

LUXURY AND LIFESTYLE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

travel

Volume 22 | Issue 2 | March 2022 | ₹250 / \$10 US

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WELCOME BACK TO SINGAPORE

Travellers from India who are fully vaccinated can now visit Singapore quarantine free on Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) flights.

Singapore Airlines operates daily VTL flights from Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai. From 16TH March 2022, all Singapore Airlines stations in India will operate VTL flights.

For the latest information, please visit
<https://safetravel.ica.gov.sg/vtl/requirements-and-process>

Or scan the QR code below



singaporeimagine

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LUXURY AND LIFESTYLE TRAVEL MAGAZINE travel SPAN

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Address changes and subscription
order to travelspan@gmail.com

Registered with Registrar of
Newspapers of India under
RNI No. DEL/ENG/2000/03308

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY
Profiles Media Network Pvt Ltd.
C-59, Defence Colony, Chetna Marg,
New Delhi 110024, India
Tel - +91 (124) 4111182
Mob- +91 99999 97607
Website: www.travelspan.in

PRINTED BY
STUDIO 9 PRODUCTIONS
C-59, Defence Colony, Chetna Marg,
New Delhi 110024, India

Volume 22, Issue 2, March 2022

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Singapore opens Vaccinated Travel Lane for all Indian cities

**~Fully vaccinated Indian travellers from all Indian cities can enjoy
quarantine-free travel to the destination from 16 March 2022**

Singapore has announced the extension of the Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) to all Indian cities, which was earlier applicable only to Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai. With this new development, more travellers from India who are fully vaccinated may now use the VTL for quarantine-free travel to Singapore. The VTL which was launched on November 29, 2021, between both countries has witnessed success since its commencement.

As the pandemic has now shown signs of ebbing, there is new hope and optimism in the travel and tourism industry across the world. Arrangements like the VTL serve to ease travel woes and encourage people to revive their long-pending vacation plans. Travelling to Singapore from India for travellers who are fully vaccinated has become easier, with some pre-requisites before departure, including a valid visa, a Vaccinated Travel Pass (VTP), stay of seven consecutive days in India or a VTL country, and a mandatory RT-PCR test/professionally administered ART before boarding the flight. On arrival in Singapore, travellers can enjoy the quarantine-free stay, after taking a supervised ART at a Quick Test Centre within 24 hours of arrival and testing negative.

Mr. GB Srithar, Regional Director, IMESA (India, Middle East & South Asia), Singapore Tourism Board, said, "The extension of VTL to Singapore from all Indian cities provides the much-needed impetus to travel

between the countries for all traveller types, whether for leisure, business or cruise. This is part of Singapore's calibrated and progressive approach to re-opening our borders. Over the past year and a half, we had continued engaging the consumers and travel trade through a myriad of content and virtual experiences. We had recently launched a "Reserve in Singapore" consumer engagement activation under our SingapoReimagine campaign and are glad that more travellers from India may now start to plan their trips and reserve their experiences in Singapore. We look forward to sharing Singapore's new, reimagined tourism offerings and experiences with our Indian visitors."

India is a key source market for Singapore – the third-largest in 2019. Even as the pandemic halted international travel for close to 18 months, STB India continued to build destination affinity with Indian consumers through innovative marketing – such as an art collaboration between acclaimed Indian Gond artist Bhajju Shyam and Singaporean artist Sam Lo titled 'Dancing In Unison' to highlight the art and cultural heritage of both countries, curating the Chhota Bheem animated series to take younger audiences on a virtual trip of the destination as well as giving them a taste of Singapore's diverse cuisine through a month-long collaboration with Foodhall India in celebration of the Singapore Food Festival 2021.

We are on



DEVENDER GROVER

RNI No. DEL/ENG/2000/03308 Travel Span is Printed Published Edited and Owned by **Devender Grover**. Printed at G S Graphic Arts. A-18, Naraina Industrial Area, New Delhi - 110028

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THE MAGIC OF DARJEELING'S GOLDEN TIPS TEAS

Synopsis

Heritage

Among India's Oldest tea brands established in 1933. Originally from Darjeeling, the land where grow the finest teas in the world.

Passion

Headed by Expert Tea Taster Madhav Sarda, Golden Tips has 14+ exclusive tea boutiques across Eastern India. Exhaustive range of over 200+ Single Origin Teas and blends

Purity

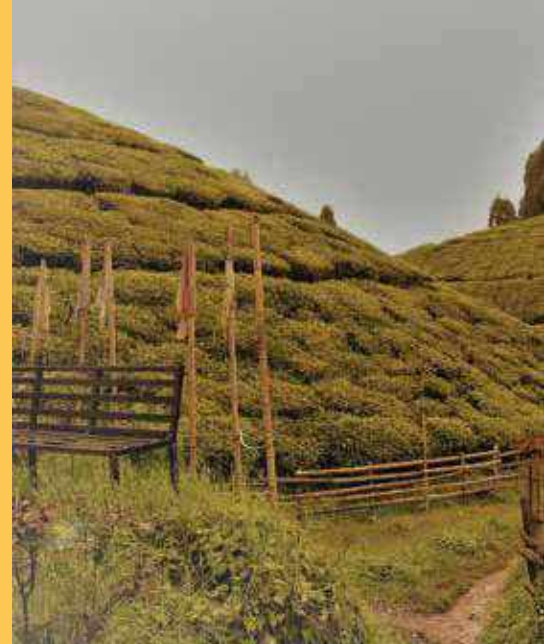
100% Pure Indian Teas certified by Tea Board of India. Specific CTM Licenses for single region Darjeeling, Assam, Nilgiri, Sikkim Tea awarded by the Tea Board.

Established in 1933 in India, where the finest teas of the world are grown with a mission to epitomize the art of drinking gourmet teas, Golden Tips is among the oldest & most reputed home-grown tea brands from India. Originating from Darjeeling, it is cherished by connoisseurs & tea lovers across the globe for the quality of its teas.

Darjeeling is blessed with a unique terroir with an altitude ranging between 1200 – 6000 ft above sea level. The steep slopes, ample humidity, rainfall, shade, moisture, and acidic soils infuse “magic” into the teas of this region. There is a certain air about the region and not surprisingly, Darjeeling teas are one of the most loved beverages around the globe with absolute uniqueness in flavour and aroma.



Expert Tea Taster and
Managing Director Golden
Tips Tea, Madhav Sarda



Capturing the essence of Darjeeling is a home-grown tea brand Golden Tips Teas, which comes with a heritage of over eight decades and 4 generations of tea entrepreneurship. Following the “Direct from Plantation + Auction model”, the expertise of Golden Tips lies in sourcing, sampling, choosing, packaging and marketing of the finest single origin teas, tea blends, infusions for a cross section of tea drinkers and that - at the correct prices. The Company offers an extensive range of teas in terms of varieties and styles. The packaging offers innumerable options and is also ideal for gifting during special occasions.

The company operates primarily through its retail outlets (over a dozen stores mainly in Eastern India), Omni-Channel route, through renowned stores at select cities and airports in the country, and from the company’s website www.goldentipstea.com apart from online marketplaces like Amazon, Flipkart, etc.

Golden Tips has a strong presence in Darjeeling & Sikkim and its famed Tea Boutiques are very popular amongst tourists and visitors, especially during the peak holiday season. The Boutiques are a must visit, whether to relish the ambience, avail the free tasting facility, to see and learn more about the world-renowned Darjeeling Tea, and also to purchase for drinking or gifting.

A wide and attractive range of Tea accessories consisting of Tea Sets, Tea Pots, fancy Tea Strainers, Tea Cosies, Tea Timers, etc are also on display and



sale at the Boutiques to entice and charm visitors to make their visit a memorable one.

Apart from the domestic market, the company has dedicated customers across the globe and has shipped Golden Tips teas to almost 90 countries at some point of time in the last several years through orders from its website & online channels. Golden Tips also has exclusive representations in Russia, Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan, Nepal, Bhutan and now China, through distributors.

Reminiscing about the history, **Madhav Sarda, Expert Tea Taster and Managing Director, Golden Tips Tea** says, “When we started a few decades ago way back in 1933, the almost complete absence of a premium homegrown brand that could package and present the finest Darjeeling Teas

to customers spurred us to start Golden Tips.” Today, Golden Tips follows the “**Direct from Plantation + Auction model**) and the brand’s expertise lies in sourcing, packaging and marketing of premium quality single origin teas, and tea blends. Apart from the domestic market, Golden Tips sells online to 90+ countries with Russia, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, Bhutan and now China, the main international markets for B2B sales of the Golden Tips branded range.

Sarda adds, “Our endeavour has been to cater to domestic as well as foreign customers, especially those visiting India, through our omnichannel presence across India and of course through our website and marketplaces like Amazon. Our specialized and unique **Tea Boutiques** spread across Darjeeling, Sikkim, etc are also a



must-visit for tourists and play a major role in popularising the finest teas and making them available to connoisseurs.” **Madhav, who is also an experienced tea taster**, shares, Golden Tips has a vast and eclectic range of the finest **Darjeeling, Sikkim, Assam, Nilgiris**, and other Indian teas sourced from the best plantations across the country. These teas are packaged in varied styles and packs. Like Economy packs, Handcrafted Gift packs consisting of **hand-carved wooden boxes, fancy Brocade** and Velvet cloth bags, Jute boxes, etc. The brand also manufactures commercial packs in paper cartons and tin cans, as well as gift packaging and assortments, he adds.

Elucidating on the future roadmap for Golden Tips, Madhav says, “We have

recently opened one of its kind PURE VEGETARIAN café - “**Teattoria**” in Darjeeling. It offers Italian/ Continental and Oriental cuisine along with our Specialty Teas. We now plan to expand our footprint through our offline/ physical retail operations across Metro and Tier 2 cities in India by opening niche experiential tea boutiques and stores. We are exploring this route and hopefully shall finalize some tie-ups after the current wave of the pandemic subsides. We also intend to give a thrust to our online operations to capture a larger market in the near future.”

Profiling Madhav Sardha, Expert Tea Taster and Managing Director, Golden Tips Tea.

A Well-known Tea Taster and Managing Director of Golden Tips Teas

Madhav Sardha was born and brought up in Darjeeling. The tranquil environs of Kanchenjunga, amidst the idyllic and scenic surroundings of the Himalayas and the tea plantations of Darjeeling has had a lasting impact on his life. An alumnus of St. Joseph’s School and College Darjeeling, he was the founder Secretary of Friends Organization and also the Charter President of Leo Club of Darjeeling, which happened to win the International Excellence Award during his tenure.

Madhav, with over 4 decades of tea tasting experience majorly with Darjeeling & Assam orthodox Teas, personally tastes and selects each tea, assisted by his colleagues, which eventually bears the Golden Tips stamp, to ensure that customers get the perfect cup every time. His passion to make Darjeeling Teas available to connoisseurs in India and worldwide - not only pure and fresh, but also at reasonable prices, and in attractive packaging directly from the source - continues unabated.

An avid whistler, he is truly a music lover. His album ‘Mesmerising Melodies Whistle’ is about his passion for those evergreen Hindi Film songs that we all love to hum. Madhav has recorded a collection of such unforgettable songs in a whistling style. He continues with his passion till date whether at home, office or any public place apart from occasional public performances. He is also a percussionist of some consequence. Everyday yoga & exercise is also a part of his daily regimen to stay fit.

Emirates opens new lounge for young flyers



Young travellers flying Emirates as unaccompanied minors can now relax and wait for their flight in a newly upgraded lounge dedicated for them at Dubai International Airport, located next to Emirates' First Class Lounge in Concourse B. Emirates' lounge for unaccompanied minors is open 24/7, and the newly upgraded facility offers fun video games, drinks and snacks, comfortable seating areas, free wi-fi, and washrooms designed for kids.

Parents or guardians who have pre-booked Emirates' Unaccompanied Minor service, can drop off their young flyers at Dubai Airport Terminal 3, where Emirates' airport team will check them in for their flights in a special lounge area for unaccompanied minors. This facility is located in between the Economy and First/Business Class

Check-in halls.

After check-in formalities are completed, one of Emirates' friendly airport services team members will escort the young flyers through immigration and security, onward to their dedicated departure lounge in the airside concourse, and later, from the lounge to the boarding gate.

Young flyers enjoy priority boarding, and the Emirates cabin crew will be waiting to welcome young flyers at the aircraft door, and help them to find their seats and settle in for their flight.

Onboard, young flyers can look forward to delicious meals and snacks designed for their palates, toys and activity packs, and kid-sized headsets to enjoy the selection of over 50 Disney movies and 130+ TV channels for young travellers. Emirates is currently

offering young flyers cool take-home toys and bags on board, inspired by Expo 2020 Dubai and featuring little Emirates characters. All toys and bags use recycled material and bags are made from 100% recycled plastic bottles.

Young solo flyers with a connecting flight in Dubai are also well cared for while in transit. Emirates' ground services team will meet and escort them from their flight to one of the dedicated lounges for unaccompanied minors, while they wait for their next flight.

Emirates' services for unaccompanied minors must be booked in advance of travel and are available for children from 5 to 11 years of age, who are travelling without an adult. The service can also be booked for young travellers between 12 and 15 years old.



UNLOCKING THE WORLD

Israel's Borders Open to Everyone from March 1, 2022

Only RT-PCR tests required

Starting March 1, 2022, Israel will allow entry to all tourists regardless of whether they have been vaccinated against COVID-19, as decided by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz, with the involvement of Tourism Minister Yoel Razvozov.

Prime Minister Bennett said, “We are seeing a steady decline in the mortality rates across the world therefore, we see it is time to gradually open tourism.” Under the new guidelines, tourists of all ages, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, will be allowed to enter Israel provided they present a *negative* RT-PCR test before arriving and take an RT-PCR test upon landing in Israel. So far, only those vaccinated against COVID-19 are allowed to enter Israel after the country closed its borders to foreigners for the first time in March 2020.

Bennett elaborates stating, “Our indicators must be in sync with the situation on the ground, we must be certain that what we are telling the public is in sync with what is to be expected. In order to maintain public trust and to be sure that the government’s guidelines are being implemented, we need to open up when the situation improves - and it is improving significantly.»

With the new guidelines being put into effect, it will also be easier for Israeli nationals to enter the country. Like all travellers to Israel, they only have to undergo a RT-PCR test on arrival whereas the antigen test is no longer required prior to departure. Unvaccinated locals will no longer have to be quarantined if the RT-PCR test at Ben-Gurion International Airport comes back negative.

With regard to the situation in the country, Bennett emphasizes,

“At the moment, the situation in Israel is good, which is the direct result of correct and dynamic management. Though Israel is opening to tourism, we will continue to monitor the situation closely and, in the event of a new variant, we will act quickly again.»

Sammy Yahia, Israel’s Director of Tourism to India and the Philippines, is thrilled with the new guidelines stating, «This is the news we have been waiting for since the first wave of the pandemic brought the world to a standstill two years ago. We are confident that visitor numbers will gradually recover to pre-pandemic numbers as consumer confidence grows in line with the gradual easing of restrictions. Our first, and most important priority is the safety and wellbeing of all those who wish to travel to Israel and starting next week, I look forward to welcoming Indian tourists back to my beautiful country.”



Fossils show 1st intrepid humans left Africa 200,000 years ago for an icy Israel

Remains from the Ice Age show ancient inhabitants thrived in the region



on the Upper Jordan Valley, specifically near Ohalo II, enabling those people to utilize a broad ecological niche comprised of varied edible plants, mammals, reptiles, birds, and fish. *"Despite their ability to hunt large animals, these inhabitants also hunted a wide range of*

A new paper was published on January 26, 2022, in PLOS ONE by a team from the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HU). The article focused on the remains of a previously submerged fisher-hunter-gatherer camp on the shores of the Sea of Galilee from around 23,000 years ago. Through closer analysis of the abundance, variety and thorough use of animal remains, the team concluded that these survivors of the latest Ice Age thrived, whereas most of their contemporaries in other parts of the world were nearly starved due to the Earth's extremely cold temperatures.

The Israeli site, known as Ohalo II, was occupied at the end of the last Ice Age ("Last Glacial Maximum"), between 23,500-22,500 years ago. Ohalo II is known for the excellent preservation of its brush huts and botanical remains. The study, led by HU doctoral student Tikvah Steiner, under the supervision of HU Professor Rivka Rabinovich and University of Haifa archaeologist Prof. Dani Nadel who excavated the site, examined the diet and extensive use of animal parts to determine the welfare and lifestyle of these ancient inhabitants.

During the Last Glacial Maximum, ice sheets covered much of North

America, Northern Europe, and Asia, profoundly affecting Earth's climate by causing drought, desertification, and a large drop in sea levels. Ironically enough, Ohalo II was discovered in 1989, following drought conditions that lowered the water level of the Sea of Galilee by several meters. Excavations were carried out between 1989-1991, and again between 1998-2001. The site covers 2000 meters and is located near the southern tip of the modern Sea of Galilee, about 9 km south of Tiberias. The site contains the remains of six oval-shaped brush huts, open-air hearths, the grave of an adult male, as well as various installations and refuse heaps. Abundant organic and inorganic materials provide a wealth of information about the lifestyle of fisher-hunter-gatherers during that period.

From a close analysis of 22,000 animal bones found at the site, including gazelles, deer, hares, and foxes, as well as previous documentation regarding the number of charred plants remains, flint tools, cereal grains found there which signify a robust diet and lifestyle, the team concluded that Ohalo II presents a different picture of subsistence than most other early Epipaleolithic sites.

Climatic oscillations during the Last Glacial Maximum had minimal effects

prey and had tools and time enough to fully exploit animal carcasses down to the marrow," shared Steiner. Likewise, "tortoises were seemingly selected for a specific body-size, which may suggest that their shells for use as bowls—and not their meat-- were the main target. Hare and fox were possibly hunted for their pelts," she added.

The current study focused on reptile, bird and mammal remains found in one of the huts during its three consecutive occupations. As part of the study, identification and quantification was carried out of the different animal species, bone sizes were measured, and bone surfaces were subjected to spectroscopic examination to identify signs of cutting and wear. In addition, Dr. Rebecca Biton, a post-doctoral student at the Hebrew University and an expert in herpetology, discovered that the turtles were all of a uniform size, which might indicate a conscious selection by the hunters for a specific size of the turtle shell.

Steiner and her colleagues believe that the findings from the site do not indicate a decline in the availability of food during this period but rather a rich diversity of food sources. In this way, Ohalo II is a wonderful example of a true broad-spectrum economy during the latest Ice Age, at the very beginning of the Epipaleolithic period.

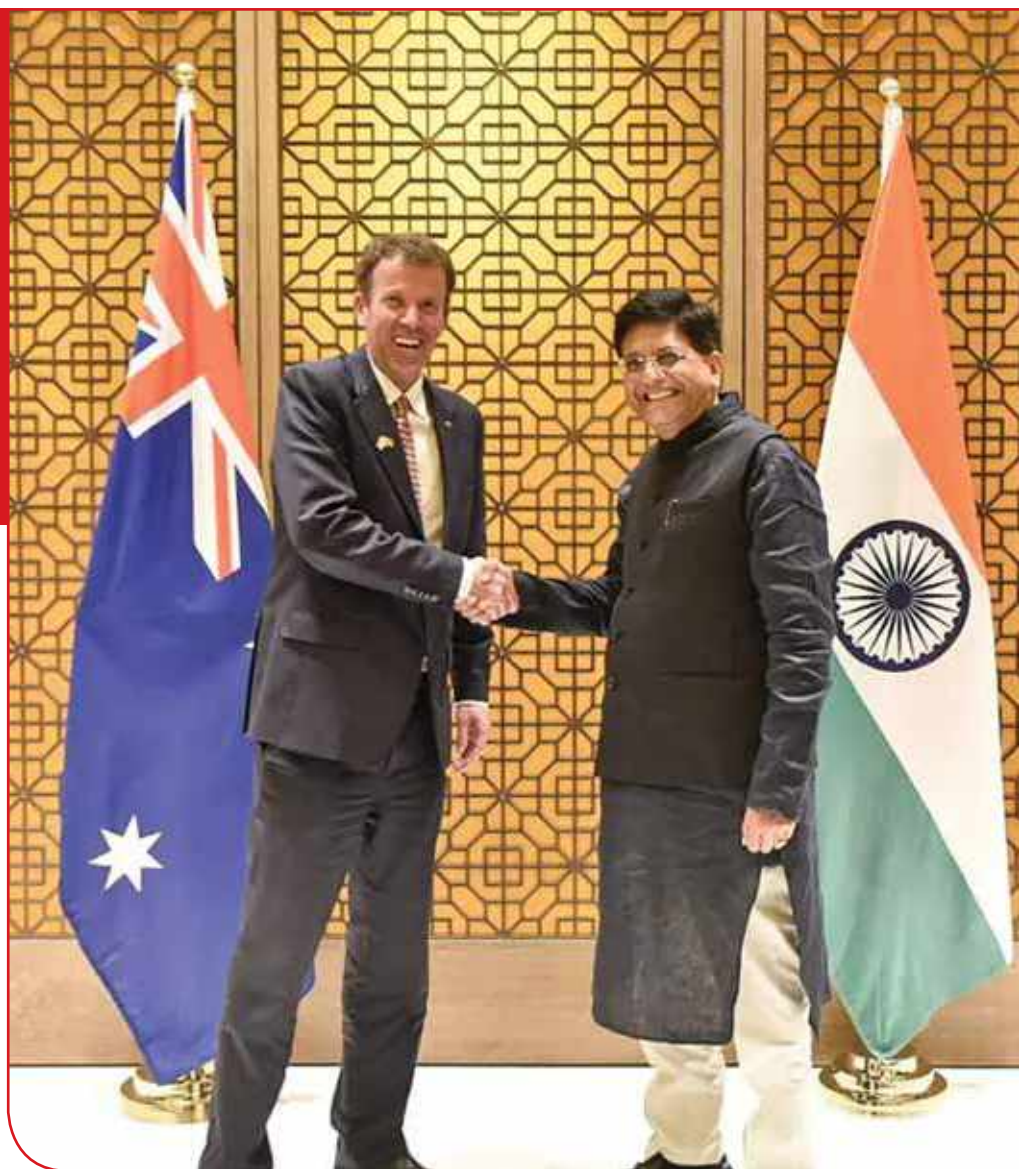
India, Australia sign agreement to boost the pandemic-battered tourism sector

India and Australia have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote tourism on February 11, 2022. The agreement is also aimed at facilitating bilateral relations in tourism, and the exchange of information and data related to the sector between the two countries.

India and Australia have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote tourism on February 11, 2022. The MoU was signed by Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Australia's Dan Tehan, MP, Minister of Trade, Tourism and Investment.

The agreement is also aimed at facilitating bilateral relations in tourism, and the exchange of information and data related to the sector between the two countries. Other areas addressed in the MoU include cooperation between stakeholders, particularly hotels and tour operators, exchanges between training and education providers, tourism and hospitality, investment in the tourism and hospitality sectors, visits of tour operators and wholesalers, media and opinion makers, high quality, safe, ethical and sustainable tourism development, interest in major cultural, artistic and sporting events, opportunities for traveller education on applicable laws, rules and instructions in each other's country and enhanced tourism engagement in multilateral fora, according to a statement from the Ministry of Tourism.

Australia is one of the most important tourism markets for India.



It is ranked fourth in terms of foreign tourist arrivals to India in 2019, contributing 3.4% of the total tourism share of foreign tourists in the country. The signing of the MoU with Australia will be instrumental in increasing tourists' arrival from this important source market.

India and Australia had previously signed an agreement on tourism cooperation in the field of tourism in 2014 which expired in 2019.

The number of Australian tourists to India has increased consistently in the last few years. In 2016, over 2.93 lakh Australian tourists visited India, which increased to 3.67 lakh in 2019. The number of Indian tourists to Australia also increased from 2.62 lakh to over 5.89 lakh in 2019. From November 27, 2014, India has been offering Electronic Tourist Visa to Australian citizens.

Presently, the Ministry of Tourism has similar agreements with 45 countries.

Travel Momentum Builds as Restrictions are Lifted - Even faster progress is needed:IATA

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) released data showing growing momentum in the recovery of air travel as restrictions are lifted.

increase for any two-week period since the crisis began.

Progressive Alleviation of COVID-19 Measures

The jump in ticket sales comes as more governments announce a relaxation of COVID-19 border restrictions. An IATA survey of travel restrictions for the world's top 50 air travel markets (comprising 92% of global demand in 2019 as measured by revenue passenger kilometers) revealed the growing access available to vaccinated travelers.

- 18 markets (comprising about 20% of 2019 demand) are open to vaccinated travelers without quarantine or pre-departure testing requirements.
- 28 markets are open to vaccinated travelers without quarantine requirements (including the 18 markets noted above). This comprises about 50% of 2019 demand.
- 37 markets (comprising about 60% of 2019 demand) are open to vaccinated travelers under varying conditions (18 having no restrictions, others requiring testing or quarantine, or both).

These numbers reflect a spate of relaxation announced around the world, including in Australia, France, the Philippines, the UK, Switzerland, and Sweden among them.

"Momentum toward normalizing traffic is growing. Vaccinated travelers have the potential to travel much more extensively with fewer hassles than even a few weeks ago. This is giving growing numbers of travelers the confidence to buy tickets. And that is good news!"

Now we need to further accelerate the removal of travel restrictions. While recent progress is impressive, the world remains far from 2019 levels of connectivity. Thirteen of the top 50 travel markets still do not provide easy access to all vaccinated travelers. That includes major economies like China, Japan, Russia, Indonesia, and Italy," said **Willie Walsh, IATA's Director-General.**

IATA continues to call for:

- Removing all travel barriers (including quarantine and testing) for those fully vaccinated with a WHO-approved vaccine,
- Enabling quarantine-free travel for non-vaccinated travelers with a negative pre-departure antigen test result,
- Removing travel bans, and,
- Accelerating the easing of travel restrictions in recognition that travelers pose no greater risk for COVID-19 spread than already exists in the general population.

"Travel restrictions have had a severe impact on people and on economies. They have not, however, stopped the spread of the virus. And it is time for their removal as we learn to live and travel in a world that will have risks of COVID-19 for the foreseeable future. This means putting a stop to the singling out of the traveling population for special measures. In nearly all cases, travelers don't bring any more risk to a market that is already there. Many governments have recognized this already and removed restrictions. Many more need to follow," said **Walsh.**

Improved Ticket Sales

IATA reported a sharp 11-percentage point increase for international tickets sold in recent weeks (in proportion to 2019 sales).

- In the period around 8 February (7-day moving average) the number of tickets sold stood at 49% of the same period in 2019.
- In the period around 25 January (7-day moving average) the number of tickets sold stood at 38% of the same period in 2019.
- The 11-percentage point improvement between the January and February periods is the fastest such

Kerala Travel Mart deferred to May 5-8, 2022 due to Covid surge



The eleventh edition of Kerala Travel Mart (KTM), India's largest tourism industry congregation originally scheduled for March 24-27, has been postponed to May 5 to 8 at Kochi in view of the current surge in Covid-19 across the world.

The revised schedule of the

event was announced by **Dr Venu V, Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism, Shri V R Krishna Teja, Director of Tourism, KTM Society President Shri Baby Mathew, and Secretary Shri Jose Pradeep** at a virtual press conference. Former presidents and managing committee

members of the KTM Society were also present.

The inaugural ceremony of the event, being organized by the KTM Society, will be followed by three days of deliberations at Sagara and Samudrika Convention Centre in Willingdon Island in Kochi.

Dr. Venu said KTM 2022 has been postponed to ensure the safe health of more than 1,000 buyers attending the meet.

The KTM meet is of crucial importance in the state's efforts to revive the pandemic-hit tourism sector by attracting visitors from across the world, they said.

Coming close on the heels of the launch of the state government's Caravan Tourism project 'Keravan Kerala', the upcoming edition of KTM will have caravan tourism and adventure tourism as the main themes. Alongside, the internationally-acclaimed responsible tourism, too, will receive prominent attention.

Kerala is readying up to serve again its visitors with new travel destinations and innovative tourism products, said Shri Krishna Teja.

KTM comes at a time when the travel industry is looking at the nascent Caravan Tourism with renewed hope, Shri Mathew noted. The concept has immense potential to fetch Kerala a special place in the world tourism map, as did Houseboat Tourism earlier, he added.

Organisers have charted a pre-KTM tour for vloggers from within the country and abroad to show the beauty and variety of Kerala's destinations. A similar journey will be conducted after the event for select buyers attending the mart, Shri Baby Mathew revealed.

The upcoming mart will be conducted in a space of one lakh square feet, which will be totally paper-free, Shri Jose Pradeep of KTM Society said.



Priority Pass adds 183 new lounges and experiences in 2021

- *Leading airport lounge and experiences programme adds 134 new premium lounges and 49 new experiences to network in 2021*
- *Reveals it has at least one experience covering 95% of all international flights, from the 100 busiest airports globally*
- *Priority Pass drives premium travel experiences by giving Members access to even more dining, sleep, and spa offerings in airports worldwide*

Priority Pass, the world's leading airport lounge and experiences programme, owned and operated by Collinson, has announced it has added a total of 183 airport lounges and experiences to its global network in 2021. The latest additions mean that Priority Pass has at least one experience covering 95% of all international flights from the top 100 airports*, with new additions in airports worldwide, including the US, Russia, and China.

The brand has also focused on making more premium experiences accessible for its Members, by adding further dining, sleep, and spa offerings to its network as well as



recently announcing a partnership with CarTrawler.

Growing The Premium Lounges Network

As part of its dedication to growing its premium lounge network, Priority Pass added 134 new premium lounges in 2021, each designed to be a luxurious oasis for travellers pre-

flight. As part of this, through its sister company, Airport Dimensions, Priority Pass Members were also given access to a new lounge concept in partnership with the VIP Ambaar Lounge brand. The exciting, new, premium 'Ambaar Club' launched at Viracopos International Airport (VCP) and has since been rolled out to two further airports in Brazil this year with more to come.

Separately, as previously announced in June 2021, a relationship with JP Morgan Chase will give Priority Pass Members access to lounges within the brand new, premium airport lounge 'Chase Sapphire Lounge by The Club'. Three lounges are already in development at Hong Kong International, Boston Logan, and New York La Guardia airports.

Adding New Airport Experiences

As part of its commitment to expanding the range of options available for Members beyond airport lounges, Priority Pass introduced 49 new experiences in 2021. These include Sleeping Pods at airports including Moscow Sheremetyevo, New York La Guardia, and Bahrain International; nine new spas, featured in destinations such as Istanbul, Lagos, and Dallas; and even a brand new gaming experience at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).

Further premium dining experiences were added, where guests can dine on delicious local cuisines and, in some cases, enjoy the scenery nearby with expansive window views.

Be Relax also joined the Priority Pass network, offering Members the opportunity for a relaxing spa experience before or after their flight. With numerous locations across the US and around the world, Be Relax offers a large range of wellness services, including chair massages, loungers, and aromatherapy.

Priority Pass Members can visit Be Relax locations at San Diego International Airport (SAN), Detroit Metropolitan Wayne Airport (DTW), Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), Dallas International Airport (DFW), and New York Airport (JFK and La Guardia), with more locations coming soon to the network.

Providing New and Exciting Services

As well as expanding its airport experiences, Priority Pass added a range of new Travel Services to its app, allowing Members access to more things to enhance their overall travel experience, including a global

partnership with CarTrawler.

The partnership gives all Members access to competitively priced car rental and airport transfers through CarTrawler's network of over 2,200 vehicle partners across 50,000 locations worldwide. The partnership is a result of Priority Pass' desire to constantly evolve its propositions in accordance with travellers' evolving needs and wants, and joins COVID-19 travel testing and Duty-Free Shopping services.

Rebuilding traveller confidence

Priority Pass launched a number of innovations last year to help rebuild traveller confidence and welcome passengers back safely. During the pandemic, the company launched a ground-breaking new 'Ready 2 Order' food and beverage system in recognition of the challenges traditional Food & Beverage (F&B) models in lounges faced as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.

The solution meant a number of lounges were able to protect the provision of F&B for guests, whilst ensuring all Members and lounge staff could stay safe via a contactless ordering process. To date, over 143,000 orders have been placed via the app and in November, following this incredible response, Priority Pass announced it was expanding its Ready 2 Order footprint from 16 lounges to 46, with a view to being up and running throughout 2022.

Priority Pass Members were also offered COVID-19 travel testing discounts on both PCR and Antigen tests for arrivals and departure to help make taking to the skies again more accessible.

"2021 has been a massive year for Priority Pass," said **Christopher Evans, Joint CEO, Collinson**. "Not only have we expanded the network into more locations, but we've expanded with a whole host of new experiences and services. One of our key goals this year was to bring more premium, digitally-enabled travel experiences to our Members, to help them feel a bit of luxury, and boost their confidence

while travelling during what has been a difficult time.

Our aim has always been to enhance the experience of getting from A to B and make access to these benefits more seamless. I am delighted with the incredible range and quality of the additional lounges, experiences, and partners that our customers now have access to.

"As we move into 2022, thanks to innovations like COVID-19 travel testing, the rollout of vaccines, and increased health and safety measures across the industry, we can expect confidence in travel to return. And our lounges will be ready and waiting to welcome passengers when they take to the skies again."

"It's no secret that the travel recovery in the Asia Pacific is taking longer than other parts of the world; however, it will come, and we're pleased to already be seeing progress in certain markets in our region. We remain committed to furthering our global aim of achieving the safe return to travel through a range of initiatives, including the World Health Organisation (WHO) Foundation's 'Go Give One' campaign; which sees Collinson partner together with WHO to help ensure everyone, no matter their location in the world, has access to COVID-19 vaccinations.

Our desire to support and elevate the experience of those who wish to travel today and, in the future, has also remained steadfast, reflected through a range of investments and new partnerships across the Asia Pacific in 2021. These include new lounges and experiences in key markets such as China, Australia, and Malaysia through partnerships with leading brands including THAI Airways, Sama-Sama Hotels Group, and Marhaba.

*We look forward to announcing additional enhancements and partnerships throughout the region in the coming weeks, in support of both domestic travel within Asia Pacific markets and our region's continued re-opening to international travel," added **Todd Handcock, President, Asia Pacific, Collinson.***



TAAI holds a meeting with SpiceJet CMD Ajay Singh, discusses mutual business collaboration

During the discussion, Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI shared her concerns on the continued challenges faced by the travel & tourism, and aviation sectors, which are massively hit by the pandemic.

In a virtual meeting with Ajay Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, SpiceJet on February 11, the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) raised its concerns and discussed the ambiguity around the airline's future and that of the Indian aviation sector, SpiceJet's plan for 2022, the launch of new flights and destinations and details on airline's logistics arm SpiceXpress apart from issues faced by association members.

During the discussion, **Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI** shared her concerns on the continued challenges faced by the travel & tourism, and aviation sectors, which are massively hit by the pandemic. "While many airlines globally closed their operations, it was an achievement that our airlines had weathered the storm and were performing well. I would like to even congratulate SpiceJet, for zero retrenchments and to take care of its employees during the tough times," she said.

While many airlines across the globe had to, unfortunately, shut down operations. Mrs. Mayal said it was a relief that no such airline



collapse was witnessed in India and it was a big achievement that our airlines had weathered the storm and were performing well. While some airlines in India were forced to retrench employees during the pandemic, Mrs. Mayal noted with satisfaction and appreciated the fact that there were zero retrenchments in SpiceJet, and the Company had done its best to take care of its employees.

She discussed the challenges that the sector was facing and sought clarity on the future plans of SpiceJet, its focus on commercial passenger operations and its fast-growing logistics business, refunds, credits of TDS, and incentives to members, if any, to members due to cancellations, and also a plan to further strengthen the relations between SpiceJet and TAAI and make it mutually beneficial. She also asked for inputs on the relevance of IATA for the Indian market as she had already had a meeting with the earlier Minister of Civil Aviation.

Responding & thanking Mrs. Mayal & TAAI for initiating this meeting, Mr. Singh very candidly explained the challenges faced by Indian airlines & addressed all queries. Ms. Shilpa Bhatia clarified that there were no pending refunds to any agent.

Mr. Singh informed that under SpiceJet as the parent entity a new company has been incorporated in the name of SpiceXpress which will exclusively focus on Cargo. He went on to invite the TAAI members to come forward and leverage the opportunity by venturing into Cargo business bookings, for which mutually agreed commercial arrangements can be worked out.

Mr. Singh said the pandemic had disrupted Indian aviation, tourism, and travel sectors in ways no one could have anticipated. But challenges like this bring the best out of an airline like SpiceJet. SpiceJet has always looked for opportunities in the face of adversity, he said. SpiceJet built SpiceXpress during the pandemic and has grown that business from \$30-40 million a year to a \$350 million a year business.

Mr. Singh further clarified that with aviation coming back on track, especially the domestic operations, a window of opportunity is open to both airlines and travel agents to work in tandem and reap the attached benefits, which could be a stepping stone to revive fast. Had it not been for the recent Omicron scare, the recovery of the aviation sector and restoration of regular air travel would have started much earlier, Mr. Singh said & hoped that this was a temporary setback.

He emphasized the need for having a domestic entity like IATA in place to have a more robust in-house management of issues and challenges. He suggested that Indian aviation and travel trade have their own issues and the way of handling them, and therefore having in place a domestic arrangement like such would be much helpful in dealing with the same, which was seconded by all present.

Mr. Paras Lakhia, Chairman, Airline Council discussed various issues concerning agents, operational issues, changes in flight schedules, etc.

TAAI representatives, Mr. Shreeram Patel, Hon. Treasurer; Mr. Sameer Karnani, Chairman – Western Region; Mr. Amish Desai, Chairman (Karnataka Chapter), and Dr. Himanshu Talwar, Executive Director all reemphasized the above issues, which were duly acknowledged by Mr. Singh with an assurance of personally looking into the same and get it addressed on priority.

Mr. Singh reemphasized the importance of travel agents & reiterated that SpiceJet would be happy to collaborate in revenue sharing of all ancillary products & also help to build a healthier & technology-driven environment.

Mr. Singh said the government realizes the importance of the aviation sector and has taken many initiatives in the last five years to help the sector but much more needs to be done & it can be achieved by working together.

In India, aviation fuel is taxed at the highest level in the world, airport charges are extremely high and there are all forms of other taxes and duties

and regulatory complications which make us uncompetitive. These need to be resolved because India has this phenomenal potential of being an incredible aviation space given its geographic location, given the demand and the population that we have, he said.

He informed that at a post-budget interaction, on behalf of the civil aviation, travel, tourism, and hospitality sectors, he had raised with the Hon'ble Finance Minister, Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman the difficulties being faced by these sectors because of Covid. He had requested the Hon'ble FM to consider granting Infrastructure Status to these sectors to facilitate lending by banks and financial institutions. He has also requested the Hon'ble FM's support for the inclusion of Aviation Turbine Fuel under GST.

Mr. Singh informed, the Hon. FM has promised to consider granting infrastructure/ industry status to help the sectors of aviation, travel, tourism, and hospitality. She has also assured that she will take up the issue of inclusion of Aviation Turbine Fuel under GST at the next meeting of the GST Council.

Mr. Singh updated that SpiceJet had successfully reintroduced Boeing 737 MAX aircraft into operations and 11 of its 737 Max were already operational. The return of the MAX will help SpiceJet add new routes and destinations and improve operational efficiency.

Mr. Singh said he believed that the worst is behind us and the road ahead is full of opportunities and a bright future awaits our airlines, travel, and tourism sectors.

Mrs. Mayal also applauded SpiceJet for having operated hundreds of charter flights in the last two years at a time when scheduled international flights had been suspended and creating business opportunities for agents as well as helping hundreds of thousands of people to travel to and from India.

Appreciation was shared for Chief Commercial Officer, Ms. Shilpa Bhatia for immediately resolving issues for the trade and our membership.

South African Tourism launches 'More & More' campaign



South African Tourism has launched its 'More & More' campaign. Localised for Indian audiences, this campaign aims to highlight the variety and diversity of experiences that South Africa has to offer, ranging from over 3,000 adventure activities to exciting culinary experiences and more, across its 9 provinces.

The campaign – that will be live until March 31, 2022 – is slated to have multiple roll-out legs to it, starting with OOH advertising in Mumbai and Delhi. This will be complimented by digital activations across Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, as well as on-ground physical consumer and corporate activations in Mumbai and Delhi.

The campaign is crafted to speak to every type of traveller including millennials, families, solo explorers, active lifestyle seekers and couples. More & More builds on the emotion and spirit of adventure, which is a sentiment unique to every individual. For some, adventure may mean jumping off the highest commercial bungee in the world at Bloukrans Bridge or going shark-cage diving in KwaZulu-Natal, whereas for another it could be



the thrill of scenic road trip across the stunning Garden Route or a night of stargazing in beautiful Knysna. To still some, it could be about discovering the origin of humans by exploring the Cradle of Mankind, interacting with indigenous tribes like the Zulus and learning about their culture or retracing Nelson Mandela's life journey.

Timed with the easing of international travel restrictions in India, the More & More campaign is expected

to increase summer outbound traffic to South Africa and contribute to the recovery of the tourism sectors in both countries. South Africa, which remains open to Indian travellers, is also processing tourist visas on priority to support these travel recovery efforts.

Neliswa Nkani, Hub Head – Middle East, India and South-East Asia, South African Tourism, stated, "Having a constant finger on the pulse of Indian travellers has made us sure of one thing – when on vacation, they want to experience it all! They could be wine connoisseurs one day, and history buffs the next. South Africa is a perfect match since we offer the best of the world in one place. From shark-cage diving and glamping to serene wellness retreats, we want Indian thrill-seekers to keep coming back for More & More."

Prior to the pandemic, India was the 8th largest international market for South African Tourism. India remains a core market for South African Tourism globally, and holds much promise in the coming years, especially given that Indian travellers are the international largest consumers of adventure in South Africa.

"As we re-initiate marketing efforts, we look forward to working more closely with our partners in India and South Africa, towards sustained growth and collaborative recovery," she continued.

The More & More campaign will be supplemented by robust travel trade engagement in the coming months, starting with South African Tourism's first physical annual Roadshow post pandemic in March 2022. The tourism board will also participate in SATTE 2022 this year, as part of these recovery efforts.

At present, several stop-over flights fly from India to South Africa, including Emirates, Qatar Airways, Ethiopian Airlines and Kenya Airways. Travellers from India to South Africa will be required to produce a negative PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test, not older than 72 hours from the time of departure from the country of origin to South Africa.

TAAI 66th Convention in Sri Lanka

Signs Tripartite agreement with SLTPB and SLAITO

On the invitation from the Sri Lankan Tourism Promotion Board (SLTPB) and the Sri Lankan Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO), TAI shall be holding its 66th Convention in Sri Lanka from 19th – 22nd April 2022. A tripartite agreement was signed on 23rd February 2022 between the parties in Colombo.

TAAI will be organizing its 66th Convention in Sri Lanka in April 2022. Sri Lankan counterparts shall be extending full support in terms of accommodation, logistics, and all arrangements to welcome around 400-500 delegates from India's oldest and nodal Travel & Tourism Association, stated **Mrs. Jyoti Mayal, President of TAAI**.

This convention shall not only strengthen bilateral tourism ties between the two countries but, will act as a catalyst in reviving the travel industry for both countries post the pandemic, she added. We shall create opportunities to sell products of Sri Lanka as a tourism destination but also shall be promoting Incredible India to local Sri Lankan stakeholder partners.

Jay Bhatia, Vice President stated that TAAI Conventions (Indian Travel Congress) are the most eagerly awaited events of the Travel & Tourism

industry not only in India but in the overseas markets as well. The visibility this annual event of TAAI brings to the global tourism stakeholders is fantastic. Generally, 500 to 1000 TAAI delegates are offered an excellent opportunity to network; attended b2b interactions, promote or buy, and more importantly take home some great learnings from the knowledge sessions and updated information from the destination. We are excited and are looking forward to a great opportunity after nearly 2 decades to come back to Sri Lanka for our Congress.

TAAI has a large membership who is actively involved in several industry verticals, and thus its focus is to promote these effectively and connect members with opportunities for all stakeholders i.e., Airline Ticketing, Outbound Tourism, MICE & Specialty Events, Adventure sports, Rail Journeys, and Self-drives, Cruises, Destination Promotion, Wellness, and Weddings, etc. said **Bettaiah Lokesh, Hon. Secretary-General**. TAAI does these conventions for Facilitation of Bilateral Tourism, Interactions with Dignitaries i.e., Diplomatic Missions, Governments, High Commissioners, Ambassadors, etc. and Networking Events / Knowledge Sessions / Round



Tables added Shreeram Patel, Hon Treasurer.

The 66th Convention shall be historic, creating greater opportunities and enhancing travel and tourism from and to India, to create opportunities post the crisis of the pandemic.

Present on the occasion from SLTPB and SLAITO to sign the MoU was Managing Director of SLTPB Ms. KPP Siriwardana, Mr. DP Daluwatte, Director Events, President of SLAITO Mr. Thilak Weerasinghe, IPP Mr. Maheen Kariyawasan, along with their core teams and committee members and the 4 National Office Bearers of TAAI.

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Jazeera Airways returns to profitability in record time in 2021 with KD7.1 million

Jazeera Airways returned to profitability for the year 2021, a period which continued to be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions on travel, reporting a net profit of KD7.1 million for the year, up 126.8% from the previous year. The earnings were supported by an increase of 48.2% in the number of passengers flown, which reached 1.0 million, while load factors increased by 3.9% to 66.8% and yield increased by 28.6% to KD73.9.

Operating revenue for 2021 stood at KD80.4 million, up 94.3%, and operating profit increased by 152.2% to KD10.8 million.

The airline returned to profitability in record time during the third quarter of the year following a second year

- Closes deal to purchase 28 new aircraft to serve expansion plans
- Reports strong results despite a turbulent operating environment during the year

impacted by restrictions and limitations in capacity imposed on travel at Kuwait International Airport, and globally, in response to the continued spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Jazeera maintained a positive performance in the last quarter (Q4)

of the year with a net profit of KD7.0 million, a 164.6% increase from the same quarter of 2020. Operating revenue increased by 285.5% to KD33.1 million while operating profit increased by 204.3% to KD9.3 million. The number of passengers in Q4 increased by 476.6% to 520.2 thousand passengers, while the load factor increased by 35.2% to 74.2%, and the average utilization of aircraft increased by 220.4% to 9.2 hours.

Commenting on the results, **Jazeera Airways Chairman, Marwan Boodai** said: “Jazeera’s performance in 2021 is proof that its flexible and resilient business model continues to safeguard customers, employees, and shareholders in times of crises. Financially, our airline took the right

steps to control costs and limit cash burn, while operationally we focused on new destinations that satisfied an appetite to travel to destinations marked “Covid-safe” as well as catering to a high and latent demand for connecting flights between the Middle East, Asia, and Europe.”

Financial and Operational Highlights 2021 Highlights:

- Operating revenue: KD80.4 million, up 94.3%
- Operating profit: KD10.8 million, up 152.2%
- Net profit: KD7.1 million, up 126.8%
- Passengers: 1.0 million, up 48.2%
- Load factor: 66.8%, up 3.9%
- Average utilization: 5.9 hours, up 41.1%

Q4 2021 Highlights:

- Operating revenue: KD33.1 million, up 285.5%
- Operating profit: KD9.3 million, up 204.3%
- Net Profit: KD7.0 million, up 164.6%
- Passengers: 520.2 thousand, up 476.6%

- Load factor: 74.2%, up 35.2%
- Average utilization: 9.2 hours, up 220.4%

Operations at Kuwait International Airport remained at limited capacity during the first nine months of the year, with restrictions imposed and direct flights suspended from 35 countries.

The fast roll-out of vaccinations in Kuwait contributed to the ease of restriction in the second half of the year, with PCR tests mandated upon departure and arrival to limit the quarantine in Kuwait.

Speaking of the airline’s performance, **Jazeera Airways Chief Executive Officer, Rohit Ramachandran**, said: “The challenges that the pandemic brought about in the travel industry in 2020 also opened new opportunities for our airline: cargo operations, charter flights, and connecting routes were expanded to benefit our business. We were resourceful in adapting our business operations which enabled us to get through a very difficult period and come back strongly in 2021.”

2021 Operational Review

Jazeera launched eight new routes

in 2021, serving popular tourist and ex-pat destinations that comprised Colombo (Sri Lanka), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Yerevan (Armenia), Antalya (Turkey), and Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in addition to London Heathrow airport as the first low-cost carrier (LCC) in the Middle East to operate direct flights to the airport.

The airline also rolled out its summer schedule with favourite destinations for tourists, such as the Lebanese capital, Beirut, and other popular summer destinations including Tbilisi (Georgia), Trabzon, and Bodrum (Turkey).

Jazeera also took delivery of four Airbus A320neo aircraft during the year, bringing the fleet to 17 aircraft. Jazeera Terminal T5 saw its second quarter of profit in Q4 2021, ending the year with a net profit of KD1.1 million, compared to a net loss of KD1.4 million in 2020.

Fleet Order

Jazeera placed a new fleet order with Airbus for 20 A320neos, 8 A321neos, and 5 further options. The deal is valued at US\$3.4 billion (KD1.3 billion). The order will effectively double Jazeera’s current fleet size to 35 aircraft, supporting the airline’s expansion plans to further boost its contribution to Kuwait’s travel sector. The aircraft mix aims to give Jazeera flexibility to extend its network to medium and longer-haul destinations from Kuwait, offering passengers more choice to travel to popular destinations as much as underserved ones.

Positive Outlook for 2022 and Beyond

Boodai concluded: “We are confident that restrictions on the travel sector will only continue to ease, and traffic will return to pre-Covid-19 levels. Countries around the world have started to fully open their borders. As for Jazeera, we are looking forward to moving forward with our expansion plans, growing our network and fleet as well as our business capabilities.”



Vistara Turns Seven, Crosses Major Milestones of 50 Aircraft Strong fleet and 30 million passengers



in us on every flight, every day. Vistara entered the aviation market at a time when many in India believed that there was no place for another full-service airline, and yet, in a remarkably short span of time, it became 'India's best airline'.

Vistara, India's finest full-service carrier and a joint venture of Tata group and Singapore Airlines, celebrated its seventh anniversary on 09 January 2022 and announced key milestones of having flown 30 million passengers since inception and 50 aircraft-strong fleets.

Even as Vistara navigated the aviation industry's worst-ever crisis, COVID-19, it continued to grow in a measured way towards its vision and long-term plans. The airline registered a growth of 3.3 percentage points in market share, since July 2020, having grown from 4.2% (in July 2020) to 7.5% (in November 2021). Vistara expanded its fleet by over 25% since April 2020, to have 51 aircraft in its fleet as of date, and has significantly grown its global network to include seven new destinations across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. The airline also ensured that all 4000+ jobs at Vistara remained protected from the impact of the pandemic.

Vinod Kannan, Vistara's Chief Executive Officer, said: "Our achievements are a testament to the trust that millions of passengers place

This success is a direct result of the incredible passion and dedication of our colleagues in everything they do, regardless of the circumstances. All of us at Vistara are truly grateful to our customers, partners, and shareholders who have supported this dream of building a world-class airline that India can be proud of."

Over the last two years, the airline has also introduced multiple products and service enhancements, including but not limited to on-board WiFi connectivity, Gate-to-Gate service, fully-flat beds in Airbus A321neo aircraft, and Boeing Dreamliner 787, providing a premium and world-class flying experience to travellers.

Demonstrating that the safety of all passengers and staff is at the heart of Vistara, the airline took several steps, altered many processes, and intensified sanitization efforts to maintain the highest safety & hygiene standards on all its flights. Vistara also took several initiatives to get its staff inoculated against COVID-19 and has managed to get 100% of its crew and more than 95% of its total staff

to take both shots of the vaccines. It is also the first Indian airline to have operated flights with fully vaccinated cabin crew and pilots. Vistara also introduced two award-winning campaigns, #FlyingFeelsSafeAgain and #FlyerCODE, that were devised to generate awareness and influence positive behavioral changes in travellers, ensuring comfortable and safer air travel experience.

Vistara is India's highest-rated airline on Skytrax and Tripadvisor and has also been the winner of several 'Best Airline' awards besides being lauded for cabin cleanliness and safety standards. Below is a list of key awards won by Vistara since April 2020 till date.

- **Best Airline in India & Southern Asia** by World Airline Awards by Skytrax 2021
- **Best Airline Staff in India & Southern Asia** by World Airline Awards by Skytrax 2021
- **Best Cabin Crew in India & Southern Asia** by World Airline Awards by Skytrax 2021
- **Highest rank in India for Cabin Cleanliness** by World Airline Awards by Skytrax 2021
- **Favourite Domestic Airline** by Conde Nast Traveller Readers' Travel Awards 2020 & 2021
- **Best Domestic Airline (India)** by Travel + Leisure India's Best Awards 2020 & 2021
- **Five Star Major Airlines in the World** by APEX Official Airlines Ratings 2020
- **Best Airline – India** by Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Awards 2020
- **Travellers Choice Regional Airline, Asia** by Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice® Awards 2020

Vistara Enhances customer experience; Plans to restore pre-covid levels

Vistara, India's finest full-service carrier, and a joint venture of Tata group and Singapore Airlines have been gradually resuming services that were halted temporarily due to the pandemic. The airline plans to not only restore pre-COVID standards of customer experience but to exceed them in the coming months.

On its domestic network, Vistara brought back the choice of non-vegetarian meals in Economy Class on all eligible flights, effective 01 January 2022. The airline has also resumed serving tea and coffee, including Starbucks, on select routes and will progressively restart this service on all flights with a flying time of 90 minutes and above. Vistara also re-introduced menu cards in Business Class, starting yesterday, and will increase the choice of meals for its Premium Economy and Business Class customers soon.

On international routes, Vistara has already resumed the service of hot beverages including a range of teas and freshly brewed Starbucks coffee. Effective 1 February 2022, Vistara has enhanced the choice of alcoholic beverages in all three cabin classes. On short to medium-haul routes, menu cards are back in the Business Class and the airline has already made the full bar available to all customers. Vistara will be resuming these on the long-haul routes along with increasing the meal options for customers. The



airline will also be improving its inflight entertainment (IFE) offerings across its domestic as well as international network by introducing a wider variety of engaging content which will be updated frequently.

Commenting on the same, **Mr. Deepak Rajawat, Chief Commercial Officer, Vistara**, said, "Safety of our customers and staff have been our topmost priority, and takes precedence over all other considerations. As the world inches closer to normalcy now, we are delighted to bring back some of the services that were discontinued in view of customer safety. Vistara is committed to providing a world-class flying experience, backed by the continued support of our parent companies, Tata group, and Singapore Airlines. While we are restoring our services progressively and systematically, we will also be introducing new enhancements at



various customer touchpoints."

Since the start of the pandemic, Vistara had taken several measures including altering several processes, truncating many inflight services, intensifying sanitization efforts, etc. to maintain the highest safety and hygiene standards. The airline also, through consistent efforts, managed to get almost 100% of its staff fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Vistara is India's highest-rated airline on Skytrax and TripAdvisor, and the winner of several 'Best Airline' awards besides being lauded for cabin cleanliness and safety standards.

Kerala opens huge investment avenues in the tourism sector: Minister Mohamed Riyas



As tourism in Kerala is set to bounce back from the covid-induced crisis, the state offers high investment opportunities in the travel and hospitality sector with the government unveiling several ambitious projects to tap its potential as an extended tourist haven, **Tourism Minister Shri PA Mohamed Riyas** said.

Addressing the press in Dubai on the sidelines of the Kerala Week at Expo 2020, Shri Riyas said the state is keen to partner with UAE-based investors and Non-Resident Keralites (NRKs) in scripting a new story of growth and development in key sectors, especially tourism.

Major initiatives promising attractive investment opportunities are 'Exploring the Unexplored' destinations, opening up the untapped Malabar region, Caravan Tourism, safe and regulated

adventure tourism, experiential tourism, workcations, and active holidays, the Minister said.

While the recently launched Caravan Tourism is sure to provide a riveting experience to visitors, houseboats will continue to be one of the top holiday experiences in Kerala. Caravanning will help Kerala tourism to expand beyond established destinations, he said.

Shri Riyas, who is leading a delegation from Kerala to Expo 2020 Dubai to showcase the state's strengths, said the new projects have opened up investment possibilities in MICE facilities, resorts and hotels, caravans, and caravan parks, farm stays, adventure holidays, and travel and tour operations. The delegation includes **Dr. Venu V, Additional Chief Secretary (Tourism), and Shri. VR Krishna Teja, Director, Tourism.**

Kerala has an investor-friendly

institutional mechanism to provide quick approvals and mandatory clearances for investment proposals, the Minister said.

When the pandemic fades away, Ayurveda/health and wellness holidays will become important, for which the state is well-positioned to attract clients from the Middle East for wellness and rejuvenation holidays.

A must-visit destination for nature enthusiasts, Kerala is well-positioned to attract young travelers with soft adventure activities in the hills and forests of Western Ghats. Kerala's forests cover nearly 30% of the total land area and there are 15 wildlife sanctuaries, 2 tiger reserves, 5 national parks, and 60 plus eco-tourism destinations.

On the caravan tourism initiative, Shri Riyas said the aim of the project is to popularise this mode of holidaying

among common people.

"About 297 potential investors have evinced interest in caravans and have registered for availing subsidy so far under the project. The construction of caravan parks is underway. The response to the registration process for setting up caravan parks has been overwhelming. So far, we have received as many as 78 registrations for caravan parks," he said.

Shri Riyas also urged the Keralites in the UAE to be the brand ambassadors of the tourism projects of the state.

Kerala's tourism development is centered around the idea of Responsible Tourism with community participation. Sustainable growth is the right approach to development, he said.

Emphasizing the strong government-to-government relations with UAE and people-to-people social

and cultural ties, Mr. Riyas said he is confident that tourism will be a key driver in this relationship with more and more Keralites traveling to UAE, and vice-versa, in the future.

The reception accorded to the **Chief Minister Shri Pinarayi Vijayan** by the Ruler of Dubai, **His Highness Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum**, has further strengthened the ties, he said.

Noting that the last few years have been challenging for Kerala, Mr. Riyas said the offer of help from the ruler of UAE and NRKs to carry out relief, rehabilitation, and revival measures has been great.

"We have been successful in weathering these crises under the able and visionary leadership of the Honourable Chief Minister, Sri Pinarayi Vijayan. There is growing

optimism among the industry and the people that the worst is behind us," he added.

Dr. Venu said Kerala provides world-class services to visitors to ensure them a different experience. *"Now we have a host of new and exciting projects envisaged by the Tourism Minister, who represents the vibrant youth in the tourism sector. UAE is one of our important markets and we hope an exponential growth in the business in the next four to five years," he added.*

Shri Krishna Teja, who made a presentation on Kerala Tourism, said the leadership in Kerala has helped overcome the impact of the pandemic that hit the industry badly. The swift rollout of the total vaccination drive in tourism destinations quite early on was one of the important measures initiated by the Government.

Kerala launches 'Honeymoon Holidays' campaign

Love songs to woo honeymooners to God's Own Country

Promoting Kerala as a safe and glamorous honeymoon destination, Kerala Tourism has launched a high-octane campaign by stapling it with lyrical micro-video songs to lure honeymooners from across the world to the state.

As part of the campaign, the Department of Tourism has produced a music album titled 'Love is in the air', featuring eight micro love songs with each song having a duration under one minute.

KT has released the songs on its social media pages to promote Kerala as a prime and perfect honeymoon destination.

Sung by the popular folk/indie band When Chai Met Toast, the micro love songs videos have already got around one lakh views collectively. Besides, the audio songs reached more than 75 lakh people across the country through multiple music platforms like Spotify, Gaana, Hungama, JioSaavan and Wynk, etc.

Pitching the campaign on Valentine's Day, KT announced a contest for its social media followers to create reels using the lyrical video micro love songs released on KT's social media pages. The best reels will win a free trip across Kerala.

The campaign, 'Honeymoon Holidays', was originally unveiled after the second wave of Covid-19 and the subsequent travel relaxations. It was temporarily shelved after the pandemic's third wave started.



Istanbul Airport Named Europe's Busiest Airport In 2021 With Almost 37 Million Passengers

The annual report of Airports Council International (ACI) Europe suggests that Istanbul Airport is named the busiest airport in Europe in the year 2021, with almost 37 million passengers. As per the reports of Sputnik, Istanbul airport welcomed 36,988,563 passengers in 2021, followed by Moscow's Sheremetyevo International Airport with 30,943,456 passengers, Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport with 26,201,698 passengers, and Amsterdam-Schiphol and Moscow-Domodedovo making in the top five.

While passenger volume at European airports climbed by 37% in 2021 compared to 2020, it was still 59% below pre-pandemic levels in 2019. The

The annual report of Airports Council International (ACI) Europe suggests that Istanbul Airport is named the busiest airport in Europe in the year 2021.

statistics revealed that in 2021, the European travel sector lost 1.4 billion passengers compared to pre-pandemic levels. Last year, despite the pandemic limitations, Istanbul Airport ranked top among European airports by passenger volume in 2020, with more than 20 million passengers.

In 2019, Istanbul Airport took over as the new hub for Turkish Airlines (THY), replacing the old Atatürk Airport. Istanbul's other airports, Sabiha Gökçen, and Antalya Airport of the Mediterranean

resort city Antalya ranked seventh and ninth, according to Daily Sabah.

Expectations for a robust comeback in 2021

ACI Europe Director General Olivier Jankovec stated that following the loss of 1.72 billion passengers in 2020, they all had great expectations for a robust comeback in 2021, according to Daily Sabah. However, he further said that compared to 2019, Europe's airports lost additional 1.4 billion passengers last year which suggests



they are still under a lot of pressure, and the industry's financial system is fragile.

ACI Europe stated that the delta variant of the coronavirus essentially shut down passenger traffic in the first half of 2021. The introduction of the vaccines, along with the EU Digital COVID Certificates and the reopening of the transatlantic market in November, resulted in passenger traffic improving in the second half of the year, which is still 42.4% lower than in 2019 but the Omicron variant again disrupted the aviation industry in December.

Omicron's influence is still on

Olivier Jankovec also said that for the time being, Omicron's influence is still on, as airlines continue to reduce flights and capacity to reduce the risk of transmission, according to Daily Sabah.

He further stated that this indicates that traffic will be poor in the first quarter of 2022, but should improve as Spring approaches.

ACI Europe also said that smaller regional airports have been recovering at a faster pace since last summer compared to larger airports, reflecting that fact that "beyond the transatlantic market, many intercontinental markets remain de facto closed due to severe travel restrictions and that the recovery remains largely driven by leisure and 'Visiting Friends and Relatives' travel on intra-European and domestic markets".

A handful of "insular regional airports and others attracting low-cost/leisure carriers" managed to increase traffic in December 2021 compared to the same period in 2019 – namely Ajaccio airport in Corsica which achieved an increase in traffic of 46.4

percent, Hammerfest airport in Norway (up 8.9 percent), and Calvi airport in Corsica (up 8 percent).

Olivier Jankovec also said:

"Uncertainties as to the evolution of the pandemic remain significant and limit visibility beyond a few months, at best. "For now, the impact of Omicron is still very much on us as airlines keep pulling out flights and capacity in response to weakened demand in what is already traditionally a low season. "This means the first quarter will be disappointing, but that we should hopefully see traffic take a better turn as Spring approaches. "Whether this happens earlier depends on the pace at which travel restrictions can be lifted, now that Omicron is prevalent. A number of countries are moving in that direction, but much more needs to be done."

INDIA / AVIATION

Ministry of Tourism signs MoU with Alliance Air to boost tourism in India

The Union Ministry of Tourism (MoT) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Alliance Air Aviation Limited (AAAL) on Thursday to boost tourism throughout the country.

The ministry endeavours to position India as a preferred destination in the tourism-generating markets, whereas AAAL, with its vast domestic network, plays a vital role in the promotion of tourism in the country, according to an official statement.

"The MoU was signed with a view to achieving the common purpose of joint domestic promotion and considering the need to synergize the activities of MoT and AAAL in the tourism markets," it added.

Additional Director General in the ministry Rupinder Brar and Vineet Sood, the chief executive officer of AAAL, signed the MoU.

Alliance Air is the frontrunner in promoting the government's Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS), which is being promoted under the Prime Minister's UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme.

The objectives of the MoU are to meet an integrated marketing and promotional strategy and a synergized campaign in association with AAAL.

The specific elements of promotional efforts undertaken include advertising in the print and electronic media, participation in fairs and exhibitions, organizing seminars, workshops, roadshows, and "India evenings", the printing of brochures and collaterals, brochure support, and joint advertising, the ministry said.



10 Relaxing *in* Nordik Spas Quebec, Canada

Nordic, or Nordik spas in Quebecois French, are a circuit of hot and cold baths, saunas, and steam rooms that you move through in order to reap health and wellness benefits. Generally, you repeat the cycle 2 to 3 times in a row to get the full benefits, and it makes for a

lovely afternoon or evening, whether you're solo, with girlfriends, or on a romantic date with your partner. While these spas can be found all around the world, Quebec Canada has become extremely well known for them. The snow-capped mountains and chilly winters are the perfect time to visit and





reenergize, though you can go year-round.

The cycle works like this: You begin by working up a sweat in a steam room or sauna to simulate cardiac function and promote blood circulation. You then plunge your body into a cold temperature; whether it is a frigid river or pool, chilly waterfall, rain shower, or even the snow. The cold closes the pores, reduces inflammation, and boosts the immune system by stimulating circulation. The final step of the cycle is to allow your body to relax for 15 to 20 minutes during which time the body regulates itself back to a normal temperature. When visiting a nordic spa, you should bring your bathing suit and an empty non-glass water bottle. Check with the spa ahead of time to see whether they provide robes and sandals. If they don't, you should also pack flip-flops and an absorbent robe.

Many Nordik spas also offer a range of other treatments in addition to the baths, from massage to facials – just be sure to check the service menu at a given place. From modern and polished luxury havens to nature-focused eco-spas, discover one of these ten relaxing Nordic spas in Quebec.

Spa Ofuro

The Japanese wooden architecture and flowing river set the stage for complete relaxation here at Spa Ofuro;





located in Morion-Heights in the heart of the Laurentians. Overlooking the mountains, this Nordic spa includes three dry saunas, a eucalyptus steam bath, four hot whirlpool baths, two cold baths, and a cold river to plunge into. With a total of three indoor relaxation rooms, there's plenty of space for everyone here. The focus at this Nordic spa is relaxation and taking care of one's self, and with only the sounds of nature around; you will see why many visitors continue to return.

If you want multiple days of soaking in these baths, stay in one of their beautiful guest rooms, each of which is equipped with a queen-size bed, fireplace, and full access to all the amenities. A bistro on-site provides a daily lineup of soups and sandwiches that can be enjoyed indoors or out. The landscape is equally stunning in all seasons whether the waterfall is clear and babbling or fresh snow is covering the mountain tops.

Siberia Station Spa

Just minutes outside of Quebec City, visitors will feel like they have stepped into a different world when they walk through the doors of Siberia Station Spa. In the heart of a beautiful lush forest, multiple saunas, hot pools, and relaxing rooms await you. An infrared sauna helps to alleviate stress, fatigue,



and chronic pain while promoting healthier skin while the Finnish sauna works on blood circulation and removing toxins from the body. Six different hot pools scattered across the property allow for your muscles and mind to unwind and relax.

Hop into the beautiful Yellow River that borders the property or one of the cold plunge pools with their waterfalls to shock (erm, we meant refresh) you! Head to one of the heated relaxation areas including a yurt complete with fireplace or outdoor heated terrace. This nordic spa offers a morning just for families every Sunday from 9:00 AM until noon, as kids are not normally permitted inside. Deep relaxation is a guarantee at this wonderful spa located just steps from downtown Quebec City.

La Source

One of the most picturesque Nordic spas on our list is La Source Bains Nordique, tucked up high in the dense forest on a hillside in the beautiful Lanaudiere region. As you climb the long stairway to the entrance of this spa, the owners encourage you to leave your worries and stresses at the bottom. A gateway to relaxation awaits visitors as they enter the reception area with its roaring fireplace, bistro loaded with healthy meals and smoothies,

and beautiful views out the large glass windows.

A eucalyptus steam bath and dry sauna will warm you up quickly before you plunge into the cold baths with chilly waterfalls, snow, or even into a hole dug in the frozen river (in the wintertime). Outdoor hot tubs built into the cliffside provide massaging jets and the relaxation areas range from outdoor fireplaces, indoor solariums, terraces, and hammocks. A special darkroom is available in which guests have the chance to relax on zero gravity chairs in complete darkness. Normally the spa is all about silence and reflection, however, La Source often runs fun nighttime activities where silence is not required and people come out to have some more rowdy fun.

Spa des Chutes de Bolton

Harmony between nature, body, and spirit is the goal of Spa des Chutes de Bolton which is located at the base of the falls of the Missisquoi River in the Eastern Townships. Two dry saunas overlooking the falls along with outdoor hot tubs and a eucalyptus steam bath set the stage for the “hot” part of your nordic experience. This spa is also the only one of its kind in North America to offer the Savusavu; an old-style smoke sauna that works like a wood sauna, without the fireplace. Smoke fills the

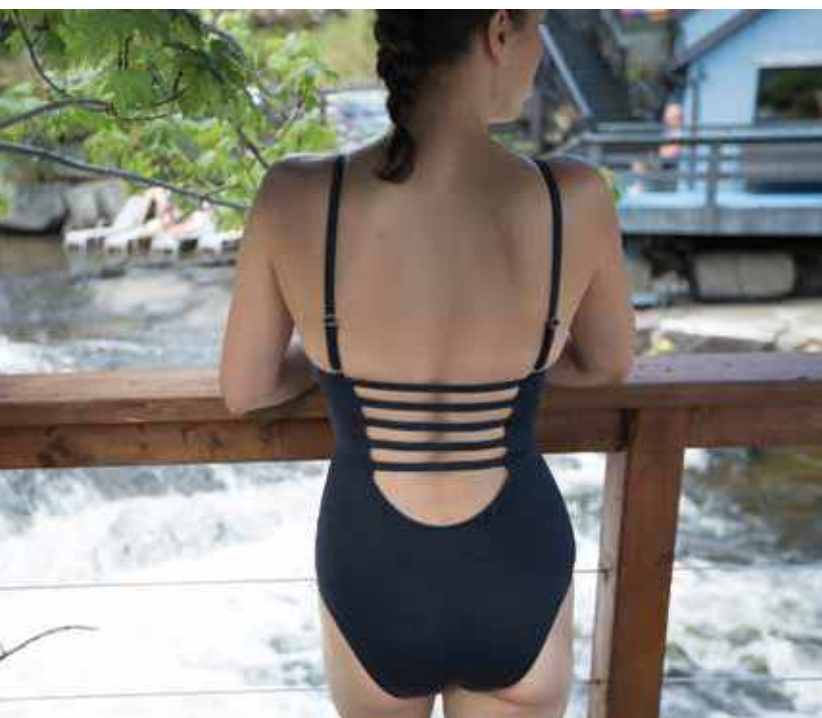
air creating a gentle heat that envelops the body and smells great.

The cold part of this spa is the natural river that crashes down and invigorates the body, leaving you fully alert and refreshed. The yurt, with its crackling wood stove, provides rest for those visiting in the winter while the sunny terrace is open in the summertime. If you're hoping for a deal or would prefer to skip the crowds, opt to visit on a weekday and after 5 pm to experience this breathtaking Nordic spa in the heart of nature.

Bota Bota, Spa-sur-l'eau

Step out of the ordinary with this next Nordic spa on our list. It's actually a former ferry that has been transformed into an incredible spa and is now moored at Old Ports Quay. It promotes the healing benefits of the spa alongside being lulled by the natural movement of the beautiful St-Lawrence River. It is hard to beat the views over the city of Montreal whether you are outside or enjoying them through one of 678 rounded boat windows.

The five decks house the various spa installations including two saunas, a eucalyptus steam bath, outdoor hot whirlpool baths, and of course, cold showers and baths to complete the cycle. There's also a restaurant,



plenty of relaxation areas, gardens and terraces on board. A variety of treatment options exist at the full spa including massages, manicures, pedicures, yoga, and Pilates, making this a must if you're in the area and needing a break.

Nordik Spa-Nature

Located only 10 minutes outside of Ottawa at the entrance of Gatineau Park sits the largest spa in North America. This Nordic spa boasts seven outdoor baths, eight saunas, and an infinity pool with views of the city. The outdoor baths range in temperature from 10 to 39 degrees Celsius, varying depending on weather and season. In addition to the typical Finnish sauna (common of all Nordic spas), this one offers many more alternatives including the Barik Sauna – a uniquely shaped tubular dry sauna that creates a special climate. Other saunas include an aromatic sauna that is kept at a lower temperature letting guests stay in longer (talking is permitted here too!); a Maa Sauna which is dug halfway into the ground and offers intense heat; and an orange steam sauna which is similar to the eucalyptus sauna with a different scent. Sign up for a package such as a

girl's getaway and foodie Wednesdays if you're looking for the full experience for one price.

Le Nordique Spa Mont Ste-Anne

The most family-friendly Nordic spa on our list is nestled on the edge of a private lake, just a five-minute drive from Mont Ste-Anne. Children are welcomed to this spa every Friday through Sunday morning from 10 AM to 1 PM, as well as holidays, which makes this the perfect place for the whole family to relax. The hot Finnish sauna and Turkish steam bath provide ultimate relaxation. Cooling off here is a breeze with opportunities to swim in the private lake, stand under the rain shower, plunge into the cold bath or simply go for a roll in the snow (a favorite of the kids).

Experience the unique Aufguss Sauna – an experience of German origin that is designed to increase sweating. Every Sunday afternoon the sauna master throws water onto the lava stones creating a cloud of steam that increases humidity, simultaneously waving a towel to increase air movement. Oils added to the water simulate the limbic system and perfume the air while frozen fruit

is distributed to participants to end the experience. This natural environment is packed full of outdoor hot tubs, saunas, and relaxation rooms – all in a beautiful setting appropriate for those of all ages.

Le Scandinave Mont Tremblant

Immerse yourself in the beautiful natural setting at Le Scandinave for quiet rest and contemplation, located at the edge of the Diable River. Heat up in the Finnish sauna, eucalyptus steam bath, thermal waterfall, or choice of hot baths. Let your pores open and toxins melt away before you head to the cold baths, waterfalls, showers, or year-round Diable River. Silence is key at this Nordic spa and encourages visitors to find inner stillness which leads to complete relaxation.

There are enough relaxation areas to keep anyone happy. Sit by the outdoor fireplace, lounge in the hammocks, or relax in solariums for 20 minutes – after all, resting after a full cycle is recommended. This Nordic spa invited visitors year-round from 10 AM to 9 PM, rain, sun, or snow. For an extra special experience, treat yourself to one of the hot stone or deep tissue massages.

Polar Bear's Club

Located on the banks of the Rivière à Simon, the Polar Bear's Club offers a breathtaking setting for the true Nordic spa experience. Two hot dry saunas, one steam bath, and five therapeutic thermal pools warm visitors up in all seasons. The cold factor comes by way of a waterfall, two cold baths, and three different access points to the river. Of course, in the wintertime, there is plenty of snow to frolic around in as well. We suggest getting with the theme of this spa and taking a dip in the cold river!

If you just can't get enough why not stay the night? Two separate hotels are available to visitors. Lofts with rustic designs, fireplaces, and a cozy bed with unlimited access to the pools are some of the best options. For larger groups, rent the two-bedroom cottage complete with two full bathrooms, a kitchen, living room, dining room, and fireplace. An updated bistro offers exceptional cuisine on-site with a roaring fireplace and views of the river. Whether you spend a few hours here after the ski hill or make this a romantic weekend getaway, Polar Bear's Club doesn't disappoint.

Spa Natur'Eau

Located in the beautiful Lanaudiere region, this cozy, calm, and serene Nordic spa will have you relaxed and rejuvenated in no time. The small staff are known for their hospitality and are always ready to ensure visitors have a great experience. Every Sunday this spa opens to families from 9:30 AM to 1:00 PM so the whole clan can relax together. The on-site restaurant also offers fresh and healthy meals with a view if you're needing a bite to eat.

The dry Finnish sauna or high-temperature hammam (Turkish bath) is the perfect place to start your heat cycle. From there, plunge into the cold pool with a waterfall to get the heart pumping. Then head to the yurt or aromatherapy room to relax. Three outdoor hot tubs that are cut into the rock face provide visitors with the chance to stay warm and relax outside in the wintertime. This Nordic spa offers a variety of different activities throughout the year including days where you can whisper instead of remaining silent when kids are treated to massages, lunch and the baths, and a full moon evening when mediums and clairvoyants join.





Boutique Wineries to Visit in Napa

The Napa Valley has been known for its beautiful wineries straight out of a storybook since the 1960s. While there are many popular tourist wineries in the area, there are also a few hidden gems that are more known for their intimate, boutique-style experiences. If you're headed to Napa soon, be sure to add these acclaimed boutique wineries to your itinerary.

With more than 450 wineries from top to bottom, the Napa Valley has a multitude of tasting experiences from which to choose. The valley is rife with household names in liquor stores across the country.



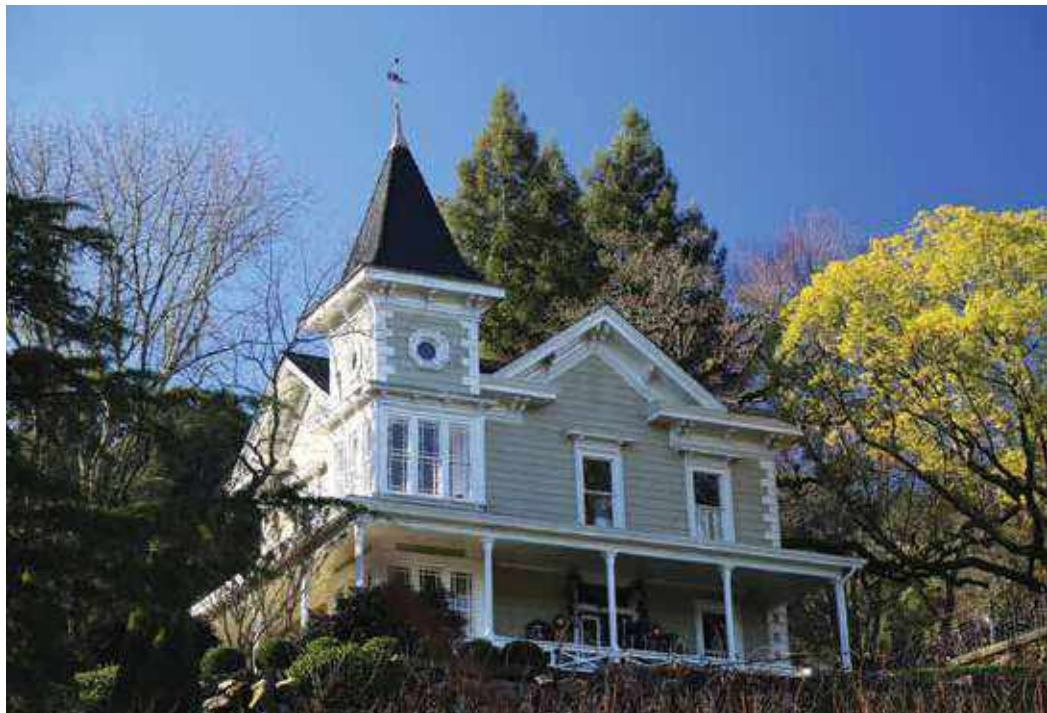
wines, it's not a surprise that St. Clement has become a must-visit stop on any tour of the Napa Valley.

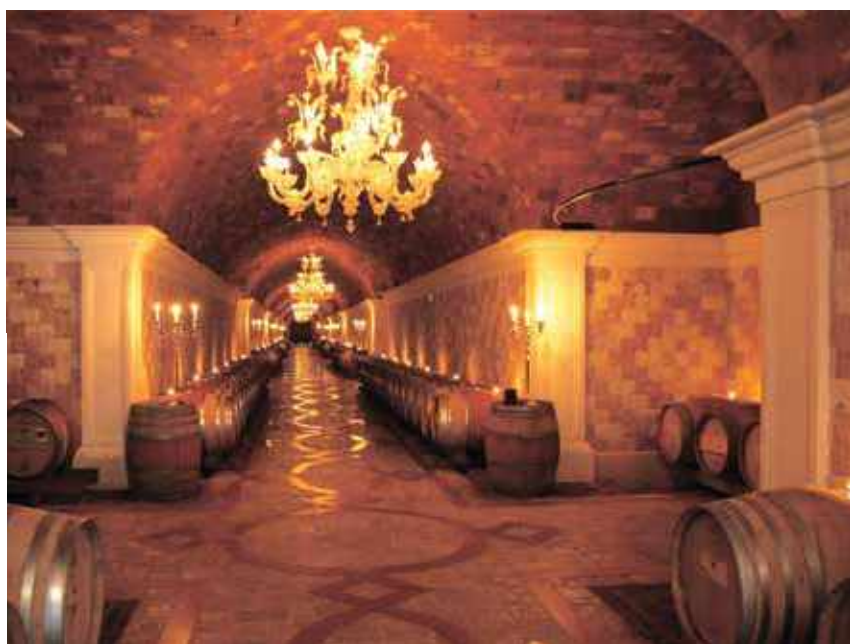
5. Del Dotto Vineyards

A small, family-run operation, Del Dotto focuses on producing premium, small-batch wines. Experimenting with both ancient and modern wine-making techniques, Del Dotto sources their grapes from family-owned vineyards scattered throughout the Napa Valley region, making for unique blends and flavorful wines that reflect the region's diversity. Renowned not only for wine, Del Dotto has also become a destination for those seeking a Napa Valley experience because of their award-winning hospitality. At both winery locations, cave tours and bar wine tastings are offered by reservation. You can also sample the Del Dotto delicacies, a food and wine pairing experience curated by the estate's executive chef. Both the food and wine pairing and the cave tour received Cellarpass Destination of the Year awards in 2015. For those particularly intrigued, the winery offers a VIP club, with additional events and special reserve wines for members.

6. St. Clement Vineyards

Despite its storied history, St. Clement has remained true to its focus as a boutique winery in the Napa Valley. The land was first used as a winery in 1878 and the current winery dates to 1976 and, since then, St. Clement has become a staple of the Napa Valley. With both its own vineyards and strong relationships with other local growers, St. Clement has focused on making vineyard-driven reds and crisp whites, without any additives or fillers that detract from the wines. The winery's signature Oropas, first vinted in 1991, has become something of a legend. Drop-in for a tasting between 11 am and 5 pm daily, or book a private tour and tasting. With a rich history and flavorful







4. Alpha Omega

One of Napa Valley's newer wineries, Alpha Omega opened its doors in 2006. Since then, the boutique operation has focused on creating balanced blends using appellations from around the valley, each reflecting the unique heritage of the region. With a Swiss winemaker and the famed Michel Rolland acting as a consulting winemaker, the vintages produced by Alpha Omega have been nothing short of world-class, even as they combine Old and New World traditions. The estate, in Rutherford, is surrounded by mountains and vineyards and boasts a number of panoramic views. The tasting room is open from 10 am until 6 pm every day, with standard wine tastings from \$30 per person and a "Red Only" tasting option as well. Private and group tastings can be booked in advance. Make a reservation for a weekday visit and pack a picnic lunch to enjoy during your visit!

3. Black Stallion Estate Winery

Located on the grounds of an old equestrian center, Black Stallion set up its winemaking operations in the remains of the indoor race track in 2007. Acquired by one of the region's family-owned winemakers in 2010, the winery has produced an array of award-winning selections, all while keeping a distinct local flavor and

family feels. A trip to the estate itself will only reinforce that sense of rustic charm, as the grounds are surrounded by century-old olive trees situated along the beautiful Silverado Trail. Once at the winery, guests can sample some of the offerings in the tasting bar or relax outside on the terrace. Private tours, tastings, and events can all be arranged, and Black Stallion plays host to a number of special events throughout the year, including luncheons, dinners, and art shows.

2. Outpost Wines

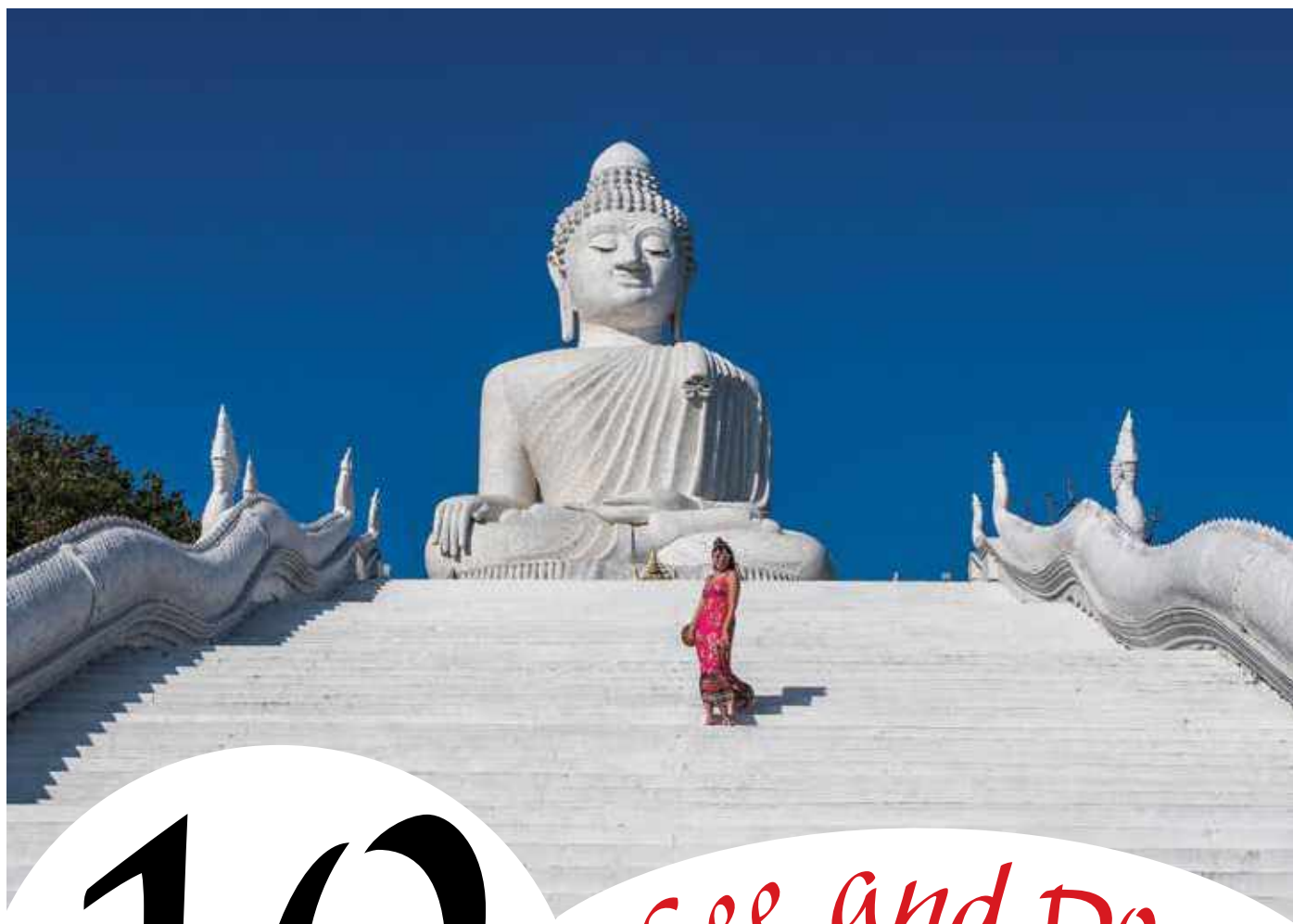
The fact that tastings are by appointment only and must be booked about a month in advance shouldn't discourage you from taking the time to visit Outpost; in fact, it should tell you something about the operation's reputation! Perched on Howell Mountain, Outpost is a 42-acre vineyard located 2,200 feet above the valley floor. Offering up a peaceful, rural setting, it's easy to see why the winery would want to keep groups small and appointments few to upkeep the intimate feel. Organically grown grapes go into every hand-crafted vintage, so you can be assured of quality and character when you taste one of Outpost's Grenache, Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, or Petite Sirah varietal bottlings. The process is also important to Outpost's

wines, with no fining or filtering involved so as to preserve the full flavor of the wine.

1. Whetstone Wine Cellars

Although Whetstone's operation is quite new, the location has been making waves in the Napa winery industry. With a focus on face-to-face communication and Southern hospitality, Whetstone seeks to make visiting and tasting an experience unlike any other in the Napa Valley. Sourcing grapes from 6 vineyards in the Napa Valley, Sonoma Coast, and Russian River Valley regions, Whetstone has produced luxury wines, with a focus on iconic Pinot Noir blends. A French-style chateau, dating from 1885, serves as the 2-acre estate's tasting room. Fully restored in 2013, the historic distillery is similar to other iconic wineries around Napa Valley, including Chateau Montelena. Wine tastings are \$30 per person and the folks at Whetstone request 24 hours advance notice. Why wait to book? Whetstone's unique experience is a must, for both first-timers and experienced Napa Valley visitors.

Reservations at Most Napa Valley wineries (especially the smaller properties) are by appointment only, so plan ahead and make reservations early for the best experience



10 Amazing Things to See and Do in Phuket Thailand

Phuket province is located in southern Thailand. It is the biggest island in Thailand and sits on the Andaman sea. The nearest province to the north is Phang-nga and the nearest provinces to the east are Phang-nga and Krabi. Phuket has a large Chinese influence, so you will

see many Chinese shrines and Chinese Restaurants around the city. A Chinese Vegetarian Festival is held there every year. While the Chinese community is quite big, there are many other ethnicities bringing all their traditions and festivals from all over the world to Phuket.

Being a big island, Phuket is surrounded by many magnificent beaches such as Rawai, Patong, Karon, Kamala, Kata Yai, Kata Noi, and Mai Khao. Laem Phromthep Viewpoint is said to feature the most beautiful sunsets in Thailand.

It isn't all just beaches though, there





is also fantastic classical architecture such as the Goom Restaurant. That and the very welcome atmosphere and the famous Phuket nightlife, you can see why the island is a hotspot for tourists in Thailand.

Phuket Thailand is full of amazing things to do, whether you are looking to relax on a beach chair as the water slowly laps at your feet, or you're looking to become one with nature in the rainforest. Temples, night markets, and a historic town all await you on the island of Phuket as well as limestone cliffs that jut out of the ocean and tower above the sparkling emerald waters. Between hikes to the impressive marble Buddha that overlooks Southern Phuket and canoes through the mangrove caves, any visitor will consider themselves the luckiest person on the planet to be able to experience the jaw-dropping beauty. We have chosen just ten of the amazing things to do while you are in Phuket but these are just the start of the epic experiences that await you here.

10. Explore Phang Nga Bay

The most amazing thing about Phang Nga Bay is the scenery, and its beauty is truly jaw-dropping. From the sheer limestone cliffs that rise vertically out of the water to the sparkling emerald green waters, this landscape is the perfect backdrop for those stunning photographs you will send home. There are many different ways to explore Phang Nga Bay but none is more amazing than by canoe.

Become one with nature as your paddle glides effortlessly through the still waters, the only sounds are the chirping of the birds, the calls of the animals, and the splash of the water. Travel through rock caves that resemble something out of an Indiana Jones movie, have lunch on a deserted island, and swim in the sandy waters. Visit a fisherman's village, squeeze into a mangrove cave and soak up the beautiful surroundings. A visit to Phuket is not complete without exploring Phang Nga Bay and our favorite way is by canoe.

9. Climb to the Big Buddha

The Big Buddha is a staple landmark in Phuket and can be seen from pretty much everywhere in the south. The impressive 45m tall statue is layered with beautiful white marble that gleams in the sunlight. Although the Buddha has been under construction for the past 10 years and still has many more years to go; this epic statue is a true symbol of peace and hope. What makes this Buddha even better is the climb up.

The road to the Buddha has been completed but your journey to the top becomes even more amazing when you choose to hike up. Not for the weary hiker as it is a steep 4km hike from the base of the hill. Along the way, you will catch glimpses of amazing landscapes and if you have timed your hike correctly you will arrive at the top to see the sun setting over the city. Look around and you can see Chalong Bay, Phang Nga Bay, Kata Bay, and Kata Noi Bay. On the way down make sure to stop in for a nice cold beer at one of the restaurants that have popped up along the road. The Big Buddha and its enormity are truly appreciated when you are standing next to it after an epic hike up the hill.

8. Snorkel the Clear Waters

Boasting some of the clearest waters around, the area of Phuket has some incredible snorkeling conditions. Not all beaches are suitable for snorkeling and some of them are extremely overcrowded with tourists but if you can find that amazing beach with the right conditions; you will never want to get out of the water. Luckily we are here to help you with that:

Banana Beach is a well-kept secret beach in Phuket offering up great snorkeling in crystal clear waters along with large palm trees and excellent sand. Throw in a restaurant that has been around for years and only offers the freshest seafood (you often see the cooks carrying it up the beach) and you have yourself a winning beach. Ao Sane Beach is another hidden gem that not only offers great snorkeling but has a dive shop on-site where you can rent equipment and even take a lesson. The

rock formations divide it into three coves creating an underwater paradise for marine life. We cannot forget about the infamous Similan Islands which by far offer the clearest water and some of the world's greatest snorkeling. Pick a beach, grab your snorkel gear and head out to view some amazing marine life.

7. Khao Sok National Park

Although not technically located in Phuket, this national park is just too amazing to leave off our list. Southern Thailand's largest virgin forest resides here and is older and more diverse than the Amazon Rainforest offering numerous exotic animals, plant species, and breathtaking scenery. Huge limestone cliffs, deep valleys, exciting caves, and breathtaking lakes make this destination truly amazing.

For a truly amazing opportunity head to Cheow Larn Lake located in the heart of this National Park. Here you can spend the night in one of the floating raft houses or luxury tents. Surrounded by crystal clear water that begs you to dive in, sounds of wild elephants and monkeys in the distance; you can't get much better than that. There are plenty of tour operators offering treks throughout this forest whether you are looking to do it by foot, canoe, or even truck. We do recommend staying away from elephant tours as the treatment of elephants in Thailand is not always the greatest. However you choose to explore this National Park; the scenery, animals, and serenity will blow you away.

6. Stroll the Historic Roads in Old Phuket Town

Located away from the beaches lies a section of town that was once a hub of activity but is now considered the historical section of Phuket. Consisting of five roads and several smaller streets Phuket's old town is teeming with fabulous architecture, Chinese temples, crumbling mansions, and culture. Explore this area on foot as it proves difficult in a car and makes sure to either grab a map of the area or join the historical walking tour.

Make sure to visit the Shrine of the



Serene Light; where a beautiful garden and colorful temple welcomes you. Thalang Road offers plenty of batik shops run by local Malays and Indians and a look at some of the renovated buildings that gleam in the sunlight. A colorful Chinese shrine, a fresh food market, and the Thai Hua Museum are all found throughout this maze of roads. Hip shops, restaurants, cafes, and even bars have been popping up all over Old Phuket Town and it is worth the time to come and experience this history-rich area.

Phuket Old Town was built on the prosperity of tin mining in the last century. It is compact enough to stroll around and witness grandiose Sino-Portuguese-style mansions and shophouses with beautiful facades. The unique architectural style reflects the mixed influences of various cultures in Phuket. The Thai-Hua Museum on Krabi Road is one of the best places that tell interesting stories of Chinese descendants and heritages on the island.

5. Visit Wat Chalong

The most important temple of the 29 Buddhist temples in Phuket is definitely worth a visit and is absolutely amazing in its beauty and meaning. This temple is dedicated to two monks who led citizens in the fight against the Chinese Rebellion in 1876 and who helped many injured people with their knowledge of herbal medicine. Please remember to dress appropriately when visiting any of the temples and respect that although many tourists come here; it is an important place of worship for the locals.

Take your time to explore this temple noticing details such as the dragons painted in vibrant colors along the staircases and the painted ceilings. Make sure to see the famous Poh Than Jao Wat statue located in the old hall of the temple along with the statue of a local that is said to have won the lottery after consulting the Poh Than Jao Wat statue. The upper level is the Grand Pagoda and is said to house a fragment of Buddha's bone. This area is breezy, beautiful and contains many images of

the Buddha and paintings that depict his life. There are many beautiful and amazing temples in Phuket and we encourage you to visit as many as you can but if you only have time for one, make sure you come here.

4. Gibbon Rehabilitation Project

Escape the ordinary and travel to the Gibbon Rehabilitation Project's visitor center at Bang Pae waterfalls. The goal of this project and its organizers is to rehabilitate unwanted or confiscated gibbons from the pet trade and tourist industry. These highly endangered animals are often used for photos with tourists in Phuket but visiting this center will have you thinking twice about stopping to snap a picture with these cute animals.

Open daily with no admission to the center (although it is located in a national park that charges an entrance fee), and full of lively and passionate volunteers; the center is a learning opportunity for locals and visitors alike. Discover why these apes are highly endangered, what you can do to help and catch a glimpse of them from the viewing platforms. Listen to the songs that the Gibbons sing out, appreciate the hard work these volunteers do, and perhaps consider adopting one of these endangered species. A visit to the Gibbon Rehabilitation Project is a unique way for any visitor to learn, support, and appreciate the wildlife of Phuket.

3. Simon Cabaret

Simon Cabaret is the largest transvestite show on Phuket Island and you can't travel here without seeing the famous ladyboys of Patong. From the elaborate stage designs to the brilliant costumes to the bright lights this is one grand show that is simply a must. The Simon Cabaret is often compared to a Las Vegas quality show and these performers lip-sync to popular songs and dance the night away; all while visitors try to glimpse a masculine feature on one of these very convincing looking "ladies".

This show is suitable for kids and adults and it is recommended

to buy your tickets ahead of time at a discounted rate. The movie-style seating in the theater along with free drinks makes it an enjoyable place to watch the show. Most visitors to Phuket will do this once and then over-the-top extravagant costumes and performances are the reason why people come to see it. Stick around after the show to grab some photos with some of the stars, just remember to tip them.

2. Visit the Night Markets

Hundreds of stalls teeming with clothes, shoes, crafts, and everything Thai; the night markets offer a break from overpriced souvenir shops and the chance to haggle with shop owners. Don't worry, the vendors price their merchandise accordingly and fully expect locals and tourists to bargain over prices; although the Thai still get the absolute best prices. Located just outside Phuket Town visitors should come hungry and ready to spend.

The various rows of stalls are protected from the rain with tarps overhanging; which is excellent unless you are taller than about 5'8. Prepare to duck as you wander through the bracelets, earrings, shoes, cell phones, live animals, and pretty much everything else you can ever imagine that can be sold. The food is to die for here at the market and be sure to try the butter dripping corn on the cob, exotic fruits, and even some deep-fried insects; all washed down with a nice cold beer. Plenty to see, plenty to buy, and a part of the local culture all await you at the wonderful Night Markets in Phuket Town.

1. Visit a Viewpoint in Time for the Sunset

There are many lookout points in Phuket that hundreds of people travel to every day in order to catch a glimpse of the magnificent sun as it slowly sinks down and fills the sky with brilliant colors. The most famous viewpoint is Laem Phromthep which arguably offers the best sunset on the island and the flock of tourists that congregate on the hilltop each night seems to justify just that.

DESTINATION THAILAND

Although crowded we recommend heading to Laem Phromthep and heading off the beaten track to a secret location where you can enjoy the spectacular sunset in peace. The lighthouse at the top provides some peace as you climb to the top and have an elevated view away from the majority of the people. But for real peace and serenity, you will want to head down to the very south end of the viewpoint. Take the stairs that are placed in the opening of the wall that turns into a winding dirt path ending at the Southernmost tip of Phuket Island. Watch as the sky turns glorious shades of red, pink, and gold and as the sun sinks beneath the clouds you might just feel as though you have found heaven on earth. Make sure to head back before it gets really dark as the path can be hard to find.

Other attractions in Phuket include:

Laem Phromthep and viewpoints

Laem Phromthep, locally dubbed “Laem Chao”, is located on the southernmost point of the Island. With its breathtaking scenery and beautiful *Sunset* spot, the cape is one of the favorite locations for photography among tourists in Phuket. From the edge of the cliff, a line of palm trees inclines downward to the cape’s end, which features rocky reefs where the island, Ko Kaeo Phitsadan, appears at the front. It is also a site of the Laem Phromthep Kanchanaphisek Lighthouse, built on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of King Rama IX’s accession to the throne. The light from the lighthouse can be seen as far as 39 kilometers. Inside the lighthouse is showcased the exhibition about the lighthouse’s construction, keeping standard time, and the calculation and display of the times of the sunrise and sunset. From the top of the lighthouse, visitors can view the endless spectacular scenery.

Ko Racha and Ko Mai Thon

Located in southern Phuket, Ko Racha is composed of two Islands: Ko Racha Noi and Ko Racha Yai. Ko Racha Yai



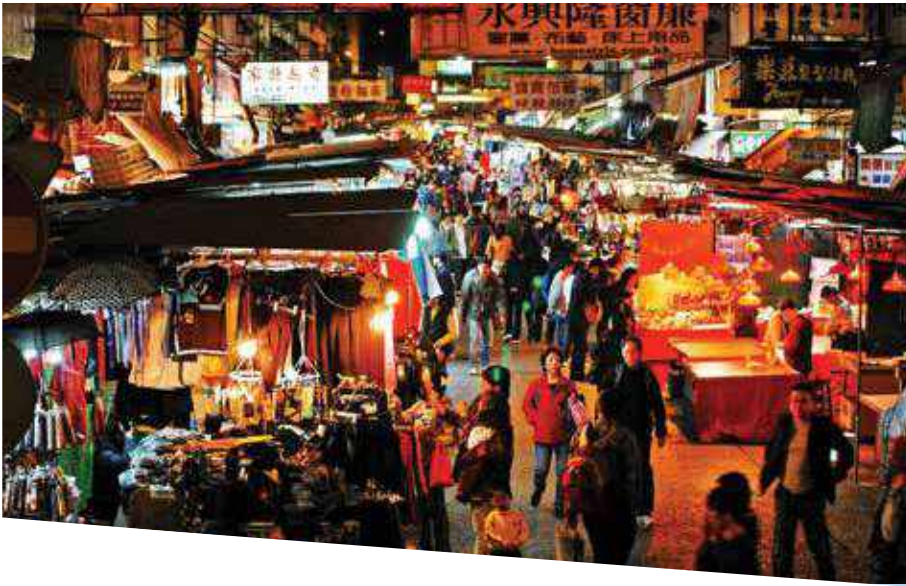
covers a white sandy Beach shoreline with crystal water. It is known as a paradise for tourists, especially, for those who are fond of diving. Equipped with full facilities, this island is ideal for staying over amidst nature. Ko Racha Noi is a popular diving spot, which is suitable for professional divers only. Divers will also have a chance to meet Manta ray or a great white shark here.

Ko Mai Thon, a small Island located in the *southeast* of Phuket, is rich with nature and features beautiful *Beaches*. It is, therefore, one of the destinations for tourists who have limited time

since it does not take long to *travel* by *speedboat* from a deep water port to get to this stunning island.

Hat Patong

The Beach features a wide curvy bay enhanced by clear indigo *sea* and a beautiful white beach that is suitable for any kind of marine-based sports. It is also internationally well-known and a center of tourists around the world. Patong Beach is almost like a small developed town that is equipped with hospitals, large department stores, a wide range of accommodation, and



lights and lively vibe of Phuket can keep you awake all night long. After dark, there are abundant places to go to, but the ones listed below are fantastic.

Phuket Fantasea is one of the most famous shows in Phuket. Inspired by exotic Thai heritages, it showcases the beauty and traditions of the country. With over 400 casts and crews, 44 elephants, and many animals, the extravaganza show impresses the entire audience with a breathtaking Las Vegas-style theatrical show featuring new acrobatics, illusions, fireworks, stunts, aerial performances, and more.

Families are entertained with a carnival Village with games, parades, and a large themed Restaurant with 4,000 seats which offers one of the best buffets in town.

Siam Niramit offers a full evening with a fabulous 70-minute show featuring great choreographies, songs, as well as a great international and Thai restaurant. The nonstop fancy show shows the History of Thailand, traditional lifestyle, and beliefs, especially of heaven and hell.

Simon Cabaret is one of the city's most famous "ladyboy" cabaret shows, offering a music show with stunning costumes, expensive sets, and great sound systems.

If these shows are not your favorites, then Muay Thai Boxing is probably the right choice. Phuket hosts stadiums and shows where you can enjoy watching the sport at its best. The main venue in Phuket is the Boxing Stadium at Saphanhin District.

Bangla Boxing Stadium is another interesting choice. Although its unusual decoration and beer bars, which give the impression that this is another tourist trap, the stadium offers the right fights.

How to get there

Phuket is 690 kilometers south of Bangkok. Many airlines operate several daily flights from Bangkok.



restaurants, which offer from seaFood, Thai to international food. To get there: the Beach is 15 kilometers from Phuket town. Take Highway No. 4019 or Wichit Songkhram Road for about 9 kilometers, then turn left along the Highway (following the signpost of Hat Patong) for about 6 kilometers. The road is quite meandering and sloping.

Phuket Fantasea

Located at Hat Kamala, the show is one of the famous attractions in Phuket and the world's first Thai cultural theme park. The show's highlight is

the Performance called the "Amazing Kamala", which is a combination between Thai arts and Culture and cutting-edge special effects of light and sound including over 10 Thai elephants and other animals on the stage of the grand theatre. The services also include Dinner in an international Buffet style.

Phuket Night Shows: A fantastic night on the Island

When darkness covers the stunning sea, Phuket's attention shifts to the nightlife and night entertainment. The colorful

TAT outlines marketing activities in support of Thailand-India 'Air Travel Bubble'

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has outlined the latest marketing strategy in response to the approval that has been given to an 'air travel bubble' arrangement with India, which is considered a major step forward in the planned recovery of what is one of Thailand's important visitor source markets.



Mr. Tanes Petsuwan, TAT Deputy Governor for International Marketing – Asia and the South Pacific, said, "Thailand was a very popular destination for Indian travellers before the COVID-19 pandemic, and there is every indication this appeal will continue. Significantly, the proposed Thai-Indian Air Travel Bubble arrangement will help enhance the image of Thailand as the preferred destination for Indians wanting to travel abroad."

Thailand's Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) has greenlighted the proposed 'Thai-

Indian Air Travel Bubble' arrangement, a decision which now awaits Cabinet approval. Once this is given, the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) will proceed with the plan through collaborations with the Indian authorities and airlines.

Mr. Tanes added, "With the TEST and GO entry scheme having been resumed from 1 February 2022, under which fully vaccinated travellers from any country can apply for a Thailand Pass, while the COVID-19 situation in India is vastly improving resulting in relaxed restrictions for international arrivals including returning Indians, TAT

will actively target high-quality Indian tourists to return to Thailand."

In line with the 'Visit Thailand Year 2022: Amazing New Chapters' marketing campaign, TAT is focusing on further building the Indian market with a particular emphasis on special interest groups with high spending; such as weddings and honeymoons, golf, millennials, and digital nomads. Among the activities include familiarisation trips and business events.

A fam trip for Indian travel agents and media gained first-hand experience on tourism products and services on

the Bangkok-Chiang Mai and Bangkok-Ko Samui travel routes, as well as discussed business with local suppliers in a trade meet event.

A dedicated familiarisation trip and wedding symposium for Indian wedding planners are set to take place in March 2022.

TAT will also head up the Thailand presence at India's largest tourism promotion event – South Asia Travel and Tourism Exchange (SATTE) 2022 – scheduled for 18-20 May, in New Delhi. It will also arrange a product presentation event to provide travel agents from key cities in the South and West of India – Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Koshi, and Mumbai – with an update on Thailand's entry schemes and 'Amazing New Chapters' travel offers.

Following the materialization of the 'Thai-Indian Air Travel Bubble' arrangement and the reopening of

commercial flights between the two countries, TAT will join hands with airlines to co-organize networking sessions in key cities in the North of India, including New Delhi and Kolkata to further promote Thailand's latest tourism products and services.

This latest marketing strategy follows TAT's ongoing efforts to maintain Thailand's positioning as a top destination for Indian travellers. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, TAT's offices in Mumbai and New Delhi continued to work in close cooperation with the Indian travel and tourism industry through ongoing marketing activities that included a 'Thailand Travel Update' webinar and the launch of the 'Thailand Specialist Programme' industry-focused online training course for travel advisors and operators to update themselves on existing and new attractions and offerings in Thailand.

The updated website of the Tourism Authority of Thailand www.tourismthailand.in contains Thailand's tourism-related content especially targeting millennials. TAT has recently launched the 'Miss You' campaign with images inviting Indian travellers to experience Thailand's 'Amazing New Chapters'.

TAT's proactive marketing efforts in India have resulted in Thailand winning the 'Best Honeymoon Destination' for the second year running at the 10th Anniversary Edition of the Travel + Leisure India's Best Awards 2021. In August 2021, Thailand was also rated one of the best-golfing destinations by an overwhelming 97% of respondents in a nationwide survey of golfers in India. Meanwhile, a Thomas Cook survey conducted in June 2021 identified Thailand as a top-three destination for Indians wanting to travel abroad.

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Address Boulevard

is a Luxurious City
Lifestyle Resort

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United Arab
Emirates

Overlooking the world's tallest tower, Burj Khalifa, with immediate access to the largest shopping and entertainment destination in the world, Address Boulevard offers A City Lifestyle Resort. This five-star hotel in the swanky Downtown district exudes understated elegance, with Art Deco-inspired interiors and 250 specially commissioned artworks. It boasts large and luxurious rooms, a cracking casual restaurant, and three pools with Burj Khalifa views.

Location

The 72-story hotel is located opposite the Dubai Mall, a 20-minute drive from Dubai airport. A covered walkway connects the hotel to the mall, while Burj Khalifa and Dubai Opera are 10 minutes walk away. Construction is a given in this part of town and there is some building and traffic noise by the pool, although triple-glazed windows ensure a good night's sleep.

Style and Character

The homegrown Emirati brand has plumped for European elegance over Arabesque styling. Dapper doormen in white gloves, waistcoats, and flat caps usher guests into the double-height lobby, resplendent in grey marble, Lasvit chandeliers and dove grey armchairs. Gorgeous lilac floral arrangements and designer gowns behind glass lend a feminine air, while the celestial sounds of the resident harpist float from the lobby lounge.





Service and Facilities

The staff is welcoming, friendly, and professional. Restaurant staff is happy to chat, while the concierge can arrange tickets for Dubai Opera and see that you're dropped off in the hotel's vintage-style golf buggy. There's a two-tier pool with fantastic views of the world's tallest tower, plus another pool for spa-goers. Children get the bottom pool, complete with cascading waterfall and small slide, while adults

have the top tier, with sleek white sun loungers and a swim-up bar. The spa has top-notch thermal and wet facilities including hammams and experience showers, along with a nail salon and dedicated yoga room.

- Parking
- Restaurant
- Bar
- Laundry
- Room service
- Pool
- Sauna
- Spa
- Wi-Fi
- Fitness centre
- Kids' club
- Steam room/hammam

Rooms

The 196 rooms (36 of them suites) all come with a large balcony offering photogenic city views. Deluxe rooms are smartly decorated in shades of white, greige, and taupe, with a supremely comfortable bed kitted out in high thread-count linen and a stylish chrome and wood coat stand that has a tray for your keys and mobile. The attention to detail is impressive: power points are discreetly hidden, while the television remote fits snugly

into a cream leather case. Modern conveniences include a Nespresso machine and an easy-to-use iGenie system to control everything from the lights to the television. Grey and white marble bathrooms feature chevron tiles, double sinks, a deep tub, and a separate rain shower.

Food and Drink Lounge At Address Boulevard

The Lounge serves as the perfect place to hold a meeting or indulge in a light snack or beverage, with soothing music wafting through the lobby as you take in the awe-inspiring view of Burj Khalifa.

There is just one restaurant, aptly named The Restaurant, open 24 hours and styled like a chic Parisian apartment, with spaces such as a library, living room, and music room. The Restaurant offers Global Bistronomy. With low lighting and quirky objets d'art, it feels homely and inviting. In the bar, artful cocktails are served in glass pipes and spheres with tiny rubber ducks (and proper napkins, too). The menu ranges from the simple (slow-cooked lamb shank, pan-seared Scottish salmon) to the special (duck confit with fregola Sarda, butternut squash, and poached egg).





Breakfast is just as delicious, with a small buffet (cold-pressed juices, pastries, cereals, and a handful of hot dishes such as baked eggs with lamb sausage) and à la carte options (huevos rancheros; smashed avocado with poached egg; brioche French toast).

Weddings & Celebrations

From the extraordinary Boulevard Ballroom to the glamorous poolside with sweeping views of the Burj Khalifa, this hotel offers a magical day at its two spectacular venues in Address Boulevard.

Perfect Venue for Meetings and Events

Address Boulevard offers spectacular meetings places with a wide array of choices.

The Meeting Room is perfect for small workshops and conferences that start off on a professional note with the full technological setup, making it easy to screen videos and showcase your projects. The meeting room can cater to different setups and is perfect for screenings and Audio Visual Presentations.

Atelier is perfect for social gatherings for friends, family, or work colleagues. Whether it's an informal



dinner event, a casual cocktail party, or a food and beverage demonstration class, Atelier offers the perfect relaxed and comfortable setting offering Communal dining concepts served by passionate chefs.

Majlis Room, offering an **elegant and luxurious décor**, is located within the magnificent Atelier conference space. This opulent yet comfortable meeting room is ideal for professional meetings that call for a private and elite space in which to converse.

Boulevard Ballroom with an elegant and stunning 450sqm venue is a versatile space designed to host small, intimate gatherings (Up to 250 guest capacity), weddings, and grand, impressive occasions. Adorned with neutral hues, high ceilings, and glittering chandeliers, this is a majestic venue for any special occasion.

The Boardroom is a quintessential space for formal business meeting needs. Equipped with the latest technologies and comfortable seating, it is the perfect venue for meetings, both virtually and in person.

The Spa at Address

The Spa here offers 10 treatment rooms, a traditional Hammam, an outdoor spa pool, and so much more.

The place to disconnect and revive your mind, body, and soul. Enter a world of elevated relaxation and hospitable serenity. Each treatment has been thoughtfully and meticulously crafted by our therapy specialists so you can experience sheer tranquillity and pure renewal.

Address Boulevard offers short and long-term stays at the **Residences** that combine the luxury of a hotel with the privacy and flexibility of its own serviced residence. The stylish studio residences offer breath-taking panoramic views of the city and Downtown Dubai, all encapsulated in a calm space where you can rest and reflect. All 96 studio residences are equipped with carefully selected contemporary furnishings, state-of-the-art appliances, and individual touches, ensuring that they offer the ideal cosmopolitan break for professionals

Value for Money

Double rooms from AED1,199 in low season; and from AED1,599 in high. Breakfast included. Free Wi-Fi.

Access for guests with disabilities?

Adapted rooms and lifts to all parts of the hotel.

Family-Friendly?

Yes, with a kids' club for three - to 12-year-olds with games, storytelling, and yoga; children's pool; interconnecting rooms and cots available free of charge. Extra beds cost AED180 per night.

Address: Mohammed Bin Rashid Boulevard, Downtown Dubai, United Arab Emirates.





ROVE LA MER BEACH, DUBAI,

offering architectural ethos, is tailored for leisure and business travellers

Rove Hotels, the contemporary midscale hotel brand Rove La Mer, located in the heart of La Mer is Dubai's world-class beachfront. Set by the Arabian Gulf and with spectacular views of the city skyline, the 366-room Rove La Mer marks the value for money addition to the growing portfolio of Rove Hotels properties in the UAE.

A trip to Dubai is incomplete without a visit to beachy La Mer! Take in the opulent seascape of the Arabian Gulf and the bustling waterfront as you take Instagram-worthy shots along the way. Located

right on the beachfront, discover the myriad of dining, shopping, entertainment, and kids' attractions, all of which are located against the backdrop of the city's glistening skyline. One thing's for sure: there's

never a dull moment at La Mer!

This budget hotel makes beach stays in Dubai affordable. It cuts costs on in-room luxuries but doesn't scrimp on facilities elsewhere. There's a well-equipped fitness center, a laundrette,



an outdoor pool, and a popular terrace overlooking the shore, so you're unlikely to spend much time in your room anyway.

Location

A retro Californian-style resort, La Mer is a neighbourhood of two halves, North and South; together they occupy more than a mile of prime Jumeirah coastline. Rove is at the southernmost tip, making it a convenient starting point for visitors.

This Seaview hotel is nestled in a self-contained #playcation spot on the beach and is only a swift ten minutes from the Dubai Mall and City Walk. Filled to the brim with water-fuelled adrenalin, over 30 cafés & restaurants along a sandy 2.5-kilometer shoreline, there's something for everyone at La Mer Dubai.

The beach offers kayaking, flyboarding, and jet ski tours that take in the landmark Burj Al Arab. The broad meandering promenade raises

the question: which of its 50 or so restaurants do you want to dine at? Opposite the hotel, innovative Indian fusion spot Masti is a safe bet, with its lengthy gin menu and mixologists who know what to do with it

Style and Character

Reflecting the winding alleyways of the La Mer neighbourhood, its interiors invigorate local artistry with a side of chilled beach vibes. This hotel works with Dubai-based creatives throughout the hotel who have told their stories of the Jumeirah neighbourhood through creative installations, signage, and wall art.

Seven stories high, Rove's building is the tallest in La Mer. By the day, its pale façade, striped with rows of back metal Juliet balconies, cuts corners into the blue sky; by night it glows like a lighthouse, guiding visitors to La Mer's edge. Rove lobbies are typically loaded with personality and this one is on brand, with a partition created

with surfboards, a Pac-Man arcade game, and a 'fish & chips' sign stirring nostalgic seaside vibes.

Service and Facilities

Youthful staff in pastel yellow capri pants and trainers provide informal service. Facilities outshine the average three-star hotel offering.

A modern 24-hour gym and large outdoor pool and deck overlooking the beach make this budget hotel feel far more luxurious, while luggage lockers and a laundrette deliver added convenience.

- Bar
- Beach
- Fitness centre
- Laundry
- Parking
- Pool
- Restaurant
- Wi-Fi

Rooms

Rove's compact and pristine rooms



pack in a mini-fridge; a travel kettle with instant coffee, tea, and paper takeaway cups; an open wardrobe, with clothes rail, shelves, and safe; and a corner chair that opens into a single bed. The double bed, made up with just two pillows, is parked in front of a 55-inch television but channel choices are limited – the English-language option is CNN. Bathrooms comprise walk-in showers with single sinks and wall-mounted eco-friendly toiletries.

Food and Drink

Billed as an “all-day neighbourhood hangout”, The Daily is part-café, part co-working space. Tables are fitted with plugs, and laptops are as common on tables as plates. Mismatched chairs, wooden crate planters, and potted trees accessorize the space, abundant under high ceilings, and floor-to-ceiling windows open onto a pool-facing terrace that’s abuzz day and night.

Breakfast is a bargain. For around 50 AED you can eat as much as you like from a buffet of acai yogurt, Bircher muesli, salads, cheeses, cold cuts, and dips – and order à la carte. Take your

pick of pancakes, waffles, berry bowls, vegan hash, white bean fry-ups, eggs, and *paratha* (doughy flatbread) with curry.

You can enjoy your breakfast with





a side of sea-fresh air, kick-back and relax with signature sundowners, or plugin and get to work with views that inspire the most mundane of Mondays, at The Daily; the local neighbourhood hangout with beachy charm and snap worthy dishes. Don't forget to try Booster drinks and savour signature coffee.

Interesting Places Near Jumeirah, La Mer

Each Rove location shines light onto the wonders of this vibrant city, rich in history, leading with modernity, culture, art & tradition with unrivalled entertainment at every turn.

Al Satwa—or simply Satwa—is one of Dubai's oldest neighborhoods. Nestled between Jumeirah and Bur Dubai, it's home to a community of many ex-pats and is best known for its vibrant street life. Trek to this location for Arabic fast food and—if you're in need of a little nature before or after visiting the Union House—there's always Al Khazzan Park for some peace among the busyness of this little district.

Etihad Museum is an ideal place to visit that offers cultural values. The Etihad Museum is your ticket to learning about the UAE's contemporary history, all at the same site where the constitution was signed in 1971. Its interactive design showcases photos and films within its exhibition spaces, education center, and library, allowing viewers to witness the rise of the city they're in. There is much to learn about the rich Middle Eastern heritage of the UAE, spanning its independence, current state of advanced development, and its link to the seven Emirati nations, as reflected within the structure's seven columns.

Laguna Waterpark is an oasis that promises fun-filled days slipping and sliding. There are four zones to suit every kind of visitor. Experience Splash, Surf, Slide, and Relax at Laguna, whether you're after a cooling and calming retreat from the Middle Eastern heat or adrenaline-inducing rides. Keep an eye out on their offers like the full day pass with unlimited food and beverage.

Value for Money

Double rooms from AED 300 in low season; and from AED 349, in high. Breakfast not included, costs AED 59 for adults, AED 29 for children aged six to 16, and children under six dine for free. Free Wi-Fi.

Access for guests with disabilities?

Wheelchair-accessible rooms with wide doors and roll-in showers are available on request.

Family-Friendly?

For families, there are interconnecting rooms, high chairs, and kids' meals, plus a games room, video game consoles, and table tennis to keep everyone entertained.

Verdict: With its architectural ethos reflecting the waterfront-inspired design of La Mer, Rove La Mer is tailored for leisure guests, and will also appeal to business travellers seeking a refreshing hotel choice.

Address: La Mer South, Jumeira 1, PO Box 119444, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

INTERNATIONAL



22 Reasons to visit New York City in 2022



• *Five-Borough Destination Highlights Include NYC Classics As Well As New Hotels, Attractions, Broadway, Dining, Infrastructure, Arts and Culture, Multicultural Neighborhood Experiences and More...*

- *New York City to Celebrate the 30th Anniversary of NYC Restaurant Week® This Summer...*
- *Visitors to the Five Boroughs to Be Welcomed by New Developments at the City's Three Major Airports...*

NYC & Company, New York City's official destination marketing organization and convention and visitors bureau, unveiled **22 Reasons to Visit NYC in 2022**, spotlighting experiences for New Yorkers, visitors, and meeting delegates to enjoy in the five boroughs this year. This includes new and upcoming developments and openings as well as New York City classics, with hotels, attractions, arts and culture, infrastructure, dining, Broadway, and more.

"New York City is known for constant renewal and reinvention. In honor of 2022, we're pleased to share 22 reasons to visit NYC this year, with this new resource highlighting just a few of the City's newest and most iconic attractions. From brand-new hotels and restaurants to upcoming star-studded Broadway shows, exhibitions and events, we invite New Yorkers and our global community alike to experience the vibrant offerings found only in NYC this year," said **Fred Dixon, President, and CEO of NYC & Company**.

Following is a selection of 22 reasons to look forward to visiting New York City in 2022.

1. 30th Anniversary of NYC Restaurant Week:

NYC & Company will celebrate the dining industry with the 30th anniversary of **NYC Restaurant Week**, kicking off in July. The biannual event began in 1992 as a weeklong, lunch-only promotional event during the Democratic National Convention, and since then has grown beyond a one-week event to a four-week program taking place at a variety of restaurants from neighborhood eateries to high-end dining across all five boroughs.

2. More Places to Stay:

More than 9,000 new hotel rooms will be coming online in the City this year, including the highly anticipated **Aman New York, Fifth Avenue**, the new urban sanctuary located on Fifth Avenue; the **Ritz-Carlton, NoMad**, a new experience inspired by the essence of the new Madison Square Park; and the **Hard Rock Hotel New York**, a

new property offering a backstage pass to the best of Midtown Manhattan, all expected to open this spring. Additionally, the **Renaissance Hotels brand** will open properties in **Harlem** and **Flushing** in the coming months; the **Virgin Hotel New York City** and **Hotel Barrière Le Fouquet's New York** are expected to open this summer; **Moxy Hotels** will open properties on Manhattan's **Lower East Side** and in **Williamsburg**, Brooklyn later this year; and **The Fifth Avenue Hotel** is expected to open this fall.

3. The Return of New York City Classics:

From world-renowned attractions such as the **Statue of Liberty** to iconic skyscrapers and venues, NYC is home to many historic locations for visitors to enjoy. For over 90 years, socialites, politicians, movie stars, and moguls have flocked to **Bemelmans Bar**, located on the Upper East Side at the Carlyle Hotel. The bar is best known for its extensive cocktail menu, nightly live entertainment, and art deco decor. New Yorkers and visitors alike can also enjoy another neighborhood mainstay, **The Palm Court at The Plaza Hotel**, popular for its Afternoon Tea. Since relaunching in 2014, the timeless location has completely renovated the space with lush greenery and introduced a new American fare-inspired menu and grand bar serving craft cocktails. In Midtown Manhattan, visitors can find the original (and iconic) home of New York City glamour and entertainment, the **Rainbow Room**. Since 1934, the event space has hosted and served classic and contemporary American cuisine to presidents and some of the brightest stars in entertainment.

4. See New York City from Above

Observatories have always been a part of the City's DNA with classics like the **Empire State Building** and the **Top of the Rock**. A few years after the opening of the remarkable **One World Observatory**, the City's skyline welcomed **Edge** at Hudson Yards in 2020, which also recently unveiled a

new, breathtaking way to take in the skyline with **City Climb**, the ultimate skyscraper adventure for thrill-seekers looking to take in a view of the City from 1,200 feet above the ground. Last fall, **Summit One Vanderbilt** opened as the City's fifth observatory, offering spectacular views. This year, a new virtual attraction debuted offering a unique bird's-eye view of the skyline: **RiseNY** is an immersive, interactive experience, giving visitors a chance to view New York City virtually while suspended 30 feet in the air.

5. Go International Throughout the Boroughs:

Globally, New York City is known as one of the most culturally rich and diverse cities and is the home for many international citizens. Throughout the five boroughs, visitors can explore and taste the different cultures that exist within the City. From **Little Caribbean** located in Flatbush, Brooklyn, and **Little Sri Lanka** in Tompkinsville, Staten Island, to Manhattan's **Chinatown** and **Washington Heights**, visitors can get a worldly experience in the unique, vibrant neighborhoods throughout the boroughs. Recently named as one of the "52 Places to Go in 2022" by *The New York Times*, the borough of Queens is home to a variety of international cuisines. Visitors can **dine along the 7 train** to expand their palate with an array of ethnic cuisines from Eastern European to Japanese. For those looking for authentic Italian cuisine, the Bronx's **Arthur Avenue** is home to some of the best dishes in the City.

6. A New Era of Air Travel:

The gateways to New York City have undergone exciting transformations including brand-new terminals at **LaGuardia Airport**, **Newark Liberty International Airport**, and **John F. Kennedy International Airport**. The new Terminal B at LaGuardia Airport features 35 gates plus new retail and dining offerings, including Shake Shack and FAO Schwarz. The new Terminal C will open at LaGuardia in the coming months. And later this year, Newark





Liberty International Airport will debut an updated Terminal A, offering 33 new gates directly connected to a multilevel parking facility. Newark will break ground on a new 2.5-mile elevated guideway train system later this year, which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ease traffic congestion.

Terminal 8 at JFK International Airport will debut in December with 130,000 square feet of new and renovated space, serving American Airlines and British Airways. Construction will also begin this year on the **New Terminal One** at JFK, expected to open in 2026.

7. A Greener New York City:

Sustainability remains at the forefront for the City, with the newly renovated and expanded **Javits Center** debuting

its state-of-the-art 7-acre green roof. The rooftop has become a sanctuary for area wildlife, including 29 bird species, five bat species, and thousands of honeybees. Meeting delegates and visitors can schedule a tour to learn more about the facility's effort in reducing energy consumption. Meanwhile, New York City's newest public park, **Little Island**, located near the Meatpacking District, provides serene spaces for locals and visitors to explore, venues for live cultural performances and events, and views of the river. And **Central Park**, one of the world's most iconic green spaces, has created a **Central Park Climate Lab** partnership with the Yale School of the Environment and the Natural Areas Conservancy



to develop new research and tools to help urban parks manage the severe impacts of climate change.

8. Brand-New Culinary Experiences:

Across the boroughs, visitors and locals can expect a slate of new restaurant openings and the return of New York City favorites. Washington Heights recently welcomed a new spot in the neighborhood, **Dutch Baby Bakery**, a woman-owned shop serving fresh seasonal breakfast pastries, tarts, cakes, and artisanal bread, that has quickly become a local favorite. **Rowdy Rooster**, an Indian-spiced-fried-chicken fast-casual spot located in the East Village, opens today, February 22; **Place des Fêtes**, a Spanish-inspired restaurant, will open this month in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn; **Makina Café**, New York City's first Ethiopian-Eritrean mobile restaurant, will open a full-service restaurant in Sunnyside, Queens, in early April; also in April, Eisenberg's Sandwich Shop, a 91-year-old Manhattan sandwich counter, will reopen under a new name, **S&P**; and Keith McNally and Daniel Boulud are working together to reopen **Augustine** under a new name this spring in the Financial District.

9. Enticing Exhibits Debuting This Year:

Through August 14, the American Museum of Natural History is displaying **Sharks**, featuring life-size models, fossils, interactive exhibits, and more. The National Museum of the American Indian will present **Dakota Modern: The Art of Oscar Howe** beginning March 11, a retrospective exhibition tracing the artistic development of one of the 20th century's most innovative Native American painters, Oscar Howe. In April, **Jean-Michel Basquiat: King Pleasure** will debut at the Starrett-Lehigh Building. The exhibition will include over 200 never-before-seen and rarely shown paintings, drawings, and artifacts to share the story of the Brooklyn-born artist. Beginning April 6, the Whitney Museum will be celebrating its 80th **Whitney Biennial, Quiet as It's Kept**, featuring an array of intergenerational artists displaying a constellation of art and ideas that are present today. Fashion history enthusiasts can receive a lesson in American fashion this May at The Met Fifth Avenue, with the second half of the Costume Institute's **In America** exhibition, **An Anthology of Fashion** launching featuring women's and men's dress from the 18th century to today.

Also in May, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) will present **Henri Matisse: The Red Studio**, an exhibition focusing on Matisse's *The Red Studio* (1911)—a painting that has remained among MoMA's most important works since it was acquired in 1949—featuring never-before-seen archival work and related paintings and drawings. This June, the **High Line** will debut artist Meriem Bennani's first public sculpture, *Windy* (2022). The sculpture was inspired by the experience of walking on the High Line. On July 1, the Brooklyn Museum will host its first survey exhibition dedicated to the late artist and designer Virgil Abloh. The exhibition, **Virgil Abloh: "Figures of Speech,"** will showcase a mix of fashion, videos, sketches, and more, spanning nearly two decades of the multi-creative's career.

10. Stars and Beloved Stories Return to Broadway:

There's no business like show business, and this year, Broadway is going to become home for some of the biggest and brightest stars in entertainment. Hugh Jackman recently returned to Broadway for the revival of **The Music Man**; Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew Broderick will star in the



Broadway revival of Neil Simon's **Plaza Suite**, with previews February 25; on March 22, Darren Criss and Laurence Fishburne join the stage for the revival of **American Buffalo**; and Daniel Craig will make his anticipated return to the stage on March 29 for **Macbeth**. There are also limited revivals of shows coming to Broadway such as **For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When The Rainbow Is Enuf**, beginning April 1; **Hangmen**, with previews beginning April 8; and the best-selling novel **The Kite Runner** is coming to Broadway for the first time this summer.

11. New York City As Seen on TV:

The most memorable and iconic television series set in New York City have recently returned to the small screen. With the return of *Gossip Girl* and *And Just Like That*, fans can explore the City that is home to Serena van der Woodsen (and the new *Gossip Girl* cast) and Carrie Bradshaw and friends. *Gossip Girl* fans can take one of the **On Location Tours** of the many sites where the popular series was filmed, including The Met steps and Grand Central Terminal; and *Sex and the City* fans can take an **official tour**, including dining at Buddakan or indulging in cupcakes at Magnolia Bakery.

12. Shopping in New York City:

This fall, visitors will be able to stop by the new **Tiffany & Co.** flagship store at 727 Fifth Avenue in Midtown Manhattan. The store will include eye-catching installations, exclusive products, and the reopening of The Blue Box Café, where customers can enjoy breakfast. Visitors can also stop by New York City's most iconic department stores, including **Macy's Herald Square**, **Nordstrom NYC**, **Bloomingdale's**, **Bergdorf Goodman**, and **Saks Fifth Avenue**.

13. New and Evolved Museums and Cultural Institutions:

The **Museum of Broadway**, the first permanent museum dedicated to Broadway, will open in Times Square

this summer and celebrate Broadway's history while also giving a behind-the-scenes look at the creation of Broadway productions. **Louis Armstrong House Museum** in Corona, Queens, is undergoing a physical and programmatic expansion for a new cultural center, expected to debut later this year, which includes an interactive exhibit, archival collections, a 68-seat jazz club, and store. And, the **Bronx Children's Museum**, which celebrates the natural curiosity, creativity, and compassion inherent in all children, is also opening this year after moving to a new home in Mill Pond Park.

14. Festivals and Festivities Returning This Year:

NYC plays host to some of the largest events in the world across a multitude of industries. On the arts and cultural calendar, the **Afrofuturism Festival** is taking place at Carnegie Hall through the end of March, featuring more than 80 events, while **Asia Week**, which is a celebration of Asian art throughout metropolitan New York, occurs from March 16–25. **NYCxDISIGN's 10th Anniversary Festival** will happen from May 10–20, offering a global stage for NYC's designers, manufacturers, artists, and makers to show their latest and greatest creations. Celebrations of art continue with the **Tribeca Festival** from June 8–19; the "Conscious Carnival," **Letsgetfr. ee**, in August; and **New York Fashion Week** will return in September, setting the stage for designers worldwide to showcase their latest designs.

15. Food Halls Featuring International Delicacies and NYC Favorites:

Singapore Hawker Center, an enormous Singaporean-inspired food hall, will soon open in Midtown bringing authentic, traditional cuisine from 18 street-food vendors, including Douglas Ng of Fishball Story; Chris Hooi of Dragon Phoenix; and Ah Tai, known for his Hainanese chicken rice. This fall, the **James Beard Foundation** will also open an 18-stall, 16,000-square-foot hall at Pier 57 featuring local

businesses and offerings from food entrepreneurs. Additionally, visitors arriving at the **Moynihan Train Hall** can now select from a dozen curated vendors at the Moynihan Food Hall, including Sauce Pizzeria, E.A.K. Ramen, Magnolia Bakery, H&H Bagels, and Jacob's Pickles—and can soon enjoy the full market, expanded food hall, and three signature restaurants.

16. Explore What's New on Staten Island:

There's never been a better time to hop on a ferry and visit Staten Island. The acclaimed **Clinton Hall** opened its sixth beer hall in the City at the **Empire Outlets** alongside **MRKPL Culinary Market**, offering shoppers a robust selection of craft beer, wine, cocktails, and cuisine. The brand-new **Staten Island Ferry Hawks** baseball team will begin playing in the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball this summer. The team was named in honor of the iconic ferry and the hawks that are native to the island. In addition to a new **Staten Island Ferry** fleet, the recently-launched St. George route on the **NYC Ferry** now offers a picturesque and convenient direct route to Manhattan's Battery Park City and Midtown West.

17. Year-Round and Citywide Celebrations of Pride:

As the birthplace of the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement, New York City is proudly the center of Pride celebrations each June, and throughout the year. **HAGS**, the first LGBTQ+ fine dining restaurant, will open its doors this year in the East Village. NYC also plays host to the annual **NYC Pride March** taking place on June 26. One of the largest Pride marches in the world, the annual event attracts tens of thousands of participants and millions of sidewalk spectators each year. The celebrations will continue in the boroughs beyond Manhattan, including the new **Queens Pride Parade** on June 5, the **Brooklyn Pride** celebration on June 11, and additional celebrations that have yet to be announced.



18. New and Revamped Performing Arts Centers Take the Stage:

New York City's performing arts scene is making more than just a comeback in 2022. Those looking to discover up-and-coming artists will welcome back the return of **Amateur Night at the Apollo Theater** in Harlem this month after a two-year hiatus. The Apollo is also undergoing the first expansion in its history, with the opening of the new **Victoria Theater** next month. The theater will feature two new performance spaces and will be available for use by local artists and NYC-based art organizations. In April, **The Barrow Group** theater company will open a new facility in Midtown Manhattan that will offer over 13,000 square feet of training studios and a brand-new theater. And **David Geffen Hall**, part of Lincoln Center and the New York Philharmonic, will reopen its doors to the public this fall, after a complete makeover.

19. Explore the Great Outdoors Within the Five Boroughs:

Experience the beauty of the outdoors without leaving the City, with a vast array of floral and nature-related offerings. This spring, view the annual blooming of the cherry trees at **Brooklyn Botanic Garden** and the East River walkway on **Roosevelt Island**. Since each tree only blooms for one week, check out BBG's **Cherry Watch** to plan your trip. Don't miss the horticultural spectacle of **The Orchid Show** at the **New York Botanical Garden** in the Bronx, which will fill the historic Enid A. Haupt Conservatory with thousands of dramatically displayed orchids. Nearby, adventure enthusiasts can check out the **Treetop Adventure** at the Bronx Zoo, reopening this spring. And to catch some waves, visit **Rockaway Beach** in Queens, known as the City's go-to surfing destination, which also offers playgrounds and other outdoor

activities, such as basketball courts, baseball fields, volleyball courts, and more.

20. Rejuvenating Wellness Experiences:

Find tranquility at the City's numerous wellness outposts in 2022. The seasonal **Winter Spa** at **The William Vale** hotel offers guests the ultimate spa experience with private red cedar outdoor saunas featuring panoramic dome windows and soaks in their red cedar hot tubs to relax and recharge. **Governors Island** offers your pick of 20 wellness experiences at **QCNY**—opening March 4—including several saunas, and massage and treatment offerings. Additionally, opening this spring, the spa at the new **Aman New York** hotel will offer three stories of rejuvenating experiences, including a 65-foot-long indoor swimming pool, two spa houses, and an outdoor terrace.



21. A More Accessible New York City:

New York City is on a mission to make the destination more accessible to all. Some of the biggest Broadway shows including *The Lion King*, *Aladdin*, and *Come From Away* have implemented **autism-friendly performances**, with adjustments such as reducing any jarring sounds and eliminating strobe or spotlights that shine into the audience. **Contento**, a restaurant that opened in East Harlem last June, was designed to be accessible for all.

Accommodations include lower bar counters for those using wheelchairs, a QR code on the menu that people with visual impairments can scan with their phones to have the menu read out loud to them, and the bathroom on the same floor as the restaurant instead of down a flight of stairs. The **Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum** offers many free access programs for visitors with developmental disabilities, taking place on select Sundays throughout the year, alternating each month between virtual and in-person programming.

22. World-Famous Sporting Events:

New York City is home to some of the greatest sporting events across the globe, for both spectators and participants. The **NYCRuns Brooklyn Marathon & Half Marathon** will take place April 24, offering runners the chance to explore the borough from North Williamsburg and along the waterfront, before finishing in Prospect Park. On May 1, bike enthusiasts can take to the streets in the **TD 5 Boro Bike Tour**, experiencing New York City streets without any car traffic. Since 1978, the top tennis stars have played in the **US Open** at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, Queens, with this year's tournament taking place August 29–September 11. And, the sporting event most synonymous with NYC is the **TCS New York City Marathon**, an annual 26.2-mile run taking place November 6 that also takes competitors through all five boroughs.

The **Key to NYC** program mandates proof of full vaccination for staff and all patrons age 5 and older for indoor dining, indoor fitness, indoor entertainment, and certain meeting spaces. Patrons should visit each location's website for additional information on safety protocols.

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