

## Customer asked about booking Trek Travel trip to France

We've got a good customer who wants to book a Trek Travel trip to France to see the 'Tour this July. Who wouldn't! But what if you can't get there? The uncertainties of a Covid-19 world have created havoc in the travel industry. Is it safe to make plans? What if you've been saving for the dream-of-a-lifetime trip and you can't get there, but the cost for the tour isn't refundable? My response below-

Travel companies are caught between a rock and a hard place. They depend upon firm bookings; they can't afford to run a tour with open seats. Doesn't matter if it's a trip to see the Tour de France or Machu Picchu. Meaning? They can't make it too easy to cancel and stay in business.

Realistically, if France doesn't allow people to enter, they'll have to cancel the entire trip. What they can't do is exceptions for moderate hardships. For example, if United cancels out a bunch of flights to Europe, making it tougher but not impossible to get there? Your tour company is still going to expect you to find a way to get there. Maybe you'd have to fly into London and take the train over. Maybe you couldn't leave from your local airport but would have to travel to another one hours away that would be offering the required testing. There are many examples I can imagine that would make travel more of an adventure than planned.

The tough thing is that nobody knows, right now, what the state of Europe is going to be three months from now. At the moment, it's scarier than we thought it would be. They thought they'd be on the downward slope by now, but hospitalizations are going up. As messed up as the vaccination program in the US has been, we're better off than just about anywhere else. Trek Travel has to be really nervous because if they have to cancel trips, their financial losses will likely be huge. The whole travel industry is operating on a wing and a prayer right now, hoping that this summer actually happens.

Personally, I am hopeful that the combination of vaccinations, testing and continued social distancing will allow Europe to reopen as a travel destination.

My feeling is that, if you really want to see the Tour de France this July, and if France is letting people into the country, it's going to work out. You may endure some additional hassles getting there, but if you plan an extra 48hrs ahead of when you need to meet up with TrekTravel, it should work out. Meaning, create a two-day buffer in France, two extra days added to your vacation at the beginning. If you've never been to France, I can give you ideas of what to do, what to see, depending upon the region.

Alternatively, if France isn't letting people into the country, Trek Travel would end up cancelling the trip and you'd get your money back.

Travel this year is going to be an adventure. For many of us, that adds to the fun & excitement. It's going to be an experience we won't forget, being the first of the post-Covid pioneers. The crowds will be smaller, the views better, and on balance I think the positives will outweigh the negatives. No matter where you're going. Just make sure you're fully vaccinated and in decent health because routine health care may still be down the road a bit.

--Mike--