

Could virus cause us to become timid travelers?

Our deep-rooted survival instinct for disease avoidance could make us less willing to embrace strangers and take foreign travel risks, according to new research.

“We wanted to look beyond the current crisis and consider the future psyche of the post-COVID-19 traveler,” says Associate Professor Florian Kock of Marketing and Tourism at Copenhagen Business School.

The research is the first of its kind that goes beyond the surface and finds longer-term psychological consequences; discovering that the pandemic has affected tourists’ attitudes and behaviors in unforeseen ways, often subconsciously.

The research found post-pandemic tourism could curb our motivation for new adventures with people becoming more destination-loyal, returning to places where they have already been, and that we could inadvertently choose these options because we become more xenophobic towards strangers and foreign travel risks.

“We found that a COVID-19 threat also made people overestimate the crowdedness of public spaces and feeling uncomfortable in crowded places like restaurants or shopping malls,” adds Professor Kock.

The research is published in the *Annals of Tourism Research*.

— *phys.org*



wfxrtv.com

The Blue Ridge sees outdoor tourism boost

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have had to get creative on ways to entertain themselves, and outdoor tourism seems to be the top attraction for those in the Blue Ridge.

Many people have decided to head outdoors where the chances of the virus spreading are lower. This mindset has caused a boost in outdoor tourism, according to officials with Visit Virginia’s Blue Ridge.

“Outdoor tourism is what kept us alive from June through November,” Yvan Beliveau, owner of Beliveau Farms explained.

Beliveau owns 165 acres of property and has spent the last 20 years building his brand and his vineyard.

“We’ve had a lot of people from around the country, but still 80% of our business is local,” he continued.

Now Beliveau says it’s paying off, adding that they had better sales

during some months in 2020 than they had in 2019.

“As good as last June through November was, December through, I’m going to guess, May is going to be quite slow,” he stated.

Beliveau predicts that is because of the 26 person limit due to the COVID-19 mandate.

Visit Virginia’s Blue Ridge officials said COVID restrictions are what pushed people to venture outside. Officials stated their website has seen a 30% increase in traffic on their social media platforms.



Yvan Beliveau,
owner of
Beliveau Farms

Maine releases funds not spent in 2020

Maine’s tourism industry is optimistic about the upcoming summer season in part because of \$4 million the state will put toward marketing.

“We have every reason to believe that this year will be a really good rebuilding year for us,” said Alison Sucey, Chief Operating Officer of the Maine Tourism Association.

“There was leftover money that wasn’t spent on marketing last year because obviously there wasn’t any sense in spending state taxpayer dollars to market Maine when we were so limited in who could come here,” Sucey said.

That money is used to advertise to out-of-state visitors, and it will be important this year as many communities look to rebuild.

“Research shows that those who are able to invest in marketing as we’re on the road to recovery will come back much stronger, and for a community like Ogunquit, which is pretty much 100 percent reliant on tourism, it’s big, big news,” said Alice Pearce, Executive Director of the Ogunquit Chamber of Commerce.

– wmtw.com



Photo by Ridofranz/Getty Images

Travelers may defer until more are vaccinated

As the Biden administration ramps up vaccine production and news coverage moves past rising case numbers, Americans are starting to see a light at the end of this very dark pandemic tunnel.

Along with this newfound hope seems to be a slowdown in travel. With vaccine production rising, are Americans hunkering down and – staying home for the spring in – hopes of a more normal summer?

New research from the U.S. Travel Association and Destinations Analysts shows this could be a possibility.

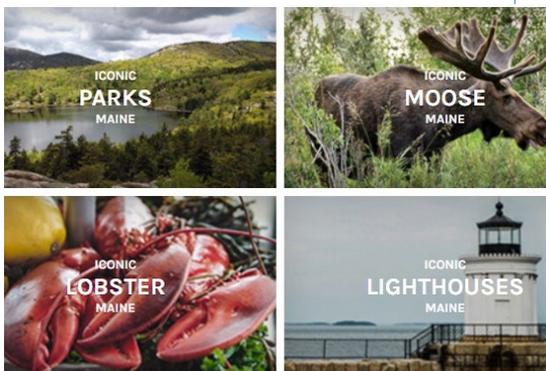
Only about one in eight Americans (12 percent) is planning a spring break trip this year, according to polling data by Destination Analysts, and that is down from the previous week, during which 16 percent of Americans were planning to travel. This suggests that travelers wary of traveling during the pandemic may be deferring their plans until more

people are vaccinated.

For those working in the travel industry, these numbers are a further blow in the short term to the hard-hit tourism industry, which accounts for 39 percent of the jobs lost in the country. However, it could be good news for a sustained recovery in the long-term.

“Travel is a central pillar of the U.S. economy, so an overall recovery will only be possible if Washington moves quickly to keep the industry on its feet,” said U.S. Travel Association president and CEO Roger Dow. “A true travel comeback can also only happen once the pandemic is decisively behind us, and we all have an important part to play: get vaccinated as soon as you can, and don’t become complacent about mask-wearing and other important health practices.”

– travelpulse.com



visitmaine.com