



# MICE & TOURISM around the World e-Magazine

ONLINE since 1997 vol. 27, issue 6, June 2024

**Southern Mice Expo 2024 - SRI LANKA**

**Over-Crowding, Over-Populated, OVER TOURSIM**

**The DIGITAL FUTURE of TOURISM e-TOURISM AND e-HOLIDAYS**

**The Year of LAOS Welcomes Over 1 Million Tourists in 2024**

**NEW YORK TOURIST TAX Revenue Exceeds 2019 Levels**





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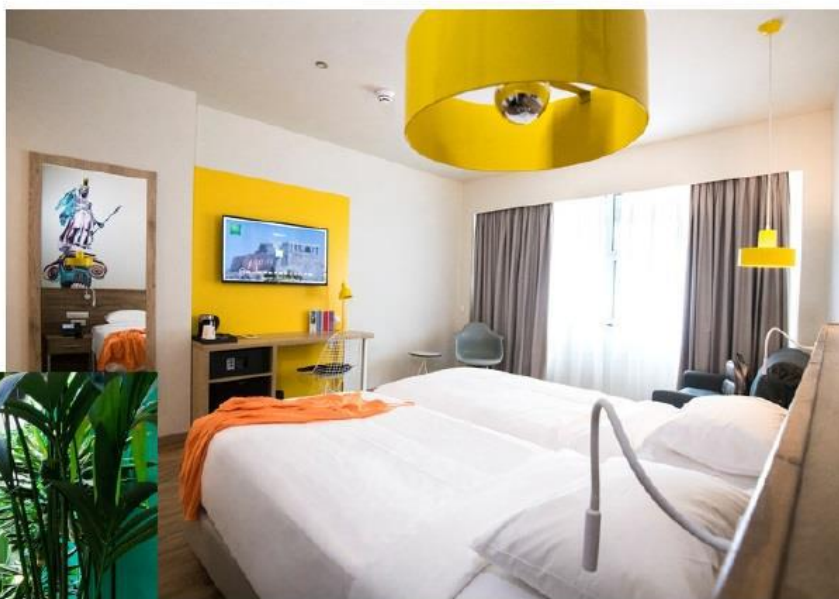
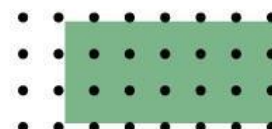


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# Message from Caroline-Artemis

Welcome to the June edition of **MICE & TOURISM around the World** e-Magazine  
we are already half way through 2024!

By being in the travel, tourism and MICE industry, our first and most important job is hospitality.

Without positive hospitality our businesses would fail, our destinations would not have tourists, hotels would not have guests, airlines would not have passengers.

Would you stay or go anywhere that you did not feel welcome?

Hospitality is at the core of what we do.

On my recent trip to Sri Lanka, I was overwhelmed by the kindness, charm and hospitality of the people.

It was as if there was a collective sense of purpose to ensure that as a visitor to their homeland, they sincerely and genuinely offered their hospitality in order that I would enjoy every single moment I was there. And they succeeded!

Being welcoming and pleasant to each other should come naturally as a human response, but often in business it can sometimes be a challenge. As humans, when discovering or exploring some new it is in our nature to be open, social and intrigued.



Offering hospitality to visitors in their home, to a destination, at an event, onto an aircraft, etc, the golden rules of hospitality need to be met; atmosphere, customer service, guest expectations, attention to detail, and flexibility.

We may not always agree with people, places or policies, but if we can stay respectful and hospitable to each other in everything we do, then the world is definitely a better place and also in our mind, body and spirit.

Thank you Sri Lanka for every level of hospitality you showered upon me and indeed our group. You remind us that the simple things in life are truly the best and they are almost always free to give and reap the greatest rewards.

'Ayubowan' ( ආයුබෝවන් ) / Long Life

Enjoy the June edition!

**Caroline-Artemis Laspas**  
co-founder & editor

**07-20 Southern Mice Expo 2024  
SRI LANKA**



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**SOUTHERN**  
**MICE**  
**EXPO 2024**  
SRI LANKA

# Business





# SOUTHERN MICE EXPO 2024

A Shining Example for Mice in the Indian Ocean's Jewel that is...

## SRI LANKA

by Caroline-Artemis Laspas

# Forum





The Sri Lankan Convention Bureau hosted 115 hosted buyers and international media from around the world for the 3rd edition of this highly targeted and successful MICE expo.

With the aim of promoting this jewel of a nation, while allowing invited buyers to meet local suppliers as well as discover the many varied destinations and venues on offer for MICE events across the southern region of the country.



The event kicked off in Colombo, the capital where buyers arrived at the international airport with a VIP welcome of refreshments and fresh flower garlands.

An overnight stay at the Negombo Goldi Sands Resort Hotel began with a traditional Sri Lankan cultural dance and the lighting of blessing candles.

**MICE & TOURISM around the World e-Magazine** were honoured to be invited to cover this fabulous event which has previously taken place in the northern region of Jaffa, and Colombo city.

As we gathered together from around the world, we had the first taste of the monsoon weather but that did not dampen the exceptionally warm welcome from the staff at the Negombo Goldi Sands Resort.

Located right on the beach, north of Colombo and approximately 20mins from the airport the hotel is open plan and offers sea views and a large outdoor swimming pool that reaches into the hotel lobby!



The buffet lunch and dinner included an array of cuisine types, and so the journey began into the delights of real Sri Lankan and Indian food. This time allowed us to meet new and old friends over a relaxed environment. A tour of the rooms and ballroom also highlighted the MICE offering at the hotel if you wished to keep your event in house.







A city tour the following day allowed us to discover the many sights Colombo has to offer including the Independence Square, Parliament building, Pettah Market, Jami Ul Alfar Mosque and views of the stunning and unique famous city icon, the Lotus Tower.



Lunch was hosted at the Hilton Colombo with a stunning cultural music and dance display. An inspection of rooms allowed us to see the high standards expected from the Hilton group. The rooms also offered incredible views across the city, the old Parliament building and the beautifully green lush gardens of the hotel.

A presentation in the beautiful cream ballroom complete with huge glittering chandeliers saw another spectacular display of foods from around the region with all tastes catered for; with dhal, curry, kottu, biriyani, stews, fish dishes, delicate petit four deserts, local fruits and traditional delicacies.

Our next stop took us south to the resort town of Bentota, an hour and a half drive from the capital and the location of the B2B forum the following day. Buyers stayed in the Heritance Ahungalla Hotel and the Taj Bentota Resort & Spa.



Arrival at the Heritance Hotel was with a fanfare of cultural drums and dances as well as welcome drink, and a refreshing wet towel. The renowned Sri Lankan hospitality was clearly well earned as nothing was ever a problem and always with a smile.

With time to rest, a brief walk along the beach saw storm clouds gather against the wild sea with rolling waves crashing onto shore.









In the evening the Taj Bentota Resort hosted the Business Forum and Welcome Dinner. Present were the Minister of Tourism for Lands, Sports & Youth Affairs the Hon. Harbin Fernando (who it turns out is a party animal and great singer, who knows how to get the party going!); the Director of the Sri Lankan Convention Bureau, Mr Krishantha Fernando; the Chairman of the Sri Lankan Tourism Promotion Board, Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu; the Chairman of the Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism & Hotel Management, Mr Shirantha Peiris.



With presentation videos highlighting the variety of tourism opportunities on offer in Sri Lanka as well as news on the MICE sector and upcoming projects for the country in order to further promote its growing MICE and tourism sector, (look out for more on this in upcoming editions), the Forum concluded with a Q&A and questions from the floor. The buffet dinner was yet again a magnificent display of traditional cuisine from the region and with an entire room dedicated to deserts! The band began and soon we were on our feet singing and dancing! We also attempted to learn a traditional Sri Lankan dance, with not much success, but with lots of laughter and fun, the evening was also made more special with the singing talents of His Excellency the Minister!



Bright and early the next morning the B2B event took place at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel, Bentota, with a welcome address the candle lighting blessing, followed by stunning displays of traditional Sri Lankan dances, re-enacting cultural tales.

Speeches were made by the Minister of Tourism for Lands, Sports & Youth Affairs the Hon. Harbin Fernando; Chairman of the Sri Lankan Convention Bureau, Mr. Thisum Jayasurya; the Director of the Sri Lankan Convention Bureau, Mr Krishantha Fernando; the Chairman of the Sri Lankan Tourism Promotion Board, Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu; the Chairman of the Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism & Hotel Management, Mr Shirantha Peiris; President of the Sri Lankan Association of Conference, Exhibition & Event Organisers (SLAPCEO), Mr Imran Hassan, Head of Worldwide Sales & Distribution at Sri Lankan Airlines, Mr Dimuthu Tennakoon.





From inspiring speeches, the productive day got underway with back-to-back meetings with locally invited suppliers from the country's tourism sector. A networking lunch allowing for no opportunity to be missed.

The evening beach party was transferred indoors due to the weather, but that did not dampen the spirits of the positive day or the enjoyment of the evening. With a beach theme, we had all been given flip flops and traditional batik wraparound skirts for the ladies and beach shirts for the men, so we were set to party the night away Sri Lankan style!



The following day, the Post Tour began as we travelled further south. With bright warm sunshine, we arrived in the famous Dutch port town of Galle. En-route however, we past several monuments including the memorial to those who died in the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami. Sri Lanka lost 30,000 citizens on that fateful morning.

The Dutch port of Galle is a UNESCO world heritage site and famous for its fort and white lighthouse. Over centuries the town has been enriched by different occupiers; the Dutch and English are dominate among them, leaving their influence across the historic site.



With more to see, we drove to the newest congress centre of the southern region, the Magam Ruhunupura International Convention Centre (MRICC). The state of the art centre offers various meeting facilities including the main auditorium with capacity for 1500 seats; a restaurant and cafe for 500 seats, a grand ballroom with capacity for 750 seats, committee rooms for 400 pax and a conference room for 120 people. On the mezzanine level there are media rooms, roof terrace and VIP lounge. The floor to ceiling glass windows let in masses of light while giving wonderful views of the green landscape beyond.





Just 15mins away from the MRICC is the luxury Shanghai-La Hambentota Resort. Entering this world renowned brand property took Sri Lanka to another level. Welcomed with refreshing towels and cold drinks we enjoyed a VIP welcome with traditional dancers and music performed for our arrival.



After a brief rest and a 20min dip in the pool, dinner was arranged at the DoubleTree by Hilton Weerawila Rajawarna Resort, approx 45mins drive from the Shangri-La Hambentota.



The picturesque retreat is located on the banks of Weerawila Lake, close to Weerawila Tissa Sanctuary and Bundala.

Designed so almost every room had a view and despite the sun having set, the hotel still shone brightly, with stunning interior decor blending natural colours with sophisticated elegant seating and artwork.

A site inspection of the rooms highlighted the many positives the luxury hotel offers as a base for an incentive trip, event or leisure trip. An outdoor buffet feast was spread across the open deck and garden with a wide variety of cuisine to choose from.

Up early the next morning for the highlight of the post tour; a visit to the Udawalawe National Park, home to the largest density of wild Sri Lankan Asian elephants.

Upon arrival we did not hesitate to transfer to the convoy of 6-seater jeeps, such was our excitement! Within minutes of entering the park boundary we saw elephants and almost at each turn there was another or a herd.

[www.heritancehotels.com](http://www.heritancehotels.com)









Our tour was by Niluka Safari ([www.nilukasafari.com](http://www.nilukasafari.com)) who were great at stopping the jeeps for photos of these majestic, calm and beautiful creatures. At a water hole, a small herd of elephants fed and bathed including young calves.

Being in the tourism sector, many of us had been on safaris before, but like me, their experience although amazing was seeing wild animals as small dots in amongst the vegetation. Here you are up close and personal, making this a unique Sri Lankan experience, a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and one we will never forget.



Located just outside the National Park is the **Craft Tunnel Retreat**. <https://crafttunnel.lk/retreat/>

Their ethos is this:

*The land you stand on now, belongs to elephants and all living creatures.*

*Whether we like it or not, we are invaders of this land.*

*Yet, we created this pace without harming any living or non-living being who owns this place.*

*We didn't cut a single tree to build this space nor did we use any pesticides, wood preservative or artificial colours, in the name of the aesthetics or beauty.*

*We do not believe in disrupting and unbalancing the natural systems for personal benefit.*

*As human beings, we must learn to co-exist, share this earth with all beings,  
and thrive together as ONE.*

*For us 'tourism' is not an industry, it is the ART of loving all beings beyond yourself.*





Here we discovered a perfect mix of pottery shopping and a buffet lunch of traditional Sri Lankan dishes, including yoghurt made from Water Buffalo milk. After 3 bowls and a bit of retail therapy we headed to our next treat!

The Elephant Transit Home was established in 1995 to rehabilitate orphaned elephant calves. It was the first of its kind in the world and over the years has successfully reintroduced 162 elephants back into the wild. There is limited human contact between the calves and carers as this can delay the calves development and allows the elephants to learn the skills they need to thrive in the wild.



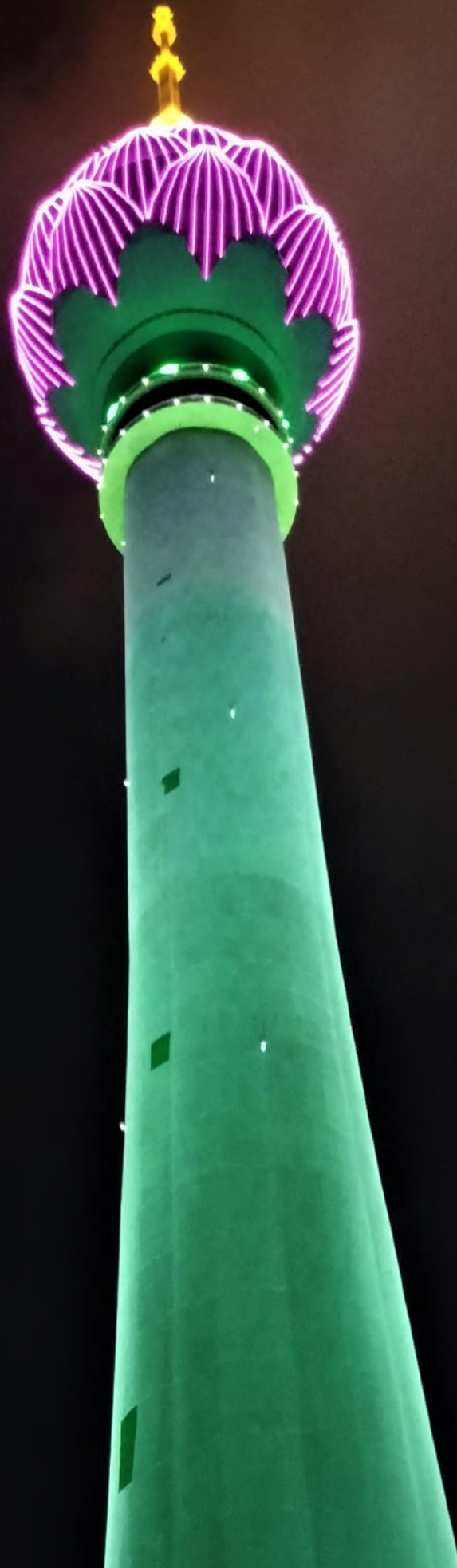
Our arrival was timed for the lunchtime feeding session. We sat waiting on the viewing platform for the babies to appear. Then, from the other side of the enclosure, 3 small round baby elephants came running to the feeding station where they were fed formula infant milk through a plastic tube and funnel.

It was an elephant kinder garden with some larger infants demanding more milk and when refused, would trumpet loudly in annoyance, accompanied with naughty behaviour like kicking a bucket, to really make a point! A truly magical experience.



[www.shangri-la.com](http://www.shangri-la.com)









Back at the Shangri-La Hambentota, a swim in the late afternoon sunshine, before the farewell dinner at the hotel.

With stunning almost endless displays of food and dishes including a room for salads, sushi, cheeses and deserts, there was even more chat, dancing and laughter with new friends and colleagues.

Departing from southern Sri Lanka with a multitude of memories, inspiration and new opportunities for business, the post tour success was also due to the expert and outstanding tour guides. As part of the group in Bus 2, huge thanks to Riyancy for his enthusiasm and simple love for his country while adding his own informative, funny, and engaging tales and facts along the way.

The SOUTHERN MICE EXPO 2024 was extremely well organised and maximised buyers time together in both a formal and relaxed way leading to lasting friendships and plenty of motivating business opportunities.

A huge gratitude of thanks to the Sri Lankan Convention Bureau's for an outstanding event and for giving [MICE & TOURISM around the World e-Magazine](#) the opportunity to discover and explore the unique and beautiful Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is a jewel of a destination in the Indian Ocean and a true gem for MICE events.

With a unique culture, traditions, cuisine and destinations, combined with the dedicated professionalism, attention to detail and teamwork enhanced by exceptional enchanting hospitality, it is all you need for a successful MICE in Sri Lanka.

**SRI LANKA – YOU'LL BE BACK FOR MORE**



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# AIRLINES

NEWS from around the  
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## 5 BILLION PASSENGERS EXPECTED AROUND THE WORLD THIS YEAR



2024 is expected to see record numbers of people travelling around the world, beating the previous highs of 2019 figures.

Airlines forecast carrying nearly 5 billion passengers around the world in 2024. The International Air Transport Association (IATA), general meeting in Dubai, UAE, also forecasts that companies will generate a global net profit of UK£24 billion in 2024 on a turnover without precedent of UK£778 billion.

## RYANAIR, VUELING, EASYJET... UK\$128 MILLION FINE FOR LOW-COST COMPANIES THAT CHARGE FOR HAND BAGGAGE

The Spanish Ministry of Consumer Affairs has sanctioned 4 airline companies for the practice of charging for hand baggage after many complaints from associations.

Many low cost airlines conduct this practice, which has now resulted in Ryanair, Vueling, Easyjet and Volotea receiving in Spain fines of over UK£128 million. The fines also include for the charging of the seat when a passenger travels with dependent people, such as disabled people or children, or the ban on paying in cash for the purchase of tickets at airports.



## DOGS CAN FLY TOO! BARK Air is a dedicated airline for dogs!



The idea is to put dogs first and then their owners. The flights are operated using Gulfstream G5s and are not booked to capacity, giving dogs and owners plenty of room. Calming aids are on offer onboard like: pheromone, music, warm lavender scented refreshment towels, etc to ensure a calm smooth flight. There are also treat bags and poop bags on offer.

Once onboard the dogs will be served a drink to help with ear pain from cabin pressure during take-off and landing.

They will also be served BARK-branded treats, snacks, and surprises during the flight.

BARK Air has been launched due to demand from dog owners wanting a simple and convenient solution to travelling long distances with their dogs.

## CHINA'S CHANG'E 6 MISSION ENTERS LUNAR ORBIT

Chang'e 6 has entered the lunar orbit, ready for landing on the far side of the moon in order to collect samples to return to Earth.

Chang'e 6 will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> probe to land on the far side of the moon and the first to bring back rock samples. The last time China landed on the far side of the moon was with Chang'e 4 in 2019.

## GULFSTREAM G650 AND G650ER SURPASS 1 MILLION FLYING HOURS

Gulfstream's G650 and G650ER have surpassed 1 million flight hours.

With over 560 aircraft in service worldwide, the high-performing fleet confirms its status as an iconic aircraft programme after their inauguration in 2012 and 2014 respectively.





The aircraft transformed the business aviation sector and in 2014, the G650 won the Robert J. Collier Trophy for performance, safety and efficiency innovations. Today it still sets industry standards. In 2022, the aircraft flew using 100% sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), a business-jet industry first.

The G650 and G650ER have jointly achieved over 125 city-pair speed records, while the G650ER holds the record for the farthest fastest business jet flight in history!

Both aircraft have flexible, award-winning interiors that provides the Gulfstream Cabin Experience with 100% fresh air, an ultralow cabin altitude and abundant natural light from 16 Gulfstream Panoramic Oval Windows for up to 19 passengers.



In 2023 Gulfstream and Honeywell upgraded the systems with the Primus Epic Block 3 avionics upgrade, that provided more tools to help pilots make informed safety decisions during flights.

The G650 can fly up to 7,000 nautical miles/12,964km at Mach 0.85 and 6,000nm/11,112km at its high-speed cruise of Mach 0.90. The G650ER can fly up to 7,500 nm/13,890km at Mach 0.85 and 6,400nm/11,853km at Mach 0.90.

## PORTER AIRLINES LARGEST EVER SUMMER SCHEDULE

Porter Airlines has launched its most substantial summer schedule ever, including up to 176 daily flights to 27 destinations across North America taking off from Toronto.

By August, Porter will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest carrier flying from Toronto Pearson International Airport, with up to 74 daily flights to 16 destinations across Canada and the USA. Every flight from Toronto-Pearson uses a brand new 132-seat Embraer E195-E2.

Routes from Toronto-Pearson include US destinations like Florida, Las Vegas, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Canadian cities include Halifax, Québec City, St. John's, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Victoria, Winnipeg and Saskatoon.

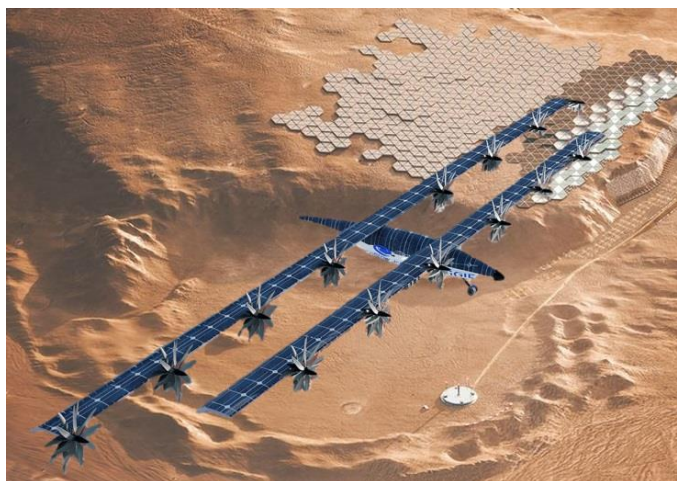
Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is still a convenient gateway for Porter's extensive Eastern Canada and Northeastern U.S. network with up to 102 daily flights to 15 destinations.



Flights from Billy Bishop are operated by the 78-seat De Havilland Dash 8-400 aircraft, offering non-stop routes to popular destinations include New York-Newark, Chicago-Midway, Boston, Halifax, Washington D.C. Dulles and Thunder Bay.

Connecting flights via Toronto-Pearson gives access to Europe with partner airline Air Transat.

## MARS PLANE MAY HELP FIND TRACE OF LIFE



MAGGIE - Mars Aerial and Ground Intelligent Explorer is being created by NASA with a view to searching for traces of life on Mars. Mars methane is hard to find, but MAGGIE may offer a solution.

The study will explore its feasibility for travelling over Mars, although it is unlikely it would ever become a reality yet.

NASA's Ingenuity helicopter, the first heavier-than-air vehicle to soar on Mars, finished 72 flights after arriving with the Perseverance rover in February 2021. While Ingenuity had a hard landing in January 2024 that grounded it forever, there's plenty of potential for more flying vehicles in years to come.

MAGGIE is designed to operate over a Martian year (nearly 2 Earth years) around the Red Planet. It would fly 1,000m above the surface, scanning for methane, which could indicate a sign of life, although after decades of searching, scientists have yet to find a permanent trace. It appears briefly and the readings fluctuate. Watch this space!



## BOEING SAFETY CONCERNING

Aircraft manufacturer Boeing's safety record has seen widespread coverage over recent years. Questions as to the safety of the aircraft design, or defects being repairs have been front page news. These all following fatal air crashes.



The latest defect is in Boeing's 777 airplanes which it is said could cause 'fire or explosion' if not resolved.

A metal plate attached to a fuel tank vent on the wings of the 777 was installed without an electrical bond, potentially resulting in increased static electricity which could cause a fire or explosion in the jet's fuel tanks.

This would affect all variants of the 777 widebody aircraft. The 777 is the world's most built widebody airliner, with nearly 1,800 delivered to operators around the world since 1995.

## SAUDI ARABIA AVIATION SECTOR TO GROW TENFOLD

Saudi Arabia has presented its new general aviation roadmap at the 2024 Future Aviation Forum, which will see the business jet segment grow to UK£1.56 billion in total sector GDP by 2030.



The roadmap covers the business jet segment, including charter, private, and corporate jets, and will support Saudi Arabia's development as a global high-value business and tourist destination. Last year Saudi Arabia revised its 2030 tourism target from 100 up to 150 million visitors by 2030.

General aviation is vital to growing high-value sectors of the Saudi economy, including tourism, business and entertainment events.

The roadmap will support private aviation aircraft owners, lessors, investors, operators and service providers through coordinated infrastructure investment and regulatory streamlining.

FAF 2024 returned to Riyadh from 20-22 May 2024, bringing together 5,000 experts and aviation leaders from over 100 countries, including ministers, regulators, manufacturers, airlines, and airports.

## WESTJET GROUP 1ST FLIGHT CALGARY - SEOUL

WestJet Group has launched an inaugural flight to Seoul from its global hub in Calgary, Canada, providing a direct link between Alberta and South Korea.

The flight confirms WestJet's commitment to expanding its 787 global hub at YYC Calgary International Airport, into Asia.



The route will operate a 787 Dreamliner 3 times per week through to 27th October 2024 and will return in Spring 2025.

## AIRBALTIC TO TRIAL LIQUID HYDROGEN PROPULSION



airBaltic in collaboration with hydrogen-propulsion creator Fokker Next Gen is to trial a new plane with a clean-sheet, liquid hydrogen-fuelled narrowbody aircraft.

The commercial aircraft will mainly operate on liquid hydrogen, with a range of up to 2,500km.

A converted Fokker 100 prototype will make the first hydrogen-powered flight in 2028, with full commercial operations by 2035.

airBaltic has one of the youngest fleets in Europe but recognises the need for new technologies in order to deliver aviation's long-term commitments. The airline currently operates 47 A220-300s and intends to operate 100 by 2030.

## GLOW-IN-THE DARK DISHES ON MAIDEN SPACEFLIGHT MENU

The world's first floating spaceport is scheduled to take off on its maiden flight in 2025 run by the luxury spaceflight company Space Perspective.

Powered by bio-fuel, with capacity for 8 passengers and a pilot, the Spaceship Neptune will reach 30km above earth.





On board passengers can expect a spectacular meal prepared and served by the Danish Michelin star chef Rasmus Munk, which will see glow-in-dark stars made from aerogel and jellyfish protein.

Tickets for a space on Spaceship Neptune cost UK£387,000 each. Over 1,000 places have already been booked.

## NORSE ATLANTIC AIRWAYS NEW YORK-ATHENS FLIGHTS



Norse Atlantic Airways has launched a flight from New York-JFK to Athens, Greece. The new route joins the New York to London Gatwick, Paris, Berlin, Rome, and Oslo routes.

Initially operating 5 times a week using a Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft, with seats equipped with a state-of-the-art personal entertainment system. Cabin choices include Economy and Norse Premium – with a 43" seat pitch and 12" recline.

There are 3 fare options. Light: Value option for budget travellers. Classic: Offering additional benefits and services. Flextra: Includes maximum baggage allowance, 2 meal services, enhanced airport and onboard experiences, and increased ticket flexibility.

## FIJI AIRWAYS BECOMES 15<sup>TH</sup> ONEWORLD MEMBER

Fiji Airways has joined oneworld, becoming its 15th full-member airline. For the past 5 years it has been a oneworld connect partner. Oneworld has welcomed Fiji Airways membership since the South Pacific carrier has added a valuable service in the oneworld alliance.







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# OVERCROWDING, OVER-POPULATED, OVER TOURSIM

by Dimitri Laspas



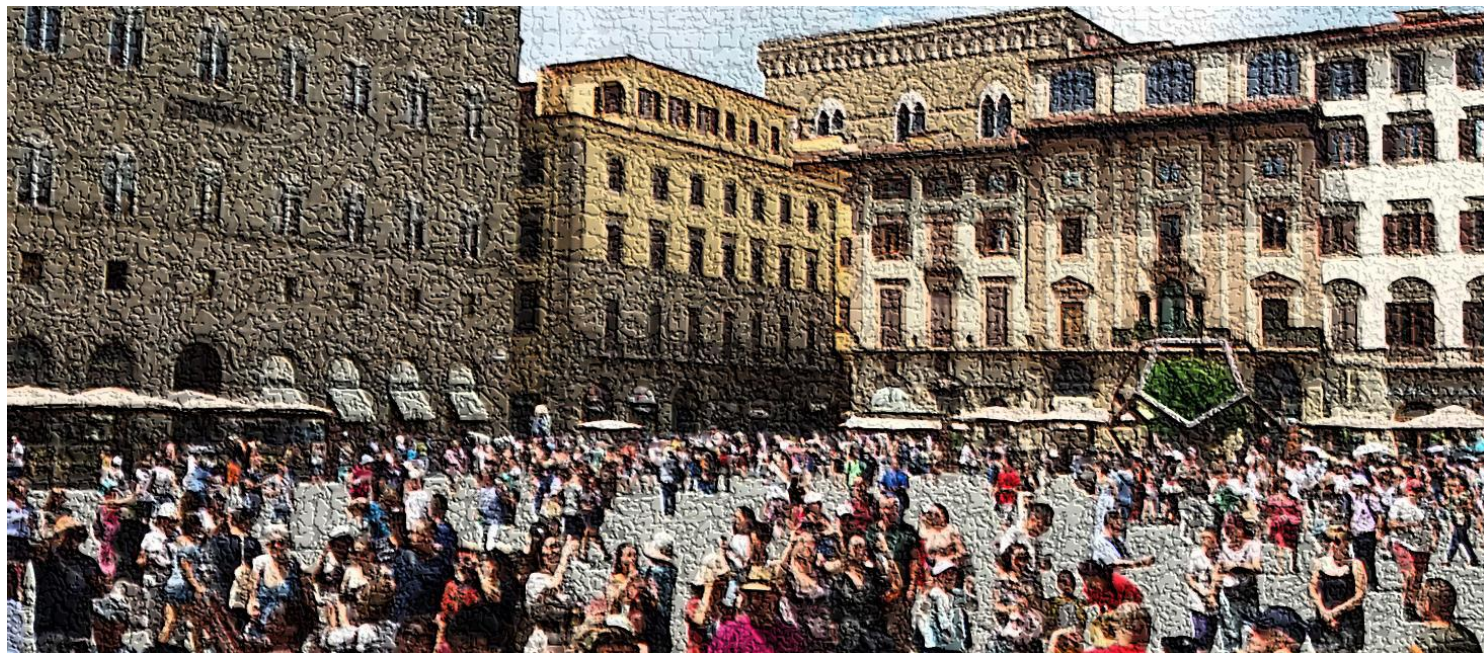


**It has become too much for many of the world's top tourist spots, during the peak summer seasons.**

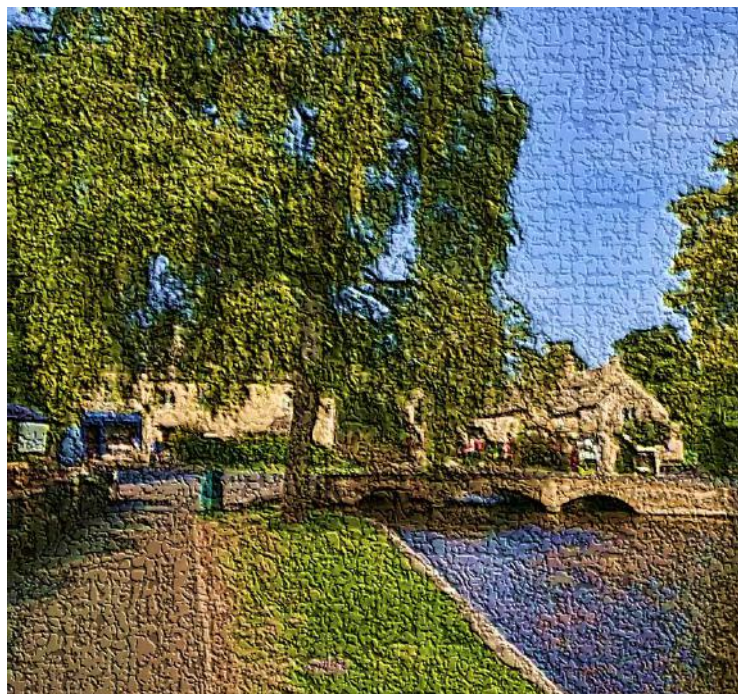
We have heard of the restrictions from Barcelona, Venice and other big city destinations, but now it is the smaller ones who are also saying enough is enough with many introducing new rules to try to restrict the number and flow of tourists to their doors.

This surely benefits all concerned; residents can go about their daily lives, without being over-run by noisy tourists and tourists get to see the destinations in a measured way and not jam packed with people which cause human traffic jams on narrow alleys and paths.

Here are some of the latest restrictions brought in to help control tourism.



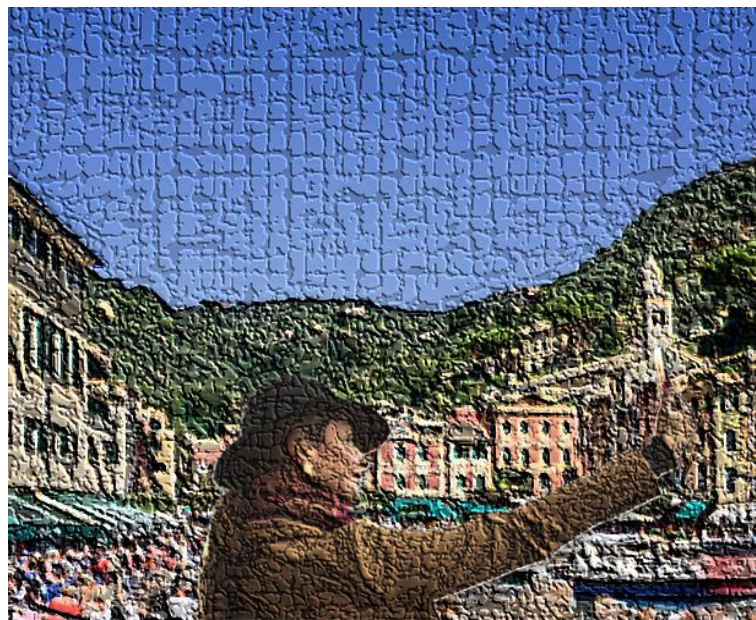
#### **UK VILLAGE BANS COACHES**



The most well-known UK Cotswold village of Bourton-on-the-Water is to ban coaches passing through the village's centre over concerns of resident and tourist safety and to reduce traffic congestion in the village centre.

In 2023, 160,000 tourists visited the village by coach. The allocated coach car park has been closed permanently since the beginning of this year and no alternative has been assigned for coach parties.

#### **SELFIE FINES IN ITALY'S PORTOFINO**



The picturesque hillside village of Portofino in Italy with its colourful buildings and quay, has introduced 'no-waiting zones' to prevent tourists from stopping to take selfies and blocking paths and roads. This is the towns response to overtourism during the summer season when it receives over 10,000 visitors compared to the 400 residents.

If caught in a no-waiting zone, between 10:30am and 6pm from now until 15th October, the fine is UK£230.



## HALLSTATT - AUSTRIA

Nestled in the Austrian mountains is the picturesque village of Hallstatt, noted as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Tourists have always flocked to the village, but when you add into the mix, that the village is the basis for the village seen in the Disney film 'Frozen', all of a sudden, you have the world arrive on your doorstep! In addition, it was featured in a South Korean film, which brought even more eager Asian tourists to see it for real.

Such is the town's popularity abroad, that in 2012, a full scale replica of Hallstatt was built in China.

Local residents have protested the over tourism by blocking the tunnel that leads into the town, placing a large fence along the roadside most popular for photos, as well as limiting the number of tour buses allowed into the town each day.

It is not only the quantity of tourists that concerns local residents, it is also the quality. Locals are also annoyed at the added rubbish left behind by tourists after they leave, meaning the locals have to tidy up after them.

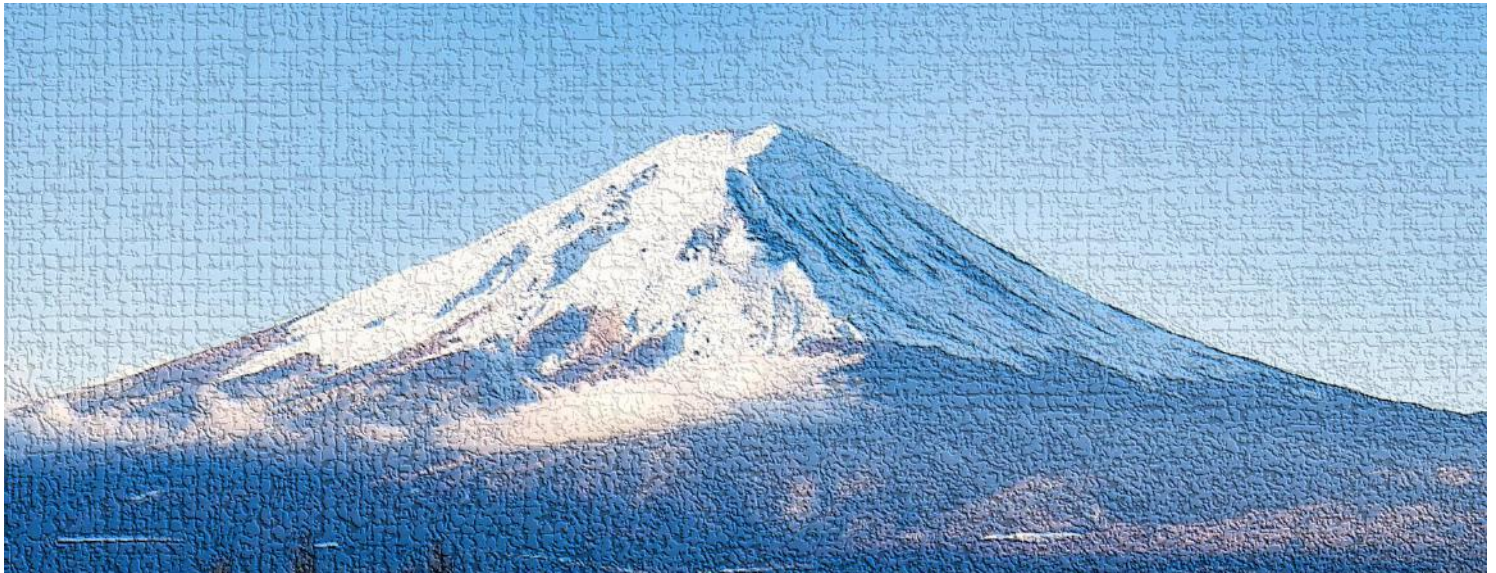
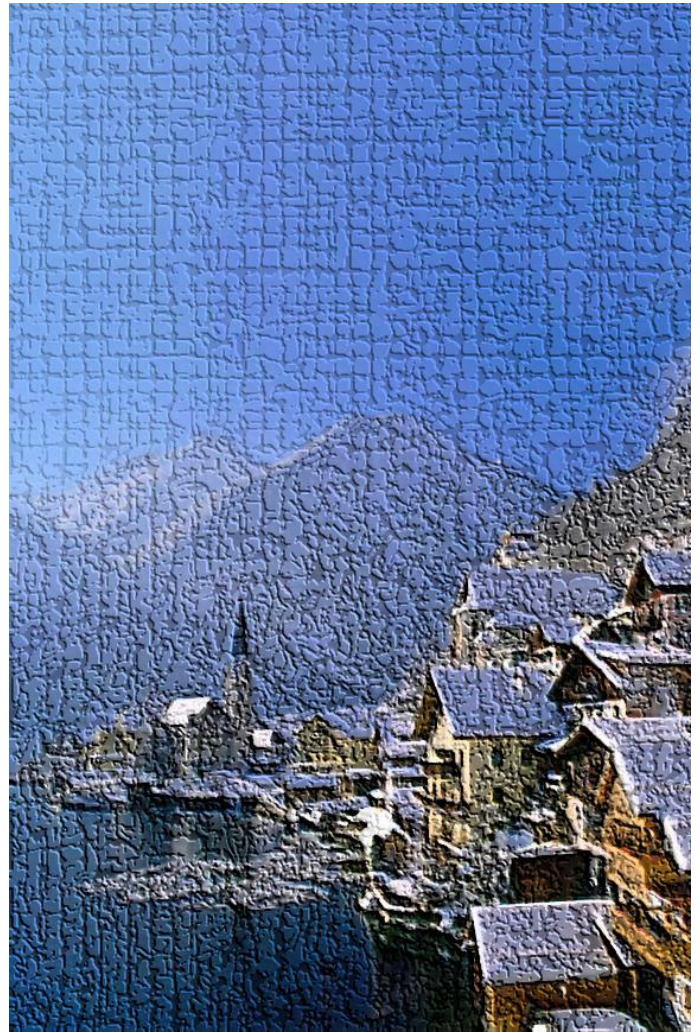
## MOUNT FUJI – JAPAN, BLOCKED

At a common location in the Japanese town of Fujikawaguchiko, where tourists have frequently stopped to take a photo of the iconic Mount Fuji mountain seen rise above the roof of the local convenience store.

It is one of the best views of the iconic mountain. However, a new black mesh screen of 2.5m high and stretching for 20m along the sidewalk has been erected to stop tourists taking photos.

Locals had been annoyed that tourists would trespass on gardens to get more photos and overcrowding was becoming an issue.

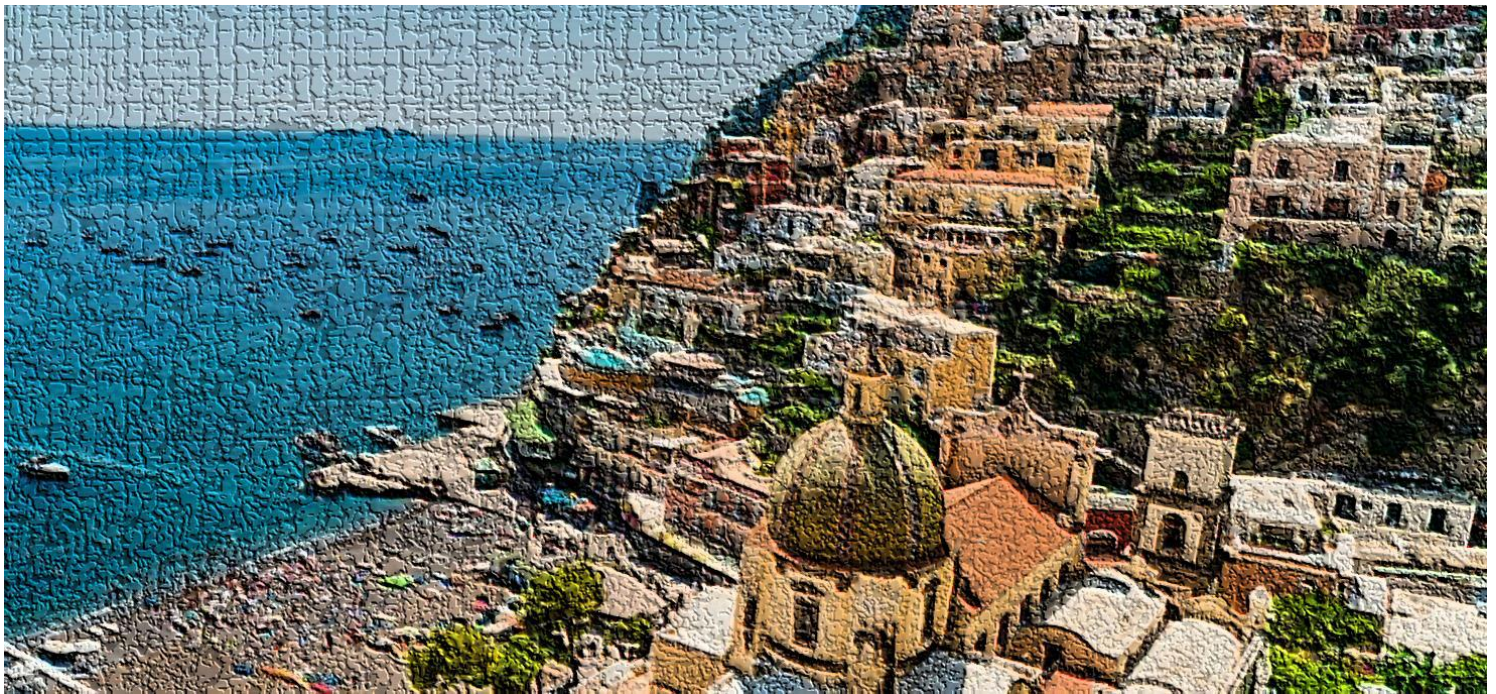
There are still many other places tourists can find the perfect souvenir of the famous Mt. Fuji. Those wishing to climb to the summit of the mountain now have to book in advance due to record numbers, overcrowding, littering and safety concerns.



# Discover Cyprus

## [www.visitcyprus.com](http://www.visitcyprus.com)





## THE AMALFI COAST

With its stunning coastal views and crystal clear turquoise bays, the 35km road between Vietri sul Mare and Positano, can become a traffic headache.

To restrict numbers of cars, a number plate restriction system has been introduced between June and September. Car number plates ending in an odd number can access the road on odd dates while even number plates access on even days of the month.



## THAILAND – MAYA BAY RESTRICTIONS

The small 200m long by 15m wide beach in Maya Bay in Thailand, is one of the most beautiful locations in Thailand and was made famous by the film 'The Beach' starring Leonardo DiCaprio.

Tourists have flooded the area every year with devastating consequences. With so much swimming and snorkelling and footfall, the corals and marine life began to die and the water was badly polluted by so many small boats mooring in the bay.

In 2020 the beach was closed for maintenance and to restore the eco-system of the bay. It reopened in 2022 with strict rules for boats and tourists.

Now in 2024 it will close again for 2 months as part of the National Parks plan to preserve the recently recovered maritime ecosystem.

When it does re-open the same restrictions will be in place as beforehand when it closed; walking will not be permitted on the beach; swimming, sightseeing, and taking pictures will be permitted from behind the roped line.

Anything is good in moderation.

It is how we find the right balance that is difficult especially when local residents still need to continue their day-to-day lives.

Back in 2004, MICE & TOURISM around the World e-Magazine, wrote an article questioning if Europe was ready to welcome mass tourism mainly from Asia and Russia. After 20 years from that prediction, the proof is that Europe failed, blinded by the flow of money but ignoring the consequences.

In addition these small destinations rely on tourism as a pillar of their community's economy and a source of jobs. Added to this, more and more tourists wish to travel, both from traditional markets as well as fast growing new ones like India and China's middle classes, who are increasing global tourist arrivals tenfold as well as raising tourism revenues worldwide. We need to find and address the balance and fast.



# TRAVEL MEET *Asia*



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# M.I.C.E & Events

News from Meetings, Incentives,  
Conferences, Exhibitions,

Venues & Events





# POSIDONIA 2024 UNVEILS COMPREHENSIVE CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Leading Experts to Set Global Maritime Agenda in Athens from 3-7 June

Posidonia 2024, the world's most prestigious shipping exhibition, commenced from 3-7 June at the Athens Metropolitan Expo for a week packed with more than 65 thought-provoking and informative seminars and conferences where a strong line-up of prominent industry leaders and decision makers covered a spectrum of critical topics shaping the future of shipping.



With Posidonia known as the Home of Shipping, the 'TradeWinds Shipowners Forum' once again attracted much of the attention. This year the forum delved into the roles of shipowners, charterers, financiers, and regulators in fostering a new paradigm against a backdrop of geopolitical turmoil, economic flux, and climate crisis considerations. Distinguished leaders explored the push for cutting-edge technologies and eco-friendly fuels in relation to the need of shipping companies to maintain robust financial health.

Coinciding with World Environment Day, the 'HELMEPA Conference' delved into sustainability and climate issues impacting the industry. Top experts discussed the impact of climate change on maritime operations, fostering awareness and strategies for sustainability. The conference featured a high-level panel discussion -exclusively for shipowners- that explored the multifaceted impacts of climate change on global shipping, covering both operational challenges and financial implications fostering awareness and igniting actionable strategies for resilience and sustainability.

Experts and market participants convened to discuss the impact of geopolitics, changing trade dynamics, and energy transition on shipping markets at the Global Commodity Insights Forum". They focused on issues around the increased geopolitical tensions and their impact on commodity trade dynamics and freight markets.

With such a robust and diverse programme of knowledge-sharing events, Posidonia 2024 was again an unparalleled gathering of industry leaders, fostering dialogue and innovation to propel the shipping industry towards a sustainable and prosperous future for the global maritime community.

## GDS-MOVEMENT APPOINTS MS. JENNIFER JENSEN AS UK RELATIONSHIP MANAGER

The Global Destination Sustainability Movement (GDS-Movement), a pioneering, data-driven international change agency that catalyses socio-economic and environmental transformation in cities and regions worldwide, proudly welcomes Jennifer Jensen to its team as the UK Relationship Manager. She joins the GDS-Movement UK team to further enhance and expand its exciting initiatives.

Jennifer brings over two decades of rich experience in tourism and destination marketing to her new role.

In her role, Jennifer will apply her expertise to support UK Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) and Destination Development Partnerships (DDPs), leveraging GDS-Movement's experience in collaborating with 17 UK destinations to create and execute regenerative tourism strategies, measurement programmes, and storytelling initiatives.

GDS-Movement empowers tourism and events professionals worldwide with the mindsets, skill sets, and toolsets to co-create more regenerative and resilient destinations. With Jennifer joining the UK team, the movement is primed to advance its mission of championing sustainable tourism practices within the UK. By focusing on robust destination management, implementing clear planning strategies, and nurturing strong relationships with interested parties. GDS-Movement aims to foster the growth of the visitor economy while aiming for long-term sustainability and prosperity.

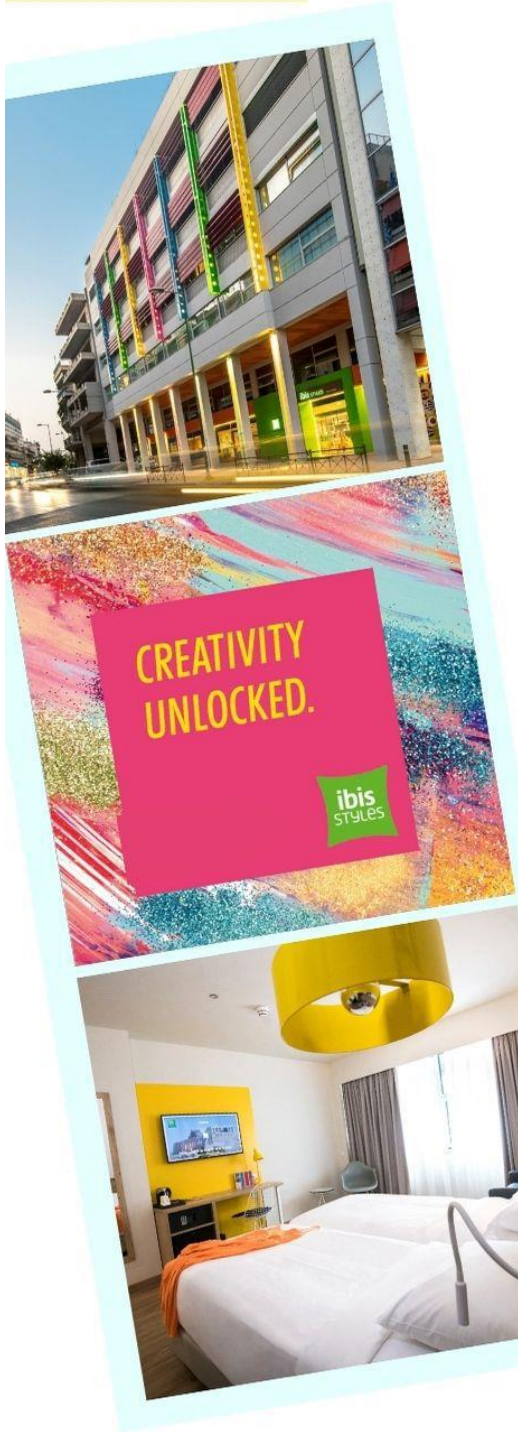


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## PATA FOCUS ON THE FUTURE OF TOURISM WORKFORCE

PATA, the Pacific Asia Travel Association, hosted nearly 200 international and local youth and industry delegates from more than 15 destinations at the 2024 PATA Youth Symposium.

The event was held on the 2nd day of the 2024 PATA Annual Summit in Macau, China, organised by the Macau Government Tourism Office, MGTO, and co-organised by SJM Resorts, S.A.

The PATA 2024 Youth Symposium, emphasised the importance of developing the next generation of tourism professionals, bringing together international opinion leaders, tourism educators and future tourism leaders.

## PATA YOUTH SYMPOSIUM 2024

In-person @PATA Annual Summit 2024

The programme consisted of expert keynotes, a panel discussion and roundtables, allowing young people to interact with industry leaders and colleagues, share their ideas and views, and learn about the latest trends in the industry.

The young delegates participated in roundtables with other aspiring tourism professionals. They were given the opportunity to express their opinions about the industry on the main stage, including what aspects of the industry would drive them to remain in the workforce and what improvements the industry could make to effectively recruit and retain tourism talent.

In order to broaden young people's vision of future careers and prepare them for the future, the latest session of the PATA Youth Symposium focused on the introduction of careers in the travel and tourism sector beyond the who are on the front line.

## IATA TO HOLD 81ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN DELHI

The International Air Transport Association, IATA, will hold its 81st Annual General Meeting in Delhi, India in 2025, with India low-cost operator IndiGo (6E) to be the host airline. The event will take place from 8-10 June. Delhi has previously hosted the IATA AGM twice before in 1958 and 1983.

The return of the Annual General Meeting to India takes place when Indian airlines are placing record aircraft orders over recent years. Last year IndiGo placed an order for 500 Airbus narrow-body aircraft, and orders for 30 A350-900s.





## IMEX Frankfurt 2024 SIMPLY A SUCCESS

The 2024 edition of IMEX Frankfurt marked a notable surge of confidence and business certainty in the global events industry this week. IMEX Frankfurt, which took place from 14-16 May, welcomed 12,000 event professionals of which over 4,000 were buyers. More than 60,000 meetings were pre-booked with thousands more taking place on the show floor.

Encouraging the next generation of event planners entering the sector was the focus of many conversations at the show. During the show, ICCA announced a new partnership with universities to provide scholarships, mentorships and networking opportunities for students and young event planners. In addition, the IMEX-MPI-MCI Future Leaders Forum marked its 22nd year.

Impact, IMEX's Talking Point for the next two years, was embraced by partners and exhibitors with Sarawak's vibrant, multi-sensory activations at the show entrances striking a friendly, welcoming note and others such as Singapore, Houston and Glasgow all launching different impact projects during the week.

New this year and a notable success was the dedicated Impact Zone in Hall 9, led by MICE Impact, a co-creative area that united planners, suppliers, and partners with a range of workshops, panels, and stakeholder discussions.

Next year's IMEX Frankfurt will take place **20 – 22 May 2025**

## MYANMAR NO LONGER TO HOST MISS GRAND INTERNATIONAL 2024

Miss Grand International 2024 will no longer be hosted in Myanmar. A new host nation will be announced soon. The Miss Grand International competition was founded by a Thai citizen back in 2013. The winner of Miss Grand International 2023 was Miss Peru.



## PARAGUAY MICE TOURISM A HUGE BENEFIT TO THE COUNTRY

Senatur, the Office of the Ministry of Tourism as launched its initiative 'Meetings Tourism Plan', aimed at attracting over 50,000 foreigners in the coming months. The Plan is part of the wider Paraguay Tourism Master Plan, which will boost the economy and create jobs. In addition it aims to position Paraguay as a leading destination for MICE. Working with Senatur will be the Paraguay Convention Bureau and the National University.



## HONG KONG - CHINA TO HOST ROUTES WORLD 2025

Hong Kong has been confirmed as the destination for Routes World 2025.

The event will take place from 24-26 September 2025, hosted by Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) at AsiaWorld-Expo, with support from Hong Kong Tourism Board

Routes World brings together decision makers from airlines, airports and the destinations they serve from across the globe.

The 30th edition of the event is expected to attract VPs and heads of network planning from over 260 of the world's leading and fastest-growing airlines.

Increased air connectivity is proven to bring massive economic benefits and prosperity to a destination. Independent analysis has demonstrated that the total economic impact of a typical Routes World event can exceed more than \$590 million. This is primarily a result of new air services secured due to the profile from hosting the event.

HKIA has witnessed strong passenger growth in 2024. In March, the hub handled 4.36 million passengers and 29,840 flight movements, representing year-on-year increases of 56.7% and 48.2%, respectively.

Completion of the Three-runway System (3RS) at the end of 2024, is HKIA's long-term strategy focusing on attracting airlines to open new destinations and leveraging the market potential of the Greater Bay Area and Mainland China. Following the full completion of the 3RS, the airport will offer more slots for new markets such as the Belt and Road Initiative countries and the Middle East to connect to Hong Kong.

Routes World is a prestigious international event which will bring together over 3,000 industry leaders representing airports, airlines and other key stakeholders.

## THE ORANGERY AT KENSINGTON PALACE REOPENS

The Orangery at Kensington Palace reopened after extensive renovations and again features high as one of London's most desired events venues. Located in Kensington Palace Gardens the Orangery dates back to 1704, built for Queen Anne's orange trees. It was also used back then as a venue for parties and continues to this day.



Since it closed in 2017, it now welcomes back bookings for private dinners, weddings, and elegant receptions.

With its striking and bold appearance, grand south-facing white windows and a vivid red exterior, the interior offers a serene environment with crisp white walls and elegant columns.

The circular rooms at either end are separated by tall arches, while the entrances add a touch of visual contrast with elaborate carvings.



[www.visitgreece.gr](http://www.visitgreece.gr)



## THE REGION OF CENTRAL MACEDONIA AT IMEX 2024

The Region of Central Macedonia participated at IMEX 2024 alongside the Thessaloniki Convention Bureau (TCB).

Thessaloniki is ranked 26<sup>th</sup> place among European city destinations for MICE, and 42<sup>nd</sup> place in the global ranking.



Interest in the city of Thessaloniki and the region was high with meetings from tourism professionals from Europe, America and Asia learning more about the multitude of experiences offered in all sectors of tourism in the region, helping to make Central Macedonia an ideal destination 365 days a year.

The gastronomy of the region with its excellent quality agri-food products and dynamic wine production, the archaeological treasures of Vergina and Pella, the natural beauty of Olympus, Vermio and the rest of the mountains, the wellness paradises of Pozar and Agistros, the enchanting beaches Halkidiki and Pieria, presented the unique experiences on offer by all the regions of Central Macedonia.

## TOURISM MALAYSIA HEADS FOR SALES MISSION TO OMAN AND QATAR

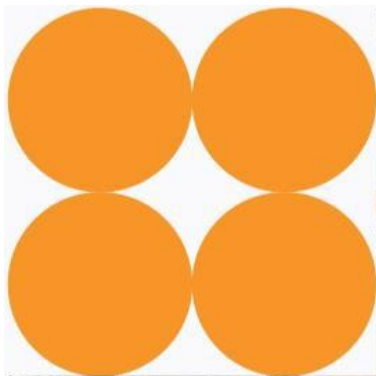
Tourism Malaysia travelled to Oman and Qatar recently for a sales mission aimed at forming closer tourism ties and showcasing the latest offerings to the West Asian market.

Tourism Malaysia along 23 Malaysian delegations (12 travel agents, 8 hoteliers, 2 product owners and a representative from the State government), presented Malaysia's latest tourism products which were truly enchanting, entertaining, inspiring, alluring, relaxing and exhilarating.



West Asian travellers have consistently ranked in the top 5 international spenders in Malaysia, with a high per capita expenditure and longer average stays. In 2023, Malaysia welcomed 18,078 and 2,464 tourists from Oman and Qatar, respectively. The aim is to reach the 2019 arrivals of 23,911 and 4,089.





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# TOURISM & TRAVEL

NEWS from around the World







## THE DIGITAL FUTURE OF TOURISM e-TOURISM AND e-HOLIDAYS

VR headsets allows people to 'visit' destinations as if they were really there.

Now with many top tourist spots reaching saturation point, or suffering with overcrowding and unhappy locals, could the answer be e-tourism!

We will have to see what affect e-tourism has on 'real' tourism in the real world, but will e-tourism make people want to really travel to the destination or will they be happy that they experienced it digitally?

The idea of e-tourism is to promote year round tourism and to focus on destinations away from the typical hotspots.

The Pro Vision device is placed on the head and totally replaces the wearers vision by transporting them to the mountains, sea, or city, but one that is different to reality.

Initially designed as a marketing aid for destinations, now many European countries are using it to target creating a year round tourism destination, but also to attract people to visit other regions and places.

European national tourism boards aim to create a 'virtual reality', which would be integrated into their main websites while focusing on specific themes, like culinary, wellness, religious, etc.

This will then allow digital tourists to browse through the countries or regions history, e-walk through locations, forests, follow in the footsteps of historic famous people, e-climb mountains, water e-skiing, winter e-ski. They will also be able to e-sunbathe by on the beach!

It would also include visuals of airlines (your perfect view from a first class seat!), hotels and rooms, coffee shops, museums, etc in order to give you the perfect e-vacation!

You may be thinking that this is a joke, but it is big business and several national tourism boards are employing big digital companies to create their 'ideal alternative reality destination'. This is the future of e-tourism and the future of a meta society!

The question is, will it help support a nation's economy, and jobs?

Or will it end up decreasing the actual number of visitor arrivals and thus not supporting the tourism economy at all with all its indirect sectors.

By digitalising the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors into an e-holiday, the e-tourist will see the benefits of no hassle from flights, hour changes, delays, crowds, etc and could ultimately choose this kind of e-holiday as a 'normal' vacation.

Enhanced Reality tourism is expected to be fully implemented by 2026. It remains to be seen what affect it has on the real world, but for sure it will generate huge profits for the digital creators in the short term.



## PERSIAN GULF NATIONS CREATE 'SCHENGEN-STYLE' VISA

A new Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) unified tourist visa is expected to be operational by the end of the year.

The GCC States unanimously approved the proposed visa, which will allow travellers to explore the 6 members of the Gulf: UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait.







# THE YEAR OF LAOS WELCOMES OVER 1 MILLION TOURISTS IN 2024

Laos aims to welcome 4.6 million international tourists in 2024, generating an estimated revenue of UK£1.020 billion. Already over 1 million tourists visited the country in the first 3 months of 2024.

Top arrivals were from Thailand with 337,689 visitors, followed by Vietnam with 263,160 arrivals. China, the Republic of Korea, and the USA followed.

ASEAN nations alone recorded a total visitors of 620,250 while the accumulated numbers of visitors were from Asia and the Pacific. European visitors totalled 84,788 visitors, 35,191 visitors from the Americans, and 2,539 visitors from Africa and Middle East countries combined.

Laos's appeal has been publicised widely throughout the world as a perfect authentic destination for slow tourism, with many cultural attractions, outdoor experiences, and genuine charm.

With its diverse tourism offering and attractions as well as its sustainable tourism practices, Laos is ready to becoming a leading Southeast Asia travel destination.

The Visit Laos Year 2024 campaign is playing an important role in attracting visitors, as well as educating tourists about Laos's history and the sustainable use of its natural resources.



# CANADA PROMOTES INDIGENOUS TOURISM PROJECTS



Indigenous tourism is an important and unique part of Canada's tourism sector, allowing for indigenous cultures and stories to be shared.

The Government of Canada has prioritised the development of and collaborating with First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities.

With the launch of the 'Indigenous Tourism Fund (ITF)', UK£11.42 million will support indigenous-led projects across the country.

The first initiative, the Micro and Small Business Stream, aims to support 145 projects which will enhance existing tourism destinations located near vital cultural and natural sites within indigenous communities, by establishing flagship experiences that define tourism destinations in indigenous areas and developing the necessary tourism infrastructure and services.

# SLOW RECOVERY FOR TOURISM IN GERMANY

Germany's tourism sector is seeing a much slower recovery than other key European destinations, as international travel spending remains low. It is the domestic sector which is keeping the sector going through this slow period.

The German tourism sector has yet to reach its previous percentage of GDP or reach the job levels seen in 2019. International visitor spending in 2023 was more than 25% behind 2019 figures with a shortfall of UK£11.90 billion being spent.



## GREECE

### 625 BLUE FLAG BEACHES - 2ND IN THE WORLD

Greece is ranked in 2nd place in the world out of 52 countries, in the list of Blue Flag 2024 quality awards for beaches, marinas and sustainable tourism vessels. Spain is in 1st place.

Greece maintains 625, compared to 617 last year, of its beaches, 18 marinas and 9 tourist boats that have obtained the Blue Flag eco-label. Within Greece, Crete maintains 1st place with 146 Blue Flag beaches.

To receive the Blue Flag eco-label, a beach must not only have excellent water quality, but must meet a total of 33 criteria, with 38 for marinas and 51 for boat operators.



### NEW YORK TOURIST TAX REVENUE EXCEEDS 2019 LEVELS

As New York is still rebuilding its visitor numbers back to 2019 levels, the revenue gained from the city's tourism tax has exceeded 2019 levels.

In 2023, 62.2 million people visited the city, down from 66.6 million in 2019, but with higher revenues gained due to rises in hotel rooms and other services. It has seen a steady economic recovery but it is not expected to reach 2019 figures until 2025, when the target is for 68 million visitors.

One sector it needs to return to the city is business travel and more international travellers. International visitors represent 20% of the annual visitors. 2023 saw 11.6 million international tourist arrive, but that is still 14.1% lower than 2019 figures. Domestic travellers have helped hugely with 50.6 million American visitors in 2023, a rise of 7% on 2022 figures.

Domestic and international business travel has been slow to recover compared to leisure travel, falling to 400,000 in 2021 from 3.4 million in 2019. It currently stands at about 2.3 million. Overall the city's tourism industry is still 10.4% down on 2019 and is still suffering staff issues.

However, New York remains the top tourist destination in the USA, with 33 million overnight visitors in 2023, followed by Las Vegas (26 million) and Los Angeles (21 million).



[www.visit-lebanon.org](http://www.visit-lebanon.org)



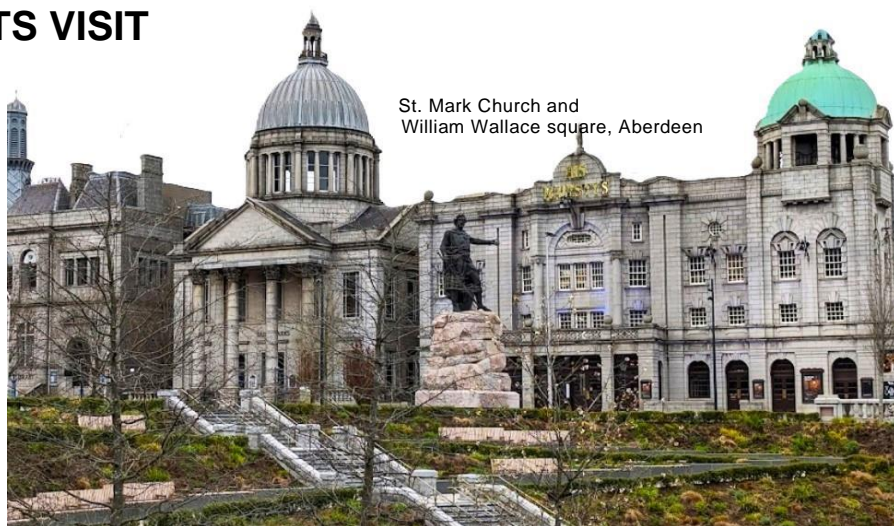
## RECORD OVERSEAS TOURISTS VISIT SCOTLAND IN 2023

Foreign tourist arrivals reached almost 4 million to Scotland in 2024; an increase of 15% on 2019.

Visitors to Scotland in 2023 spent UK£3.6 billion - up 41% on 2019.

International tourism is hugely important to the Scottish economy, with 19% of visitors coming from international markets because they stay longer and account for 46% of the value of tourism to Scotland. Visitors from North America were up by 16% and from Europe by 19%. Tourists from Australia and China among others saw the greatest increase in arrivals by 53% since 2022.

VisitScotland has found through research that the unique experiences on offer throughout the country are a key draw for tourists, like designing tartan or having a bagpipe lesson. Wellness activities, like wild swimming and food and drink trips are also popular.



St. Mark Church and William Wallace square, Aberdeen

## TOURIST ARRIVALS TO VENEZUELA GROW BY 220%

Venezuela's tourism sector is seeing an unprecedented boom in international tourist arrivals, with a 220% growth in the first 4 months of 2024 compared to 2023 data.

The positive increase is due to increased air and land connectivity with neighbouring countries such as Colombia and Brazil, as well as the arrival of visitors from Europe, Russia and Poland.



Already the country has surpassed 2019 arrival figures and expect that by the end of 2024, the country will receive over 1.6 million foreign tourists. Domestic tourism has also seen considerable growth of 20%, helping to restore and strengthen the tourism sector.

Other important considerations to the growth are the new direct flight connections between China and Venezuela and the agreements with Ibero-American and European countries, helping to grow the country's tourism sector.

## TÜRKİYE AIMS TO BE ONE OF TOP 3 TOURIST DESTINATIONS

Türkiye is aiming to attract more Asian tourists and to become one of the top 3 tourist destinations in the world.

The Asian markets are growing quickly for Türkiye with increased flight connectivity via Turkish Airlines targeting these markets.

From January – April 2024, tourist arrivals from Asian countries increased by 11.6%, compared to the previous year, up to 2.25 million.

Chinese tourists visiting Turkey increased by 131% year-on-year to 112,000, while Japanese tourists rose by more than 100% to around 34,000 year on year. More than 59,000 South Koreans visited Turkey in the Q1 2024; an increase of 33% from 2023.



Pera, Istanbul



Tourists from Indonesia and India rose by 6% and 29%, to 77,000 and 85,000 respectively. From Western countries, Turkey aims to attract more high-income tourists.

Globally, Turkey is now ranked 4th in the world for tourist arrivals, overtaking Italy. The goal is to welcome 80 million visitors and become one of the 3 main destinations in the world.

10.65 million foreign tourists visited the country from January - April 2024; an increase of 11.75% compared to the same period in 2023. Including Turks residing abroad, the number of visitors reached 12.7 million.

## LITHUANIA A GREAT CULTURE GEM

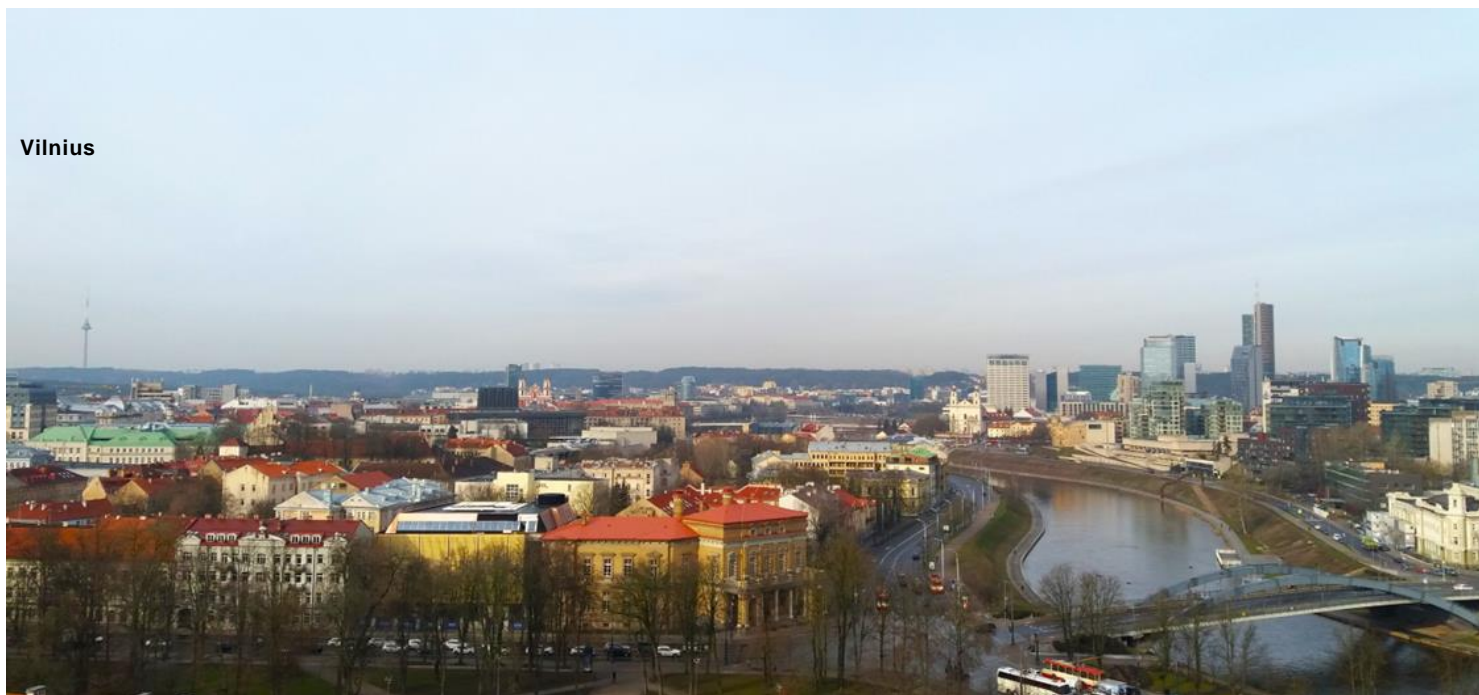
Lithuania has a long and diverse history, which can be seen through its cultural and historical sites as well as along its streets and in the towns and cities.



Visit any of the 3 main cities of Lithuania, with World Heritage Site status and see for yourself!

The architectural heritage of the old town of Vilnius; the treasure of modernism of Kaunas and; the site of Kernave.

Vilnius



You can also easily discover the country's culture through its gastronomy, with a variety of traditional dishes, such as Šaltibarščiai, a cold beetroot soup.

With many cultural festivals held throughout the year that offer a unique insight into Lithuanian history and culture, you will be sure to learn and love Lithuania more than you thought!



## EUROPEAN TOUR OPERATOR FTI COLLAPSES

Europe's 3rd largest tour operator FTI Group has collapsed. With falling booking and financial woes, FTI is no longer viable. Its collapse has left 11,000 employees jobless and thousands of travellers either on vacation or having booked packages for the summer season.



FTI was already struggling before the health crisis and had received government funding. A possible buy out for UK£0.82 could not be secured in time to keep the company afloat over the summer and so it had to close immediately. One of the main reasons is their overdue payments to other companies, in various countries around the world.

It is currently making arrangements to bring holiday makers back to Germany and issuing refunds for holidays already bought.

## TOURISTS TURN WINDERMERE LAKE, UNITED KINGDOM GREEN!

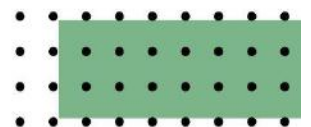
Lake Windermere is England's largest lake and a major tourist attraction within the Lake District National Park.

However research has discovered that high visitor numbers during peak summer season are contributing to turning the waters of the lake green.



The report found a link between peak tourist periods and algal growth in the lake. Algal blooms when warm weather and other nutrients combine, making the water green and toxic. Some blame the water utility companies for not treating waste water currently as well as dumping sewage into the water.

With recurrent green water over the busy summer periods, oxygen levels in the water have reduced, resulting in the dying of fish and other aquatic life.



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# 11 th ATHENS INTERNATIONAL TOURISM & CULTURE EXPO 2024

**12 > 14 DECEMBER**  
ZAPPEION EXPO CENTER



**As we embark on our 11th year, let's unite for even greater successful cooperations!**



**AIT Expo maintains its upward trajectory, building upon all our years of success!**

Amidst the plethora of new international partnerships formed in 2023 between exhibitors and hosted buyers, as well as visitors

With the successful international promotion of all tourism sectors and Greek destinations

**The 11th Athens International Tourism & Culture Expo will once again signal, alongside exhibitors, the opening of more agreements for inbound tourism in 2024.**





## Three robust days for dynamic tourism professionals

Throughout the three days from December 12 to 14, the Exhibition will present all sectors of the tourism industry as well as Greek destinations, targeting exhibitors, hosted buyers, and business visitors to facilitate new profitable business deals.



Hotels, Tourist Offices,  
Villas  
& Accommodations



Regions & Municipalities  
from all over greece



Leisure Companies,  
Mice, Luxury, DMC's,  
Marine and Alternative  
Tourism



Electronics Systems  
tourism,  
Electronic Systems  
& Business Management



Hotel Management  
Companies,  
Organization of Events



Architects, Engineers,  
Builders & Decorators

## In 2024, the Exhibition will play host to...



**130 Lead  
International Hosted Buyers**

from 40 countries



**more than  
5.500 B2B meetings**

following on from the success of 2023

*"We would like to thank you  
and your staff for a great Expo.  
We had some very good meetings and  
we will have lots of business  
opportunities in Greece."*

### HOSTED BUYERS' REVIEWS

*"Time to say many thanks for all you did.  
It was a successful Expo and we enjoyed many  
new contacts, suppliers and updated info.  
It was one of the best shows ever."*



## PARALLEL EVENTS

The Exhibition in 2024 will be complemented by significant parallel events featuring speakers from exhibitors, scientists, and representatives of tourism organizations, under the themes of 'LUXURY & MICE TOURISM' and 'SEA TOURISM'.

THE EXHIBITION IS HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE MINISTRY OF OF TOURISM,  
MINISTRY OF OF MERCHANT SHIPPING AND SETE  
AND HAS THE SUPPORT OF GREEK NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION.



## LAOS

### TAD LOH-TAD HANG WATERFALL GAINS IN POPULARITY

Located in the Hoakhuaset village of Lao-ngam district, the Tad Lor-Tad Hang waterfall is gaining in popularity among both domestic and foreign visitors as a natural tourist destination.

In 2023 a private company was granted permission to turn the waterfall into a tourist destination and now it is becoming popular. During the first weeks of Visit Laos Year 2024, between 300-500 tourists visited the waterfall each day.



The development aims to attract more domestic and foreign visitors to the province and therefore contribute economically, offer jobs, reduce poverty and protect the cultural, natural and historical heritage of the province.

The project has 3 phases:

Phase 1 (2023-2026) - renovation of the tourist site, building electric and water supply infrastructure, and botanical gardens.

Phase 2 (2026-2030) - for expansion of tourism activities, building of hotels, restaurants and souvenir shops.

Phase 3 - for upgrading the services to international standards.

The waterfall originates from the Seset River in Sekong Province and is approx. 10m high. As a natural attraction, it has been open to the public since 1986 but now sees a new era dawn, enhancing its natural beauty.



**BML**International-UK London, United Kingdom

[www.bmlinternational.co.uk](http://www.bmlinternational.co.uk)



## UNWTO RECOGNISES EL SALVADOR TOURISM GROWTH



The UNWTO has recognised El Salvador for its positive development of tourism. In 2023, El Salvador received 40% more visitors than in 2019. Through various national plans, it has shown how tourism can change the lives of people and their families.

One of the main factors for this new growth has been the implementation of the Territorial Control Plan, aimed at stopping the threat from gangs and criminal groups, who for decades have frightened Salvadoran families. In addition, the construction of tourism infrastructure, has benefited local development too.

It will help to significantly boost tourism and increase the number of visitors to the region. The finer details and cost are yet to be revealed.

## CYPRUS TOURISM RESILIENCE

Cyprus has seen a 9.8% increase in tourist arrivals in March 2024, despite challenges like the geopolitical instability in the Eastern Mediterranean region, the economic instability in the markets of Central and Western Europe, as well as the negative situation in the aviation sector.

Tourist arrivals in March 2024 were 202,256 compared to 184,263 in March 2023. For January-March 2024, arrivals totalled 415,251, compared to 393,893 for the same period of 2023; an increase of 5.4%.

The main markets for tourist arrivals for March were the UK (64,414), Poland (21,054) and Germany (19,732).

## BRAZIL BREAKS INCOME RECORDS FROM INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS

In the Q1 of 2024, Brazil welcomed a total of 2,530,526 international visitors, with a spend of approx. UK£1.58 billion; a rise of 21.3% over the first 3 months of 2023. The spend is also 13.7% higher than in first quarter of 2019. This record income is the best since records began in 1995.

In March international tourists in Brazil spent around UK£465 million.

Brazil received 740,483 international visitors, +1.6% compared to March 2018 (728,742 arrivals), and +28.8% compared to the same month in 2023, (577,215 visitors).







Rio De Janeiro

## CUBA FOCUSES ON CHINESE TOURISTS

With a new route operated by Air China between Beijing week, Cuba is encouraged that more Asian tourists will

The new air route will also strengthen ties between both academic sectors. In addition, Chinese citizens are now

The number of international tourists arrivals to the data for 2022. For 2023, in the Q1 arrivals have already grown by 8%.

The Cuban government is focusing efforts to bring more Chinese tourists to the island in order to further boost its tourism sector.

and Havana, with a stopover in Madrid, operating two round-trip flights a choose Cuba as a holiday destination.

countries, facilitating exchange in business and exempt from requiring a visa to enter Cuba.

island rose by 51% in 2023, compared to the

Temple of Havana



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## LIVERPOOL UNITED KINGDOM'S BEST LARGE CITY BREAK

The city of Liverpool in the UK has been named the UK's best large city break in a recent survey.

The city topped the list of towns and cities visited by 'Which? Members' over the past two years and was ranked highly for accommodation, food and drink, cultural sights and value for money.



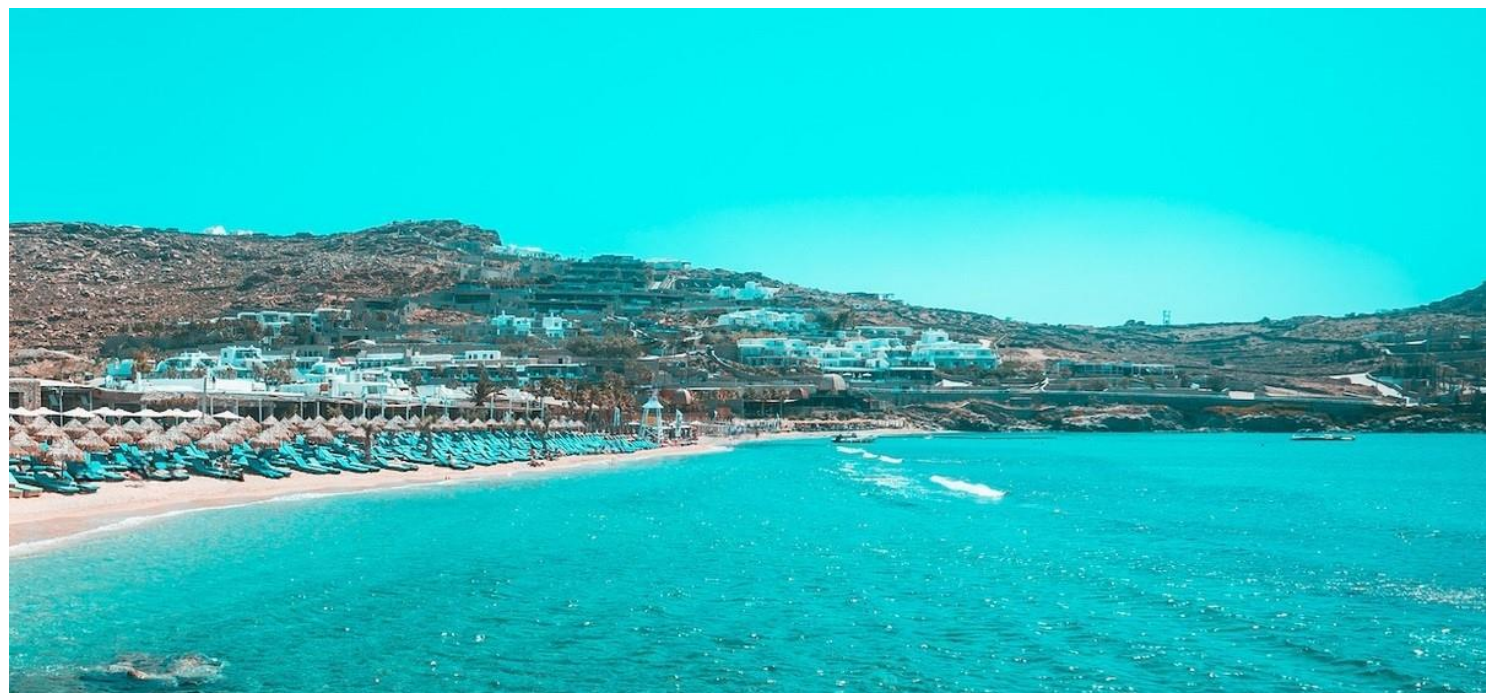
Liverpool stands out for its fantastic cultural scene and vibrant nightlife.

Liverpool came first in the large cities category with 84%. 2nd place was Manchester (71%), 3rd Belfast (77%), 4th was London (76%) and 5th Cardiff (72%).

## NEW GREEK BEACH RULES AIM TO REDUCE CROWDS

Tourists to Greece this summer will see a change to beaches following the implementation of new rules.

The new rule will only allow a third of the beach to be occupied by sun-loungers, while all beach furniture will be banned in ecologically sensitive areas. The aim is to reduce overcrowding and to offer more beach area to those who do not wish to buy a sunbed.



The new rules are widely welcomed by locals who have for years seen less and less beach for them with unlawful 'private' beaches taking up large areas of public beach.

These new rules follow on from the 'Greek Beach Towel Movement' which saw locals protest against the illegal occupation of beaches by bars and resort hotels.

Greek law states that all beaches are public, but aerial footage indicates that many beaches are overrun by sun-loungers and beach bars.

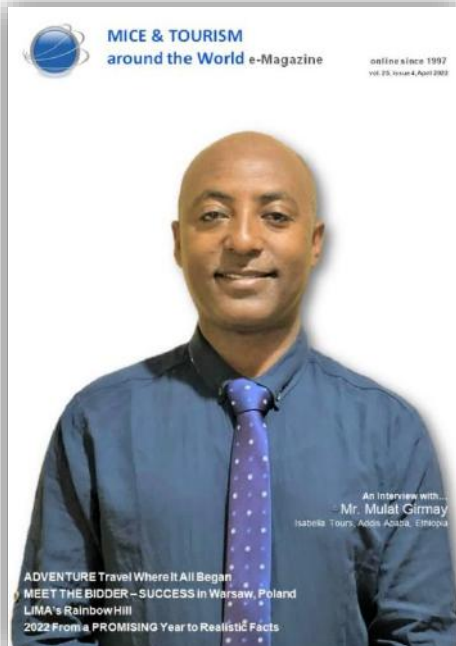
The new rules will be enforced with regular drone inspections and fines.

On the flip side, the Greek government is also debating a controversial new bill that will change the legal distance from the shoreline that construction can take place. This is currently 100m from the sea, but the new law would bring construction to 30m from the water's edge. Surely that would suffocate beachgoers' use of the beach as well as damaging to the protection of the coastal management zone.



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London, United Kingdom



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