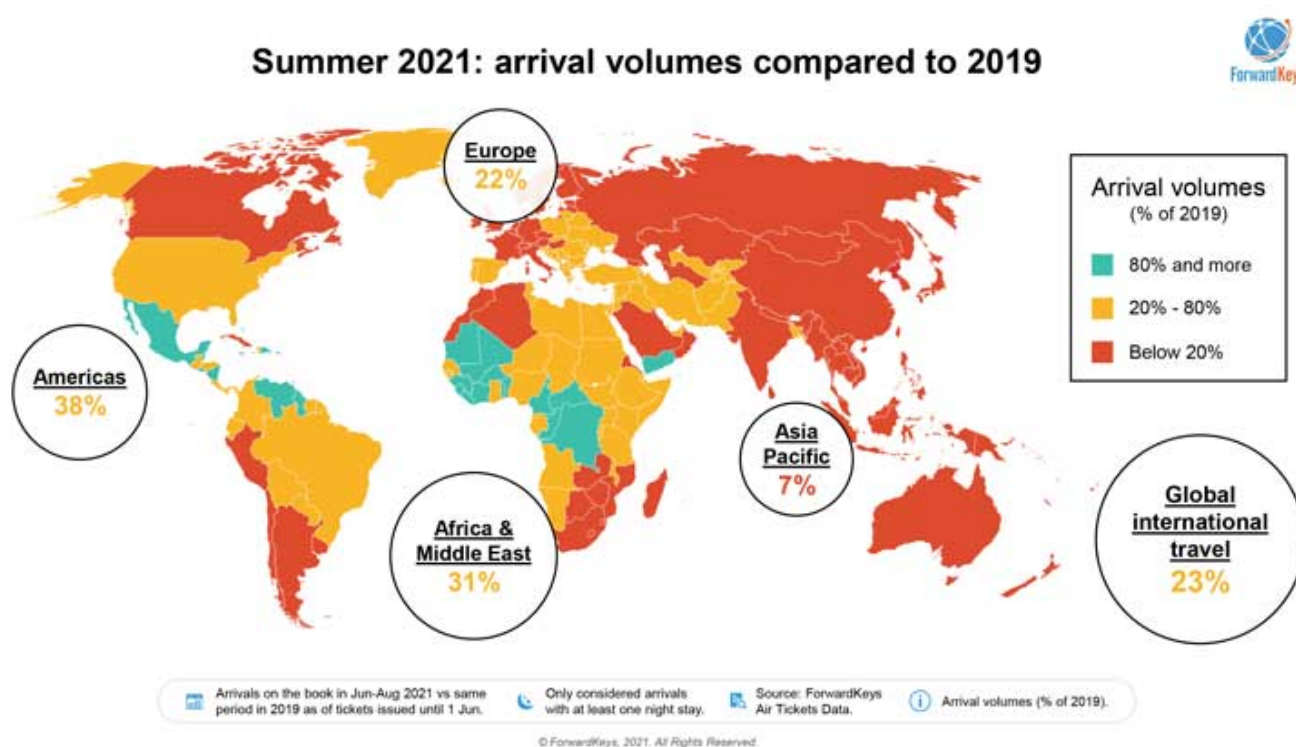


ForwardKeys says it's a staycation or Caribbean vacay this summer

The latest research from ForwardKeys reveals that the outlook for international air travel this summer (June 1 - August 31) is set to be just under a quarter (23%) of pre-pandemic levels. As of June 1, flight tickets issued for international arrivals in Africa & the Middle East were 31% of what they were at the equivalent moment in 2019. The Americas stood at 38%, Asia Pacific at 7% and Europe at 22%. The one region where this summer's travel looks healthy is the Caribbean where bookings are 81%.

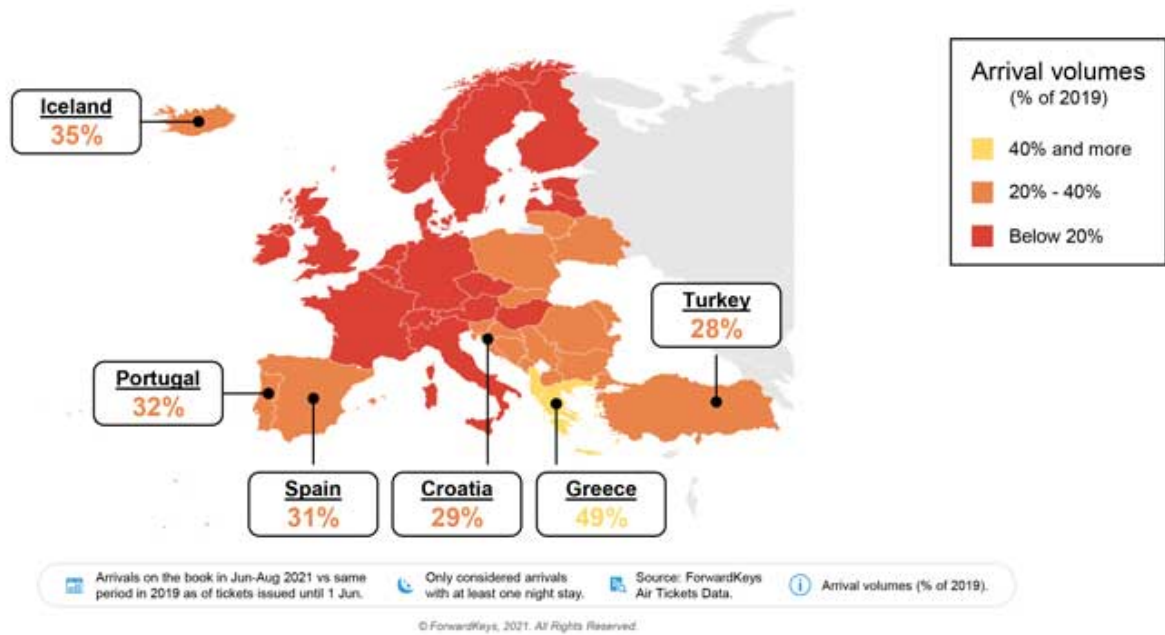
The dominant theme explaining what is happening to international travel is not so much COVID-19 as it is governmental reaction to the virus and the travel restrictions imposed in response to it. For example, summer bookings to China, Japan (which is welcoming no foreign spectators for the 2021 Olympics), Thailand and Australia (which are effectively closed to visitors) are 2%, 4%, 2% and 10%, respectively.



In travel terms, Europe, looks set for another disappointing summer, with the possible exception of Albania at 73% of 2019 levels. Greece (49%), Serbia (38%), Iceland (35%) and Malta (35%) are preparing to outperform other regional mainstream destinations. Along with Greece and Iceland, Croatia has been consistently vocal about its enthusiasm to welcome visitors who have been vaccinated.

Bookings to Portugal currently stand at 32%; however, following the UK's decision last week to remove the country from its green list, they are likely to slow. The strongest origin markets for travel to Mediterranean destinations are Germany, France and the USA, where current outbound bookings stand at 37%, 42% and 24% of 2019 levels, respectively.

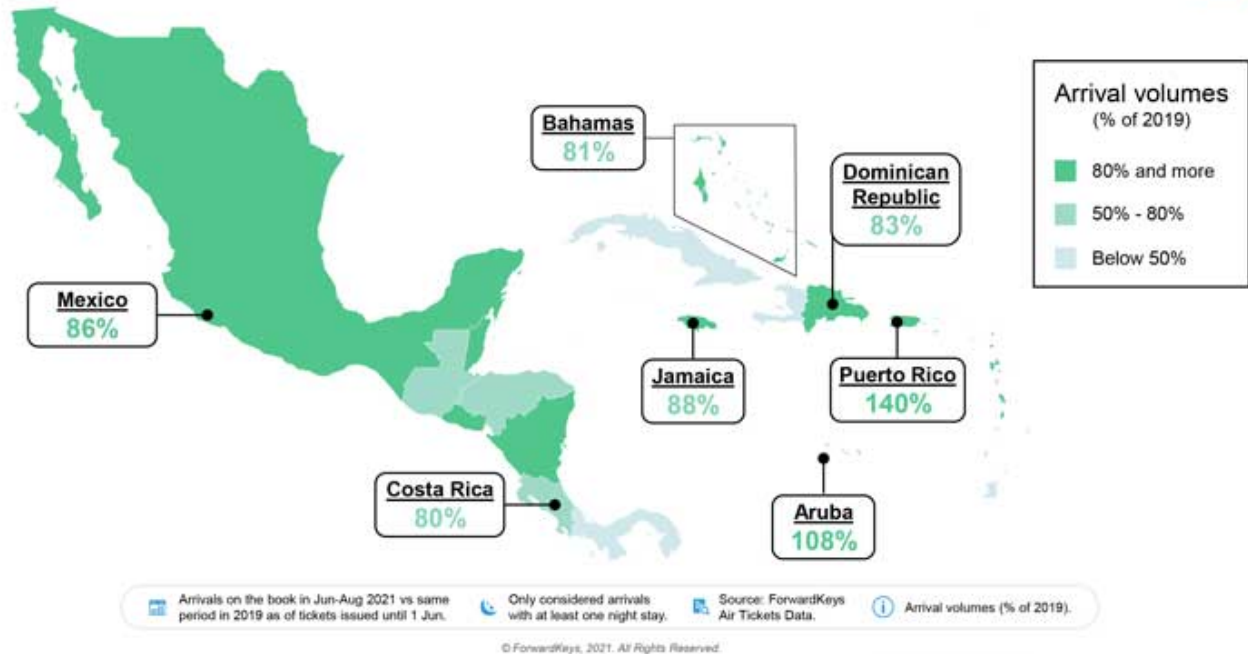
Europe: Summer 2021 international arrivals



The one region of the world where a significant amount of international travel is taking place is the Americas – this is mostly driven by US citizens traveling to Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean for a holiday and slightly driven by Latin Americans going to the USA for a COVID-19 vaccination.

Destinations performing strongly in the summer bookings stakes include Mexico (86% of 2019 levels), the Dominican Republic (83%) and Aruba (108%), which have steadfastly remained open to tourists and the Bahamas (81%) and Puerto Rico (140% ahead), which are allowing vaccinated travelers to enter without restriction.

Caribbean & Central America: Summer 2021 international arrivals



Summer bookings to some parts of West Africa are also holding relatively strong, most notably Ghana and Nigeria (both at 73% of 2019 levels) and Senegal (77%). However, in these cases, travel is dominated by people visiting friends and relatives.

“It is now clear that for most of the world, a summer holiday abroad is a dream; and a staycation is the reality. Travel businesses in general, and airlines in particular, will face more substantial losses, as many countries combat COVID-19 by closing their borders and imposing severe restrictions on flying internationally.

However, certain destinations, specifically in Central America and the Caribbean, which are highly dependent on tourism, are taking an alternative approach. By requiring vaccination and/or proof of negative COVID-19 tests, they are showing the world that it is possible to have a summer season,” says Olivier Ponti, VP Insights, ForwardKeys.