Coronavirus Is Causing Chaos for Travel Influencers

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As flights, events, and media trips are canceled and hospitality marketers **tighten their budgets** over coronavirus fears, travel influencers are **scrambling**.

Dana H. Freeman, a travel influencer in Vermont, was supposed to board a cruise ship from San Diego on Thursday, only to have the trip canceled over the weekend. Merissa Principe, 29, a travel influencer from New York, said her trip to Washington, D.C., was just canceled. Sheri Griffiths, 45, a cruise influencer, said all of her travel through April has been canceled over the past week.

Influencers, who alongside many in the gig economy, make money through freelance **assignments**, including promoting hotels, destinations, airlines and other travel brands, now **face** canceled sponsored trips. Many are **struggling** to **cope with** how to move forward as the hospitality industry craters.

"It's absolutely affecting our business," Ms. Griffiths said.

"In the past 48 hours I have lost five campaigns," said Scott Eddy, a travel influencer and marketing consultant. "I do think they'll come back to the table, but no one can predict when this will end. It's all been **put on indefinite hold**." His losses as of Wednesday accounted for more than $25,000 in income, he said.

Those influencers currently on trips are faced with worries about how to get home, in some cases cutting their excursions short. On Wednesday night, President Trump announced new travel **restrictions** from Europe.

Sarah Gallo, 27, another travel influencer, is in northern Norway on a sponsored trip but has been forced to **rework her itinerary** multiple times over the last few days. She was originally supposed to **venture** to Ethiopia after her time in the arctic, but as of Wednesday had reconsidered.

"I need to be careful about the places I'm visiting," Ms. Gallo said. I have to think, Is this where I want to be **quarantined** for a week or two months?"

On Thursday, she found out that because she had recently traveled outside of the Nordic region, she and the photographer she was traveling with had to **abide** by government-mandated 14-day self quarantine. The Norwegian tourism board canceled the remainder of her trip and she is now **holed up** in a cabin on a remote island.

"It's kind of the perfect place to be quarantined," Ms. Gallo said. "We have the most spectacular views, and we're not around anybody. But at the end of the day, we're still quarantined. We don't know how we're going to get home. We're waiting day by day, hour by hour to find out what we can do."

Ms. Gallo, like many travel influencers, spends the majority of her year in the air and on the road, and lost travel means lost income. "I travel 10 months per year, and they're all income producing activities," she said.

In addition to canceled trips, she and other travel influencers are losing money as the public's interest in travel nose-dives.

"Vlog numbers are down, social media numbers are down on travel, **affiliated** income is down because hotels aren't being booked, people aren't buying travel gear," Ms. Gallo said. "There's a chance some conferences I'm scheduled to speak at might be canceled. I'm losing speaking gig payment, tourism board payments, hotel payments. We don't know when things will bounce back."

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Many influencers are turning to private Facebook groups to seek advice from colleagues about how to move forward. Posts in one group question whether the media is **blowing things out of proportion**, while another post faults people for not taking the virus seriously enough.

Many influencers report feeling in a state of **purgatory**. They've reached out to brands, but it's nearly impossible to get any answers. "It's all changing so quickly," said Selena Taylor, 29, a travel influencer in New York, as she packed for a flight to Amsterdam on Wednesday night.

"Currently we are scheduled to go on nine cruises in the next couple months, they're not canceled yet," said Alyssa Griffin, 30, a cruise influencer. "But we work with the tour operators, my husband and I, and we've been having issues essentially with commitment. They don't know what's going to happen. Some are all **gung ho**, some say there's nothing they can do right now."

With **so much up in the air**, Ms. Griffin and other influencers have struggled with what to tell their audiences. Some have continued posting as if nothing is happening, only to receive **backlash** for appearing tone deaf.

Others have opted to pause posting until they can figure out how to appropriately address the pandemic. "It's a serious topic, and we don't want to give any of the wrong advice," said Sion Walton-Guest, 31, one half of the travel influencer couple at *theglobetrotterguys*. He added that they'll likely advise their audience to follow the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization.

"As a travel influencer, one has to be really **mindful** of your role and what you play in the travel space," said Sarah Dandashy, who runs *AskAConcierge*. Ms. Freeman, who has her own blog, published an article on her blog listing statements and policy updates from all the major cruise lines.

She thought it was a way to empower her audience to make the choice about travel for themselves. "I wouldn't want someone to feel like I'm pressuring them to keep traveling," Ms. Dandashy, 37, said.

Some influencers continue to travel. Ms. Taylor posted updates on Wednesday evening from the airport and her seat on the plane to Instagram Stories. "In the next few days I'll definitely be talking about how my experience has been," she said. "I **stocked up on wipes**, and I plan on disinfecting my seats. I honestly plan on just being extra-cautious and hopefully taking lots of breaks to wash my hands."

When Ms. Gallo boarded her plane to Scandinavia earlier this week, she too took extra steps to remain safe. "I wore a N-99 mask on the flight from New York to London and London to Stockholm," she said. "My mask did not leave my face for those flights."

Edana Mg, 29, an influencer from New York, said that while she has canceled all of her international travel, she still hopes to travel **domestically**, including upcoming flights to San Diego and Oregon. "I'm not worried at the moment about domestic trips," she said.

Posting the right content, no matter where you are, is key. Ms. Gallo plans to rework her content calendar for Instagram. "I'd linked up some post from Italy I was going to publish, but now is not the time," she said. "I had my content planned for months out, and now I have to rework the entire strategy."

Other influencers have stopped posting about cruises and travel to Asia, instead reposting old content or offering **staycation** guides.

Jade Broadus, the vice president of Travel Mindset, an influencer marketing agency that specializes in the travel industry, said that while overall travel is down, remote locations may see **an uptick**. "People are looking to self-isolate and get out of bigger cities," she said. "Places that have those outdoor recreational activities may see an incline in tourism whereas cities might have a decline."

For the past several days, however, Harry Hill, 25, an influencer in New York, has been posting updates from his own staycation in the Williamsburg Hotel in Brooklyn, where he is working on a project for Hotels.com.

On Thursday, he posted a photo of himself in bed at the hotel to his Instagram Stories. "Go comment where you're quarantined!" he wrote.

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Vocabulary to be searched in the text.

- _____something that makes you suffer
- _____no decision has been made about it yet
- _____a small increase or slight upward trend
- _____a strong negative reaction by a number of people against recent events, especially against political or social developments
- _____conscious of
- _____very eager to do something dangerous or violent
- _____wet tissues
- _____constraints, limitations
- _____be annoyed and rush around
- _____within the country
- _____to try extremely hard to achieve something
- _____to go somewhere that could be dangerous
- _____be confronted with
- _____to keep a person or animal apart from others for a period of time in case they are carrying a disease
- _____going to be done or dealt with at a later not exact date
- _____to buy a lot of something in order to keep it for when you need to use it later
- _____connected with something
- _____holiday in your own country, not abroad
- _____limit the funds
- _____to hide somewhere for a period of time
- _____to accept and obey a decision, rule, agreement
- _____to make something seem much more serious or important than it is
- _____change the schedule
- _____tasks
- _____to succeed in dealing with a difficult problem or situation



LIVEWORKSHEETS