



NCL underscores its long-term commitment to Asia



Isabela is big on adventure

→ SPOTLIGHT
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Things to do with children in Barcelona



Outrigger raises World Oceans flag



Resort World Cruises sets sail

Resorts World Cruises this week celebrates a double milestone with its maiden voyage as a new cruise line; and the Genting Dream's inaugural cruise from her homeport in Singapore.

This marks the start of Resorts World Cruises' premiere as a new Asian lifestyle cruise brand while introducing the group's first ship as it builds a new fleet serving destinations across Asia.

Hong Kong's passenger traffic up in May

Easing off some travel restrictions helped to increase passenger traffic in May, particularly from Southeast Asia according to the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) reporting traffic figures at Hong Kong International Airport during May.

HKIA handled 170,000 passengers in May, representing a year-on-year increase of 186.1%, although passenger volume remained significantly lower than the pre-pandemic levels.

Southeast Asia's recovery off the pace

Southeast Asia lags far behind the rest of the world in recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic according to the latest data from ForwardKeys that suggested visitors from the USA returned in greater numbers than from other origin markets.

In the first five months of the year (January to May), travel to Southeast Asia reached just 18% of pre-pandemic levels, whereas travel to Europe reached 55%, to the Americas 66% and the Middle East & Africa 64%.

Asia Pacific airlines make gains in May

International air passenger demand strengthened amidst the lifting of travel restrictions that unleashed a robust return of travellers, according to preliminary May 2022 traffic figures released by the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA).

THAI to fly to Saudi Arabia

Thai Airways International will introduce flights on the Bangkok-Jeddah route starting from 19 August 2022 in response to the recent mending of diplomatic relations between Thailand and Saudi Arabia.

In a media statement introducing the new service, the airline said it would "help enhance tourism between the countries, and Saudi Arabia is a major connecting hub in the Middle East for travellers heading for Indochina, Australia, and Southeast Asia."

AirAsia adds flights to Kuala Lumpur

AirAsia Thailand (FD) has launched its first international flight from Suvarnabhumi Airport, becoming the only low-fare airline to fly direct from Suvarnabhumi (BKK) to Kuala Lumpur (KUL), Malaysia.

The Thai airline serves the route with two flights daily, while AirAsia Malaysia flies a daily service from Don Mueang Airport (DMK) to Kuala Lumpur.

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Managing editor: Don Ross: donr@ttrweekly.com

EDITORIAL: news@rosstr.com
Editor: Don Ross

MARKETING: sales@ttrweekly.com
Content editor: Danai Stephen Ross
Publishing director: Lars Magnusson

PRODUCTION:
Creative director: Danai Stephen Ross
Graphics: Kamolapat Srivirawan

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Three Korean airlines fly to Sabah

Korea is poised to become a key contributor to Sabah's visitor arrivals with the resumption of Air Busan direct flight from Seoul to Kota Kinabalu.

Air Busan is the second Korean-based low-cost airline to

executive officer Noredah Othman and KKIA Senior Airport Manager Sunif Naiman were also present to distribute welcome souvenirs courtesy of the Sabah Tourism.

"With the arrival of Korean

Sabah to international visitors, we also want to encourage locals to take advantage of this direct flight and explore Korea," said Joniston.

Air Busan currently operates two weekly flights to Kota Kinabalu, on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Another Korean low-cost airline, Jeju Air, is expected to restart direct flights to Sabah on 29 June. For the time being, all three airlines will depart via Incheon.

Joniston and Sabah Tourism Board chief executive officer Noredah Othman visited Seoul in early May to meet with airlines in Korea along with top officials from Jin Air, Air Busan and Jeju Air. They also held discussions with top Korean travel companies Mode Tour and Hana Tour.



resume direct flights from the Korean Capital to Kota Kinabalu post-Covid-19 pandemic after Jin Air on 26 May.

The third airline Jeju Air is expected will restart direct flights to Sabah on 29 June. For the time being, all three airlines will depart via Incheon.

The Air Busan BX 767 flight from Incheon International Airport with 196 passengers on board arrived at the KKIA at about 2310 and was greeted with a water cannon salute.

Sabah Assistant Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister cum Sabah Tourism Board chairman Datuk Joniston Bangkuai was on hand to greet the passengers, all Korean tourists.

Sabah Tourism Board chief



airlines in Sabah, we are seeing a slight improvement in Korean arrivals. Koreans' willingness and confidence to return to Sabah is a great indication for us.

"While we want to promote

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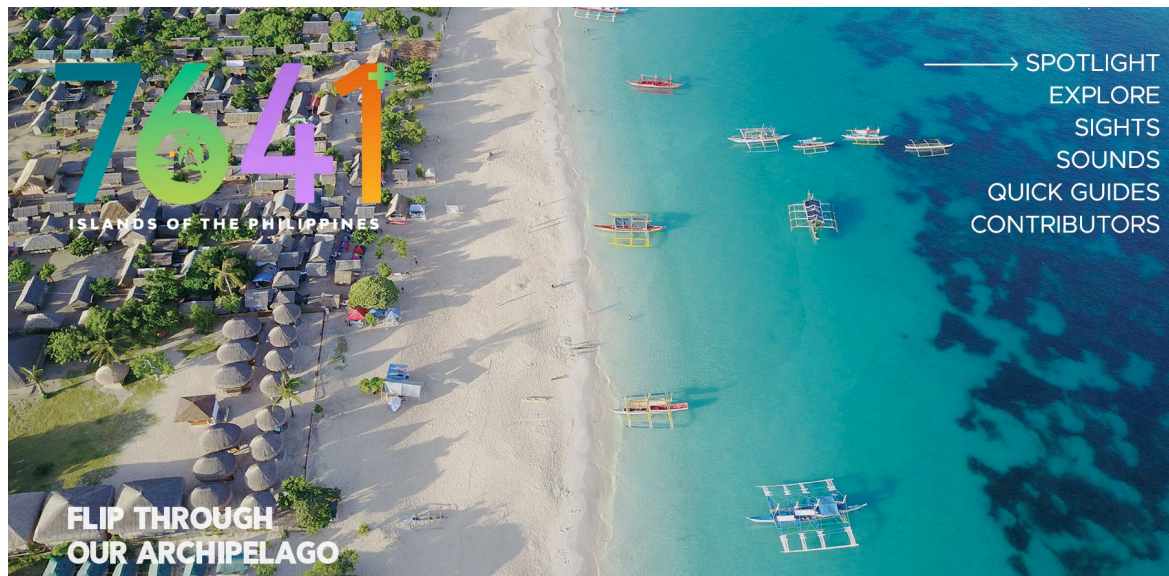


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Isabela is big on adventure



The Philippines' TourismPHL campaign is promoting the country's second-largest province, Isabela inviting international tourists to explore its adventure opportunities.

The campaign promotes a video introducing the adventure travel options at the Ilagan Sanctuary, where tourists can ride a cable car and embark on hiking, trekking and caving. The sanctuary also delivers tree-top adventure, rappelling, horseback riding, and ziplining.

In the blurb introducing the video post on YouTube, travellers are invited to learn more about organic farming ways at Gonzaga Farm. Or they can take a short pilgrimage at Dariuk Hills and go back in time at Balay na Santiago where you can take a peek at the province's heritage. Then finish off the adventure and try their sticky rice delicacy, Patupat!

Discover more adventures in Isabela at <https://www.7641islands.ph/>

Orientation

According to Wikipedia, Isabela is the second largest province in the Philippines, located in the Cagayan Valley region in Luzon. Its capital is the city of Ilagan. Neighbouring provinces are Cagayan to the north, Kalinga to the northwest, Mountain Province to the central-west, Ifugao and Nueva Vizcaya to the southwest, Quirino and Aurora to the south, and the Philippine Sea to the east.

Tourism attractions

Since the early 2000s, tourism has grown to become a significant income-generating industry for Isabela. New hotels and resorts have opened, mostly in the cities of Ilagan, Cauayan and Santiago, and the towns of Tumauini, Gamu, Roxas, Alicia, Burgos, Ramon, San Mariano and Cordon.

Top tourist attractions are the centuries-old churches; Magat

Dam Tourism Complex, which houses Southeast Asia's biggest dam; Santa Victoria Caves, Pinzal Falls and Ilagan Sanctuary at Fuyot National Park; the white sand beaches in the coastal municipalities of Maconacon, Divilacan, Palanan, Dinapigue and islands of coastal Isabela. The world's biggest wooden lounge chair or butaka resides in Ilagan City. Various festivals and fiestas are celebrated in the province, including the annual Bambanti Festival celebrated every February and the commemoration of the province's founding during Isabela Day every May.

Airports

There are five airports, but Cauayan Airport is the primary airport in the province serving flights from Manila, Palanan, and Maconacon. Cebu Pacific is the main airline serving the Cauayan-Manila-Cauayan route.

THE PHILIPPINE MICE: ON SERIOUS BUSINESS AND LEISURE

Bleisure travel, a portmanteau of business and leisure, is nothing new in the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions/Events (MICE) industry. But today, there is a tremendous demand from business travelers to have a well-thought-out leisure itinerary that combines work arrangements with opportunities to explore personal interests, making it a huge factor when it comes to attracting MICE players. This is where the Philippines stands steps ahead of the game.

Uniquely positioned at the crossroads of international trade and commerce in the Asia Pacific, the Philippines has establishments with strategic accessibility: beaches are nearby for workation opportunities and the metro offers a multitude of options to enjoy the nightlife. It also banks on its global appeal in terms of offering high-quality venues, first-class hotels, and facilities throughout the country that are accessible, multifunctional, and cost-effective, all key factors in choosing MICE destinations.

Add to this the renowned brand of Filipino hospitality, rich cultural heritage, and a diverse option of tourism activities in its 7,641 islands, the Philippines is ready to provide more than a little joie de vivre to anyone who visits its shores.

Coming from the recently concluded World Travel and Tourism (WTTC) Global Summit, the Philippines proved its readiness to welcome MICE events. It also remains competitive in providing quality MICE venues to visitors with the opening of new world-class hotels and meeting facilities in strategic MICE destinations in the country. Here are some of the most considered MICE locations in the Philippines.

CLARK



Just a couple of hours north of Manila is Pampanga, the culinary capital city of the Philippines. Its modern city, Clark, also offers a unique experience for adventure, culture, business, and leisure tourism.

The city gains headway in its vision to be a modern, sustainable aerotropolis and a prime MICE and tourism destination in the Asia-Pacific region with additional MICE facilities – the SMX Convention Center Olongapo in November 2020, Hilton Clark Sun Valley in December 2020, Park Inn by Radisson Clark Extension in June 2021, and the SMX Convention Center's second standalone property, following SMX Manila, in Clark last May 2022.

ILOILO



Geographically placed in the middle of the country, Iloilo has been branded as the Heart of the Philippines featuring both pristine island destinations, well-preserved heritage sites, and competitive urban development.

As one of the international gateways of the country, Iloilo has proven itself an ideal MICE destination given its high accessibility, with a modern airport, wide roads, numerous trading ports, and seamless infrastructure such as the Iloilo Convention Center (ICON), the biggest MICE facility in the city, and the SMX Convention Center Iloilo. It also offers a multitude of business hotels including Park Inn by Radisson, The Courtyard by Marriott Hotel, Seda Atria, and Richmonde Hotel Iloilo, among others.

CEBU



Cebu enjoys a natural advantage in location, sitting in the middle of Luzon and Mindanao, and has become a center of trade. It also boasts of centuries-old traditions, natural landscapes, and colorful underwater scenes. Cebu is a great choice for those who want to take advantage of both urban life and easy access to adventure destinations.

It may be the oldest city in the Philippines but it's one of the top workation destinations that is fully equipped for MICE. It is complete with an international airport, the newly-opened Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway, global hotel brands such as Marco Polo Plaza Cebu, Radisson Blu Cebu, Shangri-La's Mactan Resort & Spa, and venues ideal for all kinds of MICE gatherings – Cebu International Convention Center, SMX Convention Center Cebu, Grand Convention Center of Cebu, among others. The Cebu MICE scene is a combination of character, history, world-class service, and professionalism, making it a top choice of MICE organizers abroad, specifically from the ASEAN region.

The Philippines bolsters its MICE readiness efforts to create an authentic travel experience that will make each guest's business trip fun and memorable. Through the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, the attached agency of the Department of Tourism, the country rebuilds its momentum in the MICE sector with an enhanced incentive program for all MICE stakeholders.

The enhanced MICE Plus Program is a set of incentives and privileges that the TPB offers to boost the industry by encouraging local and foreign MICE organizers to bring events to the Philippines. MICE organizers in need of event support may send inquiries at mice@tpb.gov.ph or visit www.tpb.gov.ph/enhanced-mice-plus-program/ to avail assistance from the TPB.





NCL underscores its long-term commitment to Asia

Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL), the innovator in global cruise travel with a 55-year history of breaking boundaries, will return to Asia for the 2023-2024 cruise season, featuring 12 immersive and port-rich sailings ranging from 10- to 12-days on board Norwegian Jewel as well as a 16-day Extraordinary Journey from Seattle, Washington (US) to Tokyo, Japan.

The extensive season will operate from October 2023 to March 2024 and will see a vast choice of departure ports, including Tokyo and Yokohama,

Japan; Taipei (Keelung), Taiwan; Singapore; Kuala Lumpur (Port Klang), Malaysia; Bangkok (Laem Chabang), Thailand; Bali (Benoa), Indonesia; and Seoul (Incheon), South Korea. In addition, NCL will make “Brand first” visits to four ports in the region, including Puerto Princesa, Boracay, Salomague and Hualien, where travellers will explore the natural beauty and rich culture of the Philippines and Taiwan.

Norwegian Jewel returns to Asia for her second successful season in the region following a 16-day repositioning cruise

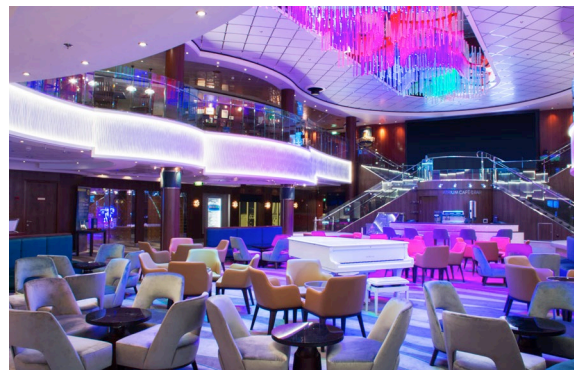
from Seattle, Washington (US) to Tokyo, Japan, via Alaska. Her port-intensive Asia itineraries mostly include less than two sea-days per cruise and multiple late-night departures and overnight calls on select itineraries in Osaka, Japan; Singapore; and Phuket, Thailand. Almost all cruises are open-jaw, allowing travellers to book-end their voyage with land explorations in different exotic destinations.

“Asia is a key source market, and our return allows our guests from Asia the freedom to sail with us from their doorstep.

We couldn't be more pleased to make our long-awaited return to this uniquely diverse and culturally rich region with Norwegian Jewel, a ship we already know is incredibly popular in Asia."

Asia's energetic cities, lush green landscapes and idyllic tropical islands are best explored by sea. Whether guests are seeking to couple the culinary delights of Japan with the bright lights of Taipei, or an island exploration of Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia, visiting jewels such as Langkawi, Lombok and Phuket, NCL's Asia programme on board Norwegian

"We're thrilled to return to Asia and to reaffirm our commitment to one of the most sought-after cruise destinations around the world," said Norwegian Cruise Line president and CEO Harry Sommer.



Jewel offers travellers diverse itineraries together with the freedom to fully immerse themselves in the destination.

On board Norwegian Jewel, guests can enjoy numerous amenities including action-packed activities at the outdoor Sports Complex, high-energy Zumba and Flywheel Sports classes, and multiple uniquely

themed bars and lounges, including Bliss Ultra Lounge, where guests can dance the night away. Norwegian Jewel, with a guest capacity of 2,376, also offers some of the largest suites at sea with staterooms that accommodate every style and budget. The ship also offers a Haven Deluxe Owner's Suite that features the most luxurious, well-

appointed accommodations on board, including 24-hour butler service.

For more information about NCL's award-winning 17-ship fleet and worldwide itineraries, or to book a cruise, please contact a travel professional, call Hong Kong on +852 2165 6000 and Southeast Asia on +65 3165 1680 or visit www.ncl.com.

Things to do with children in Barcelona

Barcelona is a perfect city for spending a few days with the smallest members of the family. You'll find museums that are ideal for children, amusement parks they'll never want to leave, and shows that will leave them spellbound. These are just a few things you can do in the Catalan capital as a family. Choose the one you like best – or why not enjoy them all?

family with the city of Barcelona in the background – the views are simply stunning. There are attractions for all ages, and the park can be reached by taking the funicular railway.

Want more ideas? Catalonia in Miniature and the Animated Forest: a multi-adventure park with zip lines and exhibitions of models of different places in Catalonia, located around 20

something about its history through interactive games and handicrafts, while Casa Batlló looks to bring Gaudí and the history of art alive with theatrical activities and exhibitions.

Barcelona also offers you an immersive experience – the G-Experiencia. Augmented reality activities where the little ones (and the not-so-little ones) can learn all about Antoni Gaudí. 4D films, impressive models, interactive screens, exhibitions and endless different ideas.

Get up close and personal with the animals

On the one hand, you have the Aquarium, an oceanarium that's unique in Europe where exciting experiences await, such as taking a dip with sharks.

And then there's the Barcelona City Zoo, home to a huge variety of plant and animal life, everything from pygmy hippos and red pandas to meerkats. The zoo organises educational experiences so that children can get to know more about these species at close quarters. Exploring the African savannah with the zoo's educators, for example.

CosmoCaixa is a perfect place to learn as a family. Not just the children but the whole family will marvel at the interactive installations, space exhibitions and science-related workshops.

If you're passionate about music, very close to the Sagrada Familia you'll find the Music Museum, where you can learn how to make musical instruments and listen to

Have fun in the leisure and amusement parks

You're sure to love El Poble Espanyol, an open-air leisure park located on the mountain of Montjuïc that was built for the 1929 Universal Exposition. It's an architectural museum with full-scale replicas of 117 buildings from different regions in Spain. You'll see a typical Andalusian neighbourhood, Romanesque monasteries, and much more. What's more, there are craft workshops, exhibitions, music for children, etc.

In the highest part of the city, you'll find the famous Tibidabo Amusement Park. This is an ideal spot for a snapshot of the whole

kilometres from the city centre.

And if you're adrenaline junkies, you mustn't miss the chance to visit the famous Port Aventura World theme park (right by Ferrari Land and the Caribe Aquatic Park). Although it's about 100 kilometres from the city, the transport links are excellent and – you'll absolutely love it!

Discover the city's monuments and artists

La Pedrera and Casa Batlló are two of the most famous monuments in Barcelona. And they both organise cultural activities specifically for children. La Pedrera aims to teach children





rhythms that will whisk you away to the furthest corners of the planet.

Or maybe you're looking for something rather sweeter? In that case, pay the Chocolate Museum a visit. The children can learn about the origins of chocolate and take part in a wide variety of workshops.

the oldest garden in the city of Barcelona, is a great place to while away the time. Reckon you can find the way out of the maze?

Another of Barcelona's authentic natural beauties is its Botanical Gardens, a riot of different colours depending on the time of year. It's located on

Get away from it all on the Barcelona coast

If you fancy spending a fun day on Barcelona's beaches and in the surrounding area, there are lots of water sports to choose from, such as paddleboarding, scuba diving, jet skiing and kayaking. You might also like to take a boat trip along the city's coastline in a typical golondrina.

If you're adrenaline junkies, then parasailing is definitely something for you. A small canopy, rather like a parachute, will allow you to fly along the coast and admire all the splendours of the city from the up on high.

As you can see, there's no chance of getting bored in Barcelona! What's more, if you're visiting is a short one, remember that there's always the Barcelona Tourist Bus. You can hop on and hop off as many times as you like and choose to visit only those places that really grab the children's attention.

Looking for another interesting way of getting around the city? Then try the Montjuïc Cable Car. It runs for 750 metres, starting out from the bottom of the park, and finishing its journey at Montjuïc Castle.

For more information visit:
<https://www.spain.info/en/>



Other places the smallest members of the family will love are the Big Fun Museum (with ball pits and 3D installations) and the Wax Museum (with waxworks of iconic historical figures).

Enter the world of "urban nature"

Is there anything children like better than solving mysteries and finding the answers to riddles? The Parc del Laberint d'Horta,

the mountain of Montjuïc, and its mission is to showcase the hundreds of species of plants that live there.

Park Güell is not to be missed. A ceramic dragon has long been one of the park's main attractions, so you can set the children the task of finding it. The dragon stairway, the hall of the hundred columns and dozens of mosaics promise to make your visit to the park an unforgettable one.

Outrigger raises World Oceans flag



To go beyond World Oceans Month, which started 8 June, Outrigger Resorts has kicked off 11 weeks of environmental actions, informally called 'Ocean's Eleven', which will run to 31 August across its nine flagship properties.

Outrigger's Asia Pacific resorts, including Fiji, Thailand, Mauritius, Maldives and Hawaii, are hosting multiple events ranging from coral planting to fish-house making to beach and marine cleanups and mangrove tree planting. For guests less

willing to take the plunge, there will be in-room videos, kids' club activities and presentations on manta rays, whale sharks, turtles and coral reef conservation.

Outrigger's 'Ocean's Eleven' campaign includes coral planting, mangrove propagation, marine education awareness and more.

'Ocean's Eleven' is an extension of Outrigger's ZONE (OZONE), the company's global conservation initiative that provides enriching experiences for Outrigger guests, hosts and local communities with an

emphasis on healthy oceans and coral reefs.

Volunteers and hosts from Outrigger plant mangroves in Mai Khao area of Phuket on 13 June.

Examples of the marine conservation campaign by Outrigger include:

Phuket – following beach cleaning on 8 June by the hosts of Outrigger Surin Beach Resort and Outrigger Khao Lak Beach Resort, the team joined mangrove tree planting at Mai Khao Beach in Phuket on 13 June.

Koh Samui – the Outrigger Koh Samui Beach Resort staff collaborated with Trash Heroes Koh Samui in its weekly cleanup efforts around the island's beaches; the staff also assisted the Bantai Crab Bank in their catch and release programme, which releases baby crabs back into the ocean.

Maldives – led by Outrigger Maafushivaru Maldives Resort in-house marine biologist Lynn Kessler, Outrigger will collect data on manta rays and whale

school children in August when a mobile marine educational centre called Bis Lamer will be present at the resort throughout the month. On 8 June, there were ocean awareness trips on a glass-bottom boat for kids who also joined in World Ocean Day 'edutainment' games on shore.

Fiji – there will be a round-the-island beach cleanup on 16 June at Castaway Island, Fiji and fish house making on 23 June.

Hawaii – hosts and guests at

beach resorts from Mauritius to Hawaii, Outrigger has a front-row seat to the link between healthy oceans and healthy communities," said Monica Salter, Outrigger's VP of global communications and social responsibility.

'The goal for 'Ocean's Eleven' – 11 weeks of marine action and awareness-raising – is to inspire both guests and hosts to take individual action towards a sustainable lifestyle. This will hopefully make a positive impact



sharks for local conservation NGOs; she is also working with ORP a sea turtle protection group that also carries out underwater cleanups of man-made debris; Ms Kessler will be giving marine biology presentations twice a week for guests. And to raise awareness – and for fun – Outrigger is offering guests a Blue Ocean Martini, made of vodka, martini and Blue Curacao.

Mauritius – beach cleaning at Outrigger Mauritius with local

Outrigger Reef Waikiki Beach Resort and Outrigger Waikiki Beach Resort participated in a Sustainable Coastlines Festival Cleanup, which took place on 18 June. It will also hold its 6th Annual OZONE Day at Waikiki Aquarium, with many educational activities for families, on 25 June.

These are just a highlight of the activities. Others will be added between mid-June and the end of August.

"As owners and operators of

on the planet beyond our almost three-month intensive period of action," she said.

Further information:
www.Outrigger.com/sustainablesummer

Check out Phuket's village culture

Tourism business and traveller behaviours are changing as the Covid-19 recovery phase takes hold.

The disruptions have widened the 'capability' gaps between small and big players favouring the wealthy operators. They had the resources to wait out the Covid-19 disaster. But It leaves



local communities needing meaningful partnerships to rise up the agenda and reclaim the attention of Phuket's visitors.

Baan Bang Thao – Cherng Talay Community in Phuket is one example of community-based tourism practices that manage sustainability within their community to create understanding and connections between visitors and local village culture.

Most Baan Bang Thao – Cherng Talay residents are Muslim, and their main activities are agriculture, farming, and fishing. The community has been established as a community enterprise for almost 10 years to promote local wisdom, agricultural and processed products made with raw materials from the village.

Today, the community is strongly committed to its original way of life and is ready to show visitors authentic experiences, culture, and agricultural diversity.

Baan Bang Thao Cherng Talay Community Based Tourism head Sonthaya Kongthip explains:



"We welcome approximately 20 visitors a day, or sometimes up to 50 for field study groups. That's the maximum capacity that we can serve. As a community enterprise, we manage different groups of activities that work collaboratively such as food, farms, and transport groups to improve the community's life, based on the sustainability concept."

He added: "Phuket is lucky that the government has given us a chance to open up our island destination to international visitors gradually. During the pandemic, we've never imagined that the whole island would

be closed to visitors. However, it allows us to reflect on how sustainability is important to our community and which direction we should take in the new normal era.

"Government, business, and communities will need to work closely together toward the sustainability in tourism. Local authorities are the ones who provide guidelines and supervise, while hotels send visitors to us. We, as a community, are the one who designs experiences and allows visitors to learn about local identity and local way of life. Working with different parties, the community will need to understand what to offer visitors and adjust our standards to meet businesses' requirements, for example, safety and hygiene standards in the new or next normal era."

Baan Bang Thao – Cherng Talay Community offers choices of community-based tourism activities where visitors can experience villagers' way of life and authentic cultural exchange. Simultaneously, they motivate and support villagers to keep their community strong and their homeland fertile.

Half-day Tour Sampler

In the late morning, local transport will pick up visitors from the village entrance near the Bukarom Mosque, one of the oldest and largest mosques on the island. After a short ride along a small alley surrounded by tiny houses, orchards, and rubber plantations, visitors will reach 'Uncle's Lab' home, where

[Full story.](#)



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Xacobeo 21-22



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