It is most likely that majority of the hotels across the globe will adapt the robotic technology soon.



Application of Robotic Technology in the Travel Industry

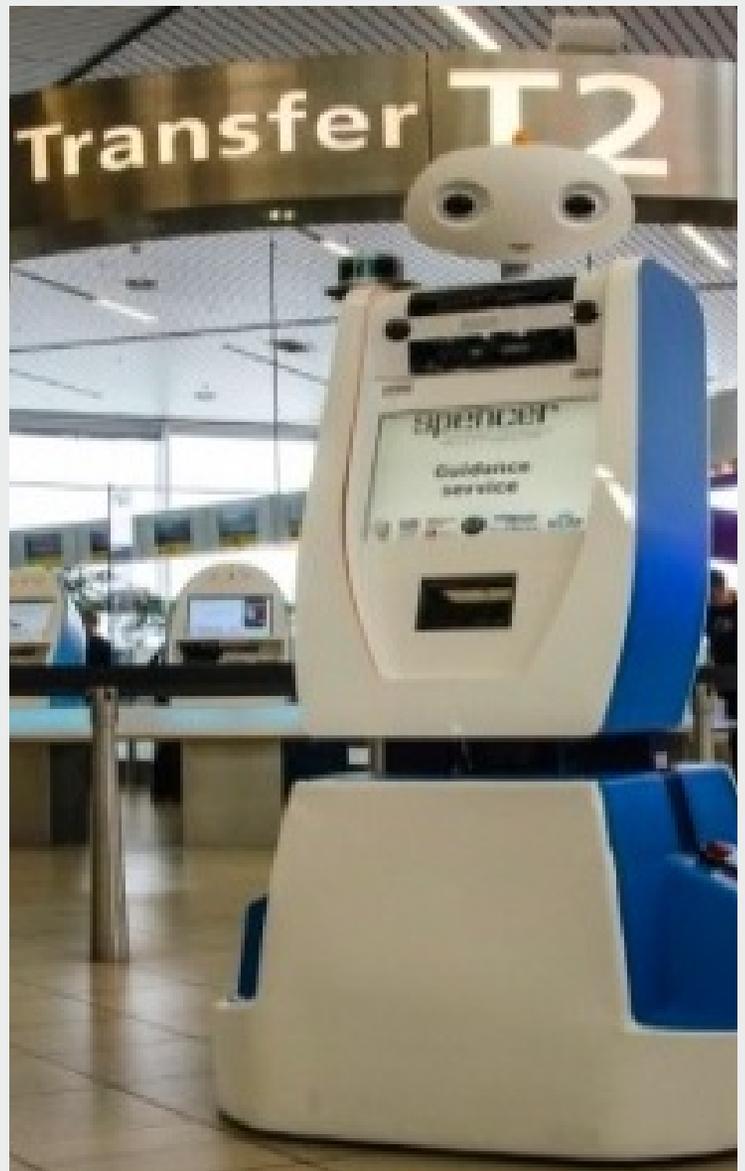
AIRPORTS

The presence of robotic technology is also rapidly increasing in airports around the world. Several airports now have robots that serve as assistants, guides and security personnel, as well as porters and cleaners. It was back around 2016-2017 that the Schipol Airport in Amsterdam conducted trials with Spencer, a robot created to assist KLM passengers to their departure gates. Spencer was considered the first socially-aware robot deployed in an airport. In the same year, Tokyo's Haneda Airport introduced the EMIEW3 humanoid assistant robot created by Hitachi that can speak to passengers and guide them in English and Japanese.

The Mineta San Jose International Airport also deployed three customer service robots in late 2016 called Norma, Amelia and Piper that not only assist passengers but also engage and entertain them. Robots are also largely used at airports for security purposes like the 5 ft. high Anbot in China's Shenzhen Bao'An Airport. Similar security robots can also be seen in Hamad International Airport and La Guardia Airports. These robots are equipped with cameras, sensors and facial-recognition systems and help in security checking at terminals.

South Korean-based LG Electronics have introduced several autonomous cleaning and navigating robots at Incheon Airport. The airport has also deployed Troika robots for guidance and assistance. The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted more airports to embrace robotic technology for advanced cleaning

and better sanitisation like the floor scrubbing robots at Pittsburgh International Airport, the UV light cleaning enabled robots at JFK International Airport, the Xenex LightStrike robot at San Antonio International Airport, among others. Robots have also started serving as waiters like the Pepper robot at Oakland Airport as well as porters like the LEO robots at Geneva Airport in Switzerland.



CRUISES

The cruise industry has been among the latest sectors to gradually welcome robotic technology. Back in 2014, the Quantum of the Seas launched the breakthrough robotic arms that served drinks to guests in its bionic bars and became the centre of attraction in cruise innovation. Several other companies followed suit and robotic bartenders can now be seen in high-tech cruise companies like Harmony, Symphony of the Seas, Anthem and Ovation. MSC Cruises introduced the first virtual cruise assistant chatbot, named Zoe, a free, voice-enabled bot installed in every cabin. Zoe can speak in seven different languages and answer hundreds of questions about life at the sea with just a simple “Ok Zoe” command. It can help passengers to reserve bookings in hotels and restaurants, book trips, check their bills and much more. Similarly, Carnival Corporation's AIDA Cruises and Costa Cruises also launched the humanoid Pepper robots that welcome and guide passengers on boarding and assist them throughout their voyage.



TRAVEL AGENCIES

More recently, robotic technology is also being experimented in travel agencies. Robotic travel agents can entertain customers and gather information about customer preferences and refer it back to an in-person travel agent. Amadeus has already started experimenting on a prototype of 1A-TA, a humanoid Pepper robot travel agent with deep learning capabilities. Customers can interact with the robot just by touching the computer touchscreen and allowing the robot to analyse and understand their preferences.

Pros and Cons:

Every big change or innovation is often accompanied by varied opinions. The introduction of robotic technology in the travel industry has resulted in faster operations, better consistency and greater efficiency as compared to humans. A robotic staff can be functional 24 hours each day without the need of any break. This can result in better productivity and consumer engagement. Robots can also work in dangerous or critical situations which are otherwise hazardous for human beings. Tourists or travellers can also have a more advanced, enhanced and

diversified experience with robotic staff in the travel industry. However, a high reliance on robots can lead to a crisis where robots replace humans and result in shortage of jobs. Travel industry professionals may face the threat of losing their jobs to automated creations. Robots can also suffer technological malfunction and become dysfunctional suddenly. It might not be able to handle unanticipated situations and events as perfectly as human professionals. Although robotic technology is gaining relevance in the travel industry, human professionals may still be indispensable.



World Festivals

Hong Kong goes all out for its annual celebration of the end of the plague. Back in the 1600s when the disease was rife, locals put up an altar outside the Pak Tai Temple to give them a place to pray for the evil spirits to leave the island and rid them of the plague. The locals believe that praying away the plague really worked and so they celebrate every year with a week of music, dance, drums and parades.



Cheung Chau Bun Festival

Place: Hong Kong

Date: 27 April- | May, 2021

Cinco de Mayo is one of the popular festivals in Mexico which reminds the Mexican victory over French colonialists in the 1832 Battle of Puebla. Cinco de Mayo is also recognised in the United States and Canada. This usually involves a feast of Mexican cuisine and dancing to Mexican music.

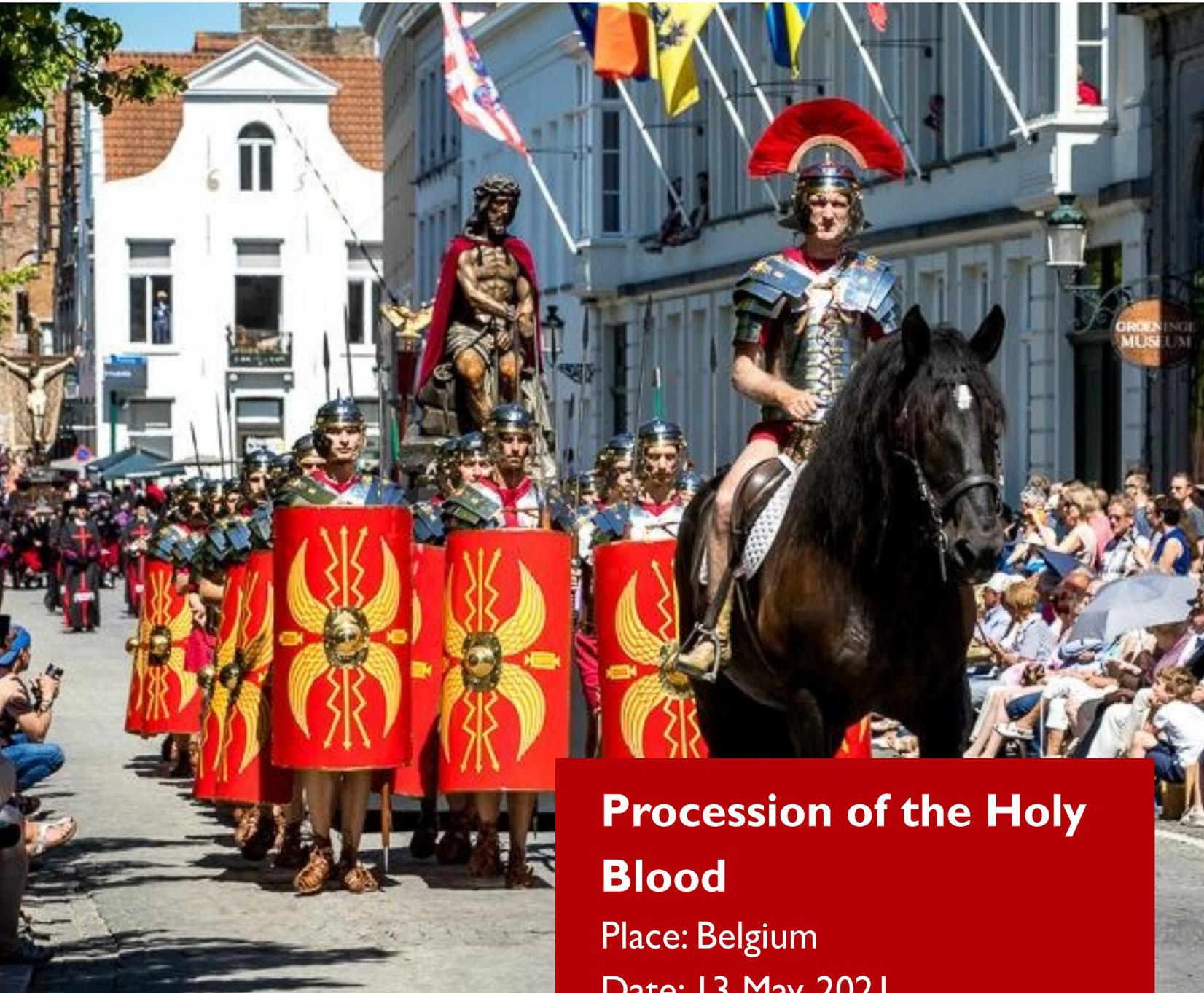


Cinco de Mayo

Place: Mexico

Date: 5 May, 2021

Forty days after Easter on Ascension Day, the street of Bruges are filled with a procession of the Holy Blood. The religious leaders and locals walk through the streets holding a vial of blood, said to be Jesus Christ's blood. Some are dressed in robes; others costumed to represent scenes from the Holy Bible.



Procession of the Holy Blood

Place: Belgium

Date: 13 May, 2021

The people across Philippines honour Patron Saint of Farmers, San Isidro de Labrador with a celebration of all the best local food they have whether its via vendors, stalls or restaurants. But they don't just stop at eating it, they go all out decorating their house in colourful food.



Pahiyas Festival

Place: Philippines

Date: 15 May, 2021

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**9th May - 16th May,
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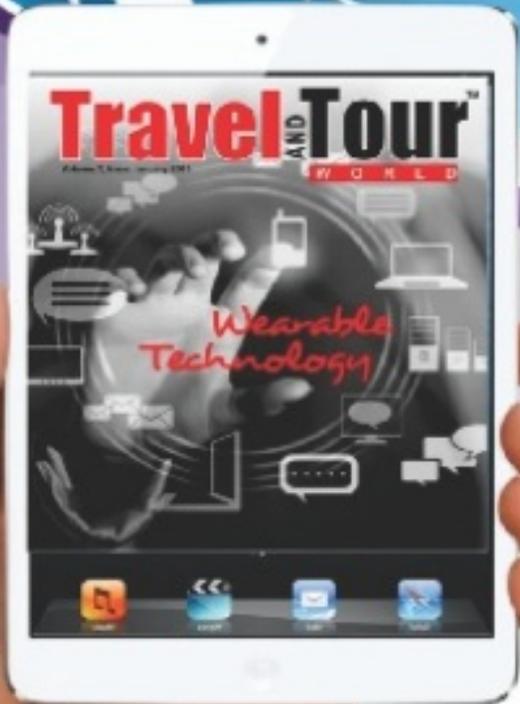
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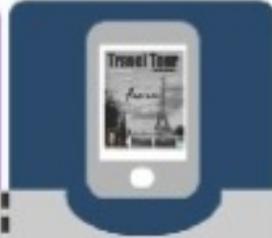
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