

What's Hot for 2005

We're often asked what the current "hot" destinations are. Some people like to know where everyone else is going so that they can go to. Others like to know where everyone else is going so that they can go someplace else. Regardless of which group you fall into, you might be interested to know what the current travel trends are so that you can make your plans accordingly.

In our first group, we have what I like to call "the old favorites". These are the "comfort food" of the travel industry. Destinations such as Walt Disney World, Las Vegas, the islands of the Caribbean and Mexico continue to draw vast numbers of vacationers both first-time and repeat. Several Caribbean Islands are even reporting record numbers of visitors this year as the word spreads of what they have to offer. The building boom in Cancun continues to expand capacity for an ever-increasing number of vacationers looking for fun in the sun.

Secondly, we have the long-haul destinations. We're seeing a resurgence in bookings for Hawaii, Australia & New Zealand, Alaska and, despite the continued strength of the Euro, Europe. Italy and Britain continue to be the most popular destinations in Europe and many tour operators have added new itineraries for 2005 to help attract even more visitors. Many Alaska and Mediterranean cruises for summer of 2005 are all but sold out and we're still six months away.

Next is group travel. In 2004 we saw more friends traveling together and more family reunions than ever before. This trend is continuing strong into 2005 as cruise lines and tour operators respond with more attractive benefits to attract this type of travel.

Cruises are attracting record numbers of vacationers through word-of-mouth and very aggressive advertising. The Cruise Lines International Association predicts that cruising will top the 10 million-passenger mark this year. That's an all-time record for the cruise industry and they're gearing up for even higher numbers in 2005 as they continue to scramble to increase capacity.

Lastly, there's what we refer to as the "emerging destinations". Exotic destinations like Costa Rica, Belize and the Turks & Caicos Islands aren't that remote any more as increased air service to destinations like these is attracting those looking for something different.

With that said, whether you intend to follow the trend or be a trend setter, you've heard me say it before but it bears repeating here, early booking will ensure you get the vacation you want instead of settling for what's left over.

Happy Holidays and best wishes for a wonderful New Year!

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