

18 Future Trends in Travel and Tourism – Post Covid-19

by Srilal Miththapala with added comments by Masaru Takayama

ASIAN ECOTOURISM NETWORK April 27, 2020

1. **Less long-haul travel, more short-haul:** Travel among Asia and Pacific will be more popular, businesses and destinations aiming for far-reaching places like Europe and US may alter priorities.
2. **Preference for direct flights:** People may avoid connecting flights. Short-haul direct flights may be more effective market targets.
3. **Less cheap flights:** Physical distancing within flights may be in high demand, less people on board means the cost of the flights rises i.e. keeping the middle seat open like many European business-class flights.
4. **Less group traffic, smaller groups/FIT:** Like what ecotourism businesses have been practicing, people may prefer to take smaller-group trips over more reasonable mass-tourism packages to keep the physical distancing.
5. **More private, customized excursions to less crowded tourism sites:** Ecotourism sites are much more private, very much often customized, and definitely less crowded so in the post-COVID, we will gain the momentum from the mainstream! Destinations should also start supporting less crowded excursions.
6. **Medium to smaller sized hotels, which can exhibit good health and safety protocols in operations will be in demand:** People will look for comfort and safety in less crowded situation means ecolodges and eco-resorts, community-based ecotourism accommodation facilities may be chosen over larger hotels.
7. **High-end hotels and boutique properties in particular, they can be positioned as safe getaways for wealthy visitors:** The smaller properties with high quality standards in safety, sanitation, and comfort can be sold well in the niche market.
8. **More focused on wellness, yoga, authenticity, environmentally-friendly, nature-loving, well-being, spirituality:** People are thinking more about themselves, families, nature, improving life-style that matter, etc. Going local to enjoy slow travels while their spirituality, wellbeing, and self-esteem are the aspects they care more.
9. **Reduction in MICE traffic:** People avoid gathering at one place with a large number of people, at least in the short term. The hotels and convention centers that cater the needs of MICE needs to rethink of the revenue stream. More and more e-events will take place. That is a good thing for the earth emitting far-less CO2 derived from transportation and other energy-intensive activities.

10. **Almost zero cruise travel:** The cruise industry may be the last industry to recover as it is seen as the place to avoid. Island tourism economy dependent on the cruise industry needs take an action on alternative choices.
11. **Increase in business travel:** On-line meetings are welcome, but face-to-face businesses still need to be done and may experience faster recovery than holiday travelers in the short and medium term.
12. **Increase of domestic tourism:** People will start looking into quick getaways when things start to come back to normal yet avoid heavy discounting rather focus on the value additions to regain what's lost in during the pandemic period.
13. **Less banquets and large functions in hotels:** Businesses that prioritize weddings, large events, etc. need to look for other opportunities for a while.
14. **Flexible booking options:** No one knows what may happen in the short-term future so even the last-minute cancellation may be accepted without any penalties to help spur the business.
15. **Strict health and safety protocols for guests and staff:** Housekeeping department has been the back of the house, but now it becomes the front of the house indicating the safety of the business which people want to see, the businesses need to practice deep-clean and may use professionals' advice to train the staff.
16. **Less buffet in hotels:** Serving individual sit-down meals rather than all-you-can-eat buffet will be more preferred to avoid contact with others. Note to stay away from disposable containers and wrapping but utilize re-usable options.
17. **More takeaway and less eat-in:** Stand-alone restaurants in particular will continue to see difficulty as people would not feel comfortable sitting down with others having a meal. Help identify the locally-sourced and employed businesses to revitalize the local economy.
18. **Mergers, acquisitions, and consolidation:** A number of businesses will not be able to survive though this pandemic that might make a drastic change in the tourism industry. We hope that local capitals stay in the area and the policy makers can help make it happen by implementing righteous actions.

KEEP IN MIND 'BUSINESS AS UN-USUAL'