

Travel industry prepares to do business at WTM Virtual

Travel and tourism professionals from around the world will reconnect with vital business partners at WTM Virtual from 9-11 November.



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The online event includes the Travel Forward Virtual and International Tourism & Investment Conference (ITIC).

The conference sessions will also host top politicians, leading academics, health experts and the world's media, as the travel industry plans for recovery in 2021.

Highlights of this week's agenda include:

- Global tourism forecasts from Euromonitor International
- ITIC – International Tourism & Investment Conference

- Responsible Tourism programme
- Aviation sessions with bosses of major low-cost carriers Ryanair and JetBlue
- UNWTO, WTTC & WTM Ministers' Summit
- First meeting of tourism ministers from Israel, UAE and Bahrain since historic Abraham Accords signing

"The travel and tourism industry is facing its worst crisis in living memory, so WTM Virtual will provide a crucial platform for planning the bounce-back, reconnecting with business partners, forging new connections, and learning about the best way forward," said Simon Press, senior director, WTM London.

The Euromonitor International report, to be launched on the first day of WTM Virtual, will explain why global tourism will take between three and five years to recover from Covid-19.

Called Accelerating Travel Innovations after Coronavirus, the study will also reveal how the travel industry is innovating in order to survive the devastating impact of the pandemic.

The International Tourism & Investment Conference (ITIC) will have the mission statement of Invest, Finance & Rebuild the Travel & Tourism Industry.

It will feature a ministerial panel on 9 November and a summit with industry bosses, politicians and experts on 10 November.

The Responsible Tourism Programme takes place across two days, with eight conference sessions featuring authoritative speakers from the private and public sectors.

On 10 November, the sessions will be: Resilience & Covid 19; Build Back Better; Tourism and Biodiversity; and Decarbonising Aviation.

The sessions on 11 November will be: Responsible Tourism in India; Racism in Tourism; Certification and Consumer Choice; and Can we make tourism better?

The turbulence in aviation will be discussed on all three days of WTM Virtual, starting with a debate about trends and forecasts on 9 November.

Called The Long-run Evolution of Aviation Activity following the coronavirus pandemic, it will feature expertise from Virgin Atlantic, Boeing, IATA and Tourism Economics.

WTM's aviation expert, John Strickland, will interview Michael O'Leary, the chief executive of Ryanair on 10 November, and JetBlue CEO Robin Hayes on 11 November.

The annual UNWTO, WTTC & WTM Ministers' Summit on 9 November is the largest annual gathering of tourism ministers and private sector leaders.

Under the rallying cry of To Create Safer, Greener, Smarter Travel & Tourism, it will host tourism ministers and private sector bosses debating the recovery of travel and innovations to deal with Covid-19 and sustainability.

The summit will also hear from Oliver Dowden MP, the British Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

It will be followed by Tourism: The Path to Peace in the Middle East, with the tourism ministers of Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

In September, these countries signed the "Abraham Accords", a historic deal that enables business opportunities and tourism prospects.

The ministers will be discussing the new travel and tourism opportunities and the sector's role in supporting peace in the region.

It will be the first time the tourism ministers have met since signing the agreements.

"Since 1980, WTM has provided an essential forum for the industry to do business, network and learn about trends in the market.

"2020 is the year where global connections need to be maintained, build those networks and understand what's happening in these extraordinary and challenging times.

"Our delegates will be able to keep ahead of the game and lay strong foundations for recovery and innovation in 2021," concluded Press.

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