



Eid Mubarak

During the sacred month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk to focus on prayer, spiritual renewal, clarity and purification of the body and mind, while extending charity to those in need.

In Trinidad and Tobago, we are blessed to have a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society.

tourism NEWS

KICK STARTING RECOVERY

"The COVID-19 pandemic has swiftly and thoroughly thrown the travel and tourism industry globally into a crisis; the likes of which has never been seen before. Even when compared to the Global Economic Crisis of 2009, the SARS epidemic of 2003 and the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001 in USA, those impacts dwarf in comparison to the fallout of this current crisis. There is no question that tourism is among the sectors hit hardest by this crisis, but it is also at the heart of the recovery," states Mrs. Heidi Alert, Chief Executive Officer (Ag.) of Tourism Trinidad Limited (TTL).

A return to travel is critical for the global economy as travel and tourism account for 11% of the world's GDP and create more than 320 million jobs for workers serving 1.4 billion travellers annually. Globally, tourist arrivals for the first quarter of 2020 are down 22.4% and arrivals in March 2020 alone has shown a decline of 57%. The Caribbean has already recorded the 6th largest percentage decline in tourist arrivals in the world (by subregion). The challenge ahead for Trinidad tourism sector lies in two (2) phases - first in weathering the impact of COVID-19 as the sector has taken a severe blow and secondly in rebuilding. It is anticipated that recovery will come firstly from a domestic staycation perspective and then international travellers can be encouraged to come visit as international travel is likely to be heavily restricted for some time.

Following all guidelines and protocols developed by the Ministry of Health, Tourism Trinidad, in the coming months, will be partnering with the diverse range of tourism stakeholders to offer exciting options and packages for exploring Trinidad and all we have to offer as a tourist destination. This will also include opportunities for volun-tourism, which will allow citizens to explore the destination, build national pride and help prepare to open our doors once more in the future.

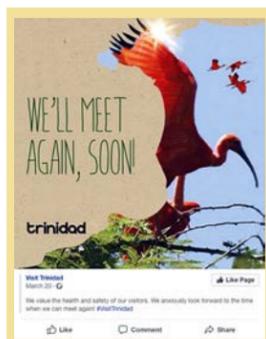
Tourism Trinidad Limited has taken the opportunity during this "stay at home" period to rethink the entire way we approach tourism to deliver a sector which is financially self-sustaining in the longer term. In this regard, Tourism Trinidad has developed a draft "Go to Market Strategy" and we will be holding extensive consultations with tourism stakeholders to discuss this plan. It is essential that the private sector be at the centre of discussions from the initial planning phase.



Moreover, Tourism Trinidad will be launching a series of online training programs for the industry to hone their skills and improve their qualifications.

TTL currently has an active digital media campaign to reassure and engage consumers and the trade, provide nostalgia moments, as well as to reintroduce Destination Trinidad to the world. This is all in keeping with the wider regional and international tourism messaging of resilience, hope, and a commitment to safe travel.

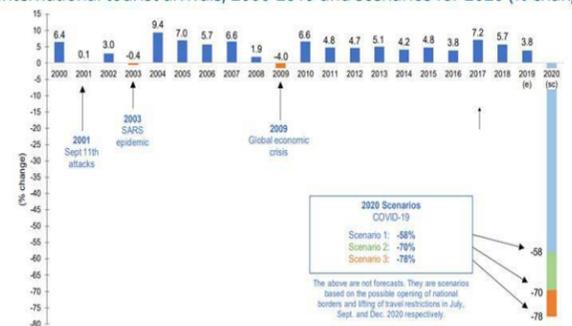
Our social media platforms are showcasing and promoting virtual concerts with our local soca artistes, displaying riveting photography of our natural and built heritage, recipes of our world-renowned street foods and virtual tours of our sites and attractions so that Destination Trinidad remains top of mind. The hashtags #TravelTomorrow #CaribbeanDreaming #TrinidadDreaming #VisitTrinidad are being used on social media channels to lift spirits and help travellers plan their next holiday in Trinidad... when the time is right.



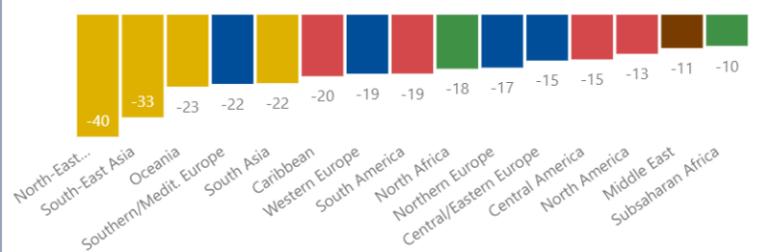
WORLD DATA

Arrivals could drop 58% to 78% depending on pace of normalization

International tourist arrivals, 2000-2019 and scenarios for 2020 (% change)



YTD change by subregion (%)



M meet certified tour guide, professional photographer and “Trini Mushroaming Man” Jeffrey Wong Sang, who dreams of becoming a mycologist. A member of the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalist Club, Jeffrey treks through our forests, rivers, and nature spots in search of a treasure chest of fungi, or mushrooms as they are often called.

Fungi are often described as being the “fifth kingdom of life on Earth”; they are neither plant nor animal, microbe nor protozoa. The larger fungi or macro fungi are popularly referred to as mushrooms and are the fruiting and sporing body of fungi. They play a major role as decomposers and recyclers for nutrients (eg. nitrogen, phosphorus) in the wide variety of ecosystems. Mushrooms, perhaps the most easily recognisable forms of fungi, have been hailed as the latest superfoods, while some experts have said fungi may even have the potential to save the world from humanity’s worst excesses.

A passionate environment advocate Jeffrey Wong Sang explained that most people refer to him as “The Crazy Mushroom Man” because of the strangeness of his hobby which has now grown to be an integral part of his tours. This journey into “mushroaming” first started with his self-initiated cleaning up of the Bamboo Cathedral in Chaguaramas. It was during one of his many expeditions to that area, in 2011, that his unorthodox interest in fungi was awakened and he then began to utilise his photographic abilities to capture the amazing local variety of fungi in order to raise awareness about their enormous potential.

For Jeffrey, “there is no life without fungi and mushroaming. It is a product of my passionate love for nature and travel. It is a really great opportunity for me to educate our youth and I love interacting with people who are eager to explore new territory and are open to take in new experiences and enjoy the wonders of nature and travel”.

He went on to add “I am just overwhelmed by the physical beauty of fungi and what started off as a photographic exercise has now blossomed into a full-fledged science project where I have started to document and preserve these mushrooms”.

Jeffrey is hopeful that further local technical research into the medicinal and healing properties of mushrooms, as well as other uses, can result in the development of a new revenue earning product stream.

Perhaps one of Jeffrey’s greatest achievements is his collection of samples of mushrooms (and photographs) to document Trinidad and Tobago’s fungi biodiversity for eventual scientific identification, as well as the development of his Facebook page “Mushrooms of Trinidad and Tobago” which helps in crowd sourcing photos and information on mushrooms. He has also mounted several mushroom displays in malls, schools, and scientific fora; focusing on teaching children how to be active and responsible citizens of the planet, so that they become the strong, active and empowered adults who are inheriting our planet.

The mushroom photos of Jeffrey Wong Sang have been featured on the website of National Geographic, the global nonprofit organization committed to exploring and protecting our planet. He reflected that “COVID-19 has forced tour guides to re-think our tours . . . we need new tours. . . we have to turn this thing inside out and upside down. The old norm is not going to work. We have to get people excited”.

Thanks to Jeffrey Wong Sang, interest in mushroaming to reconnect with the magical and amazing rich flora and fauna of Trinidad is growing beyond a few specialists.

the Trini Mushroaming Man



IN THE NEWS



VIDEO GLOBETROTTER

Friday May 22

7:30 AM

Lifetime

The island of Trinidad will be featured in the highly acclaimed new US series “Video GlobeTrotter” on the popular Lifetime Network starting on Friday May 22, 2020. Hosted by the affable travel expert and media personality Scott Eddy, this Caribbean travel adventure series takes viewers on exciting whirlwind trips. The premier episode unveils Trinidad’s outstanding and flavourful cuisine, fun and exciting adventures, history and heritage and lush rainforests.

With Lifetime’s reach of over 96 million US households and syndication in over 2,000 hotels reaching over a half-million rooms, the promotional benefits of “Video GlobeTrotter” are quite far-reaching. Additionally, Scott Eddy has a current social media following of more than 1.5 million.

All aired episodes can be viewed on VideoGlobetrotter.com.



ONLINE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Ready to Re-open? How the Caribbean Tourism Industry Should Prepare for the Tourism Restart. This webinar will discuss the latest developments for tourism recovery, resumption of air travel in the Caribbean and presentation of social sentiment data and insights illustrating what consumers in the United States expect from hotels and attractions in the Caribbean in a post-COVID-19 world. May 19, 2020 3:00pm

Tips for Leaders during Turbulent Times. Starting at 10.00am on May 19, this webinar is organised by the Caribbean Export. Visit www.carib-export.com/webinars to register and view past webinars.

OTHER PROGRAMS

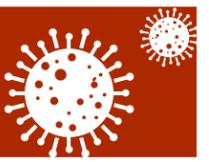
Several organisations continue to offer online learning opportunities at reduced prices or free of charge.

1 <https://alison.com/courses/tourism-and-hospitality>
Offering several courses in tourism and hospitality including: **Food Safety and Hygiene in the Catering Industry; Tourism - Introduction to Retail Travel and Hospitality in Management Studies – Hotel Operations**

2 <https://www.oxfordhomestudy.com/>
Offers several distance learning professional courses. Areas of study include: **Accounting and Finance; Business Studies; Customer Service; Diet and Nutrition and Marketing.**

3 www.unwto-tourismacademy.ie.edu
The UNWTO Online Tourism Academy is currently offering a free course ‘Introduction to Tourism Industry Management’. Other courses are provided but at a cost.

Staying Sane in COVID-19 World



People around the world are facing increasing mental health issues during this COVID-19 pandemic. Capsized travel plans, indefinite isolation, panic over scarce resources and information overload could be a recipe for unchecked anxiety and feelings of isolation.

Persons working in our local tourism industry are not immune. We are worried about our health and that of our precious loved ones. . . fear as to the source of our next pay cheque . . . or just plain anxiety over the unknown.

Stress may be manifested as:

- Changes in sleep and/or eating patterns
- Increased use of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol
- Worsening of known health conditions
- New health conditions
- Difficulty staying focused and concentrated

Psychologists acknowledge that feeling worried and anxious is normal in a crisis like this, but it can be managed. Your ability to cope with stress will be of benefit not only to you, the individual, but to members of your family, friends, and the wider community.

TIPS TO MANAGE STRESS

- Stay active . . . take time for daily walks in open well-ventilated spaces
- Practice meditation or do yoga
- Get as much sleep and relaxation
- Avoid tobacco, drugs, and alcohol
- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals
- Drink lots of water
- Avoid obsessing over endless Coronavirus media coverage. Pay attention to positive stories about COVID-19, such as the experiences of people who have recovered. Do not get stuck overestimating the threat and underestimating human resilience.
- Connect over FaceTime with family and friends that you trust and whose company you enjoy

The fact is you are in a fast-paced, ever-changing business. Learning ways to manage stress is critical to your health and the health of your business. Control what you can and let the rest just be.

If you need assistance managing your anxieties, contact: - **Trinidad and Tobago Association of Psychologists**
868- 717-TTAP (8827) or visit www.psychologytt.org . The service is FREE.

CONTACT

Do you want Tourism Trinidad to feature your business, then drop us a line at info@visittrinidad.co.tt

Follow us on:

 <https://www.visittrinidad.co.tt>

 Facebook: VisitTrinidad

 Instagram: booktrinidad

 Twitter: @explorettrinidad

EDITORIAL TEAM

Akilah Procope	- Senior Research Officer
Allyson Aguilera	- Visitor Experience Officer
Carlton Vaughn De Four	- Transport Coordinator - Air
Cheryl-Ann Cummings	- Stakeholder Relations Officer
Sherma Mitchell	- Manager Corporate Communications & Stakeholder Relations