Dear Tourism Colleague,

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) extends best wishes for a safe 2021. We look forward with great anticipation to the continued recovery and resurgence of Caribbean Tourism, noting the strides being made by the international medical community and efforts by regional governments in developing relevant protocols and response strategies. This January edition of the Sustainable Tourism Roundup features information and updates relevant to sustainable tourism product development and various resources to support your ongoing efforts and initiatives in response to COVID-19. You are encouraged to take action where appropriate and to disseminate this information widely for the benefit of all tourism stakeholders.

CTO INITIATIVES

Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy and Development Framework

The Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy and Development Framework (CSTPDF) is a reference tool that offers benefits to our member countries, our private sector and regional partners and to our own work at the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), as we continue to support the sustainable development of tourism and foster the competitiveness of our regional tourism sector.

The CSTPDF 2020 is intended to guide the vision for sustainable development of Caribbean tourism for the next decade. It brings together broad but integrated policy thematic areas that reflect current regional needs and priorities seen as critical to the sustainable development of Caribbean tourism. It is also guided by the post-2015 global agenda for Climate Change, Comprehensive Disaster Management and Sustainable Development.
CTO is grateful for the assistance provided by the Caribbean Development Bank through the ACP-EU Natural Disaster Risk Management Programme, in financing the CSTPDF 2020. CTO also recognises the support of our regional partners and, most significantly, is pleased that all of our member countries were engaged and involved in the development of the CSTPDF 2020.

The complete document can be found on the CTO’s website at:
https://www.onecaribbean.org/our-work/sustainable-tourism-dept/research-policies-frameworks

It is also available on Our Tourism website:
http://ourtourism.onecaribbean.org/resources
The Caribbean Tourism Organization will be partnering with George Washington University again this year to offer the **Professional Certificate in Sustainable Tourism**.

The dates for each cohort will be:
- **Spring 2021**: Monday May 10th - Sunday May 30th
- **Fall 2021**: Monday October 11th - Sunday October 31st

### REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL PARTNER INITIATIVES

**CARPHA Situation Report No. 127**  
– January 28, 2021

*Report by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)*

**Attached** is the Situation Report No. 127 on the Coronavirus Pandemic in the Caribbean as at January 28, published by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA). CARPHA in its role as the regional public health agency for the Caribbean has produced various information resources and tools. Please visit the CARPHA website for updates and toolkits including Technical Guidance Documents, Prevention Measures and Travel Advisories, via the following website:  
[https://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health/Novel-Coronavirus](https://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health/Novel-Coronavirus)

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**Caribbean Tourism Climatic Bulletin**

*A Joint Bulletin by the Caribbean Tourism Organization, the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association and the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology*

The purpose of this bulletin is to help tourism businesses and policymakers identify and prepare for favourable or
inclement climate conditions in the Caribbean and source markets, before they occur. The full bulletin is attached for your information.

It is recommended that industry stakeholders use the seasonal climate forecast information for the upcoming period (December 2020 – February 2021) presented in this Bulletin in tandem with weather forecasts (1-7 days). This suite of information can inform strategic and operational decisions related to the use of environmental resources, marketing, and enhancement of the visitor experience.

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Caribbean Climate Outlook Newsletter
Caribbean Drought & Precipitation Monitoring Network (CDPMN)

**CARIBBEAN DROUGHT BULLETIN**
February 2021 | Volume V II | ISSUE 9

Attached is the Caribbean Drought Bulletin for February 2021. Also, the CariCOF Climate Outlooks for November to January 2020-'21 are now available online on the Caribbean Regional Climate Centre's website and can all be accessed here.

These include the Temperature and Precipitation Outlook Maps, the Drought Outlook, the Wet Days & Wet Spells Outlook, the Experimental Dry Spells Outlook, and The Caribbean Climate Outlook Newsletter (PDF download of the Newsletter here).

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Sargassum Sub-Regional Outlook Bulletin

Attached please find the Sargassum Sub-Regional Outlook Bulletin for the months of January – April 2021.

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Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) – Situation Report No. 4

**EFFUSIVE ERUPTION AT LA SOUFRIÈRE VOLCANO, ST. VINCENT**

**SITUATION REPORT No. 4**
**AS OF 8:00 PM ON JANUARY 22, 2021**

Attached is the CDEMA Situation Report No. 4 as at 22 January 2021 on the effusive eruption at La Soufrière Volcano, St. Vincent & the Grenadines.
Sargassum Outlook – December 2020

*By University of South Florida Optical Oceanography Lab*

Attached is the December 2020 update for the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico.

While the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico remained mostly free of large Sargassum mats, the central tropical Atlantic saw significant increase in Sargassum amount. In most of the previous Sargassum years, January and February showed more Sargassum than previous December. This will be monitored to see whether the next two months will repeat history.

Looking Back at the Year that Wasn’t

*By Tourism & More, Inc.*

Wishing everyone health and happiness in 2021

May 2021 Be A Better Year

Most people in the tourism industry are more than willing to say adieu to the year 2020. The twenty-first century’s third decade began with extremely high hopes. A mere year ago, no one could have conceived of the fact that by March of 2020 the tourism industry would have been in shambles. In February of 2020 Covid-19 struck, and the tourism industry went into a tailspin going from unprecedent highs to its greatest lows. From February until the end of the year, every aspect of travel and tourism has suffered. Many hotels and restaurants are now bankrupt, others are still alive, albeit on economic life-support. The airline industry, which serves much more than the leisure traveler, faces continuous layoffs and potential bankruptcies. There is greater demand for national and international regulations due to the industry’s loss of credibility. Airline industry employees, and those who work in its satellite industries such as airport terminals, now live with perpetual uncertainty. The same can be said for major attractions and museums. Some museums have found themselves in such dire straits that they have had to auction off part of their priceless collections. At the start of 2021 the travel and tourism industry finds itself in a state of severe economic contraction.

From major tourism centers to small towns, the travel and tourism industry is only now beginning to awaken to the many new challenges that it will have to overcome if it is to survive. With the current end, or hiatuses of the global economy, tourism leaders are having to rethink their assumptions and world views. In January of 2020 tourism leaders believed that during this new decade no industry, nation, or economy would be an island unto itself. International tourism was on the rise and many locales, such as Barcelona, Spain, Venice, Italy, or the United States national park system faced what only a year ago was called “over-tourism”. In the months of February and March (2020), the world of tourism changed, and the fear of over-tourism became the fight for tourism survival. How the travel & tourism industry adapts to these new economic and environment shifts will impact the world’s economy for decades to come.
In this new and unstable world no one can be sure that what is predicted is what will come to be. Experts’ analyses have continuously been wrong. Should the new vaccines prove to be effective and reliable, then 2020 might be nothing more than an anomaly in the history of the growth of tourism. No one, however, can be certain that these new vaccines will prove to be as successful as hoped or that if we defeat Covid-19 then a new pandemic might arise on the horizon.

To help you determine your own strategy Tourism & More presents the following ideas and possible future trends always emphasizing that we live in a highly fluid situation and what might appear logical today might be invalid tomorrow.

-Do not run from a problem, recognize it and start to seek solutions. After 2020 there are very few tourism communities or businesses that are not suffering. The year 2021 will require creative changes and solutions. Marketing without real change is nothing more than placing a bandage on an open wound. Tourism professionals will have to face reality, begin to prioritize problems, and seek solutions one at a time. Be dignified and honest with both employees and customers. The worst thing to do is to lose credibility.

-Think of your tourism industry as an integrated whole rather than as a series of independent components. Additional travel costs mean that visitors will be seeking ways to economize. Visitors do not see each part of their tourism experience (hotel, transportation, food, attractions) as separate experiences but rather as a unified experience. The tourism industry needs to do the same. Each of tourism’s components needs to work with the other sectors of the industry to find ways to increase the quality of the tourism experience despite higher prices. If visitors do not see the total experience as worthwhile, then all of the tourism industry’s components will suffer.

-Remember that your local community has also suffered due to a downturn in tourism revenues. Tourism does not only directly impact those who work in the industry, but the secondary and tertiary effects are felt throughout the community. In major cities it is estimated that a dollar (peso, euro) spent on a tourism product has a multiplier effect of at least 7. Although the effect is less in smaller communities, any community with a tourism industry is feeling the slowdown’s impact both economically and socially. By taking the lead, tourism professionals can demonstrate that they are part of the community and that they care about the total community’s wellbeing.

-Think local! Consider expanding your market by finding more visitors closer to home. This solution will help not only the local hotel industry, but also permit retailers to weather the storm by adding to the community’s economy as tourism revenues from outside of the local region begin to fall. Buying and featuring local products adds a unique quality to the travel experience. In areas where there are geographic limitations, such as many island destinations, develop creative pricing, along with creative airport hospitality.

-Be appreciative! All too often tourism businesses act as if they are doing the customers a favor. This is the time to develop creative ways to show appreciation. For example, locales may want to develop "welcome passports" to be used at restaurants and hotels where visitors are provided with a free "extra" as a way of showing appreciation. Showing appreciation is especially important in an era where long-haul travel may decline. Tourism businesses will become dependent on local, short-haul and regional travel if they are to survive during the initial recover phases. Follow-up letters may also be sent in which the local tourism industry thanks people for visiting. The letters can even be e-letters and used as a way to encourage visitors to return for another visit.
-Do not over-survey! Many frequent travelers are over-surveyed and see right through surveys that are designed to avoid negative feedback. Surveys have become so common in tourism that they have become not only meaningless but a new annoyance. The best surveys are oral survey where the tourism business not only listens but acts.

-Get to know your product again! Tourism professionals need to rethink what they are selling! Ask yourself: Are we selling experiences, leisure, rest, or history? Are we selling basic transportation or the travel experience? How does our business fit into the total travel experience in this post-Covid-19 world? Do our past marketing efforts reflect current realities?

-In the post-Covid-19 world of tourism freebees will be more important than ever. Even when people are feeling good about their economic situation travelers still love to receive something for nothing, even if they have to pay for it! In these challenging times, a welcome drink or cookie, a small gift or souvenir can turn a simple experience into a memorable one. Combine basic costs into the cost of an admission ticket or a free night’s stay. If hospitality is based on the idea of being taken care of and pampered than charging for extras may be a poor strategy. Avoid extra sur-charges. In the new world of travel, personal service is essential.

-The last impression is often the lasting impression, so consider being creative when people leave a destination. For example, hotels can give a restaurant coupon to departing guests, passport controls can hand out a come-back soon brochure or gas stations can offer a free cup of coffee-for-the-road. The cost of the item is a lot less important than the memory and positive word of mouth advertising that it will create.

The goal of "Tourism Tidbits" is to provide travel professionals with a monthly, easy-to-read overview of creative ideas. With proper referencing, we invite you to quote or reproduce "Tourism Tidbits" and to pass it along to a friend. For more information, please contact Dr. Peter Tarlow at ptarlow@tourismandmore.com or visit www.tourismandmore.com

Compliments,

Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO)
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