



Discover Puerto Rico Feeling Optimistic About 2021

San Juan, Puerto Rico, December 15, 2020- In Discover Puerto Rico's monthly Industry Update, they shared the importance of relying upon sound research and solid data as the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) continues working on future plans and strategies. Despite COVID positivity rates rising steadily in recent weeks throughout the U.S., they continue to see pent-up demand for future travel build, which is a good sign for 2021. For this reason, they are keeping the Puerto Rico tourism brand top-of-mind with travelers, planners and travel advisors.

"While the current environment severely restricts travel, this doesn't mean we have to stop promoting Puerto Rico. Instead, we continue to inspire future travel by creatively highlighting what is unique, attractive and appealing about our Island. We continue to lean into partnerships both on, and off the Island to optimize our results and enhance our impact on your top line and bottom line. Aligning and collaborating with partners who can help us achieve our goals is always a sensible strategy, but it takes on added importance as we climb out of this current situation together," expressed Brad Dean, CEO of Discover Puerto Rico.

While many sectors of the economy are anticipated to bounce back in 2021, travel will sustain long-term impacts. Various DMO research partners show hotel demand, booking pace, and the rental market has dropped significantly in the past weeks in Puerto Rico as well as among our competitors. In an updated forecast from Tourism Economics and the U.S. Travel Association travel spending will return to 2019 levels in 2024. Some of the reasons include low consumer confidence and high unemployment, the perceived threat of travel and increased regulations and restrictions.

"It might be hard to remain optimistic given these numbers, but travel will return. While we know we will see increases in 2021, it is not going to be back to 2019 levels, but we will definitely welcome visitors again. Americans are already planning to make travel a priority in the coming year. There is so much pent-up demand for travel, and especially the kinds of trips that Puerto Rico offers, we must be prepared to capitalize on consumer interest," explained Alisha Valentine, Director of Research & Analytics of Discover Puerto Rico.

In the marketing portion of the presentation, Discover Puerto Rico shared additional promotional angles they are using to strengthen the tourism brand and build desirability for future travel, including "Sounds like Puerto Rico," an educational and inspirational video series, developed and produced internally by DMO staff. One of the initiatives that was recently launched was "Adopt a Coquí," a program in partnership with *Conservación ConCiencia*, a local non-profit organization dedicated to environmental research and conservation. The goal with this seasonal activation is to highlight Puerto Rico's natural offerings, while educating future travelers about the importance of enjoying our natural resources in a safe and responsible way as many will be looking to explore the outdoors in the new year. The program gives potential tourists and residents the opportunity to virtually adopt a coquí in exchange for a small donation. All donations are going to *Conservación ConCiencia*.

Despite unprecedented times, Puerto Rico stills boasts the longest holiday season, and while this year it is looking very different, Discover Puerto Rico is leveraging this moment to include the Island's unique traditions and gastronomy in U.S. mainland media to inspire future travelers. The food scene remains a

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topic of interest for many reporters, especially around the holidays, for this reason the DMO has partnered with Spoon Food Tours to host a virtual cooking session to teach all media attendees how to make *tembleque* from the comfort of their homes.

In the sales department, solid lead activity continues to be seen specifically for the incentive market, which many believe will be one of the first segments to return. The incentive market generally means recognition, awards, team building and networking events which clearly cannot be duplicated virtually, these can be from any industry or organization. The industry as a whole and particularly the United States expects to make some progress towards 2019 activity levels next year, all regions expect to be close to 2019 levels in 2022 and the US based respondents expect to exceed 2019 levels in 2023.

Finally Discover Puerto Rico hosted the first destination convention center hybrid FAM experience. This experience showcased the Puerto Rico Convention Center hybrid event capabilities in a live environment powered by PSAV and shared with event planners and stakeholders around the US. A total of 266 unique attendees viewed the live feed, where they had the opportunity to learn virtually the possibilities of hosting a hybrid event in Puerto Rico. The attendees also got a glimpse of El Distrito with offerings and experiences available for future live events in Puerto Rico.

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About Discover Puerto Rico:

Discover Puerto Rico is a newly established private, not-for-profit Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) whose mission is to make Puerto Rico visible to the world as a premier travel destination. The DMO brings prosperity to the people of Puerto Rico by collaboratively promoting the Island's diversity and uniqueness for leisure and business travel, and events. It is responsible for all global marketing, sales and promotion of the destination and works collaboratively with key local governmental and non-governmental players throughout Puerto Rico's visitor economy and community at large, to empower economic growth. To discover all the beauty the Island has to offer, visit [DiscoverPuertoRico.com](https://www.discoverpuertorico.com).