

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE FROM JBT

A message from Jon Baines:

We're all in the depths of very strange times, with unprecedented change on a daily basis. We hope that all our travellers, families and friends stay safe during this time and I urge you all to take care and look out for each other. A few words from me about what is happening in the Jon Baines Tours offices in London and Melbourne.

We have now safely repatriated all our tours and cruises that were running when the crisis and subsequent lockdowns happened. A special thank you to Cuba, a country we have visited many times on our medical tours, who stepped up to help us dock some cruise passengers, screen them and bring them on shore, before the group departed on a flight back to the UK. All passengers are safe and well and we are grateful to the Cubans for their efficiency, kindness and friendship. We're now re-arranging all tours impacted by the government shutdowns around the world. We've not had to permanently cancel a single tour and we are determined to continue in this vein.

This is a complicated job that is occupying our offices full time, but we've all put a lot of work into creating specialist tours with carefully arranged professional visits – we'll move heaven and earth to make sure they go ahead. Our suppliers and ground agents all around the world are working with us to make this happen. Many of our tours are different from normal tours. We connect fellow professionals around the world. These visits and meetings take time to organise and will take time to rearrange. However, with our wonderful international network of agents and guides, this is happening.

We're in contact with affected passengers with updates, but this is a very busy time. As always, we welcome your calls and emails but please do understand that we might not be as quick as usual with our responses. We are dealing with this day by day, as is everyone.

We're all working from home and plan to send our travellers content to read in their own homes – recommended reading, lectures and articles from our tour leaders, updates on our supported projects. We're also working away on 2021 tours, because we will travel again, with no doubt even more appreciation of our journeys than ever before.

I'd also like to say a fervent thank you to our wonderful team in London and Melbourne, who have been tirelessly adaptable, dedicated and caring at this troubling time – I could not do any of this without them.

Stay safe.

Jon Baines



The health and safety of our passengers is always our top priority. We understand that the escalated pandemic status of coronavirus, or COVID-19, is unsettling. We are closely following developments on a daily basis and who are more than happy to answer your calls or emails. Along with other tour operators, we take our advice directly from government recommendations.

The FCO has advised British nationals against all but essential international travel. Any country or area may restrict travel without notice. The Australian government has issued its highest travel warning for all destinations, advising all Australians not to travel at this time.

We are postponing our forthcoming tours for the next few months. We are working with our ground agents and partners in the destinations we visit to re-schedule the tours at a later date; either later this year or early 2021. Please be assured that the safety and security of our guests continues to be of the utmost importance to us. We are in ongoing contact with passengers who are on tours affected by this situation.

This is a fast-moving situation. We will continue to monitor the situation and keep you updated. Please be assured that our number one priority is the health and well-being of our passengers and our ground agents and staff, and our number two priority is rearranging all cancelled tours to a suitable time.

W.H.O. recommendations for international travellers

20 March 2020 – NEWS:

To increase access to reliable information, WHO worked with WhatsApp and Facebook to launch a new WHO Health Alert messaging service today. The WhatsApp-based service will provide vital information about COVID-19 to millions of people through their mobile phones. The services uses an AI chatbot to provide updated information on the pandemic, including how to protect yourself, questions and answers, and the latest news and press coverage. The Health Alert service is now available in English and will be introduced in other languages next week. This is part of WHO's wider initiative to work with technology companies to get accurate health information into the hands of people that need it at this critical time.

It is prudent for travellers who are sick to delay or avoid travel to affected areas, in particular for elderly travellers and people with chronic diseases or underlying health conditions.

General recommendations for personal hygiene, cough etiquette and keeping a distance of at least one metre from persons showing symptoms remain particularly important for all travellers. These include:

- Perform hand hygiene frequently, particularly after contact with respiratory secretions. Hand hygiene includes either cleaning hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand rub. Alcohol-based hand rubs are preferred if hands are not visibly soiled; wash hands with soap and water where possible and certainly when visibly dirty.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a flexed elbow or paper tissue when coughing or sneezing and disposing immediately of the tissue and performing hand hygiene;
- Refrain from touching mouth and nose;
- A medical mask is not required if exhibiting no symptoms, as there is no evidence that



- wearing a mask – of any type – protects non-sick persons.
- As for any travel, travellers are also advised to follow proper food hygiene practices, including [the five keys for food safety](#), as well as [recommendations to reduce the risk of transmission of emerging pathogens from animals to human in live markets](#).

Travellers returning from **affected areas** should self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days and follow national protocols of receiving countries.

F.A.Q.s

The constant stream of information can be confusing. Here are some answers to frequently asked questions about COVID-19 from the World Health Organisation website:

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around 1 out of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness. People with fever, cough and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention

How does COVID-19 spread?

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets. This is why it is important to stay more than 1 meter (3 feet) away from a person who is sick.

Studies to date suggest that the virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly transmitted through contact with respiratory droplets rather than through the air.

How worried should we be about COVID-19?

Illness due to COVID-19 infection is generally mild, especially for children and young adults. However, it can cause serious illness: about 1 in every 5 people who catch it need hospital care. It is therefore quite normal for people to worry about how the COVID-19 outbreak will affect them and their loved ones.

We can channel our concerns into actions to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our communities. First and foremost among these actions is regular and thorough hand-washing and good respiratory hygiene. Secondly, keep informed and follow the advice of the local health authorities including any restrictions put in place on travel, movement and gatherings

Should I wear a mask?



Only wear a mask if you are ill with COVID-19 symptoms (especially coughing) or looking after someone who may have COVID-19. Disposable face mask can only be used once. If you are not ill or looking after someone who is ill then you are wasting a mask. There is a world-wide shortage of masks, so WHO urges people to use masks wisely.

What can I do to protect myself and prevent the spread of disease?

Stay aware of the latest information on the COVID-19 outbreak, available on the WHO website and through your national and local public health authority. Many countries around the world have seen cases of COVID-19 and several have seen outbreaks. Authorities in China and some other countries have succeeded in slowing or stopping their outbreaks. However, the situation is unpredictable so check regularly for the latest news.

You can reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by taking some simple precautions:

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.
 - Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.
- Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
 - Why? When someone coughs or sneezes they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
 - Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.
- Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.
 - Why? Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.
- Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.
 - Why? National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.
- Keep up to date on the latest COVID-19 hotspots (cities or local areas where COVID-19 is spreading widely). If possible, avoid traveling to places – especially if you are an older person or have diabetes, heart or lung disease.
 - Why? You have a higher chance of catching COVID-19 in one of these areas.

Protection measures for persons who are in or have recently visited (past 14 days) areas where



COVID-19 is spreading

Follow the guidance outlined above (Protection measures for everyone)

- Self-isolate by staying at home if you begin to feel unwell, even with mild symptoms such as headache, low grade fever (37.3 C or above) and slight runny nose, until you recover. If it is essential for you to have someone bring you supplies or to go out, e.g. to buy food, then wear a mask to avoid infecting other people.
 - Why? Avoiding contact with others and visits to medical facilities will allow these facilities to operate more effectively and help protect you and others from possible COVID-19 and other viruses.
- If you develop fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical advice promptly as this may be due to a respiratory infection or other serious condition. Call in advance and tell your provider of any recent travel or contact with travelers.
 - Why? Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also help to prevent possible spread of COVID-19 and other viruses.

