



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF TRAVELEX INTERNATIONAL

*The gorgeous view from the Hilton Los Cabos Beach & Golf Resort in Baja California Sur, Mexico.*

## The Value of a Travel Advisor

TODAY, HAVING A TRUSTED PERSONAL ADVISOR is essential for your financial, medical, professional, and legal affairs. But what about your travel plans and dreams? Consider hiring a travel advisor for what can be some of your most cherished life events, and investments.

Many people think that hiring a travel advisor makes their trips more expensive. That isn't true. When you add up the value of what travel advisors offer in expertise, and the time, money, and aggravation you will save before, during, and possibly after your adventure, you'll be glad you worked with a pro.

### A TRAVEL PARTNER

A travel advisor will get to know your preferences

and then provide expert advice based on their experience and first-hand knowledge of a vast number of destinations, as well as likely having contacts at the properties where you stay. Travel advisors often provide better pricing on bookings, give you tips and resources to benefit your stay, and operate as your "back-room office" for those unexpected problems, delays, and even emergencies while traveling.

In addition to expert advice for personalizing your trips, travel advisors have become even more valuable now due to the restrictions and challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are plenty of destinations available to visit today, but based on frequent changes and updates, this is the ideal time to hire a travel advisor to offer real-time

assistance before, during, and after your travels.

### TRAVELING RIGHT NOW

As countries re-open for tourism, they will have ever-changing policies and protocols for travelers to enter their borders. A travel advisor is your source for the most up-to-date news and latest policies. Travel advisors are constantly monitoring the situation and have the most current information on border openings, destination specific test and vaccination requirements, entry authorization forms, and the new travel insurance policies required by some destinations.

Airlines may also require, or even provide, COVID-19 tests prior to boarding. With the introduction of the vaccines expected early this year, airlines may also require proof of vaccination.





A traveler in Los Cabos.



Cliffside dining at the Cocina del Mar restaurant at the Esperanza resort in Los Cabos, Mexico.

Should you become ill while traveling, your travel advisor will be an invaluable resource and liaison with your travel insurance carrier, medical assistance, and any change in travel arrangements you may need to make.

Travel advisors are traveling right now, putting themselves out there as the “test pilots” for the re-start of tourism. Many have traveled to destinations within the United States and to Mexico, Tahiti, some of the Caribbean islands, and various other destinations. Advisors have documented their trips and reported on the safety procedures followed in the various locations. Most have commented that they felt safer in these locations than they did at home!

#### A HIGHER LEVEL OF SERVICE

With the start-up of tourism, “revenge travel” will be a factor as the pent-up desire for traveling again will be overwhelming, creating a rush to get out of town. Travelers will want an advisor who can not only protect their health, but also protect their


wealth. Having established relationships with the most secure cruise and tour operators throughout this ordeal is an essential part of the advisor/client relationship.

An advisor who knows the trusted players who have consistently provided the best service, refund and re-booking policies, on-the-ground assistance, and overall confidence for their clients amid the craziness of the pandemic, is worth his or her weight in gold. Advisor roles have changed dramatically as they must now keep current on airline policies, safety protocols, destination travel restrictions, new standards in hotels, cruise ships, and escorted tours. Travel advisors are now implementing reservation research and management fees to off-set the cost of providing these higher levels of service.

#### WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

Every country, property, and airline has varying health and safety requirements that are also changing on a regular basis. Several vaccines are

now approved, and distribution channels are being negotiated. Aside from vaccination, there are other new technologies that are being developed to make travel safer in the future. Your travel advisor can give you the most current information and advice for your travels. For example, biometric identification by Star Alliance Biometrics enables the identification of guests at the airport by matching pictures taken at the airport, to those stored in the biometric profile. Facial recognition also works when a face mask is worn. In the Star Alliance network, registration is valid for all participating airports and airlines. Travelers, however, can decide which airports and airlines may use their data.

Travel remains one of life’s greatest pleasures, one we can pursue now with careful planning. Now, more than ever, is a great time to work with a travel advisor to make the best of your time away. 

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