NEW TRENDS: TRAVEL DESTINATIONS AFTER COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has reopened the debate on what the travel destinations of the future should be like. While in the 19th century the medieval pandemics of the plague and cholera led to the widening of streets, experts believe that the current health crisis will result in a stronger commitment to sustainability, the environment and pedestrianization.

In addition, hotels will see a series of trends that business must embrace in order not to fall behind in this new way of understanding destinations and tourism.

Human and Healthy

The first trend, which many cities have been upholding for years, is to reclaim the space for pedestrians. **The anthropocentric, human or walkable city will triumph after the COVID-19 pandemic, proving how essential it is that citizens and tourists have spaces to walk.** A walkable and green city improves the health of those who walk through its streets by promoting physical exercise and avoiding a sedentary lifestyle, while also cutting pollution by reducing space for cars.

For example, Spanish Pontevedra stands out: 70% of the trips in the city are made on foot or bicycle, 80% of children walk to school, and there is no longer regulated parking, but free parking spaces that can only be occupied for 15 minutes.

Compact and Connected

The walkable concept is one of the main elements of a compact city, which looks to reduce the need of the citizen or visitor to use private vehicles. Meanwhile, a proximity city is in contrast to the traditional model of a dispersed city, where the population must cover long distances in daily trips.

A compact and proximity city puts the citizens in the center, and all their needs must be within a step away: school, work, hospital and shops. This concept also helps the traveler, who is now able to discover the destination by visiting neighborhoods beyond the historic center. At the same time, this commitment to a proximity city makes it possible to open hotels and accommodation of all kinds, since it will be much more comfortable to discover.

An example of this is Paris's 15-minute city concept: the residents move within different compact neighborhood units integrated into a large polycentric city.

Mobile and Inclusive

The newest concept comes from Sweden: the 1-minute city wants residents to become co-architects and redesign their own streets in one minute. It is a hyperlocal project, since it focuses on the immediate urban landscape, using the street as the basic unit of the city.

Sweden has developed an urban furniture kit that residents can use according to their needs: flowerpots, seats, bicycle racks, children areas or outdoor gyms. This mobile city model is included in the trend of tactical and participatory urbanism.

Smart

Technology brings us closer and closer to smart cities, an intelligent model that provides constant information to citizens to make lives easier. **At a tourist level, more and more towns and cities are joining the Smart Destinations Network.**

Traffic lights, buses and shops will communicate with each other; mobile apps will show nearby parking spaces; and WiFi will be made available throughout the city, among others. Tokyo stands out in this regard, having combined sustainability with technology, turning into a smart city that is focused on creating renewable energy for public lighting.

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