Travel Industry Update
November 23, 2020

Chicago Airports Adding COVID-19 Testing Facilities

- Chicago’s two major airports will be joining New York’s three major facilities by adding on-site COVID-19 testing facilities at O'Hare International and Midway by next month.
- The city is already taking requests for proposals from medical providers who can operate drive-up and walk-in facilities at the airports, according to the Chicago Tribune.
- Officials say both the rapid test and the PCR test will be available.
- The testing is especially helpful for travelers heading to destinations that require negative coronavirus tests before you can enter the country.

Airlines say more travelers opting not to fly, canceling trips as COVID-19 cases surge

- United Airlines warned Thursday that bookings have slowed and cancellations have increased as the number of coronavirus infections spikes across the country.
- Southwest Airlines has also seen more cancellations, and the carrier’s CEO said that travel demand will remain weak in the first quarter.
- The number of people flying in the United States is down about 65% from a year ago, and airlines were hoping that the upcoming holidays would mean an increase in leisure travel.
- United said however that it continues to see the coronavirus pandemic hurting travel.
- In the past week, “there has been a deceleration in system bookings and an uptick in cancellations as a result of the recent spike in COVID-19 cases,” United said in a regulatory filing.
- Chicago-based United expects to operate no more than 45% of its normal schedule in the fourth quarter. and it continues to forecast a 67% decline in revenue compared with last year's fourth quarter.
- Southwest officials said bookings are rising for the holidays but so are cancellations — they didn't provide numbers for either.

Thanksgiving travel: TSA screens 1 million for the first time since March despite COVID surge

- Thanksgiving travel is surging despite new coronavirus cases approaching 200,000 a day in the United States.
- On Friday, the number of travelers screened at US airport security checkpoints topped 1 million for only the second time since March, according to Transportation Security Administration figures. That's still just 40% of the volume screened on the Friday before Thanksgiving a year ago.
• Travel organization AAA has said that it expects at least a 10% drop in travel this Thanksgiving because of spiking coronavirus cases, shifting travel restrictions and calls by health and government officials for people to stay home.
• AAA forecasts nearly 48 million travelers will drive to their destinations -- representing a 4.3% drop from last year in the number of people traveling by car over the holiday period, which AAA defines as Wednesday to Sunday.
• Air travel is expected to see its largest one-year decrease on record for Thanksgiving, a nearly 48% drop, with just 2.4 million travelers expected to fly, according to the organization.

Delta CEO calls New York-London travel corridor 'complicated,' as airlines aim to revive transatlantic travel

• Delta Air Lines CEO Ed Bastian said Sunday that the New York-London travel corridor will be "complicated" due to coronavirus restrictions, as airlines look to revive transatlantic travel.
• Bastian said that it would be easier to reopen a route to almost any other European city than London, citing the quarantine requirements in the U.K. as well as the lack of reliance on tourism.
• “I think you will find on the continent several countries that are more open,” Bastian told the Financial Times, adding, “I think New York-London is complicated.”
• Domestic flights in the U.S. have revived faster than international travel, with Thanksgiving to see a bump – though, Bastian projects that flight volume would be around 35%-40% of last year’s level.

Disney World is bringing back Park Hopper perks next year

• On Friday, Walt Disney World Resort announced its Orlando, Fla., theme park is bringing back the beloved Park Hopper program starting on Jan. 1, 2021.
• Tickets or annual passes with the Park Hopper perk allows guests to visit multiple Disney Parks – including Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park, Magic Kingdom Park, Disney's Hollywood Studios and EPCOT – on the same day.
• However, Disney is implementing some new modifications amid the COVID-19 pandemic to continue its "ongoing focus on health and safety," the company said in a statement.
• Guests will only be allowed to hop between parks from 2 p.m. until closing, and will have to make a reservation to the first park they plan to visit in the day.
• "These modifications are designed to help us continue managing attendance in a way that fosters physical distancing," Disney said in a statement. "Additionally, other enhanced health and safety measures remain in effect, including face coverings required for all guests ages two and up."

CDC raises warning against cruise travel to highest level, strengthens international flight guidelines

• The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a Level 4 travel notice on Saturday advising that "all people" should avoid travel on cruise ships worldwide because "the risk of COVID-19 on cruise ships is very high."
"Cruise passengers are at increased risk of person-to-person spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19, and outbreaks of COVID-19 have been reported on cruise ships," the organization said on its website.

The CDC added that for passengers who may be considered at increased risk, the warning is "especially" applicable.

"Passengers who decide to go on a cruise should get tested 3-5 days after your trip AND stay home for 7 days after travel," the CDC said. "Even if you test negative, stay home for the full 7 days."

For passengers who don't get tested, the CDC recommended staying home for 14 days.

A similar update was issued Saturday for international air travel, recommending that Americans who are choosing to fly out of the country get tested before and after traveling: "1-3 days before your flight" and again "3-5 days after travel." Even those who test negative upon return should stay home for seven days; 14 for those who do not get tested.