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Where our travel writers are going now the world is opening up

From Canadian wilderness to off-season Spanish theme parks, travel journalists are looking forward to getting on the road again. **Lucy Thackray** finds out where they're headed

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Canada's Yukon territory is sparsely populated and home to many indigenous communities (Getty Images)



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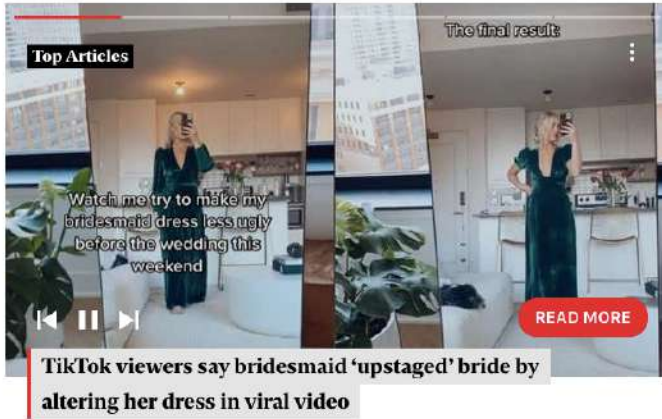
ow that testing requirements have been eased and the traffic light system shelved in favour of the red and ROW lists, where are our intrepid explorers heading next?

Rotterdam, Romania, Jordan (and Algeria)

"As the testing companies battle to squeeze the last few millions from the PCR-testing gold rush, prices are falling. So the 'travel tax' that has previously cost me more than £100 on each occasion returning to the UK



has now approximately halved.



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"My first trip is to the Netherlands, which has just reopened to British visitors – specifically its underrated and innovative second city, Rotterdam. I will get a first glimpse of the latest addition to the skyline, the Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen – an art storage facility that doubles as a shiny spaceship.

"Later in October I shall head for some of the other destinations previously written off by the pandemic that are now open to Brits: a trip combining Romania and Jordan (easily accessible on cheap Ryanair flights), and later Algeria." **Simon Calder**

Canada

"I can't wait for Canada. And in particular, the untrammelled wilderness and waterways of western Canada, where I'm off to in October. Since restrictions on international **travellers** eased last month, I've been frantically planning a mammoth trip to Vancouver Island and the Yukon, which will see me heading into one of the most remote parts of North America: the Peel River watershed. After the past 18 months, we all deserve that kind of restorative peace and stillness." **Mike MacEacheran**



Athens without the crowds
(Getty Images/iStockphoto)

Greece

"While there's still trepidation about travelling, my secret plan (so don't tell anyone) is to visit places that are usually hit by overtourism. Top of the list is Athens. Oddly, I've never been to Greece, probably because their toilet-roll-in-the-bin situation didn't appeal. But these next few weeks and months offer a rare chance to roam around the Acropolis unhurried, with a little more breathing space – and that's an opportunity I can't ignore."

Shilpa Ganatra

Peru, Bolivia, California and the Alps

"I'm most excited about the opening up of Peru and Bolivia, whenever that will happen, but in the meantime I'm anxiously waiting to hear about



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the exact opening date for the US so I can do an overnight Amtrak journey on the California Zephyr, from Chicago to San Francisco - a trip I booked before the pandemic and had to cancel. Failing that, I'll be perfectly happy to get back on my snowboard in the French Alps for the first time in a year and a half." **Tamara Hinson**



Aragonese Castle in Ischia, Italy
(Getty Images/Stockphoto)

France, Santorini and the UK (from Ireland)

"Living in Ireland was particularly tough during the pandemic, with international travel pretty much off the table throughout. But all that changed when our borders reopened at the end of July. An added bonus for me is the simplicity of traveling within the EU - with no testing required, all I need is my trusty vaccination certificate and I'm good to go. As I write this I'm in France, and I'm planning on catching a bit of autumn sun in Santorini or maybe Ischia, alongside some more long-awaited 'reunion' trips back in the UK. I couldn't be happier to be back in the world once more." **Nicola Brady**

Costa Dorada

"These changes come just in time to allow families to think about an October half term break abroad. When I travelled to Greece in the summer with my partner and our two children we ended up spending around £450 extra on testing alone. Now the government has scrapped the test-to-fly requirement and is aiming to downgrade the currently-required PCR test with a cheaper lateral flow one, the total cost of testing will drop dramatically. We'll get good value flights and accommodation in Spain's Costa Dorada, which will still be warm into autumn. Here we'll have beaches virtually to ourselves and shorter queues at PortAventura, Spain's biggest theme park." **Fiona Whitty**

Paris and the Alps

"A year ago, I was dreaming about trips to Vietnam, Japan or West Coast USA, but it turns out I've missed my favourite neighbouring countries more and more. I'm also increasingly thinking about sustainability when I travel, so the prospect of an autumn drive to Paris and skiing in the Alps at Christmas is magical enough for me at the moment. Watch out, Europe, I'm coming for you!" **Rachel Ifans**

Saudi Arabia

"I've just booked flights for Saudi Arabia this morning - a trip I didn't think I'd get to take until next year or even 2023, even though I've been thinking about it since 2019. Saudi is the cradle of Islamic culture and even though millions of people visit the country each year for Hajj, it was off limits to travellers until the Kingdom introduced its first ever tourist visa in 2019. The secrecy was part of the allure for me, but the more I learn about its Unesco heritage sites, the more I'm fascinated by the ancient civilisations that lived there and how they're connected to the rest of the world." **Qin Xie**



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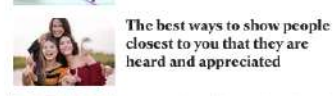
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Pilgrim walking the Camino de Santiago near Astorga, Spain (Getty Images)

Chile and Japan

"While my body hasn't been able to wander far, my mind has: and it keeps floating back to Chile. I have never been and want to know what's up and what's exciting in Santiago, its often-troubled capital city. I want to see if Robinson Crusoe Island is for real and how winelands tourism is taking off and if the beaches are a good alternative to South Africa and Australia. The land I've missed the most is Japan. I went every year from 2014 to 2019. Every time, it felt like a kind of cultural detox, flushing out all the stresses and sillinesses of life in less civilised places. I've only just begun exploring the country. Nara next, then the art islands. But a mountain ryokan anywhere will do." **Mark Jones**

The Caribbean, Red Sea Coast or UAE

"I'm craving some reliable autumn sunshine, so I'm looking into a trip to a Caribbean island such as Antigua, or perhaps Egypt's Red Sea coast - or even a balmy US city such as Miami, assuming the slated **US travel ban lift** happens promptly in November. Failing that, the UAE will certainly have the toasty temperatures I'm dreaming of as my umbrella does battle with London's winds and rain." **Lucy Thackray**

Bilbao to Santander

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"I've been attempting to walk this section of the famed Camino de Santiago pilgrimage trail in Spain for, oh, nearly two years now. The pandemic wrecked my best-laid flight-free travel plans, but this trip is finally back on the table - I'll head there and back by ferry from the UK and spend five days walking in blissful solitude. Compared to other testing-heavy trips I've taken of late, this should only require one 'day two' PCR. Unless Grant Shapps has relented and downgraded this requirement to a lateral flow by the time I return - here's hoping!" **Helen Coffey**

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