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CBP Issues Travel Guidelines for USVI and PR Summer Travel Season, Prohibits Pork Products from Dominican Republic

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A passenger is identified during TSA's verification and safety process. By. CBP

As the summer travel season is set to begin with Memorial Day weekend, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in the Caribbean has issued a series of recommendations for travelers. The guidance comes in anticipation of a surge in international arrivals at airports in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"We ask travelers to be aware and ready in order to avoid long lines and inconveniences at the airports," said Roberto Vaquero, Director of Field Operations for Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. He also reminded travelers that CBP officers have the authority to inspect both

individuals and their personal belongings to enforce laws and ensure the safety of all travelers.

Among the key points of advice offered by the CBP are:

- Pork related products from the Dominican Republic are strictly prohibited from entry due to the ongoing African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak.
- All travelers should ensure they have the necessary travel documents for their destination, as well as proper identification for re-entry into the United States. Passport books are essential for all international air travel. Other alternatives like the U.S. passport card, trusted traveler cards, border crossing card, and permanent resident card can be used for entry into the United States from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda at land or seaports.
- Citizens of Visa Waiver Program countries should secure an approved Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) before boarding their flight to the U.S.
- Travelers must declare all items purchased or acquired abroad, including those bought in duty-free shops. Personal use or gift items may be eligible for duty exemptions, but goods brought back for resale are not.
- Travelers should understand the distinction between prohibited and restricted merchandise. The former is legally banned from entering the U.S., while the latter requires a special permit. More information can be found in the Restricted/Prohibited section of the CBP website.
- Travelers are also encouraged to monitor border wait times for various ports of entry. The CBP recommends planning trips during lighter traffic periods or opting for less congested ports of entry. Up-to-date wait time information can be found on the CBP website.

For Global Entry members, expedited entry is available via the upgraded facial biometric technology kiosks at the Luis Munoz Marin International Airport (SJU). These kiosks confirm the traveler's identity and make admissibility decisions without requiring a receipt, thus offering a faster, secure, streamlined, and touchless experience.

Travelers who do not have Global Entry can use the Mobile Passport Control (MPC) app. This free, secure app allows eligible travelers to submit their passport and customs declaration information via their smartphone or other mobile devices. The MPC app helps streamline the entry process into the United States by reducing passport control inspection time and overall wait time.

The CBP's comprehensive guidelines aim to ensure a smooth travel experience for all international arrivals during the upcoming summer season, while also maintaining stringent health and safety standards.