

JAMAICA

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HISTORIC VIRTUAL JAPEX LIVE 2020 A SUCCESS

Jamaica Hosts Fully Virtual Travel Trade Show - A First in the English Speaking Caribbean



Hon. Edmund Bartlett, Tourism Minister

KINGSTON, JAMAICA – November 12, 2020 – The 30th staging of the annual Jamaica Product Exchange (JAPEX), held virtually for the first time, was a huge success. As the show was virtual this year, it allowed for greater participation from all corners of the globe. The two-day trade show brought together a record number of delegates from the United States, Canada, Latin America, Europe and Asia comprising of 2,500 registrations with 2,000 travel agents, 250 tour operators, 140 supplier companies, 280 supplier delegates, 251 buyer delegates and over 158 journalists.

The destination’s resilience, commitment to recovery, and continued innovation and development throughout the pandemic were a significant theme throughout the event.

“The success of this first fully virtual trade show is great news and speaks to the innovation which has been at the forefront of the tourist industry in Jamaica as we prepare for the recovery and beyond,” said the Hon. Edmund Bartlett, Jamaica’s Minister of Tourism. “We look forward to the business that will emanate from this year’s event and remain confident that it will redound to the benefit of the destination.”



Jamaica's Director of Tourism Donovan White demonstrates ease of interacting with online platform ahead of the historic virtual JAPEX LIVE 2020

“We’re pleased with the participation and support from international delegates for this virtual staging of the island’s leading travel trade show,” added Donovan White, Jamaica’s Director of Tourism. “It’s encouraging that since reopening the destination in June, we have welcomed over 211,000 visitors. With the holidays approaching, it is our hope that this trend will continue, as we persist on the road to the industry’s recovery in the coming months.”

Over the two days, delegates attended destination training and breakout sessions, learning about the island and setting up one-on-one business appointments via the digital platform. Both breakout sessions and training sessions boasted record-breaking attendance, with 3,960 users participating in the breakouts and 1,986 engaged in training sessions. Booth visits were in excess of 25,000, and JAPEX LIVE saw an overwhelming 14,000 shares of content through the platform. An exciting feature was the opportunity to explore the various resort areas using an interactive Google map.

“We are happy that this year’s event attracted such widespread participation which speaks to the interest in Jamaica and our road to recovery. Partners have been encouraged and reported that they were able to conduct some fruitful negotiations,” noted Clifton Reader, President of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA).

Below are some of the tourism development highlights discussed at the conference:

- Most of the major airlines serving the destination, including American Airlines, Delta, JetBlue, United, Southwest, Air Canada, WestJet, and Copa, are increasing service as the demand picks up.
- British Airways started twice weekly service to Montego Bay from London Gatwick. Virgin Atlantic returned to Jamaica last month, with service from Heathrow to Montego Bay.
- A new Linkages Centre of Excellence, on the site of the Shoppes at Rose Hall, will provide visitors with a place that showcases the best of Jamaica combining gastronomy, a craft market, health and wellness options and local entertainment.
- In Montego Bay, the 1,700-room Hard Rock Resort, located on the Elegant Corridor, will be laid out and construction will begin soon. The SeaGarden Beach Resort, located near the Hip Strip is adding an additional 800 rooms to their beachfront all-inclusive property.
- In Trelawny, Oceans by H10 is adding a 440-room property and the Royalton Group is building two more resorts totaling 1,200 rooms.
- In Ocho Rios, Karisma Hotels & Resorts has begun phase one of the Sugarcane property with 700 rooms. Phase two will add another 3,800, bringing the total room count to 4,500.
- In Kingston, renovations are underway for the ROK – Kingston, the 168-room property overlooking downtown Kingston’s waterfront which will be managed by Hilton through its Tapestry Collection.

For more information on Jamaica and the tourist industry, go to www.jtbonline.org.

About Jamaica Tourist Board

The Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), founded in 1955, is Jamaica’s national tourism agency based in the capital city of Kingston. JTB offices are also located in Montego Bay, Miami, Toronto and London. Representative offices are located in Berlin, Barcelona, Rome, Amsterdam, Mumbai, Tokyo and Paris.

This year, the JTB was declared the Caribbean’s Leading Tourist Board by the World Travel Awards (WTA) for the thirteenth consecutive year and Jamaica was declared the Caribbean’s Leading Destination for the fifteenth consecutive year. Jamaica also earned the WTA award for the World’s Leading Cruise Destination and Leading Meetings & Conference Centre for the Montego Bay Convention Centre. Most recently, Jamaica was named as one of the “Best Places to Go in 2020” according to *CNN*, *Bloomberg* and *Forbes*. Jamaica was awarded three gold 2020 Travvy Awards including Best Culinary Destination, Caribbean/Bahamas; Best Tourism Board Overall and Best Tourism Board, Caribbean/Bahamas. In 2019, TripAdvisor® ranked Jamaica as the #1 Caribbean Destination and #14

Best Destination in the World. In 2018, the International Council of the Pacific Area Travel Writers Association (PATWA) named Jamaica the Destination of the Year and TravAlliance Media named JTB Best Tourism Board, and Jamaica as Best Culinary Destination, Best Wedding Destination and Best Honeymoon Destination. Jamaica is home to some of the world's best accommodations, attractions and service providers that continue to receive prominent global recognition.

For details on upcoming special events, attractions and accommodations in Jamaica go to the JTB's Website at www.visitjamaica.com or call the Jamaica Tourist Board at 1-800-JAMAICA (1-800-526-2422). Follow the JTB on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) and [YouTube](#). View the JTB blog at www.islandbuzzjamaica.com.

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