



Travel Industry Update

September 29, 2020

JetBlue partners with at-home, COVID-19 testing company

- JetBlue said it will partner with Vault Health to make COVID-19 testing widely available to customers with pending travel plans.
- "The reliable at-home test option provides convenience to customers wanting peace of mind and those who must secure a negative COVID-19 test result before entering certain states and countries or in order to avoid certain mandatory quarantines," the airline said in a news release making the announcement.
- JetBlue says the process will involve an at-home saliva test, administered via online video connection through Vault Health with a test supervisor who ensures the customer is providing their sample properly. The customer's sample is shipped overnight to a laboratory which processes and analyzes the specimen, and results are provided in 72 hours or less.
- According to JetBlue, the test meets the medical standard many states and countries require to bypass a mandatory quarantine.

JetBlue service to Baltimore, some California airports now suspended until April

- The New York-based carrier will not resume flights to Baltimore/Washington (BWI), Burbank (BUR) or Ontario, California (ONT) until at least April 2021.
- The suspensions come as executives at American Airlines, Southwest Airlines and United Airlines all say service cuts are likely without additional federal aid. The three carriers, as well as JetBlue, are all pushing for an 11th-hour extension of the payroll support program for airline employees that expires this Thursday, Oct. 1.
- "We need Congress to do their job," JetBlue CEO Robin Hayes told reporters on the extension effort outside the U.S. Capitol on Sept. 22. "Our crewmembers sit there and say 'if we did our job, why can't they do their job?'"
- With or without aid, JetBlue has had to shrink to match the number of people flying today. The airline only plans to fly about half of what it flew a year ago in October, according to Cirium schedules.

CEO of Lufthansa airline Swiss to step down

- The head of Lufthansa-owned airline Swiss International will step down at the end of 2020, Swiss said on Tuesday, with a successor yet to be determined.
- "Thomas Klühr, who has been CEO of Swiss International Air Lines since 2016, has asked the SWISS Board of Directors to release him from his duties at the end of 2020," Swiss said in a statement, adding Klühr would also step down from his role as chairman of Edelweiss Air, another Lufthansa flight operator. "The Board of Directors will decide on his successor as SWISS CEO in the fourth-quarter period."

Korean Air gets ready to deliver COVID-19 vaccine to the world

- Korean Air has launched a COVID-19 vaccine transport task force to prepare for the safe and swift transport of the vaccine once it becomes available.
- Transporting vaccines is a very delicate and challenging process requiring specialized storage facilities and equipment. Vaccines generally need to be stored at low temperatures between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius whereas some types require temperatures as low as -70 degrees Celsius.
- Korean Air's cargo terminal at Incheon International Airport has 1,292 sqm of cold storage that can accommodate 100 tons of freight. In addition, to expand its operations, the airline plans to use the 2,533 sqm Cool Cargo Center next to Incheon International Airport Terminal 2 when it opens next year.
- Because of the carrier's expertise in managing and transporting pharmaceuticals, Korean Air has been certified by IATA's Center of Excellence for Independent Validators on Pharmaceutical Handling (CEIV Pharma).
- IATA recently announced that 8,000 Boeing 747s will be needed to transport one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine for every person in the world. Air transport will be crucial and in high demand for the vaccine's safe and timely distribution.

Singapore Airlines drops 'flights to nowhere' after outcry

- Singapore Airlines said Tuesday it had scrapped plans for "flights to nowhere" aimed at boosting its coronavirus-hit finances after an outcry over the environmental impact.
- With the aviation industry in deep crisis, several carriers -- including in Australia, Japan and Taiwan -- have been offering short flights that start and end at the same airport to raise cash.
- The carrier has come up with alternative ideas to raise revenue, including offering customers tours of aircraft and offering them the chance to dine inside an Airbus A380, the world's biggest commercial airliner.
- Environmental activists had voiced opposition to Singapore Airlines launching "flights to nowhere", with group SG Climate Rally saying they would encourage "carbon-intensive travel for no good reason".
- "We believe air travel has always caused environmental harm, and it is now an opportune moment for us to think seriously about transitions instead of yearning to return to a destructive status quo."