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First with the news

Monday 23rd May 2022



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Coffee sessions

DESTINATION Webinars has announced a new BYO Coffee Cluster webinar series, starting Thu this week, with a range of prizes and incentives on offer.

Featuring eight suppliers covering domestic & worldwide adventures; destination specialists, and cruising, attendees will hear from Acacia Africa, Arcadia Expeditions, Ponant, Outback Spirit Tours, Exodus Travels, Simply Cuba Tours, Rocky Mountaineer and Viking - register **HERE** by Wed.



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TTC seals Luxury Esc deal

LUXURY Escapes is expanding its tours offering via a major new international partnership with The Travel Corporation (TTC) (**TD** breaking news).

Under the pact, travellers in Australia and the USA will have access to tours from brands such as Trafalgar, Insight Vacations, Luxury Gold, and AAT Kings, with more than 150 itineraries currently available to book.

As the catalogue is further developed, these brands will be joined by Contiki and Costsaver on the Cudo, Deals, Scoopon & Treat Me platforms.

Luxury Escapes co-founder & Chief Executive Officer Adam Schwab said the partnership

comes at an exciting time for Australia as travel returns bigger and better than ever before.

"Our customers drive all of our decision-making and we're committed to innovating to deliver amazing travel experiences for them," he said.

"Last year we revealed that spending on travel is set to increase, with 55% of Australians looking to treat themselves on their first international holiday, so it's now more important than ever that we can offer our customers the most unique and incredible travel experiences."

TTC Chief Executive Officer David Hosking said: "Luxury Escapes had been a valuable partner during the COVID period with strong domestic sales with AAT Kings and Inspiring Journeys so this wider international offering made sense and we are pleased to be working with such a strong brand and partner."

QF Kiwi comeback

QANTAS Airways is ramping up its trans-Tasman flights for the New Zealand ski season.

Sydney to Queenstown and Wellington; Melbourne to Christchurch and Wellington; and Brisbane to Christchurch will all restart tomorrow, with all flights completely full, as Qantas sees strong demand in both directions across the Tasman.

Qantas will operate up to 20 weekly services to Queenstown from Australia, with capacity on the route expected to reach 110% of pre-COVID levels by Jul.

Services from MEL and BNE to ZQN will recommence on 18 Jun, at which point Qantas will have returned to its full pre-COVID trans-Tasman network.

Qantas' return to Queenstown also marks the first international flight into the airport in almost twelve months.

Thailand easings

AUTHORITIES in Thailand have announced a further easing of COVID-19 restrictions for foreign visitors to the country.

Effective 01 Jun, overseas arrivals will still need to apply for a Thailand Pass, but will only need to provide passport and vaccination details and evidence of a US\$10,000 health insurance policy.

Thai nationals will no longer be required to apply for the pass.

Upon arriving, vaccinated travellers will undergo screening, and are then allowed to go anywhere in the Kingdom - more details at tp.consular.go.th.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of news, plus a cover page from **Tourism New Zealand** and a photo page from **Norwegian Cruise Line**.

Connect with NZ

TOURISM New Zealand is urging the industry to keep Kiwi dreams alive by signing up for its special trade newsletter.

Subscribers are the first to get the latest Kiwi travel news, training events, and product updates - see the **cover page**.

SQ extends CRP

SINGAPORE Airlines has extended its Complementary Rebooking Policy (CRP) to cover tickets issued up to 31 Jul 2022.

The CRP is valid for bookings issued from 05 Mar 2020, and allows unlimited complimentary rebookings.

For change requests after 31 Jul, only one complimentary change is allowed.

Explorer test sailing

P&O Cruises Australia will this week embark on a test sailing aboard *Pacific Explorer* to prepare for her highly anticipated "official" first voyage on 31 May.

The three-night "activation cruise" will depart on Thu, with shoreside staff, suppliers, and travel advisors helping to "fine-tune the P&O experience".

The sailing will be the first time *Explorer's* crew have served guests in two years.

For more on Carnival Corporation's Australian restart, head to **page 6** and see today's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.

Sky is the limit 2022

The Malaysia Airlines Sales Rewards Scheme is back. Sell Malaysia Airlines and be rewarded with free flight tickets to book the holiday you deserve.

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malaysia airlines

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AA wins US\$1 in Sabre damages

AMERICAN Airlines has been awarded just US\$1 in damages after winning a long-running case against Sabre Corporation.

The anti-competition lawsuit was originated in 2011 by US Airways, two years before it merged with AA.

US Airways claimed Sabre was impeding travel agents from using other alternatives for making flight bookings, and imposing an “unduly restrictive distribution agreement”.

After a three-week trial and five days of juror deliberations, last week the court found Sabre had harmed US Airways by “wilfully maintaining monopoly power,” but didn’t agree the tech firm had unreasonably restrained trade.

US Airways initially sought US\$300m in damages, and had won US\$15m in an earlier 2016 trial on the matter, but that verdict was overturned in 2019.

SAA slashes commission

SOUTH African Airways has joined the growing ranks of commission-cutting carriers, on Fri advising the industry that it would reduce base payouts for travel agents in Australia and New Zealand to just 1%.

The pre-emptive move applies to all international SAA services booked out of the Australasian market - despite the carrier currently only operating domestic and regional operations within Africa, and no date yet scheduled for the return of international SAA flights.

Despite the reduction, the carrier insisted that “we remain committed to working with our valued travel partners” in both countries.

South African Airways said the “difficult, but necessary decision to reduce our base commission for travel agents in Australia and New Zealand” was “key to our recovery strategy, and to

ensure we can operate as cost competitively as possible”.

“This decision has not been taken lightly,” the carrier added, thanking its trade partners for their past and continued support of South African Airways.

SAA entered bankruptcy proceedings before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (**TD** 05 Dec 2019) and having relaunched limited operations last Sep, remains subject to a yet-to-be-finalised takeover offer by a local consortium called Takatso.

Gibbons promoted

CRAIG Gibbons has been named as Managing Director Asia Pacific at Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board.

He’s been with the organisation for just over eight years, with his new role a promotion from his former Regional Director Asia Pacific designation.

Explore on sale

EXPLORE Worldwide is offering 15% off a wide range of trips available over the upcoming northern summer.

Global Director of Sales, Ben Ittensohn, said it was the first season in three years where the industry has had near-normal capacity “and we’re so pleased to celebrate that with discounted trips right up to the end of Oct, for agents to pass on to their clients - many of whom have not booked a trip yet”.

Ittensohn said Explore had seen a huge surge in demand for Northern Hemisphere summer holidays since 01 May, with bookings up 30% on pre-pandemic levels in 2019.

Explore, represented in Australia by Adventure World, has also announced a series of American itineraries taking in the “annular solar eclipse” of 2023.

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Bunnik back in Europe



BUNNIK Tours this month restarted operations in Europe, two years after putting its international tours on hold due to the onset of the pandemic.

Joint CEO Dennis Bunnik (pictured in Zagreb) has joined in with several of the initial trips, with the aim of reinforcing client confidence and giving customers peace of mind that they are in safe and experienced hands.

Dennis' European sojourn began on 08 May when he joined the Turkey in Depth small group tour, Bunnik's first European departure since early 2020.

"Being back in Europe and travelling with our groups has been like reuniting with an old friend I haven't seen for years," Bunnik said.

"The connection is still there and within minutes it feels like you've never been apart."

He also hailed the performance

of the Bunnik teams on the ground, saying "just like our excited Aussie travellers, they are so happy to be back on the road and showing off their beloved countries," he said.

Bunnik has also recorded a video showcasing why 2022 is the best time to travel through Europe - check it out at traveldaily.com.au/videos.

UA Newark lounge

UNITED Airlines has debuted its largest United Club location in the world, at New Jersey's Newark Liberty International Airport.

The new club is located in Terminal C3, with a host of new features including sustainability-led design and materials throughout, enhanced indoor air quality, "spa-like" showers, a barista coffee-shop experience and murals by local artists.

Roll out the Farrell: AFTA

THE Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) has welcomed the likely installation of Don Farrell to the Tourism Minister position after Labor secured victory in Sat's Federal Election, calling him a "champion of Australia's travel agents".

"[Farrell] has worked both behind the scenes as well as on the floor of Parliament to push the need for ongoing support and refine the delivery mechanisms," AFTA CEO Dean Long said.

"In a webinar meeting with AFTA members just before the election, Senator Farrell highlighted his own focus on listening to the industry to get a sense of what will really help in the recovery and to continue to work with us as we recover."

Despite Labor's win, AFTA added it would continue its bipartisan approach to achieving the best outcomes for the sector.

MEANWHILE the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) believes its strong relationship with the Labor Party forged over the last two years of the pandemic will serve the export tourism sector well as it seeks to continue its economic rebound.

"There is much to be done in helping Australia's export tourism industry to get back to its full success and we are looking forward to working alongside the Albanese Government in achieving this," ATEC Managing Director Peter Shelley said.

"ATEC has built a strong relationship with the Labor party, ensuring they are across the key issues being faced by our industry and we are confident the new ministry is well informed & ready to support tourism's future."

Australia's tourism industry delivers the country more than \$45 billion in revenue to the economy, with ATEC stating export tourism will be a valuable contributor to help drive Australia's recovering revenue.

Priorities in future discussions between the Federal Government and ATEC will be: visa policy and processing, export marketing development grants, aviation access, workforce & skills development, as well as insurance schemes.

Crown approves

BLACKSTONE'S \$8.9 billion acquisition of Crown Resorts has been approved by shareholders after being recommended by the board to accept a revised takeover in Feb (**TD** 14 Feb).

More than 92% of shareholders voted in favour of the deal on Fri, with the purchase now awaiting final state regulatory approval, which will be handed down at the end of next month.

"Crown will continue to assist Blackstone as it works towards obtaining the required gaming regulatory approvals," a spokesperson for Crown Resorts said last week.

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Sheraton Fiji back

SHERATON Resort & Spa, Tokoriki Island, Fiji (pictured) is reopening to guests tomorrow after a two-year hiatus.

As the fourth Marriott International resort to reopen in Fiji since the commencement of international travel in Dec (TD 01 Dec), The Sheraton Tokoriki Island will once again offer its 101 guest suites to travellers seeking an island paradise getaway.

Marriott International Vice President Fiji & Samoa Neeraj Chadha said the company is very proud to reopen the resort, which is positioned among the Mamanuca Islands.



Apr worst OTP in 20 years

THE on-time performance (OTP) of Australia's domestic airlines averaged just over 60% last month, with the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics (BITRE) saying it was the worst ever result since recording commenced in Nov 2003.

The agency said the figures were impacted by weather related events, congestion and COVID-19-related issues.

The best out of a bad lot was the Virgin Australia and VA Regional Airlines network, which recorded 65.8% for on-time arrivals during Apr, ahead of Qantas and QantasLink which had a 60.8% on time arrival result.

Among the major domestic carriers, VA achieved the highest on time arrivals with 65.6%, followed by Jetstar at 59.2% and then Qantas in third place with a result of just 58.7%.

Of the regional carriers,

Regional Express recorded 73.6% for on-time arrivals, followed by Virgin Australia Regional Airlines at 69.15% and then QantasLink with 62.4%.

The highest percentage of cancellations was recorded by QantasLink, at 5.4% for the month, followed by Qantas with 5%, Jetstar with 4.9%, Virgin Australia Regional Airlines (3.2%) Virgin Australia (3.1%) and then Rex Airlines at 1.1%.

Karratha-Perth was the best performing route in terms of arrivals with an 88.9% rate, while the worst was Launceston-Melbourne, where just 37% of flights arrived on time in Apr.

Cancellations during the month were highest on Ballina-Sydney where 14% of scheduled flights did not operate, followed by Sydney-Ballina (12.7%), Melbourne-Sydney (11.3%), Sydney-Melbourne (11.1%) and Newman-Perth (9.7%).



Window Seat

MANY Australian teenagers who take time off after finishing school end up traipsing around Europe or the USA.

But that wasn't the case for nineteen-year-old Gabby Kanizay, who decided instead she would climb Mount Everest.

And on top of that, unlike the traditional parent-free schoolies, her mum went along for the climb too.

Kanizay is now the youngest Aussie female to reach Everest's summit, saying "we definitely helped each other stay strong".



Travel is back and so is Stuba! To celebrate, we're giving you the chance to win one of 25 prizes! All you need to do to be in with a chance of winning great prizes including AirPod Pros, Sonos Roam, Apple Watch 7 and shopping vouchers is make a booking between 23 May and 26 June.

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Accor campaign

ACCOR has launched a new million-dollar marketing campaign to promote ALL.com.

The Pacific-wide marketing campaign will promote the website as the all-encompassing digital destination for the best travel experiences, with incredible loyalty benefits.

Accor's latest brand campaign will run from now until the end of Sep.

VA Tasmania sale

VIRGIN Australia is stripping off for a \$55 Tasmania sale, dropping its pants in a "cheeky" video.

The Touch of Tasmania sale offers 250,000 fares from as low as \$55 one-way, available now at virginaustralia.com until midnight 01 Jun or until sold out, for travel across the next two years.

For more information on the sale, see the video [HERE](#).

Election result is bellissimo



AS TRAVEL and tourism stakeholders across the country keenly wait to find out what the election of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese means for the sector, Manager Australia & NZ at the Italian National Tourist Board, Emanuele Attanasio, wasted no time in congratulating the 31st

leader of Australia.

"Congratulations to Anthony Albanese...I met [the Prime Minister] at the inauguration of Little Italy in Leichhardt, Sydney (pictured), here's to a brighter future for Australia," he said.

It has been an exciting period for the Italian tourism representatives in Australia, which recently appointed Anne Wild & Associates to conduct its PR locally (TD 03 May).

Albanese' father hailed from Barletta, a city located in Southeastern Italy.

Scooting to Jeju

SCOOT is gearing up launch flights to Jeju to be its second destination in South Korea.

Following news of the country easing travel restrictions, Scoot is scheduled to commence thrice-weekly non-stop services from Singapore from 15 Jun with its Airbus A321neo fleet.

"We are excited about the opportunity to serve demand between Singapore and Jeju, connecting customers directly to the island, a renowned location for popular K-pop music videos and K-drama settings," said Chief Commercial Officer Calvin Chan.

Tahiti scraps tests

TESTS are no longer required for vaccinated travellers to Tahiti.

Both PCRs and RATs have been scrapped for those coming from a range of destinations.

However, unvaccinated travellers to French Polynesia over 12 years of age coming from a country classified as "green" or "orange" will have to perform an PCR test less than 72 hours prior to arrival, or a RAT test less than 48 hours prior to departure.



Marketing Executive - Trade

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DAYS**
2022



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20 JUNE

SYDNEY
21 JUNE

BRISBANE
22 JUNE

SAVE THE DATE

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With more major players in Australian aviation than ever before, the competition to fill seats is heating up. Plus more industry news in the May issue of *travelBulletin*.

travelBulletin

Wellness summit debut

AUSTRALIA is gearing up to host the first-ever Wellness Tourism Summit, an event designed to showcase the growth opportunities for tourism businesses over the next year.

Taking place over two days in Oct, the event will be hosted by founder of Droga & co and Chair of the Wellness Tourism Initiative,

Katherine Droga, and will offer guests deep consumer insights into the fast-moving segment via panel discussions and analysis.

Globally, the wellness tourism sector is predicted to grow by 21% annually to 2025, with research conducted by Droga & co revealing just over half of Australians intend to take more wellbeing holidays now restrictions have lifted, while 45% of consumers are investing more in their wellbeing after enduring the rigours of the pandemic.

Over the course of the two days, delegates will also be able to sample wellness experiences and network with like-minded businesses within “Wellness Immersion Zones” themed nourish, pamper and explore.

“The Wellness Tourism Summit will be embracing the theme of ‘regeneration,’” Droga said.

“Wellness tourism can support the wellbeing of not only visitors but local communities, culture, and the environment,” she added.

Earlybird Tickets are on sale now for \$495 per person.

For more information regarding the schedule and registration, **CLICK HERE**.

IAG 737 Max deal

INTERNATIONAL Airlines Group, the parent company of British Airways, Iberia, Vueling and Aer Lingus, has confirmed a pre-pandemic order for 50 new Boeing 737 Max aircraft.

A letter of intent for 200 737s was signed in 2019, with the latest iteration of the deal also providing for 100 options.

IAG CEO Luis Gallego said the pact was “an important part of IAG’s shorthaul fleet renewal,” with the new aircraft to be delivered between 2023 and 2027 along with options from 2025 if they are taken up.

Gallego said IAG had negotiated a “substantial discount” from Boeing’s list prices for the new planes.

Carnival recovery is looking pine



CARNIVAL Corporation’s return to service in Australia will see it christen the Brisbane International Cruise Terminal later this week, when P&O’s *Pacific Explorer* becomes the first leisure vessel to utilise the facility.

It will be one of the highlights of Carnival Corp’s return to service in Australia, the company’s local President Marguerite Fitzgerald (**pictured** with P&O celebrity chef Luke Mangan) noted on Fri at White Bay Cruise Terminal.

Fitzgerald said *Explorer’s* impending arrival into Brisbane would be the start of a relationship which has been held up due to the pandemic.

“It’s fantastic,” Fitzgerald said,

“that’s what Carnival planned when we originally created our relationship with the Brisbane International Cruise Terminal.

“We are going to be running more than 100 calls there every year, and so this is just the first of many, and the economic activity it brings back,” she added, on the day Carnival loaded *Explorer* with fresh produce from its network of suppliers.

Fitzgerald noted Carnival’s return to service also meant an arrival of opportunity for these suppliers.

“It is also strong confirmation of the multiplier effect of cruise tourism and the diversity of the cruising ecosystem,” she added.



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No one does Hawai'i like Norwegian

LAST WEEK some of Norwegian Cruise Line's (NCL) industry partners celebrated the company's Great Cruise Comeback while enjoying Hawai'i's most immersive inter-island itinerary on board the refurbished *Pride of America*. Hosted by NCL President and CEO Harry Sommer, NCL Sales Director ANZ Damian Borg (both pictured at right) and key members of the NCL executive team, the group had the opportunity to experience NCL's unique and award-winning inter-island itinerary. During the seven-day cruise the group experienced the delights of Hawai'i on a range of shore excursions including a visit to the Volcano crater in Hilo on the Big Island (Hawaii), Iao Needle Valley in Maui, and Fern Grotto and Waimea Canyon in Kauai.



On board they enjoyed delectable dining at Cagney's Steakhouse and Jefferson's Bistro as well as a sailaway cocktail party sailing along the stunning Na Pali Coast of Hawaii.



THE Na Pali Coast sailaway on *Pride of America* was the perfect opportunity to break out those Hawaiian shirts, sported by John Williams, Our Vacation Centre; Greg Wilson, CruiseCo; Gareth Evison, Imagine Holidays; Josh Duncan, Flight Centre and Damian Borg of NCL.



GREG Wilson, CruiseCo; Josh Duncan, Flight Centre; Michael Middleton, Ignite Holidays; Gareth Evison, Imagine Holidays; Jess Wagner, NCL; John Williams, Our Vacation Centre; and Lori Thornton.



GARETH Evison from Imagine Holidays and Flight Centre's Josh Duncan enjoying a round of golf with Ross Birch, Executive Director, Islands of Hawai'i Visitors Bureau.



MAGDA Del Rosario, NCL; Jess Wagner; Josh Duncan, Flight Centre; and Neil Brodie, NCL Director Charters, Meetings & Incentives enjoying a visit to the Hilo volcano crater on the Big Island.



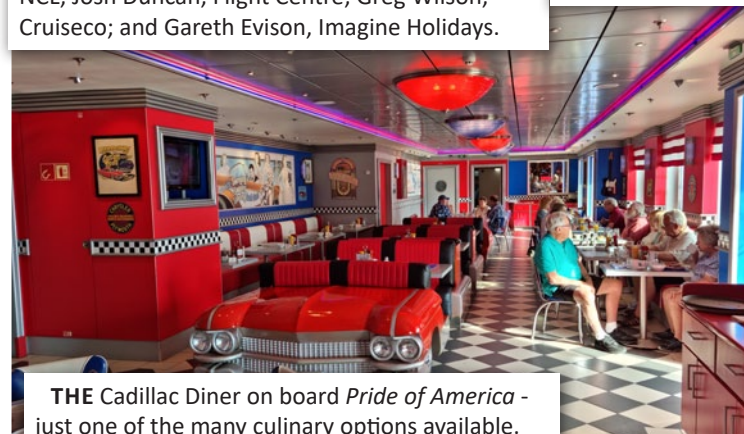
JUST lei-ing around during dinner at Beach House in Kauai - John Williams, OVC; Damian Borg, NCL; Josh Duncan, Flight Centre; Greg Wilson, CruiseCo; and Gareth Evison, Imagine Holidays.

NCL's Hawai'i by the numbers

- 0 sea days leaves more time to explore
- The 1 and only major line to offer year-round inter-island Hawai'i cruises
- 2 overnight stays
- 4 islands in 7 days
- 9 Apr recommended weekly voyages
- 10-hour non-stop flight
- NCL's 13th ship to return to sail - all 17 are now back operating
- 15 years in a row voted 'Best Hawai'i' itinerary by *Porthole Magazine*
- 52 sailings a year departing Honolulu every Sat



THE majestic *Pride of America* in Kona, Hawai'i.



THE Cadillac Diner on board *Pride of America* - just one of the many culinary options available.



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Travel Daily



Top Tourism Towns

NEW South Wales' Top Tourism Towns for this year have been revealed, with Carcoar, Berry, and Mudgee taking out the top prizes.

More than 12,000 people cast their vote for this year's Top Tourism Towns awards from a list of 30 finalists, with the winners announced at the Local Government NSW Destination & Visitor Economy Conference in Orange last week.

The three towns took out the title in the "under 1,500 residents", "between 1,500-5,000" and "over 5,000" classes.

NAS eyes expansion

NORWEGIAN Air Shuttle is eyeing a 100-aircraft fleet within two years, Chief Executive Officer Geir Karlsen told the Routes Europe conference.

The Norwegian head described a century of aircraft as the "sweet spot" for the airline's aspirations.

The newly restructured low-cost carrier is planning to grow from 70 to 100 over the next 24 months, with Karlsen adding he is confident old mistakes which led to the closure of Norwegian's long-haul operations (**TD 19 Nov 2020**) will not be repeated.

Travellers bail on Sri Lanka

ONGOING unrest in Sri Lanka, fuelled by food shortages and the rising prices of goods, has seen scores of Australian travellers cancel their holiday plans to the popular destination.

The recently appointed President of the Tourist Hotels Association of Sri Lanka, M Shanthikumar, conceded that 80% of global bookings have been cancelled in recent weeks as tourists balk at going through with trips in light of continued demonstrations.

However, he has moved to reassure travellers that the country remains safe for tourism despite the domestic conflict.

"We won't allow any inconveniences to tourists, so they can come and spend their holidays here and go home peacefully," Shanthikumar said.

The majority of the cancelled



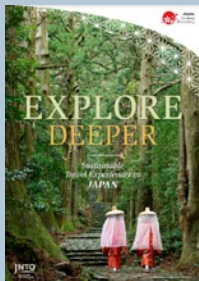
trips were made from Australia, New Zealand, Germany, and France, triggered by advisories from each country discouraging travel to Sri Lanka.

In Australia, DFAT issued an update earlier this month that Australian travellers should "reconsider their need" to travel to Sri Lanka due to the security situation, stating "several violent incidents had taken place during large demonstrations".

Despite the unrest, Australian cricket tours are set to go ahead in Jun and Jul.

BROCHURES

WELCOME to Brochures of the Week, *Travel Daily's* Monday feature. If your firm is releasing a new brochure you'd like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description summarising its features and itineraries, including a PDF of the front cover, and contact details to brochures@traveldaily.com.au.



JNTO - Sustainable Travel Experiences in Japan
The Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) has published its new "Explore Deeper" brochure, showcasing 50 sustainable travel experiences that focus on Japanese nature and culture. Travellers learn how they can participate in sustainable travel around the country, and are invited to explore the Minakami UNESCO Eco Park; enjoy guided tours through ancient cedar forests; see snow monkeys in the Jigokudani Monkey Park conservation area; and opt for in traditional towns and heritage stays, such as the Treeful Treehouse Sustainable Resort in Okinawa's Yambaru National Park.



Wendy Wu Tours - Latin America 2021-2022
Wendy Wu Tours has published its Latin America brochure, featuring tours across Antarctica, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador & Galapagos, and Peru. The brochure shines a spotlight on two new tours: the 14-day Ecuador Highlights journey, with highlights including a visit to the Ingapirca ruins and an exploration of the historical town of Cuenca; and the 21-day Treasures of South America itinerary, which gives travellers a chance to see Machu Piccu, cruise across Lake Titicaca, and climb Sugarloaf Mountain in Rio.



PR Lead

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