

Should I stay or should I go? Travel: the big dilemma

In these ever changing uncertain times it is hard to decide if travelling is indeed worth the risk. With so much still uncertain about COVID-19 or 'the virus', everything we do in a day has risk attached to it. Yet with air bridges opening up to Europe and further afield, the desire to travel is very strong, especially since the 100+ days of lockdown, which have been cooping us all up (and keeping each other safe).

The desire to literally break free from what feels like a parallel version of our previous lives is one in which we are all desperate for some resemblance of 'normalcy'. So of course over summer that includes holidays! Which begs the question should I stay or should I go?

South of France?

In all honesty, when I was invited to a friends house in South of France for a long weekend, my immediate reaction was "Yeeeeesssss, get me out of here"

but as time progressed, my second thought was, “Is this safe?” Feeling like I now have to take on a new role as risk assessor of my life, the thought of even how to go about assessing risk for a flight, hotel, restaurant, private house, other people not wearing masks or being careful.

I mean the mind is overwhelmed thinking about converting what was once a normal occurrence into a percentage of risk. Again, so much of this whole situation is unknown, news outlets seem to be on the fence, with conflicting articles. No wonder we all feel even more overwhelmed. Mentally, I feel a trip would help me feel ‘normal’ again, even though, yes the world is still far from normal and won’t be for any time soon. So would escaping and seeing everyone in masks feel weird? Will it be way more stressful?

Clearly, we are all going to have to be more careful in the future and I can’t see social distancing disappearing anytime soon. There is no quick and easy fix, so perhaps it is about learning to adapt to the ‘new normal’, rather than being fearful of it. The risk will always be there and will change daily depending on the rates of infection and deaths. Risk and the unknown is something we clearly have to get used to, we just have to decide how best to navigate this path. Like a breakup that lingers rather than just being over, we are in the grey area when it comes to COVID-19.

The Considered Approach

Perhaps now this will lead people to a more considered approach to life- asking “what do I really want to do?” If we want to limit our exposure and risk, surely people will become more selective, instead of the blanket “yes” that we were used to and that was expected of us. Now we can all say no to things with a bit more ease, people are more understanding. This is a good reset button for deciding what kind of life we all want. All I know is that I want to form that line for myself that stays safe, and also enjoy the life I have, because frankly who knows what the future holds. Walking the line between enjoyment and recklessness will, of course, be tricky to navigate, but it is something that each of us will have to do independently. I want to remain cautiously optimistic that we might start enjoying life, travelling the world, enjoying time spent with friends and loved ones and not take it all for granted. Life, freedom, both things we are reminded of are precious and should be treasured.

Should I go?

We are all adults making the best decisions that we can for ourselves and having transparency with others about our choices so that they can make theirs. France is calling my name, and that is for sure, but perhaps I will not go

as immediately as I had first thought and wait and see how flights operate, how the numbers look, and to be honest when the flight prices reduce – July is crazy expensive!

Personally, if you are going to travel, I would advise you to pre-book, most airlines are letting you change tickets anyway, get that good deal and take a chance that we can all be sipping pale Provence rosé on the beach, pool, or fabulous terrace sometime soon!

In the meantime: Why not give yourself over these alfresco dining options... Whatever Coronavirus does it still lets you daydream! One day this will all be a memory, I just hope we all have the courage to learn the lessons from this time and move forward with consideration and thought about life and the meaning of it.

Enjoy sushi with the backdrop of Mount Asama at The Prince Karuizawa, Nagano, Japan

Nestled on the edge of Karuizawa Park, The Prince Karuizawa is home to a renowned French restaurant, Beaux Sejours. Blending elegant French cuisine with traditional Japanese flavours, Chef Jikiden offers a selection of sharing plates and larger dishes that coincide with the changing seasons.

Perfect for brunch, lunch or dinner, whether healthy or indulgent, diners can soak up the idyllic sights of Mount Asama whilst tucking into a crab Kamakshi, a colourful hiyashi chuuka or yakitori dish served with the restaurant's signature green onion sauce. The restaurant's alfresco terrace sits in a secluded oasis surrounded by natural beauty, offering a serene place to rest after a day of sightseeing.

Feast your way through Arizona, USA

Arizona's capital, Phoenix, boasts a decadent alfresco dining and drinking scene featuring tried-and-true local favourites to authentic international fare. Perched 1,800 feet above the sweeping vistas of Phoenix's Mountain Preserve below, Different Pointe Of View entices guests in with its tranquil terrace, perfect for a glass of bubbly whilst soaking up the warm winter sun, or head to the trendy Skydeck in the heart of midtown Phoenix for poolside yoga followed by cocktails.

Alternatively, after hiking one of the breathtaking trails around Scottsdale, travellers can refuel on tacos, tequila and burritos at Diego Pops, a popular laid-back Mexican restaurant famous for its Sonoran Hot Dog and Snow Cone Margarita which can be sipped on the airy patio. On the other side of the city, located next to Scottsdale's Camelback Mountain, the intimate courtyard at

LON's offers inspired Arizonian cuisine, handcrafted cocktails and an outdoor crackling fireplace in the evenings.

Take in Vienna's skyline at the Atmosphere Rooftop Bar

The Ritz Carlton Vienna's spectacular rooftop bar, located on the iconic Ring Boulevard, is the perfect spot to escape for a sundowner in Vienna. The Atmosphere Rooftop Bar, which reopened on 15th May 2020, is located on the hotel's 8th floor and offers refreshing highball cocktails, mocktails and spritzers, relaxed summer vibes and incredible views over the beautiful city. The menu includes Mediterranean fare by Pastamara and reservations are required in advance.

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