

Canadian Travel During Covid and After.

Arizona State University, HST 643, Fall B Session 2024, and History of Tourism

Description: Travel experience for work travel during Covid compared with travel for relaxation post-Covid.

In 2020 my team was tasked with supporting the residential security program across Canada. This required the team and I to fly, stay in hotels, dealing with rental cars, all at the start of Covid.

Getting to the airport, wearing N-95 masks while in transit, trying to navigate the various different provincial covid measures all caused a lot of stress. Being on an airplane that was only maybe 25% full seemed surreal. I was flying about four times a month for close to a year. The near panic if I felt a sniffle or a bit of congestion made the travelling very unnerving.

The Occupational Health and Safety agency was attempting to provide direction to maintain our health while travelling. However, given the lack of information and knowledge about the disease and transmission, they were required to adjust as new information came to light. While the team and I understood that this was part of the medical research process, it was hard to have confidence that the measures they recommended would be sufficient. A lot of the measures were basic in nature, wear masks, maintain distance, disinfect hands at every opportunity. One aspect that was challenging was to not remove mask in airports or in flight, which meant I could not eat for up to eight hours at a time.

The first post-pandemic trip I took was to go on a cruise in April 2023. I hadn't flown for about a year. My wife had passed from cancer and I was looking to get away and clear my head. It was completely different with almost no one wearing a mask. People sneezing and coughing which still triggers a fear response for me. The flight was from Ottawa, Canada to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, so the travel also involved validating the differing requirements for vaccination and testing between Canada and the United States, as well as understanding the requirements for the various ports the cruise would stop in. When the plane landed after four hours I struggled to not push my way to the front to get off the plane. Getting on a cruise ship was a little frightening, given how they were high infection areas at the start of Covid. In addition, when walking around in the Caribbean I was keenly aware of the relative lack of health care facilities available should I contract Covid while on the journey. It took a while for me to feel relaxed and able to enjoy the trip.