



## Qantas doubles SAF prog

**QANTAS'** Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) Coalition program has doubled the number of partners and members since it was launched to the market in 2022 (*TD* 11 Nov 2022).

In an update delivered this week, the carrier said that its major push to cultivate greater SAF investment in the local market was progressing well, with a number of key additional corporate entities coming aboard to help drive change.

New members added to the initiative throughout the last year-and-a-half include the Commonwealth Bank, ING Australia, Deloitte, IMC and Raytheon Australia, with each company contributing to address between 400-600 tonnes of carbon emissions.

Meanwhile, Accenture, Fortescue and McKinsey & Company have joined as Partners, contributing to address 1,000 tonnes of carbon emissions.

Members pay a premium to reduce 900 tonnes of air carbon emissions annually, in doing so contributing to the cost of SAF in exchange for other reduction

methods such as carbon offsets.

"The growing demand from corporate Australia for SAF is a clear vote of confidence in the domestic production of biofuels," Qantas Group Chief Sustainability Officer, Andrew Parker, said.

"Our corporate program is one of the many levers we're exploring to manage the higher cost of SAF while we continue to advocate for local production.

"We're also working with industry partners to invest in local technologies and projects that will help the sector reach its net zero targets," he added.

Foundation members of the scheme include Australia Post, Boston Consulting Group, KPMG Australia, Macquarie Group and Woodside Energy. *AB*

## Oceania in the Med

**OCEANIA** Cruises has introduced several new sailings for its 2025 season in the Mediterranean, ranging from nine to 56 days in length.

The line's 1,250-guest ship, *Marina*, will operate four new itineraries, including an 11-day Istanbul to Athens cruise, and a 21-day sailing from Athens to Santa Cruz de Tenerife, both departing in Oct 2025.

Oceania's smaller vessel, *Nautica*, will offer three new journeys in 2025, including a 14-day voyage from Athens to Rome in Aug - details [HERE](#).

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features eight pages of the latest news, including our **Corporate Update** plus a full page from **Ecotourism Australia's Global Sustainable Tourism Summit**.

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## Eco summit returns

**THE** Global Sustainable Tourism Summit, organised by Ecotourism Australia in partnership with Tourism Australia and Accor, is heading to Brisbane for three days in Jun under the theme ‘People, Planet, Place and Purpose’.

The program will offer practical insights, networking events, a sustainability tour, and much more, featuring more than 50 expert speakers from around Australia and the world.

Places are limited and selling fast - for more details on the program, and to register for the summit, see [page nine](#).

## Strong Q1 for SYD

**SYDNEY** Airport welcomed 10.3 million travellers in the first three months of 2024, new stats from the gateway show.

The result is a 14.4% year-on-year increase on 2023 but only 93.7% of the number welcomed in the first three months of 2019.

International traffic performed very strongly, up 25% on the same period in 2023 and 96.6% of the pre-pandemic level.

**MEANWHILE**, Sydney Airport has launched a real-time feed showing waiting times for security screening at each terminal.

The feed is updated every 60 seconds and is aimed at providing a more transparent experience for passengers.

During Q1, 100% of travellers passed through security in 10 minutes or less, with 99.9% doing the same at T1 International.

## APT Asia 2025 unveiled

**APT** has announced the launch of its 2025 Asia program, which features five new luxury holidays in India, Sri Lanka, and Japan.

Travellers can enjoy a new seven-night cruise along the India’s Lower Ganges aboard the *Ganges Voyager*, or experience the highlights of Sri Lanka on a new 15-day land journey and three-day Yala National Park extension.

The collection also offers a new 18-day holiday in Japan, which includes two nights in Karuizawa, Matsumoto, Takayama, Osaka and Nara, as well as stays in Hakone, Takayama, and Kanazawa.

Guests will experience a Japanese calligraphy lesson, a day



trip to Hiroshima, a walk along the historic Nakasendo trail and visits to sake and miso breweries, a wasabi farm and the Jigokudani Monkey Park, home to the iconic ‘snow monkeys’ (pictured).

“We are thrilled with the release of our APT Asia 2025 program as there are so many new and wonderful experiences we’re able to offer guests for the first time,” said APT’s Asia Product Manager, Brett Lemish.

APT’s Asia tours for 2025 also feature the popular 12-day ‘Enchanting Japan’ journey, with prices starting from \$12,995ppts.

**MEANWHILE**, APT has demonstrated its commitment to social responsibility by donating \$6,000 to the Blue Dragon Children’s Foundation.

The funds were raised through APT’s OneTomorrow initiative following exclusive educational sessions held at its head office this week, where Blue Dragon Founder and CEO Michael Brosowski provided an update on the foundation’s work. *JM*

## ETC appoints BDMs

**EVOLUTION** Travel Collective (ETC) has welcomed two new national Business Development Managers (BDMs) to help represent its member brands.

Rebecca Hodgson (pictured left), who is based in Adelaide, and Aleksandra Markovska (pictured middle), who lives in Sydney, have joined the team alongside Michelle Daniels (pictured right), who has been with ETC since 2022.



## LATAM drops B737s

**LATAM** Airlines has ditched plans to acquire Boeing B737s from bankrupt Brazilian carrier Gol, after a deal between the two airlines fell through.

The Chilean carrier is expected to cease pursuing any transactions involving B737s, and chase other narrowbody aircraft instead.

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## Goyder survives

**OUTGOING** Qantas Chairman Richard Goyder has been re-elected for another year at Woodside, despite a campaign by shareholders to dislodge him over climate concerns.

Goyder currently holds five chairmanships, with his time at Qantas likely to end sooner after a fast-tracking of his replacement, John Mullen, last Fri (**TD** 19 Apr).

## FJ investing in AI

**FIJI** Airways has partnered with aviation software company Assaia to implement a specialised AI tool to improve its on-time running and enhance guests' experience.

Known as TurnaroundControl, the computer vision event detection technology helps airlines and ground handling crews communicate and manage turnaround operations.

FJ Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Andre Viljoen, said the airline is aiming to take its "already impressive" operational performance and efficiency to new heights.

"Our team will be able to closely track and manage all turnarounds which we are responsible for," Viljoen commented.

"The interface provides live videos, facilitating real-time monitoring and decision-making."

Fiji Airways is the first airline customer for Assaia in APAC.

"We have noted growing interest in our turnaround optimisation solution in the AsiaPac region as they plan for the expected growth in passengers, and we will be well placed to assist airports and airlines to optimise their turnarounds," said Assaia Chief Executive, Christiaan Hen.

## Schwartz bullish on Leura



**THE** Schwartz Family Company has consolidated its presence in the Blue Mountains, announcing the purchase of the Leura Gardens Resort (**pictured**).

Only renovated recently, the 92-room property was acquired for \$25 million from the Elanor Hotel Accommodation Fund.

Located in the most wealthy township in the Blue Mountains, Leura Gardens Resort features extensive grounds and gardens, multiple conference and events spaces, and the popular Olive Tree Restaurant.

The Schwartz Family has also confirmed its latest purchase will operate in conjunction with its sister property Fairmont Resort to offer "one of the most comprehensive conference and event venues in regional NSW".

"The Blue Mountains is Sydney's holiday playground and one of the most popular destinations for weddings, retreats, leisure groups, conferences and events, and by bringing these three venues together, we can offer a complete tourism solution," said CEO Jerry



Schwartz (**pictured** inset).

"Leura Gardens Resort's 3.5-star accommodation will complement the 4.5-star accommodation at the Fairmont, while we also offer multiple different venues for functions, along with the renowned outdoor activities that the Blue Mountains is famous for," he added.

The acquisition is well-timed, with the hotelier recently announcing the NSW Blues State of Origin team will establish a training base in the Blue Mountains this year using the facilities at both the Fairmont and Leura Gardens (**TD** 04 Apr). **AB**

## AirAsia eyes UL buy

**AIRASIA** Consulting has been engaged to provide services to the International Finance Corporation relating to the sale of SriLankan Airlines.

Six bidders are currently in the pre-qualification stage vying to acquire SriLankan Airlines from the Sri Lankan Government, as it seeks to stem financial losses.

Bidders chosen to proceed to the next stage can then conduct due diligence on the airline ahead of a potential sale.

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## Kiwi cruisers on track to reach 2019

IN A welcome boost for the Australian cruise sector, the country's second-largest source market is well on track to recover to pre-pandemic volumes.

New figures released by Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) today indicate the number of New Zealanders taking a cruise holiday has risen to more than 80% of pre-pandemic levels.

While the 86,300 Kiwis who took an ocean cruise during 2023 was down on the 106,300 who sailed in 2019, the final quarter of last year pushed ahead of the same quarter in 2019.

The Australian market snared 12.8% of the overseas Kiwi cruise market in 2023, performing better than longer-haul destinations such as Alaska (3.1%), Asia (2.9%), and the Caribbean (2.3%).

Topping the cruise destinations for New Zealanders were voyages in the Pacific (39.1%), followed by home sailings in NZ (25.1%), and Australia in third spot.



The average age of a New Zealand cruise passenger was around 49 years old in 2023, down from 52.4 in 2019, reflecting the same trend towards younger cruise pax in Australia, noted in CLIA data released earlier this month (**TD** 16 Apr).

But it wasn't all positive news across the Tasman, with the average duration of ocean cruises taken by Kiwis fractionally down on 2019, drifting from 9.6 days to 9.2 days in 2023.

"New Zealand was among the last countries to reopen to cruising, but New Zealanders began heading back to sea in significant numbers once ships returned," CLIA MD Director in

Australasia, Joel Katz, said.

"While New Zealand is a highly sought-after cruise destination... it is important that the right settings are in place to ensure NZ is internationally competitive.

"Collaboration among government, ports and destinations is vital, along with balanced regulation and reasonable costs to fostering a thriving cruise economy in New Zealand," Katz added.

While NZ works its way back to pre-COVID popularity, on a global scale a record 31.7 million people embarked on an ocean cruise in 2023, breaking the previous international record of 29.7 million in 2019. **AB**

## SAA Perth return

SOUTH African Airways' (SAA) highly anticipated return to the Australian market will take place on Mon, when its first relaunched flight takes off from J'burg on 28 Apr and touches down in Perth on 29 Apr at midday, local time.

## BNE runway works

**EIGHTEEN** concrete slabs in Brisbane Airport's original runway are set to be replaced in a major upgrade project to run over three months later this year.

According to an update on its website, BNE said work is expected to begin by late Jun and run through to the end of Sep.

The new slabs are expected to carry up to 560,000 kilograms, or the equivalent of a fully-laden Airbus A380 ready for take-off.

Both runways will remain open throughout the project, however travellers may notice temporary changes on where aircraft fly during the project due to the runway's length being shortened.

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## UK disruptions up

**IN EXCESS** of 4.6 million travellers experienced disruptions while flying across the UK between Jan-Mar this year, new data from AirHelp shows.

The travel technology company revealed that most passengers in the United Kingdom faced delays of three hours, and more than 480,000 had the right to claim financial compensation from their airline, while 410,000 had their trips cancelled altogether.

London Gatwick and Manchester International Airport suffered the highest disruption rate at 25%, while Liverpool John Lennon Airport and London City Airport were the most punctual.

"We are currently facing ongoing strikes and rising disruptions levels, which... highlights the areas the industry has for improvement," AirHelp CEO Tomasz Pawliszyn said.

## Tick for Gold Coast

**EXPERIENCE** Gold Coast has recruited Brant Hirst as its Head of Marketing, who has started his new role this week.

Hirst brings more than 20 years of marketing experience to his new post and joins from his most recent role leading iconic sports brand Nike's presence in China.

According to the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, Hirst's time at Nike included a direct pitch to NBA basketball legend Michael Jordan over his Air Jordan sneaker label.

He will report to CEO John Warn and promote GC to new markets.

## See more of Kyushu in style



**THE** Kyushu Railway Company (JR Kyushu) has introduced a new scenic rail journey of the Japanese island, connecting travellers from major cities to lesser-known towns and picturesque regional landscapes.

Operating six times a week, Kanpachi Ichiroku services depart from Hakata Station and traverse the Yufu Kogen Line, passing through Yufuin before reaching Beppu Station, with a typical journey taking around five hours.

Included in the fare is a one-way ticket and a bento box meal, sourced from local producers in Fukuoka and Oita.

The new trip was introduced to the rail mix in a bid to better showcase Kyushu's climate, terrain, culinary delights, and cultural customs - especially as the country's visitor economy

continues to rebound in source markets such as Australia.

The train consists of two passenger cars and one lounge car, with each segment boasting a different design based on nature attractions along the line, such as volcanoes and hot springs.

The name Kanpachi Ichiroku is derived from two historically significant figures, Aso Kanpachi and Eto Ichiroku, who both played pivotal roles in the opening and formation of the current Kyudai Main Line.

It is the first new sightseeing train to be introduced by Japan's JR Kyushu business since the Futatsuboshi 4047 and Two Stars 4047 in Sep 2022.

Visitors can book tickets online or through a travel agent.

The JR Kyushu rail pass cannot be used for Kanpachi Ichiroku. *AB*

## Not Clear to skip

**A BILL** has been proposed in California to ban air travel passengers from being able to pay to skip TSA security lines across the US state's airports.

The policy, pushed by Senator Josh Newman, would affect third-party security screening company Clear, which charges consumers US\$189 per year to pass through security ahead of other travellers.

"It's a basic equity issue when you see people subscribed to a concierge service being escorted in front of people who have waited a long time to get to the front of TSA line," Newman told local media.

"Everyone is beaten down by the travel experience, and if Clear escorts a customer in front of you and tells TSA, 'sorry, I have someone better', it's really frustrating," he explained.

If passed, the bill would force Clear to operate its own dedicated security lines, separate from other passengers, at the nine Californian airports from which it operates.



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## AA delays contentious loyalty decision

**AMERICAN** Airlines' controversial plan to prevent some travel agencies' clients from accruing loyalty points has been delayed by two months.

The American carrier said the likely date for the AAdvantage change will now take place on 11 Jul instead of 01 May, with AA also giving more time for agencies to meet the 30% threshold of NDC bookings needed to become a preferred agency and be sanctioned to accrue loyalty points on client bookings.

The deadline to meet the criteria has been pushed back from 21 Apr to 05 Jun.

The decision to penalise travel agencies globally who do not meet the 30% threshold was lambasted by the World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA) earlier this month (**TD**



11 Apr), which called on the airline to abandon the policy, claiming it would only serve to discourage travellers from booking through travel agencies.

The WTAAA also suggested at the time the "heavy-handed tactic" would ultimately fragment distribution, drive up costs, and reduce transparency for consumers who seek to compare offerings across multiple airlines.

It is unclear precisely why AA has extended the deadline for preferred qualification, however

it appears to be related to the number of agencies not yet qualified for the NDC threshold.

The carrier said that while it is "happy with the [agency] response so far", it anticipates more agencies meeting the NDC criteria soon.

Terms from within AA suggest the threshold will be raised even higher moving forward, increasing to 50% by the end of Oct, and 70% by May 2025. **AB**



## Window Seat

**THE** amazing building that houses France's National Library is on the itinerary for many Aussie travellers, but here's a tip - stay away from the green books!

The manager of the famous depository of literature recently removed four 19th-century books from its shelves, whose emerald green covers were likely laced with highly poisonous arsenic.

"We have put these works in quarantine and an external laboratory will analyse them to evaluate how much arsenic is present in each volume," a the library said.

The disturbing discovery was uncovered after US researchers determined that publishers in the Victorian era had used the chemical to colour book bindings.

Among the offending books were *The Ballads of Ireland* by Edward Hayes published in 1855, and a *Bilingual Anthology of Romanian Poetry* by Henry Stanley from 1856,

Talk about dying to read that next book...



## Embraer orders take off

**COMMERCIAL** aviation backlog orders at aircraft manufacturer Embraer have hit record highs of US\$11.1 billion, the latest stats from the company show.

Embraer's order book for Q1 2024 soared by US\$2.3 billion compared to Q4 2023, owing to an order from American Airlines for 90 of its E175 aircraft model and purchase rights for another 43 planes.

While the company's delivery rate for commercial jets remained steady at seven for the quarter, another 18 aircraft classified as



'Executive Aviation' were also sent to customers during the same period.

Embraer's full-year guidance for 2024 showed the company is expecting to deliver between 72-80 commercial jets this year. **ML**

## India drops seat fee

**INDIAN** airlines will now have to ensure that children under the age of 12 are seated with at least one of their parents or guardians without the customer having to pay extra for seat selection.

The directive was issued by India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) after multiple complaints from travellers about being seated separately from their children if they chose not to pay the seat selection charge.

The issue was also raised in the US last year by President Joe Biden, prompting American Airlines to become the first US carrier to eliminate family seating fees (**TD** 06 Mar 2023).

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## CORPORATE UPDATE

### CWT Slack on guest chat

**TRAVELLERS** can now message and conduct business with corporate and meetings travel company CWT through the Slack instant messaging service.

The company is now accepting travel requests via the platform, with clients also able to work with Slack's AI-powered virtual assistant to collect information for a human consultant to action.

By using Slack, travellers can also step away to complete other tasks without losing their conversation history, even when using a different device.

CWT said travel requests are now being fulfilled four times faster through instant messaging than via email, leading to customer satisfaction levels surging over the 90% mark.

CWT Chief Product Officer, Erica Antony, said many customers are already using Slack to facilitate

team communication, making it easier for employees to contact CWT for business travel requests.

"We increasingly see travellers prefer to use messaging instead of phone calls or emails when they need support, so we are continuing to enhance this service to help them save time and be more productive."

More than 1,000 travellers in 70 countries are already using instant messaging to work with CWT through services including the myCWT web and mobile apps, Microsoft Teams, Meta Workplace and WhatsApp. *ML*

### Taylor Cre8tive shift

**LEADING** lifestyle hotel advisor Andrew Taylor has rebranded his design consultancy business as Cre8tive Hotels & Lifestyle to help hotel owners compete in the hyper competitive lifestyle space.

Aimed as being a hotel owner's trusted advisor, Taylor's Cre8tive Hotels and Lifestyle works to educate hotel owners on the elements of 'lifestyle' that will drive efficient performance in occupancy, average rate, profit, and overall return on investment.

Cre8tive then works to match the best brands and operators to hotel owners and investors.

Among Taylor's most successful projects has been the move by Marriott International to bring the W Hotels brand back to Australia via innovative presences in Melbourne, Brisbane & Sydney.

### Spending on a 747

**DELTA** Air Lines and American Express have relaunched the limited-edition metal Delta SkyMiles credit card, made from two retired Boeing 747 aircraft.

The cards are available as an option for Delta SkyMiles Reserve and Reserve Business Card members until 05 Jun 2024, while supplies last.

Cards are made from 33% metal from the retired planes along with a white glossy finish and details of its first and last flights, tail number and distance flown.

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### Protests rebuke Venice tax



**AFTER** several false starts, tourism officials in Venice have formally introduced a tax on day trippers to the popular Italian tourism destination.

However, day one of the levy yesterday was far from smooth sailing, with protesters swarming the streets and clashing with police, with many waving banners in anger about tourists being disincentivised to visit.

The pilot project will run until mid-Jul to see if the city can make the tourist tax sustainable, which currently means travellers wanting to visit Venice have to fork out €5 (A\$8.20).

The scheme is intended to help the city better manage the millions of tourists that visit every year, and better protect its natural environment which has been damaged in recent years - particularly as the impact of climate change continues to rise.

At Piazzale Roma, where Venice's main bus terminal is located, tensions between police dressed in riot gear and around 500 protesters flared (**pictured**), with many residents against the move, expressing concerns a tax will negatively impact Venice's global image.

"I can tell you that almost the entire city is against it," Matteo Secchi claimed, the leader of residents' activist group, Venessia.com, told local media.

"You can't impose an entrance fee to a city, all they're doing is transforming it into a theme park and this is a bad image for Venice...I mean, are we joking?"

The implementation of the tax arrives only weeks after a local survey suggested Australia should look to enforce its own levy.

InsureandGo revealed 60% of Aussies were in favour of introducing a tax (**TD 10 Apr**). *AB*

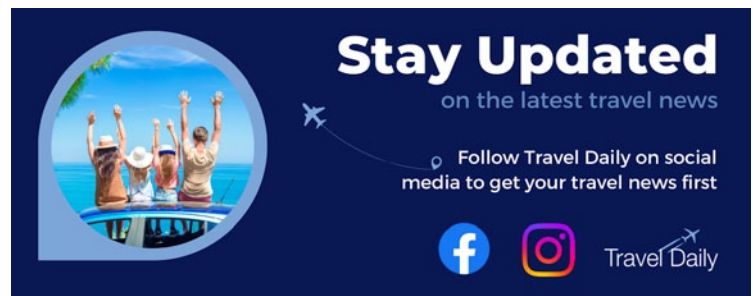


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Massive savings are up for grabs on eligible itineraries with **Uniworld's** '2-For-1 Flash Sale'. Available to book until 10 May, the luxury river cruise line is offering bookings of two guest for the price of one. Sailings include the eight-day 'Brilliant Bordeaux' roundtrip from \$3,099 per person, or the 10-day 'Authentic Danube & Prague' experience from \$4,499pp. More offers are available - call 1300 780 231.

**The Lane Retreat, Bimbadgen** in the Hunter Valley is now offering the 'Cosy Escape Package' for those who are looking for a getaway to the wine country. Priced at \$243 per night with a two-night minimum stay, guests can indulge in a wood fired pizza at Bimbadgen Pizzeria, a bottle of Bimbadgen Shiraz, and daily breakfast, among other perks. Valid for stays until 31 Aug - **CLICK HERE** to book.

Starting from today, Aussies can score discounted airfares to popular destinations with **Fiji Airways'** sale. Book before 17 May to enjoy savings through a flexible 12-month travel window, which includes return flights to and from Fiji from just \$569pp; Tokyo and Hong Kong from \$929 per person; as well as the USA and Canada from \$1,089pp and \$1,289pp respectively. Book your tickets now on the website **HERE**.

For those holidaying in Sep, **Insight Vacations** has something special in store for travellers. Up to \$4,000 savings per couple is available throughout its 'September on Sale' promotion. Eligible tours include the seven-day 'Sicily in Depth' journey, priced at \$3,342, instead of the normal \$3,713 rate. Travellers can also jump on the 12-day 'Best of Germany' trip from \$5,802, instead of the usual \$6,825. Pick a tour today in Sep and call on 1800 001 778 to book.

Secure great savings as well as a six-night complimentary accommodation pre- and post-cruise with **Cruise Traveller's** new package for bookings made before 30 May. The 30-night 'A Month in the Med 2025' offer includes three free nights in Athens before the cruise and the same in Lisbon after the cruise. Up to US\$800 of onboard spending credit is also available - call 1800 507 777 to book.

Discounts for kids and teens are currently available when staying a minimum three nights at select **Hilton** properties in Mexico. These include Cancun, Tulum, and Puerto Vallarta. A minimum one free child/teen can enjoy the offer for every adult booked, and up to two free children/teens per room. The offer is available for stays until 31 Oct when bookings are made before 14 May - **CLICK HERE** to learn more.

## Aqua hits the water



**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line's (NCL) next-generation Prima Plus class vessel, *Norwegian Aqua*, has made contact with water for the first time (**TD 18 Apr**).

The ship's float-out from its dry dock at the shipyard in Venice was celebrated with blessings by a local chaplain and champagne breaking across its hull.

"The Prima Class is a true evolution of the brand and we hear from our guests following every cruise that they appreciate the intimate nature and greater variety of elevated spaces throughout the ship," said Mark Kansley, NCL Senior Vice President of Hotel Operations.

Highlights on board include the world's first Aqua Slidecoaster, a 10-storey dry slide, the Vibe Beach Club, and a special Glow Court featuring a high-tech LED sports floor engineered for immersive play.

The construction milestone means *Aqua* is one step closer to its debut in Apr 2025, when it will begin offering seven-day Caribbean itineraries. *JM*

## Flight GPS jam ups

**THOUSANDS** of flights around eastern Europe have been affected by suspected Russian jamming of GPS systems.

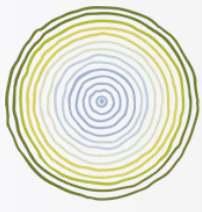
Since Aug 2023, the GPS interference has reportedly impacted aircraft navigation systems on more than 2,300 Ryanair flights, almost 1,400 Wizz Air services, 82 British Airways' flights, and four from easyJet.

Around 46,00 aircraft in total have logged GPS problems over the Baltic Sea during the same period, based on analysis of flight logs in conjunction with the website GPSJAM.org.

The UK's Civil Aviation Authority has assured that "GPS jamming does not directly impact the navigation of an aircraft, and... does not mean an aircraft has been jammed deliberately".

This was backed by a statement from Ryanair, which said its aircraft has multiple systems to identify aircraft location, with the ability to switch to an alternate system if the GPS is not functioning.





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