

# TOP 7 IMPACTS OF THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC ON TRAVEL INDUSTRY



The coronavirus pandemic appeared without any warning but has had devastating effects in every country of the world. The health crisis also brought with it an economic crisis and changed the world as we used to know it. Here are the 7 most significant changes to expect in the travel industry

## People will travel closer to home due to health worries

Research shows that most persons are booking hotels within a 100-mile radius of where they live and opting for domestic travels due to health concerns. While this is a more comfortable option for travelers, there is still a concern for people who want to travel to other states within a country. This concern stems from the fact that some states have different requirements for travelers.

For example, while the U.K is forming a travel bubble with some countries for tourism, the different states in the U.S have unique requirements. Maine and Hawaii will either require travelers to quarantine for two weeks or show a negative coronavirus test result.

Social distancing rules, health, and safety requirements will also differ from one city to the next, so travelers must keep track of these rules.

Even if people succeed in traveling within their countries, airlines, tourism destinations, hotels, and recreational centers will develop standard health and safety measures to prove that they can keep travelers safe during their flights or visits.

## Fewer passengers could increase the cost of international flights

Affordable international flight tickets might soon be a thing of the past as experts believe that several factors will affect the cost of tickets. First of all, experts project that the pandemic's effect will make passengers wary of long-distance traveling, resulting in fewer passengers on international flights. Airlines will still have to generate revenue somehow, which means passengers could pay a lot more.

Secondly, if airlines are expected to carry 50% of their cabin capacity based on proposed social distancing measures, customers will likely pay twice the regular fare because airlines have to make up for the other empty seats.

Deregulated international fares might become a thing of the past, automatically limiting international travel industry to the affluent few who can afford the luxury. Many yearly vacations will be on hold as the financial implications are likely to be too much for many to handle.

These changes will also affect tourism destinations that rely on international tourists. Tel Aviv is likely to host fewer visitors in their club as the streets of Bangkok will not be swarming with tourists interested in roadside meals.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, with an estimated revenue loss of between \$US910 billion and \$1.2 trillion for the industry, many tourism-dependent cities and countries in the world have been badly hit.

However, there is hope that after the pandemic subsides or the world finds a vaccine, travelers will be able to embrace the complete tourism experience they love and crave.

## **Airlines will need to reconcile safe practices and revenue generation**

The safety practices many airlines put in place while operating in the heat of the pandemic are likely to serve as a blueprint for further operations when traveling recovers fully.

During the pandemic, some airlines began temperature checks and requested passengers to fill health and contact forms, come on board with face masks, increased cleaning during flights, and reduced meal services during trips.

Some airlines also set a limit on passenger numbers on a flight and blocked off some seats for appropriate social distancing. However, limiting passenger numbers might not be practicable when more people begin local and international flights.

There is also a clamor for Federal authorities to take overall health and safety checks in airports before departure and on arrival.

The International Civil Aviation Organization has also waded in with some safety guidelines for airlines. Amongst other things, the ICAO directs airlines to encourage passengers to board with only luggage that fits under their seats and limit visits to lavatories during flights.

As things begin to take shape, airlines need to create a balance between making profits and ensuring the safety of their passengers.

## **Ships return with shortened cruises, temperature checks, and suspension of buffet**

Anticipations are high to find out what sailing will look like when ships return to the sea, and when exactly they plan to return. While the largest cruise companies in the world haven't said much or release guidelines concerning resumption, some things are certain.

The first being that cruise ships will reduce their passenger numbers when the cruise industry resumes and only a few ships are likely to return at a time. We might also not see new cruise ships constructed any time soon

Buffet with servers is expected to replace traditional buffets, and temperature checks will become a regular part of the sea travel industry.

It is still unclear how many passengers will be eager to get on the sea soon, especially considering the nature of major outbreaks on the sea and the absence of a vaccine. However, cruise executives anticipate good bookings in 2021.

While we wait for a more generalized *modus operandi*, different cruise lines are enforcing safety measures on their ships. Norwegian Cruise Line is looking to set up hands-free temperature checks,

install medical-grade air filters, reduce passenger capacity, improve cleaning mechanism, adjust embarkation time, and introduce servers at a buffet. Norwegian Cruise Line and Carnival Cruise Line are both looking to resume sailing with only a portion of their fleet.

## **Hotels will prioritize contactless technology and cleaning**

Hotels are expected to reorganize their lobbies for more space, introduce more frequent cleaning while making hand sanitizers available at every turn. Hotel managers will likely limit contact between hotel staff and encourage customers to book rooms and make orders online.

Guests should expect social distancing reminders and fewer activities that bring people within a close distance of each other.

The American Hotel and Lodging Association recommend guidelines for hotels when feasible, such as using technology to limit queues, lobby crowds, and contact with guests.

In line with conscious health practices, hotels are putting safety first, while major amenities are likely to be relegated for a while.

Guests might experience changes as it concerns pools, bars, gyms, and restaurants. However, it is not yet clear to what extent these changes will go. The challenges before hotels then lie in balancing safety measures and the comfort of guests. How do you introduce health and safety precautions every step of the way without making visitors wary and scared?

It is believed that hotels will find it challenging to create this balance as guests crave exciting experiences, interaction, and relaxation, while hotels aim to keep their lodgers safe.

## **Tourist attractions to have less crowd and streamlined activities**

Crowd and visitors at museums, parks, and other tourist attractions are expected to be a lot smaller as they reopen this month. Some of the major theme parks in the world have informed visitors of some measures they will implement amid the pandemic.

Such measures include mandatory use of facemask for visitors and crew members, compulsory temperature checks, characters to stay a few meters away from visitors, and spacing on rides, seats, and queues.

The Louver in Paris that faces overcrowding with guests will mandate visitors to book a time slot following their resumption on July 6th.

Generally, theme parks and other tourist attractions will control visitor numbers, frequently clean during the day, ensure all visitors use facemasks and engage staff to implement distancing between people.

## **Large gatherings and events will make a cautious come-back**

Amid the pandemic, we have seen major national and international events postponed or canceled, including the 2020 Olympics and the Cannes Film Festival.

Although hopes are high that these events will hold in 2021, there is no guarantee that it will be safe

to hold such major events that attract a global audience and thousands of people.

Even smaller events like carnivals, festivals, conventions, political rallies, and concerts are not feasible based on social distancing rules and safety guidelines of different states.

To host most of these major events means that travelers will troop in from different countries. With the uncertainty surrounding resumption of flights, international travel policies, and health checks for massive gatherings, high-profile events might not resume yet.

According to experts' predictions, the first sets of events that will recover are those organized for domestic audiences in large cities.

Such events will have brief sessions and not span over a day. With such a setting, most activities and planners will not make as much profit.

There is also a possibility that meetings will also take a new shape with people present in a room and others connecting virtually while physical distancing measures will be in place.

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