

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features four pages of news as well as a full page from Viking.

Dubai axes also tax

AUTHORITIES in Dubai have eliminated the emirates' 30% tax on alcoholic beverages, as part of an initiative to further boost international visitation.

Changes also include the abolition of "personal alcohol licences" which were mandatory for residents who wanted to consume alcohol at home, according to local media reports.

The initiative is in place for an initial one year trial period, with beverage retailers already dropping prices to reflect the change.

QF incidents

A **QANTAS** flight en route to London from Singapore was forced to make an emergency landing in Athens yesterday after a passenger onboard became "critically unwell".

It wasn't the first incident Qantas faced this week, with a flight from Sydney to Manila turned around on Sun after local authorities closed the airspace due to air traffic chaos at the city's airport, which was caused by a power outage.

Chimu legends

CHIMU Adventures has announced the launch of a new itinerary, 'Sporting Legends in the Antarctic', which will see two Australian sporting legends join the voyage.

Rugby great (and Flight Centre director) John Eales and Australia's greatest Olympian, Dawn Fraser, will both be onboard to explore Antarctica alongside Chimu guests, as well as give discussions about their lifetime achievements.

The 11-day voyage departs 27 Jan 2024 onboard Chimu's *Ocean Endeavour* - **CLICK HERE** for info.

IATA agent change fee waiver

EXCLUSIVE

THE International Air Transport Association (IATA) will allow travel agencies to report changes to their operations without paying the usual Late Notification Fee, under a new temporary policy in place until 01 Mar this year.

The organisation has reminded IATA accredited agencies across the globe of its formal policy based on Resolution 812, Section 10, which imposes fees and sanctions on any agent that doesn't report formal changes to IATA within 30 days.

These changes include any modification to agency ownership, shareholding or legal status; the agency name; agency address and contact details; and associate entity details.

The temporary waiver/cancellation of the Agency Late Change Fee will allow all agency's unreported changes to be processed without the associated

When the world stopped...

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group will feature in a new documentary to screen tomorrow on the Nine Network, sharing the story of how its business and people dealt with the abrupt global shutdown of travel in Mar 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic took hold.

Titled *Grounded*, the program includes interviews with key FCTG staffers including Melanie Waters-Ryan, Chris Galanty, Charlene Leiss, Steve Norris, Adam Campbell, James Kavanagh and CEO Graham Turner, and the extreme measures required to help the business keep going.

A trailer for the show (**VIEW HERE**) says its producers had an "all access pass to the senior leadership team...we delve into what it took for them to get together and make quick changes to the company to survive".

The program will screen on 9 and 9HD at 10.30pm tomorrow.

Late Notification Fee.

"This exceptional waiver was a result of the collaboration between the Passenger Agency Programme Global Joint Council (PAPGJC) and the Passenger Agency Conference Steering Group (PSG)," IATA said.

The imposition of the fee has been experienced by many IATA accredited agents over the last three years, as they were forced to rapidly adjust their operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The reporting of changes to IATA is free of charge, with the Association noting that from 01 Mar 2023 the Late Notification Fee of CHF1,500 will once again apply for any late or unreported changes.

NYC visitor surge

NYC & Company has released preliminary visitation figures for 2022, with 56.4 million arrivals - up 71.4% on last year and 85% of the record level in 2019.

The total includes 8.9 million international travellers - more than triple the figure for 2021.

Viking on sale

VIKING Cruises is today showcasing the "industry's leading cruise-only offers" as part of its new year Viking Explorer Sale, offering savings of up to \$9,000 per couple.

A special refundable deposit offer requires only a \$1,000 per person payment to secure bookings and take advantage of the Explorer Sale offers - for more details see **page five**.

Bamboo status deal

VIETNAMESE carrier Bamboo Airways is offering an "instant status match" for top tier frequent flyers in around 60 other airlines across the globe.

The initiative offers Gold, Diamond and First status in the Bamboo Club loyalty program for members of all Star Alliance, SkyTeam and Oneworld carriers.

Oneworld Ruby, SkyTeam Elite and Star Alliance Silver tiers become Bamboo Club Gold, while Oneworld Sapphire maps to Bamboo Club Diamond (giving business class lounge access) and Emerald becomes Bamboo Club First - see bambooirways.com.

Travel & Cruise
Weekly

keep dreaming...

A month-by-month guide to travel through the year, and more destination inspiration for 2023!

Click to read



Most on-time for 2022

THAI AirAsia was the most punctual airline in the Asia-Pacific region over the last 12 months, while Haneda Airport in Tokyo was the top performing global airport in 2022, according to a new report from global aviation analytics provider Cirium.

Brazilian carrier Azul Airlines was the world's most on-time traditional carrier with an 88.93% arrival rate for the year - just pipping Japan's All Nippon Airways with 88.61% and Japan Airlines at 88.00% in second and third spot globally.

LATAM Airlines, Avianca, Emirates, United Airlines, Qatar Airways, and American Airlines also appeared on the global top 10 list for on-time performance.

Delta Air Lines was named as the most on-time airline in North America, with 83.63% of the 1,004,684 flights it operated in 2022 having departed on time. That performance saw Delta

also honoured with the Cirium Platinum Award for global operational excellence for the second year in a row, while US top 10 carriers included United, Alaska Airlines and American.

Iberia was the leading European carrier with 85.87% of its flights arriving on time last year, followed by Air Europa, Iberia Express, Vueling, Austrian and Norwegian Air Shuttle.

Cirium also ranked the leading low cost carriers, with Japan-based StarFlyer coming out on top with 95.23% on-time arrival, followed by Solaseed Air (94.53%) and Thai AirAsia (91.56%).

In terms of airport performance, Haneda's 90.33% on-time departure rate saw it in the lead, followed by India's Kempegowda Airport (84.08%), Salt Lake City Airport (83.87%), Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (82.62%) and Philadelphia International Airport (82.54%).

EK goes Bahamas

EMIRATES has signed an agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Bahamas to promote tourism to the Caribbean archipelago.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will see the two parties work together on joint initiatives, in an effort to attract more visitors to the islands from key markets across the Emirates' global flight network.

The collaboration will include joint promotional campaigns that showcase the destination's appeal; marketing activities including media and trade familiarisation trips in the first quarter of this year; and tailor-made tour packages via the carrier's tour operating arm, Emirates Holidays.

Currently EK customers can access the Bahamas via flights to Nassau on partner carriers such as United (via Houston, Chicago and Newark), and Air Canada (via Toronto).

T'way scales back

KOREAN carrier T'Way Air will reduce its flights between Seoul Incheon and Sydney from four weekly frequencies to three during the upcoming Northern Summer scheduling period.

T'Way operates A330-300 aircraft on the route, selling food on board but notably not accepting Australian credit cards.

AC debuts in China


MARRIOTT has announced the debut of its AC Hotel brand in Greater China, with the opening of AC Hotel by Marriott Suzhou.

Situated in Suzhou's historic Gusu District, the property is close to many heritage sites, including the Classical Chinese Gardens and the Suzhou Museum.

The hotel offers 135 guestrooms, with five featuring a private outdoor garden, as well as an all-day dining restaurant, the signature AC Lounge, an event space and a 24-hour fitness centre.

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Window Seat

WANT a free flight in the US?

All you have to do is adopt a cat, under a unique collaboration between ultra low cost carrier Frontier Airlines and an animal shelter in Las Vegas.

Apparently those who foster stray pets often have to come up with creative names - and so The Animal Foundation's latest batch of kittens was given the names of several airlines including Frontier, Delta and Spirit.

Frontier heard about the move, and took to social media to offer four flight vouchers to whoever adopted the feline named after it - and in generous holiday spirit is also offering two vouchers to the new parents of little Delta and Spirit as well.

Ischia in focus

THE Italian National Tourist Board (ENIT) is participating in a new campaign to showcase the island of Ischia in the Gulf of Naples, in a bid to rebuild visitation after the destination was hit by a landslide last Nov.

As well as digital and print activations in key markets including the UK, France, Spain and Germany, ENIT will highlight Ischia as part of its participation in key international trade fairs.

EK purchases A380

EMIRATES purchased an Airbus A380 in mid-Dec from the lessor that had previously leased the plane to the airline, meaning the carrier now owns the plane designated A6-EDC.

EK paid about US\$30m for the 14-year-old plane that has racked up more than 48,000 flying hours.

It is speculated that Emirates may use the plane as a source of spare parts for other aircraft.

Travel plans scaled back

AROUND six in 10 Australians who had trips lined up this holiday season reconsidered their plans due to inflation, a new study by New York Stock Exchange-listed "human insight platform", UserTesting, has found.

According to the survey, which is based on video-based recorded responses, around 40% of Aussies polled cited significant increases in flight costs, while 30% said they experienced price upticks when it came to accommodation, city travel and food prices.

The research also revealed that 30% of Australians are not travelling this season, and half are cutting back on their travel experiences in order to save money, with some also indicating that they have reduced the number of trips they plan to take.

Of those who do have upcoming travel plans, 70% said they would stay within Australia, with 50% favouring simple, low-key

vacations to nearby destinations, or visits to see extended family.

Additionally, a recent research report by consumer intelligence platform Toluna, which looks at how Australians are responding to the cost of living crisis, found that just one in four respondents were confident spending money in the coming months.

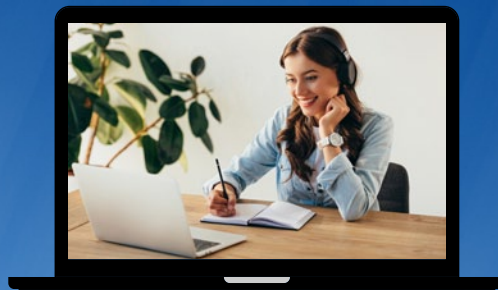
As a result, 33% of Aussies said they will reduce spend on international travel within the next three months.

Despite the short-term impact of economic pressures, the research also found that about 50% of Australians believe that "foreign travel has become vital" with a strong drive to "explore different countries now more than ever".

About 30% said they were inclined towards luxury travel and want "top amenities and minimum inconvenience," the survey reported.

SUPPLIERS & DESTINATIONS

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ACCOMMODATION

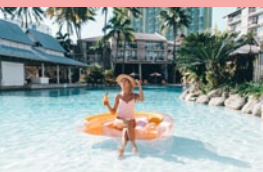
WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



Situated in Queensland's Mount Tamborine on a 112-hectare rainforest property alongside Thunderbird Park, **Cedar Creek Lodges** has recently unveiled its newly renovated Courtyard Spa Room. Located within Frog Lodge, the spacious, self-contained room is semi-detached with its own private courtyard, which has a large outdoor jacuzzi and firepit. The room is ideal for couples looking for a relaxing spa retreat.



ibis Chiangmai Nimman Journeyhub has opened within the region's Nimmanhaemin neighbourhood, surrounded by coffee shops, boutiques, restaurants and live music bars. The new hotel features 142 guestrooms, all equipped with the signature Sweet Bed by ibis, a business desk and complimentary high-speed wi-fi. Guests can also take advantage of a social hub, fitness centre, outdoor infinity pool, and 24-hour services.



Novotel Cairns Oasis Resort has revealed its new-look pool and revamped swim-up bar, completed just in time for the Christmas and New Year period. The Moku Beach Club is now almost twice as big, allowing more guests to enjoy island-inspired cocktails and share plates without getting out of the pool. There is also extra seating available around the lagoon pool, which is surrounded by palm tree lined gardens.

Sea Life upgrade

MERLIN Entertainments' Sea Life Kelly Tarlton's Aquarium in Auckland this morning unveiled "Sea Cave Adventure", the attraction's first major upgrade in more than five years.

The new immersive A\$1.6m experience showcases the wildlife of NZ's Hauraki Gulf Marine Park with a range of digital games, interactive augmented reality and a reinvigorated rockpool experience, with the support of NZ's Department of Conservation.

Hertz in hot water

HERTZ is being investigated by US auto safety regulators for allegedly renting unrepaired recalled vehicles to customers.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said the issue involved latches and locks on Ford Explorer and Nissan Altima vehicles owned by Hertz between 2018 and 2020.

The issue follows another recent Hertz controversy, with the firm paying US\$168m to settle false car theft claims (**TD** 08 Dec 2022).

Solomon's newest Captain



SOLOMON Airlines has congratulated pilot Lyndah Tito Owen on her achievement of moving up the ranks, from Dash 8 First Officer to Captain of the flag carrier's largest domestic aircraft.

She was honoured yesterday at Honiara Airport with an official presentation of her Captain's epaulettes, and a water cannon salute to mark the occasion.

Owen also operated her first flight as captain yesterday, on

the Santa Cruz to Honiara route alongside Captain Geoff Posala.

"We are tremendously proud of her, for her record of flight performance and for the example she has set for other young women and men, who may aspire to a flying career," CEO Gus Kraus enthused.

"Her promotion within the ranks of Solomon Airlines is also pleasing as we have a commitment to developing our people and our workforce in a way that generates employment opportunities within the Solomon Islands," he added.

Pictured celebrating in Honiara: Solomon Airlines CEO Gus Kraus, newly promoted Dash 8 Captain Lyndah Tito Owen and Domestic Fleet Captain Douglas Wale.

RateGain Adara buy

INDIA-BASED RateGain Travel Technologies has announced the acquisition of Adara, a Silicon Valley expert in predictive intelligence for the travel and hospitality sector.

The deal promises to form "the world's most comprehensive travel-intent and data platform powered by AI", reflecting the increasingly significant role that digital channels play in influencing travel decisions.

Adara was founded in 2009 and is a trusted partner in data collection and management for key industry players to power digital marketing, programmatic advertising, campaign measurement & client retention.

RateGain is a global provider of Software as a Service solutions, working with 2,800 clients in over 100 countries to boost yield.

FL airports chaos

PASSENGERS travelling through Florida airports faced delays yesterday due to an air traffic control computer issue, the Federal Aviation Association said.

The issue occurred at Miami Air Route Traffic Control Center and affected the En Route Automation Modernization system, which handles en route traffic.

The outage started causing delays at 1pm until it was resolved at around 6pm, with American Airlines having to push back more than 50 departures.



EXPLORER SALE



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