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## Royal Caribbean to Offer 'Fully Vaccinated' Cruise Beginning in May in Israel; Canada Extends Cruise Ship Ban to Feb. 2022

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**Norwegian Bliss cruise ship passes through John Hopkins Inlet in Glacier Bay, Alaska, in July 2019. By. TIM RUE/BLOOMBERG**

Showing the disjointed efforts to restart cruise ship voyages around the world, Israel, one of the most advanced countries relative to Covid-19 vaccination, has partnered with Royal Caribbean to start offering in May "fully vaccinated" cruise packages. On the contrast, Canada has extended its cruise ship travel ban to February 2022.

"In conjunction with Israel's health and tourism authorities, Royal Caribbean will be the first to offer fully vaccinated sailings, where both crew and guests above the age of 16 will be vaccinated

against COVID-19," Royal Caribbean said in a statement [posted on its website](#).

While Royal Caribbean Group, Costa Cruises and Norwegian Cruise Line have said they would vaccinate crew members, the recent announcement from Royal Caribbean in partnership with Israel was the first of its kind.

Meanwhile, Canada has decided that cruise ship travel should be pushed back an entire year. "Temporary prohibitions to cruise vessels and pleasure craft are essential to continue to protect the most vulnerable among our communities and avoid overwhelming our health-care systems," Canadian Transport Minister Omar Alghabra said recently. "This is the right and responsible thing to do."

He said the decision applies to cruise vessels carrying 100 or more passengers, and it prohibits passenger vessels carrying more than 12 individuals from entering Arctic coastal waters, among them Nunavik, Nunatsiavut, and the Labrador Coast.

In the U.S., a number of major cruise lines, including Carnival Corp. and Disney Cruise Line have further delayed the restart of cruise travel through May. Virgin Voyages, another cruise line, pushed back its restart date to July. "We remain excited about our future and know that cruise travel will return soon. As we await further engagement from the CDC on the industry restart, we have extended our pause in operations through June 30," said Virgin spokesperson Michelle Estevam in a statement.

The U.S. Virgin Islands, more pointedly St. Thomas, has thrived on the cruise industry, and the halt of such activity since March 2020 has greatly impacted the island's economy, with reverberations being felt in a number of industries — from retail, to taxi and hospitality.

Joseph Boschulte, Dept. of Tourism Commissioner, was asked during [a recent Senate hearing](#) when he realistically expected to see cruise ships return to the USVI. Mr. Boschulte said July would be the earliest. He said while cruise ships may be allowed to travel in May under current CDC guidelines, they must provide a 60-day cruise window to show they have successfully implemented all of the CDC's requirements.