



## ***Travel & Tourism Media Briefing***

*Produced by Early Morning Media*

*A round-up of the key press news and comment relating to the global travel and tourism industry*

**Thursday, 17th January 2019**

### **THE HOT STORY**

#### **Inbound travel boom in UK**

The tourism sector in the UK is booming, according to tourism minister Michael Ellis, as **VisitBritain** revealed a 9% increase in forward inbound flight bookings between December 23 and January 5 over the same period in 2017. Mr Ellis noted: "The UK is one of the world's must-visit destinations and the increase in forward bookings reflects the strength of our tourism sector." Forward bookings to Britain from China, the Middle East and the United States all show double-digit increases, up 44%, 59% and 27% respectively. VisitBritain director Patricia Yates commented: "We want the UK to be the number one destination for global travellers so it is great to see forward bookings looking strong in the coming weeks and months from some of our most valuable long-haul visitor markets."

[Travel Weekly](#)

### **DOMESTIC**

#### **UK hotels lag behind European counterparts**

New figures from **UKHospitality** reveal that UK hotels are underperforming compared to the EU average on every key metric, with the organisation's chief executive Kate Nicholls commenting: "Whilst we wait to review the full year figures for 2018, data showing the UK's latest performance is a concern - particularly during a time of such great political and economic uncertainty." With hotel occupancy rates in the UK in November rising by 0.6% while the European average was up by 1.2%, and revenue per room up 1.7% in the UK against 4.5% in Europe, she continued: "These figures arrive at a time when an ill-advised proposition of a tourist tax remains a possibility, business rates continue to damage the growth of the hospitality sector as a whole and more clarity is desperately needed on the Brexit deal and future immigration system."

[Hotel Owner](#) [Hotel News Resource](#)

#### **Cornwall tourism development approved**

A £30m holiday resort development in Cornwall has been given planning approval.

Located near Bodmin, the 100-acre Waterside project will see an existing country club and holiday park expanded, with the project to include 118 new 'eco-lodges', a swimming pool, children's play pool, gym, fitness studios, indoor climbing centre, sports hall, tennis courts, sports pitch and a boutique hotel featuring a spa and wellness centre.

[Travel Weekly](#)

## INTERNATIONAL

### Domestic tourism urged in Rwanda

The leading form of tourism in Rwanda, representing an important tool for development, is domestic tourism, according to a new report. The research notes that domestic tourism accounted for 73% of total travel and tourism spending (\$3,971bn) in 2017. Rochelle Turner, Director of Research for the **World Travel and Tourism Council's** annual economic impact data, said that as it represents 13% of the country's GDP and 11% of its employment, travel and tourism is an important sector for Rwanda. Domestic tourism in the country represents nearly 40% of the economic contribution the sector makes, with the nation averaging 14% annual growth in domestic spending over each year of the last decade.

[New Times](#)

### Nigeria's travel and tourism GDP contribution can be grown

A vacuum in the online travel booking space has resulted in Nigeria's travel and tourism industry remaining in "a state of near-misses and failed projections", according to reports, with only around 13% of Nigerian air travellers currently booking travel tickets on the internet. The total contribution of the leisure travel, business travel, domestic travel and foreign travel sector to the country's GDP is nearly three times greater than its direct contribution. Ranked globally, Nigeria is in 48th position in terms of total contribution and 163rd in relative contribution to GDP from the Travel and Tourism sector. It is suggested that in order for Nigeria to growing the sector's contribution to GDP, digital innovation is the way forward.

[Independent \(Nigeria\)](#) [Brand Spur](#)

### Indian tourist market eyed by Sharjah

**Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority** (SCTDA) hopes that its participation in the upcoming South Asia Travel and Tourism Exchange (Satte 2019), taking place in New Delhi, India, this month, will increase the number of visitors from the Indian Subcontinent. The authority aims to showcase the emirate of Sharjah's tourism and hospitality offerings alongside partners including Ramada Hotel- Sharjah, Copthorne Hotel- Sharjah, Air Arabia, Sharjah Airport Travel Agency (Sata), Orient Tours and TravTalk.

[TradeArabia News Service](#)

### Jamaica Minister calls for tourism leverage on coffee industry

Public private partnerships will be leveraged by the **Jamaican Ministry of Tourism's** Tourism Linkages Network to create a framework to stimulate entrepreneurship in the coffee sector and related industries, according to the country's Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett. He noted at the press launch for the second annual Jamaica Blue Mountain Coffee Festival: "Coffee has the potential to become a commodity that can change communities through linkages with tourism. This is particularly important as

our coffee farmers continue to experience challenges due to shrinking international markets and low prices”.

[ETurboNews](#)

## **Tourism at record-breaking rates in Israel**

Over 4.12m tourist entries to Israel were recorded from January to December 2018, representing an increase of about 14% compared to 2017, and 42% more than the year before that. Growth is predicted to be even greater in 2019 as new flight options, hotel renovations and openings and global events attract visitors. Ben Gurion Airport is set to undergo a major overhaul this year, expecting to see 25m travelers in 2019. Meanwhile, the Eurovision Song Contest will take place in Israel for the first time in two decades on May 12 this year.

[ETurboNews](#)

## **DESTINATIONS**

### **UK holidaymakers planning to escape winter**

New research by **ABTA** has revealed that 31% of UK holidaymakers going on a winter holiday are planning to escape abroad to warmer destination. According to ABTA Members, the Canary Islands remain the number one destination for British tourists seeking sunnier weather this winter, with Tenerife, Lanzarote and Gran Canaria all ranking strongly for bookings. Cape Verde, Turkey and Egypt are also proving popular mid-haul choices, while Jamaica and Mexico are the pick of the long-haul destinations. Victoria Bacon, ABTA’s Director of Brand and Business Development, said: “As the British winter weather takes hold and the temperature drops, holidaymakers are seizing the opportunity to make an escape to warmer climes. This year is no exception with even more people saying they’ll travel abroad for a fix of winter sun.”

*Press Release*

## **FINANCE**

### **New Japanese tourist tax**

The **Japan National Tourism Organisation (JNTO)** has introduced a new levy of ¥1,000 (£7.20) on visitors departing the country. The JNTO says the tax is intended to “expand and enhance the country’s tourist infrastructure”. Brought in on 7 January, the charge applies to all tourists leaving Japan by air or sea, but children under the age of two years, those visiting Japan for less than 24 hours and people leaving Japan “on or after 7 January 2019 using an air ticket issued before 7 January 2019” will not have to pay. World Travel & Tourism Council research director, Rochelle Turner, said: “Japan wanted money to pay for technology terminals to process visitors quicker and to add improved international language signage throughout the country”.

*The Independent*

## **VISAS**

### **MATTA urges visa-free travel for Chinese and Indian tourists**

The **Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA)** has urged the government to grant visa-free travel for Chinese and Indian tourists visiting the country. MATTA President Datuk Tan Kok Liang noted: “We laud the government’s move to extend the 15-day visa exemption for tourists from China and India from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019.” However, he added that rather than extending the visa exemption policy, authorities should work towards attracting more visitor arrivals by granting visa-free travel for tourists particularly from China and India, to become a popular holiday destination. “Malaysia’s tourism industry is trailing behind neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Singapore and Philippines. The tourist arrivals for ASEAN countries have recorded positive growth in 2017, with 7.8% increase for Thailand, 6.2% for Singapore and 11% for Philippines. Whereas visitor arrivals to Malaysia dropped by 3% with 25.95m tourists in 2017, compared to 26.76m in 2016,” he added.

[The Borneo Post](#) [World of Buzz](#)

### **Uzbekistan expands visa-free travel**

Uzbekistan is to allow visa-free travel for 45 more countries, including the UK, from 1 February, with the country’s President Shavkat Mirziyoyev aiming to build on the country’s initiative to stimulate tourism. This follows the introduction last year of e-visas to make the process for visitors from approved countries easier. Visitor numbers have already doubled since last year’s reforms, and are currently at 5.3m. The country’s Uzbekistan Airways has said it will take delivery of two new Airbus A320neos and three Boeing 787 Dreamliners in the spring 2019, allowing it to add new long-haul destinations to its routes. Meanwhile, Airbnb named Uzbekistan one its top trending destinations for 2019, and **ABTA** named it among its 12 places to visit this year.

[The Independent](#)

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **Instagram impacting travel marketing and commerce**

With a survey finding that over 40% of people under the age of 33 prioritise so-called ‘Instagrammability’ when choosing a holiday destination, travel brands are taking direct inspiration from the platform itself, as well as seeking to incorporate its functionality into their own marketing tools and campaigns. Easyjet’s Look & Book feature is one example, which allows users to upload a screenshot of a destination, with the app then using image-recognition technology to determine where it is, along with options for Easyjet flights to reach it. Airbnb has attempted to emulate Instagram with its own ‘Travel Stories’ too, allowing users to create video sequences of their Airbnb trips.

[EConsultancy](#)

### **Destinations fighting the ‘Instagram Effect’**

Popular destinations like Barcelona, Amsterdam and Santorini are beginning to limit how and when tourists visit, as they fight to balance the need to attract visitors with preservation of landmarks and heritage sites. Five locations trying to fight the so-called Instagram Effect are the Isle of Skye in Scotland, Dubrovnik in Croatia, Ireland’s Skellig Michael, Mallorca and the Machu Picchu complex in Peru. In 2015, the Peruvian government announced a five-year, \$43.7m plan to protect the ruins, with tourism at the site further limited this year.

[Fast Company](#)

## AIRLINES

### Cabin laptop ban no longer in place

After restrictions on carrying electronic devices into the cabin of UK-bound flights from Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Tunisia were imposed almost two years ago, the ban has been lifted, with the Department for Transport stating: “after working with the aviation industry and international partners to introduce tough additional security measures, the UK government has lifted these restrictions on UK-bound flights. Passengers on flights where restrictions have been lifted will now be able to take large phones, laptops, tablets and accessories into the cabin with them.” Flights from 15 airports, including Antalya, Dalaman, Istanbul and Izmir in Turkey; Cairo, Hurghada, Luxor and Marsa Alam in Egypt and Tunis, are no longer affected.

[Travel Weekly](#)

## CAMPAIGNS

### Tourism New Zealand partners with WeChat

**Tourism New Zealand** is struggling to balance the country’s growing tourism industry with practical sustainability. Targeting Chinese visitors, Kieran O’Donnell, the North Asia regional marketing & communications manager for Tourism New Zealand, commented: “One of the big things to note about the China market is that only 10% of the population have passports, and there’s a lot of competition trying to attract those outbound travellers”. New Zealand currently attracts only 0.3% of Chinese travellers, but tourism officials have recently collaborated with Tencent to run targeted advertising on WeChat. Working with the service, which boasts more than 1bn users, is seen a crucial strategy to engage with Chinese consumers.

*The Drum*

### SA tourism promotion feature local guides

A new **South African Tourism** promotional push titled *Meet Your South Africa* showcases the wealth of travel experiences available to holidaymakers in the country, with 12 local guides chosen to be the faces of the campaign. The guides, who include a game ranger, an outdoor adventure guide, a marine biologist, a chef, a wine expert and local city guides are featured in a new dedicated section of South African Tourism’s website, which allows travellers to book individual tours with their favourite guides alongside packages tailor-made by tour operator Travelbag.

[Travel Weekly](#)

## CRUISE

### Brexit advice for cruise passengers

As prospective cruise customers grow increasingly concerned about the effect Brexit will have on their holiday plans, cruise specialist agents are being offering government advice on how to handle queries. **Clia UK and Ireland** stated: “We will update this as things are clarified in the coming weeks,” with guidance covering cruising advising that: “From 29 March 2019, if there is no EU Exit deal, cruise operations will continue on the

same basis as today. Passengers who embark on a cruise at a UK port will continue to be protected by the EU regulation on maritime passengers' rights, which will be brought into UK law." Clia said it hoped the advice would reassure UK and EU citizens planning a cruise holiday departing from Britain, noting that: "We would also advise that all UK travellers check the expiry date of their passport when booking travel arrangements, and ensure that there is at least six months' validity at time of travel".

[Travel Weekly](#) *Daily Express*

### **Cruise passengers in UK set to reach 2m mark**

More than 2m British travellers took a cruise in a year, the first time this figure has been reached, according to **Clia UK & Ireland**. The total number of cruises taken by Britons between January to September rose to 1,338,000 from 1,310,000, according to the trade association. Director Andy Harmer remarked: "This is significant. It took about 50-odd years to reach the first million and then about 10 years for the second million. It shows how much the industry has transformed." He noted that just three other countries have reached the two million mark, the US, Germany and China. This comes as both the UK government and Abta issue official guidance on passenger travel to the EU by air, rail or sea after Britain leaves the EU.

[Seatrade Cruise News](#)

## **AWARDS**

### **Tourism for Tomorrow Awards finalists announced**

The **World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)** has announced the 15 finalists for its 2019 Tourism for Tomorrow Awards. Gloria Guevara, President & CEO of WTTC, remarked: "This year's Tourism for Tomorrow Awards shine the spotlight on those organisations which are leading the way in sustainable Travel & Tourism. They reflect WTTC's Strategic Priorities of Climate Action, Destination Stewardship, Future of Work, and Social Responsibility."

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