**MAY 19TH CHAPTER TRAVEL FORUM**

**By Dan Sockle and Terry Babin**

Notes from the May 19, 2022, Travel Forum

The following items were submitted in advance by Dick Ionata:

* Planes are usually totally booked, and flying “standby” is very unlikely.
* Expect longer than usual waits going through TSA checks at the airport. Plan on checking in NLT 2 hours before boarding time for domestic travel and 3 hours for international travel.
* Regularly check for departure gate and time changes and cancellations.
* Though masks are not required, recommend continuing masking in the airport and on flights because the new COVID-19 variants are exceptionally contagious.

Report on upcoming Central Europe tour and Eastern Mediterranean cruise:

* Many countries (including Italy) have dropped the requirement for submission of the Personal Locator Form—but always check to confirm there are no changes for any Europe destination.
* COVID tests (observed antigen—no home self-test) are being eased—again check regularly for changes.
* Port of Venice temporarily being closed for cruise ship embarkation/debarkation—Holland America docking being moved to Trieste, Italy.

Other updates:

* Gas prices are forecasted to remain high throughout the summer.
* Many State and private RV parks are receiving cancellations because of cost of travel—more people staying close to home.
* If planning to travel to Canada, pay close attention to entry requirements and changes—particularly those that are pandemic-related.
* Travel to/from Hawaii getting more complicated again.

Portugal trip report:

* Unsuccessful in finding direct flights to Lisbon; best to plan for a layover, and travel break.
* A recommendation was made to find flights (with layover) via the Azores
* Bring home test kits; helps monitor whether colds or flu during travel are not COVID infection.
* Biggest challenge was finding a placed to schedule and take the COVID test for re-entry to the U.S.A.
* Masking was commonplace.
* Local transportation (including 35 Euros for shuttle to/from airport) not that expensive, and much cheaper than a car rental.
* Walking can be difficult because streets/sides are mostly cobblestone.
* Stay was relatively inexpensive compared to most European destination.
* People friendly and helpful, and food (particularly fish) was delicious.
* Consider getting the TSA Global Entry Pass for International travel—saves an hour or more going through U.S. Customs

Subject matter expert was Chapter member Allan Jeska on Space A travel.

* Space A travel has opened again.
* Great opportunity to meet interesting people.
* Best sources for current information are [www.amc.af.mil](http://www.amc.af.mil) and most Space A terminals are now on Facebook.
* Nothing much has changed:
  + Need your military and dependent(s)’ ID card(s).
  + Can’t be bound by a schedule and need to find out estimated seats available to assess likelihood of making flight.
  + Usually not the luggage restrictions of flying commercially.
  + Stay visible in case someone of higher priority cancels at last minute.
  + Check destination COVID requirements.
* Widows can now fly Space A in CONUS.
* Tips on good Space A opportunities on the West Coast:
  + JB Lewis-McCord.
  + NAS Whidbey Is. (nice planes).
  + Fairchild AFB—good opportunities to fly to London.
  + Travis AFB—good twice a week opportunity to fly to Okinawa.
  + NAS in San Diego.

Other comments:

* Lee Golden provided an excellent list of places to stay if making a CONUS road trip. He has been requested to e-mail that list which will then be sent out upon receipt to Travel Forum regular participants.
* Advised getting a COVID test (PCR) in advance of a Hawaii trip (whether required or not) because the rules can change at the last minute.
* To avoid long travel time from origin to destination, consider layover time on East Coast to sightsee and recoup energy.
* Try to make the return from international travel arrive for the Customs check in Portland since lines and times are much shorter.
* A reminder from past Forums to consider flying Icelandair to/from Europe with up to 7 days layover in Iceland considered “continuous” travel.

**Next Forum Zoom meeting is Thursday, July 21st at 7:00 PM.**