

Sarawak showcases adventure



expedia group™

Expedia joins PATA's ranks

A close-up photograph of a person wearing a blue nitrile glove, holding a test tube and a pipette, likely in a laboratory setting.

High testing costs could stall recovery

A photograph of two people sitting on a beach, looking out at the ocean. One person is pointing towards the horizon. The sky is clear and blue.

Expedia offers a helping hand

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Expedia joins PATA's ranks

Arguably the most prominent travel booking conglomerate worldwide, Expedia signs up for a Pacific Asia Travel Association membership.

Expedia Group joins the Pacific Asia Travel Association as its newest corporate member, the association announced on Monday.

It makes a welcome change for the global membership association headquartered in Bangkok to recruit a significant player when the Covid-19 crisis forces companies to reconsider non-essential expenses. Some long-standing PATA members closed shop last year or asked for a postponement on membership until the pandemic eases. Some trade associations have even waived 2021 dues entirely to support members.

In its latest tax filing with the US Department of Treasury, for the fiscal year

ending December 2019, the association's revenue from membership stood at USD1,591,309, but that was before Covid-19 struck in early 2020.

"As the Covid-19 pandemic forces the world to adapt and evolve, technological innovations

the world largest booking platforms with a stable of branded companies that it has acquired in a drive to become the leading travel booking conglomerate. Driven by the core belief that travel is a force for good, they help people experience the world in

Expedia Local Expert, CarRentals.com, and Expedia Cruises.

"Working with leading organizations like PATA is crucial in helping us achieve our mission of powering global travel for everyone, everywhere," said Expedia Group Media



will continue to be a key driver in the recovery of the travel and tourism industry post-Covid-19 and beyond. That is why we are excited to welcome Expedia Group to the PATA family," said PATA CEO Mario Hardy.

Expedia Group is one of

new ways and build lasting connections. The Expedia Group family of brands includes Expedia, Hotels.com, Expedia Partner Solutions, Vrbo, Egencia, trivago, Orbitz, Travelocity, Hotwire, Wotif, ebookers, CheapTickets, Expedia Group Media Solutions,

Solutions senior director Andrew van der Feltz. "Our membership will bring opportunities for greater engagement with the travel sector in the Asia Pacific, which will be vital as we continue to reinvigorate global tourism and drive recovery."

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High testing costs could stall recovery

France stands out as the single country that tests free for Covid-19 out of an IATA's sampling of 16 countries

The International Air Transport Association called on governments to ensure that high costs for COVID-19 testing don't put travel out of reach for individuals and families.

Covid-19 testing must be affordable as well as timely, widely available and effective to support

Switzerland, Thailand, UK, USA, and Vietnam. Not all these markets require PCR testing. Nevertheless, the inbound requirements for PCR testing by many states make the availability of affordable options everywhere critical for a travel recovery.

Of the 15 markets where there is a cost for PCR testing to the individual that varies from a minimum of USD90 to a maximum of USD208.

Even taking the average of the

ticket prices (USD200) and average low-end PCR testing (USD90) twice each way, a journey for four that would have cost USD1,600 pre-Covid, could nearly double to USD3,040 – with USD1440 being testing costs.

"As travel restrictions are lifted in domestic markets, we see strong demand. The same can be expected in international markets. But that could be perilously compromised by testing costs – particularly PCR testing.

Raising the cost of any product will stifle demand. The impact will be greatest for short-haul trips (up to 1,100 km), with average fares of USD105, the tests will cost more than the flight. That's not what you want to propose to travellers as we emerge from this crisis. Testing costs must be better managed. That's critical if governments want to save tourism and transport jobs and avoid limiting travel freedoms to the wealthy," said IATA's director general Willie Walsh.



an efficient restart of international travel.

An IATA sampling of costs for PCR tests (the test most frequently required by governments) in 16 countries showed wide variations by markets and within markets.

Of the 16 markets surveyed, only France complied with the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendation for the state to bear the cost of testing for travellers.

Markets covered in the IATA sampling were Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea,

low-end costs, adding PCR testing to average airfares would dramatically increase the cost of flying for individuals.

Pre-crisis, the average one-way airline ticket, including taxes and charges, cost USD200 (2019 data). A USD90 PCR test raises the cost by 45% to USD290. Add another test on arrival, and the one-way cost would leap by 90% to USD380. Assuming that two tests are needed in each direction, the average cost for an individual return trip could balloon from USD400 to USD760.

The impact of Covid-19 testing on family travel would be even more severe. Based on average

WHO: States should bear the cost

The World Health Organisation's International Health Regulations stipulate that states should not charge for testing or vaccination required for travel or for the issuance of certificates.

The WHO Covid Emergency Committee recently reiterated this position, calling on governments to reduce the financial burden on international travellers of complying with testing requirements and any other public health measures implemented by countries.

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Sarawak showcases adventure

Sarawak focuses its pre-opening campaign on adventure, nature and beaches holiday options.

Sarawak Tourism Board is promoting nature and adventure to travellers as well as travel consultants who are seeking new content when borders reopen to international tourism.

The focus is on exploring the rainforest, national parks, caves and climbing adventures rolled into holiday options that culminate with a beach stay.

Check out here some of the options that adopt sustainable and community tourism objectives.

Beaches

Everyone loves beaches. There is nothing more calming than to relax on a beach accompanied by the soothing sound of splashing



waves. Sarawak is home to many beaches. Tripadvisor identifies seven top beaches that generated the most reviews. They are Pantai Temasya Tanjung Batu; Tusan Cliff Beach; Tusan Beach; Hawaii Beach; Luak Bay; Damai Central and Damai Beach.

Damai Beach, Kuching

Close to Kuching city, Damai Beach is popular with visitors for a day trip



to the beach. Located at Santubong in Kuching, a one-hour drive from downtown Kuching it is also the venue for the annual Rainforest World Music Festival.

Hawaii Beach, Miri

Located in Kampong Bakam a 15-minute drive from Miri City Centre, residents named the horseshoe bay Hawaii Beach due to its curved white sand lined with palm trees.

Rainforests

Tropical rainforests make up two-thirds of the land area in Sarawak. Explore this largely untouched ecosystem and get personal with the diverse selection of plant and animal life that Sarawak's nature has to offer. Sarawak's rainforests are home to the proboscis monkey, silver monkeys, large lizards, wild boars and over 150 species of birds. An opportunity that should not be missed by nature lovers.

One of Sarawak's most popular rainforest parks, Mulu is named after its highest mountain. The park covers about 32,000 hectares of

majestic rainforest that has some fantastic limestone outcrops and montane jungles.



Caves

Step into a mystical and mysterious world by exploring the many caves of Sarawak. Malaysia's largest state is home to hundreds of world-class caves that will awe and mesmerise you with their unique wonders, personalities and topography. A bucket-list destination for the bold and the adventurous. Niah National Park in Miri is the home of the Niah Cave where archaeologists discovered 40,000-year-old human remains and ancient murals dating back 1,200 years.

[Full Report...](#)



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More to Discover

Expedia offers a helping hand

Around half of Singaporeans feel stressed at the thought of booking their next big trip, according to Expedia Travel Companions Report.

Expedia launched its Travel Companions Report Wednesday, showing Covid-19 vaccination rollouts are gaining momentum worldwide that should lead to a pick up in travel demand.

Around 50% of Singaporeans are still feeling stressed about the thought of booking international trips. And, although Singaporeans are looking forward to travelling again, 71% have been overwhelmed by planning their next trip. They have put off hitting “book” at least once and estimate that they need over nine hours to plan a trip.

Expedia recently announced new features to provide helpful tools for travellers around the world to regain confidence.

Travel advisories

The new COVID-19 Travel Advisory tool helps travellers search for travel advisories around the world, including regulations for destinations and safety and health guidelines.

Improved support

New Virtual Agent capabilities allow many travellers to view their bookings, check their refund status, ask about hotel amenities or cancel/amend parts of their trips with ease.

Extra perks

Customers will receive more Expedia Rewards points on app bookings, which can be redeemed on future trips. Plus, premium

Expedia Rewards customers booking VIP Access hotels can benefit from room upgrades, spa credits and late checkout (subject to availability).

“It’s going to take time for travellers to adjust to a post-pandemic life and the new norms

upfront rather than at checkout (54%).

They are asking for support and responses to booking related questions, including cancelling or amending trips (45%).

The majority of Singaporeans



that this may entail – we want to make sure we are there for them, every step of the way. Providing a helping hand to travellers is our mission, arming them with all the information they need to confidently plan their next trip,” said Expedia APAC head of communications, Lavinia Rajaram.

Need to know

When it comes to getting back out there, travellers noted the need to know everything about Covid-19 related travel procedures, tests and clearances all in one place as a priority (63%).

They want access to all travel-related information, including restrictions, guidelines, and processes for each country in a single place (56%), having all final costs of their booking shown

(83%) agree that, even before the pandemic, they were grateful for their holiday “helping hands” – the travel companions that guided them to create the best trip possible.

When asked which helping hands they missed most, respondents in Singapore rank their go-to travel app the highest (57%), followed by their tour guide (39%), hotel staff (38%) and their travel agency (35%).

However, with the upcoming Singapore – Hong Kong Air Travel Bubble, due to start 26 May with one flight daily data shows there is strong appetite and eagerness among Singaporeans to travel with searches on Expedia.com.sg for travel to Hong Kong destinations surging by more than 800% in the first 24 hours following the announcement on 26 April 2021, compared to the past seven days.

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