

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Luxury travelers flocking to Caribbean, Mexico for holidays

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Luxury travel is seeing a surge in demand in Mexico and the Caribbean. Image credit: Rosewood Hotels & Resorts

By KATIE TAMOLA

After more than 18 months of lockdowns, restrictions and stress resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, affluents are eager to travel again in time for the holiday season.

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Travel experts anticipate, after many months of restrictions, affluents will be flocking to popular spots including the Caribbean, Mexico and Europe. Although vaccinations are available and several destinations are welcoming back tourists, travelers do need to be thoughtful and prepared when planning and embarking on their trips, acknowledging safety measures and possible limitations.

"Just know that patience and flexibility are the key to enjoying travel these days," said Misty Belles, vice president of global public relations for **Virtuoso**, New York. "The past 18 months have come with plenty of stress and while travel restrictions are easing, they're also constantly changing."

"For those who haven't yet booked their holiday travel, now is the time to do it," she said. "Booking earlier will also give travelers and their advisors more time to resolve any last-minute complications that could potentially come up."

Back in business

Travelers are ready to resume their journeys after the harrowing global health crisis, and hospitality brands are eagerly awaiting their arrivals.

Global destinations that travelers seem to have a particularly keen interest in visiting include Mexico and the Caribbean.

"Sun and sand are always a favorite as temperatures in the U.S. start to get cooler, and this year is no exception," Ms. Belles said. "For the remainder of the year, including the busy holiday travel period, Mexico is the top destination with Caribbean favorites like Anguilla not far behind."



The Caribbean remains accessible to Americans looking to travel abroad. Image credit: Small Luxury Hotels of the World

The Caribbean remains an enticing option even for those traveling with their whole families.

"We have observed that affluent Americans particularly those with families are mainly traveling domestically and in the Caribbean as they tend to have more kid-friendly destinations and activities," said Dr. Terika Haynes, CEO of luxury travel consultancy [Dynamite Travel](#), Atlanta.

For those traveling with children, [The Ocean Club at Four Seasons](#) has a Family Escape package which offers a dining credit, family picnic, babysitting services and more.

The Ocean Club is also boasting its other offerings, from private villas to romance and spa packages. Guests are also invited to embark on unparalleled experiences like snorkeling the reefs of the Great Bahamas Bank.

Hospitality group [Rosewood Hotels & Resorts' Little Dix Bay](#) is holding several upcoming events in time for the holiday season.

Guests can embark on the "Journey to the Baths" spa experience, take some sailing lessons, learn how to make a classic rum cocktail with the owner of Foxy's Tamarind Bar, explore one of the seven secluded beaches on Virgin Gorda through a private experience and more.

As travelers are excited yet still somewhat apprehensive about COVID-19, hospitality brands are continuing to assure travelers that they are taking serious health measures.



Oceanfront guest suite at La Samanna. Image courtesy of Belmond

Last December, Rosewood announced two of its properties Rosewood Inn of the Anasazi in New Mexico and Las Ventanas al Paraso, a Rosewood resort in Los Cabos, Mexico were among the world's first hotels to win a new health-safety designation from Forbes Travel Guide amid rising fears about the pandemic ([see story](#)).

Several hospitality brands are expanding their offerings in the Americas with the expectation that strong interest in the region will continue.

LVMH-owned hospitality group Belmond is opening La Samanna, a beachfront hotel located on the French side of St. Martin, amid continued travel restrictions.

Opening in early 2022, the hotel sits upon Baie Longue, one of the island's longest and most secluded beaches and the site of a pre-Columbian village dating back to 600 BCE. La Samanna's 83 suites range from deluxe oceanfront rooms with private balconies to private villas with infinity pools ([see story](#)).

Rosewood Mexico City is expected to open in 2024 in the Polanco district, and will be within walking distance of renowned luxury shopping district, Avenida Presidente Masaryk. The new location will join the group's collection of properties across Mexico from Los Cabos and Riviera Maya to San Miguel de Allende ([see story](#)).

Travelers also appear to be clamoring to return to Europe after the pandemic especially affected and closed off that region to visitors for more than a year.

In July, Four Seasons introduced new drivable adventures across Europe as restrictions lifted and leisure travel makes a resurgence.



Four Seasons has launched curated European road trips. Image credit: Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts

Six road trips were added to the "Scenic Route with Four Seasons" program, connecting 13 European properties through curated joy drives. Each experience highlights unique destinations, including castles, wineries, lakes, restaurants and more ([see story](#)).

"Europe is seeing a rise in popularity during a time typically considered its off-season," Virtuoso's Ms. Belles said. "Now that vaccination protocols have eased restrictions and countries like Italy, France and the U.K. are welcoming back Americans, pent-up demand has luxury travelers opting for these European favorites."

Packing your patience

With a return to holiday travel, vacationers are advised to be thoughtful and patient in their planning. There has been no return to "normal," as COVID-19 is still the reality, and safety measures must be taken.



Some travelers are looking to start smaller with domestic travel, while others want to travel internationally. Image credit: Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts

According to Simon-Kucher & Partners, with more savings and collected travel miles, 45 percent of consumers are looking to travel more than they had pre-pandemic, implying a new era of "revenge traveling." During a webinar hosted by the International Luxury Hotel Association in September 2021, leaders in the hospitality sector discussed how properties are preparing for an energized generation of vacationers ([see story](#)).

When the COVID-19 delta variant began sweeping North America and many parts of Europe, world leaders shared conflicting responses to travel mandates and tourists.

In early September, the European Union removed the U.S. from its safe-travel list. However, in an attempt to avert economic disaster, upscale vacation destinations such as Anguilla lifted quarantine mandates ([see story](#)).

Travel policies continue to be updated and developments are ongoing.

"Luxury travelers should prioritize safety, and we encourage clients to research the destination and their protocols during the planning process to ensure that there will be available activities and things to do in the vacation destination," Dynamite Travel's Dr. Haynes said. "Luxury travelers should also prioritize exclusivity.

"Destinations with lower amounts of tourists may have less exposure overall to people which can give travelers a sense of peace and security while traveling."

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