

# TALKING TOURISM

April 4, 2021

Each month this space will be devoted to a column written by Debbie Robinson, executive director of the Cambridge/Guernsey County Visitors & Convention Bureau (VCB). She will provide information about upcoming events, area attractions, bureau services and projects, and most importantly, communicate the tremendous impact that the travel and tourism industry has on this region.

## IMPACT ON TRAVEL PLANS

The impact of COVID-19 on the travel and tourism industry is monumental. We have and will continue to see changes in how attractions, events, shops, lodging accommodations and dining venues serve customers. The bureau continues to work on state and regional levels to learn and share what's trending. It is little surprise that outdoor activities and cabin rentals are among the top of the list for visitors these days. However, it is interesting to learn people are embracing traveling in tight groups and redefining what constitutes a "staycation." Here are a few recent travel trends to note.

A travel sentiment study conducted on March 17 2021 by Longwoods International (a leading travel and tourism research firm) concluded there were several key areas of information and content of interest to travelers this year.

87% of travelers reported having travel plans in the next six months. In March of 2020, this was the same number reported.

The factors that travelers feel are important when deciding which destinations to visit in the next six months include:

- 50% said the destination has clear health and safety protocols.
- 44% said the destination has a mask wearing requirement and social distancing policies.
- 39% said there are no travel restrictions, like travel quarantines, for the destination.
- 36% said feeling welcomed into the destination is important.
- 35% said dining location are open in the destination.
- 35% said attractions being open at the destination is important.

When asked what factors impact traveler's decision to travel in the next six months:

- 33% reported COVID-19 greatly impacting this decision vs. 13% who say it has no impact at all.
- 17% reported concerns about their personal financial situation greatly impacts this decision vs. 23% who say it has no impact at all.
- 16% said the transportation cost greatly impacts their decision vs. 19% who said it has no impact at all.
- 57% of travelers reported they would change their travel plans due to COVID-19 compared to 61% who said they would on March 3.

## TRAVEL TRENDS

- **Rise of Rural:** In 2020, search data showed that nearly 90% of overall online searches were for trips to rural areas. Cabin rentals were especially popular, accounting for 33% of total accommodation searches in 2020, a drastic +143% increase from 2019. (Source: Forbes.com)
- **More Last-Minute Trips:** When it comes to flexibility, more travelers are booking spontaneous last-minute trips. The average number of days between booking to check-in is now 50 days, down -37.5% from the average lead time pre-pandemic. (Source: Forbes.com)
- **Areas of Growth.** Trend #1: Live Anywhere – Taking Life on the Road; #2: Redefining the Staycation; #3: The Rise of Pod Travel (A travel pod is "a group of two or more households whose members have been following coronavirus quarantine and social distancing guidelines who make plans to vacation together.) (Source: AirBnB)
- **Glampervan Road Trips.** As Globetrender predicted in its Future of Luxury Travel Forecast: 2020-2025, 'super-charged road trips' are becoming all the rage. Being able to cook, sleep and shower in your own mobile home is the ultimate in self-sufficiency, and there are some seriously pimped-out vehicles coming on to the market for those who can afford them. For example, the GlamperRV (costing up to \$75,000 once fully kitted out) features Wi-Fi, a Nespresso coffee machine and a proper double bed. (Source: cntraveller.com)

## 2021 Calendar of Events

A full list of our events is located at [VisitGuernseyCounty.com](http://VisitGuernseyCounty.com). Before attending any event, we suggest that you call before you go.

April 2-4	Easter Dinner Buffet	Salt Fork Lodge & Conference Center
April 3	Deerassic Park Easter Egg Hunt	Deerassic Park Education Center
April 9-11;16-18	Shrek the Broadway Musical	Pritchard Laughlin Civic Center
April 10	Flashback Dance "Flower Power"	Pritchard Laughlin Civic Center

To learn more about the VCB, area events, and activities, visit the Cambridge/Guernsey County VCB office at 627 Wheeling Avenue, Suite 200 in downtown Cambridge, call 740-432-2022, email [info@VisitGuernseyCounty.com](mailto:info@VisitGuernseyCounty.com), or log onto [VisitGuernseyCounty.com](http://VisitGuernseyCounty.com).