

11th June 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE

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. We are all working from home, in accordance with government regulations, but are available and happy to answer your calls and emails.

Along with other tour operators, we take our advice directly from government recommendations.

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) currently advises British nationals against all but essential international travel. This advice is being kept under constant review.

The Australian government has issued its highest travel warning for all destinations, advising all Australians not to travel at this time. All overseas travel is currently banned, with few exceptions. If you're overseas and want to return, we continue to urge you to do so as soon as possible while flights are available. If you can't leave or prefer to stay where you are, make plans for an extended stay.

We are continuing to postpone our forthcoming tours until later in the year or in 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.

The World Health Organisation [website](#) has rolling updates on COVID-19 around the world. The following advice is from their website.

Protecting yourself and others from the spread COVID-19

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 others. Why? When someone coughs, sneezes, or speaks 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 has the disease.
- Avoid going to crowded places. Why? Where people come together in crowds, you are more likely to come into close contact with someone that has COVID-19 and it is more difficult to maintain physical distance of 1 metre (3 feet).
- 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 infect you.
- 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 and wash your hands. 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 and self-isolate even with minor symptoms such as cough, headache, mild fever, until you recover. Have someone bring you supplies. If you need to leave your house, wear a mask to avoid infecting others. Why? Avoiding contact with others will protect them from possible COVID-19 and other viruses.
- If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention, but call by telephone in advance if possible and 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 information from trusted sources, such as WHO or your local and national health authorities. Why? Local and national authorities are best placed to advise on what people in your area should be doing to protect themselves.



1/04/20

A message from Jon Baines:

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE FROM JBT

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

