On The Rise: Demand for Travel to Southeast Asia Increases as Borders Reopen

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As borders begin to reopen across Southeast Asia, increased flight bookings show how excited travelers are to return to the region. All countries in Southeast Asia, with the exception of Brunei, have started to remove their travel restrictions and are reopening their borders to international tourists in hopes of rejuvenating the industry that was hardest hit by the Covid-19 pandemic: tourism. Travelport, a global technology company that powers bookings for hundreds of thousands of travel suppliers worldwide, today released the below trend data showing how the easing of restrictions has affected the international demand for travel to Southeast Asia.

Hot Spots

According to Travelport's booking data, the top ten destinations in Southeast Asia for international travelers to visit in 2022 are:

1. Manila (Philippines)
2. Singapore (Singapore)
3. Bangkok (Thailand)
4. Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)
5. Jakarta (Indonesia)
6. Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)
7. Hanoi (Vietnam)
   Phuket (Thailand)
8. Bali (Indonesia)
9. Angeles/Mabalacat (Philippines)

For the first quarter of 2022, international flight bookings to Southeast Asia overall have increased and have showed upward trajectory with the Philippines taking the

lead by achieving 42% of its international bookings in the first quarter of 2019 prior COVID-19 pandemic. The Philippines and Thailand were among the earliest countries in Southeast Asia to reopen their borders, and travelers are already clamoring to visit. In the first quarter of 2022, these two countries alone represent over half (51%) of all international flight bookings to the region.

On 28 January, the Philippines announced its plans to fully reopen to vaccinated travelers on 10 February. Within a week of the announcement, international flight bookings to the country rose by 114%. One month after the announcement on 28 February, the country saw a 294% increase in daily flight bookings.

Thailand first allowed foreigners to enter the country on February 1 with the introduction of its Test & Go program which required tourists to have a negative PCR test for entry, and a subsequent antigen test on the fifth day of travel. In the 24 hours following that announcement, international flight bookings to Thailand grew by 37%. On March 7, the Thai government further revised the measures, dropping the testing requirements on the fifth day. With that change, international flight bookings grew 128% compared to booking on first announcement.

The top five countries traveling to Southeast Asia are the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Saudi Arabia, and South Korea. Solo travelers made up 44% of international flight bookings for the first quarter of 2022 to date, by far the largest traveler segment, which may be comprised of returning business travelers, flexible tourists whose bags are packed the moment borders reopen, and Southeast Asian expats who are eager to return home without enduring a once mandatory quarantine.

Hightlight

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