



Travel Industry Update

August 27, 2020

What it's like flying JetBlue Mint during the pandemic

- Description of a JetBlue Mint's business class flight from New York to LA on Aug. 13.
- JFK Terminal 5 was packed.
- Both the roadways and public spaces inside the terminal were much more crowded than anticipated.
- Everyone was adhering to the mask requirement.
- However, with so many people in a confined space, it was hard to maintain social distancing.
- Almost every airport retailer was closed.
- Everyone kept their distance while boarding; even the airplane aisles stayed clear.
- The plane was very clean, spotless.
- Before boarding, the gate agent made an announcement about JetBlue's recent mask updates (no valves and no exceptions). Onboard, nearly everyone wore their mask correctly the entire flight.
- Unfortunately, my seat neighbor was wearing an N95 mask with an exhaust valve, which is against the airline policy. I politely informed the flight attendant who quickly told me that the new policy hadn't yet been enacted. I referenced the gate agent's prior announcement, and ten minutes later, the flight attendant distributed disposable masks for everyone who boarded with a non-compliant mask.
- Before takeoff, I took a look at the spotless lavatories and wondered whether they would remain in the same condition throughout the flight. And surprisingly they did.
- I witnessed the flight attendants servicing the restroom at least once during the journey, though fellow passengers also did their part in keeping things clean.
- At JFK, there were placards and floor decals at every step of the check-in process demarcating where to stand and where to go next. There were plenty of posters reminding passengers about the mask policy too.
- Once onboard, the safety video included a new segment about JetBlue's Safety from the Ground Up cleaning program and most flight attendant announcements included references to the initiative.
- To reduce touchpoints, JetBlue removed the seatback service brochure and digitalized it. Now, when you log in to the FlyFi Wi-Fi network, you'll be prompted to review the service card.
- During the descent, flight attendants announced that passengers should deplane in a socially distant manner. Either people didn't hear or they chose to ignore the request because deplaning was definitely the least safe I felt throughout the journey.

JFK:



Deplaning at LAX



planes, make airborne transmission difficult between seated passengers, the researchers said. That likely contributed to the fact that only one passenger became infected; having every passenger wear an N95 respirator presumably also helped.

- That makes it likely that transmission resulting from touching a contaminated surface, or during boarding, disembarkation, or while walking in the aisles.
- "Further attention is warranted to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 on aircraft," the researchers wrote. "Our results suggest that stringent global regulations for the prevention of COVID-19 transmission on aircraft can prevent public health emergencies."
- Airlines have developed a variety of methods to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission on flights, as they try to instill public confidence and encourage people to return to flying.
- Every major US airline requires passengers to wear masks while aboard. Some, including Delta, are blocking middle seats in order to facilitate social distancing. All have implemented new cleaning and disinfection regimens.

Google + Volara Enabling Voice Based Contactless Guest Engagement and Touchless Room Controls

- Partnership between Google and Volara is enabling hotels across the globe to deploy the best of Google, including a contactless guest engagement and touchless room controls solution that facilitates private, automated and live, conversational interactions between hotel guests and staff.
- Running on the Google Nest Hub, guests may ask the popular voice assistant to make calls, play music, watch shows, request amenities, book services, turn on/off TVs, increase the room temperature, adjust the lights, set alarms and more without ever lifting a finger.
- With new safety protocols reshaping the guest experience, this new solution from Google and Volara presents a uniquely relevant, digitally interactive means of connecting guests to their hotel.

Hotel recovery will be U-shaped, but varied across Asia

- Hotel recovery will be U-shaped and varied across countries in the Asia-Pacific region, according to Colliers International's Hotel Insights Q3 2020 report, a quarterly digest of key trends in the hospitality sector.
- Hotels across Asia Pacific continued to experience poor performance in Q2, with overall room occupancy and average daily rate (ADR) showing decreases to 33.9% and US\$60.32, respectively.
- In terms of room occupancy, most markets witnessed year-on-year declines in excess of 40% while Singapore only declined by 14.5%. According to the report, Japan, Thailand, Hong Kong and Vietnam led the field in being the top five lowest performers.