

## **Ken's Norway Group – May 2021**

July 11, 2020 Update

**What's the Travel Plan Ken?** Hopefully most of you know thru our past experiences with me that I'm a thorough planner. I know the important stuff is in the details. I've never had any reason to not tell you like it is, and to pause in laying out all the details ahead of time. However, today – I don't have the answers, nor do I have a lot of confidence that whatever we plan can happen. Never before has our confidence of travel been so uncertain. Who knows what this is going to be like in the next 6-18 months? While this isn't a reason to panic and NOT a reason to plan, but it is a reason to have a cautious approach to that plan over the next few months. With all this being said, I will invite and ask you to come along with me and my family on this Norway & Iceland adventure! We're going to have a great time whatever we do. And if by some weird chance, we can't go – I'll be here alongside you to help us navigate around all of it. We're taking the full approach that we're going on this trip, and here's the steps to help get us there.

**Step 1 - Visit, Plan, and Coordinate:** Today is just one of the small steps we're taking. Communicating about some of the preliminary details, communicating some information, asking some questions, and asking you to gather your thoughts about what you would like to do. This way we can be ready to coordinate and execute the plan when the comfort level returns in a few months. While we are going to wait before we jump into anything further, we are still in a comfortable position. Right now, Celebrity's cruise deposit is refundable, and that won't change for a while. As we begin to step into our other travel arrangements – those will most likely not be as flexible. Therefore, I want to wait and see how things progress on the cruise in the coming months before we jump into anything solid on the rest of the plan.

**When is the next step for you?** Sometime between now and September, we want you to think about the details I have laid out. There is a small chance we act sooner - if we hear of a more confident plan with cruises, but for now – I'm thinking we wait until one of these two things happen: 1) The cruises begin their operations again in September (see more details on that below in the Cruise Update section); OR 2) They announce another suspension of operations. At this point anything is possible, so we're just going to wait. September 15<sup>th</sup> would be my projected date to have further plans move forward, slightly subject to change. Sometime between now and then - you can advise me of your desires to join my family on our plan, or customize your own experience around the cruise. Whatever you do - we will be able to offer the flights and cruise if that's all that you can do, or we can add other components as you need. You have some time to think about all this information, and when you have your decision – let's visit about it.

**What is The Trip Plan, and where/when will we go?** This is without a doubt the exciting stuff for me, I haven't been doing much of this lately, so I'm excited to get back to what I do best. Plan, book, and execute travel arrangements. The plan I have enclosed is what my family will be doing, so I hope you will join us. You don't have too, but I would love for everyone to do it with us. You'll see my plan and itinerary listed on the separate itinerary page. We're going to do Amsterdam, the Norway Cruise, and then Iceland. That's our plan, and those travel dates will be May 27<sup>th</sup> – June 9<sup>th</sup>. Please see itinerary and details on the separate page for more details.

**I can customize your trip:** If you do not want to join me to Iceland, I will make arrangements for you to do whatever else you want. We understand time away from work, home, or other obligations can impact everyone differently. My information is to help you plan for what we are doing, so you can make a decision to join that plan, or contact me to customize your own arrangements. Either way you choose is great – I'll make it happen and keep it hassle free for everyone. I will also wait for any customizing until our September 15<sup>th</sup> date, or sooner if for some reason that is needed.

**What is the Cruise Line Status/Update:** Just so you are caught up to speed with the cruising world today. Current restrictions on all ships of 250 passengers or more are that they suspended operations thru September 15<sup>th</sup>. Some smaller cruises in the USA are operating, but all the large ships are paused. Some Cruise Lines have extended thru September 30<sup>th</sup>, and there are some other sailings to certain destinations that are cancelled beyond September 30<sup>th</sup>. It's been a difficult year for all cruises, and all travel for that matter. We may not be out of the woods yet on these cruise suspensions. Only time will tell how our world navigates outside of the Covid19 situation.

Royal Caribbean International, who is the parent company of Celebrity Cruises has recently joined forces with Norwegian Cruise Line to create a panel of experts to help them develop plans and work with the health experts at the CDC, and WHO. This panel includes several experts, Former Food & Drug Commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb, former Utah Governor Mike Leavitt, who was also the Secretary of Health and Human Services under President George W Bush, infectious disease specialist Dr. Michael Osterholm, and former CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding. This panel, along with Celebrity, Royal, and Norwegian are working with the CDC and WHO on how they can move the industry forward. Their plans are scheduled to be submitted by the end of July, so hopefully progress will happen soon and we have more answers regarding the resumption of cruises and how the cruise experience may change.

Royal Caribbean CEO, Richard Fain said "we're looking to establish protocols that protect the health of our guests and crew and do so without undermining what makes the cruising so special. Yes it may be different, and we may have to make some changes. Such as changing the buffet that would not include self-serve options and instead rely on a crew member". "The panel "has only just started on the process," Fain said.

**What does all this cruise stuff mean to us?** Honestly, not much at this point, but as we learn more about all of this, we will continue our conversation on the trip. Waiting to hear more is the prudent play for our situation at this time. There's no need to worry about the "what if" at this point. I suspect we'll know more in the coming months. You can now start your dreaming about our trip, and the plan I have suggested with Iceland. When you are ready to visit with me about joining our plan, or having me create your own plan – you give me a call. We have some time before we need to officially do anything next.

**Cruise Deposit IS Refundable:** As I have mentioned several times before, your cruise deposit is refundable. This will remain in that status for many more months. There is no urgency to worry about cancelling and losing money. You can always make that decision later.

**Next Payment Step:** When you decide to move forward with joining our Plan with Iceland, then that will place you on a firmer decision on the trip and we'll look to collect airline/package deposit around September. If you were still uncomfortable making a decision then, we can visit further. If I need to customize your own travel arrangements, that date will also be set right now for September. Nothing urgently needed now for payment. You can however make additional payments toward your cruise balance anytime you wish.

**Travel Insurance:** We will do this plan when we collect our next payment. Since insurance programs vary on trip costs, your ultimate choice of travel details will impact the insurance costs. I will offer customized suggestions for each of you. While my group plans are always competitive and good coverages, I think we may end up with other options that will be better. Let me know your choice to join our Plan, or customize – then I can work on your insurance choices, prices, and suggestions.

**Contact Ken:** Our business has been greatly impacted thru all of this. My staff has been furloughed until we can see a more positive flow of business. My team is ready to come back and work, we're hoping to have them here soon. Cori and I have been in the office, and you can reach me there at 417-451-5468. My email [ken@galaxseonline.com](mailto:ken@galaxseonline.com) is also excellent to send notes/questions/etc. As we figure out how to move our business thru this, you'll can rest assured I will be here. I have no intention of stopping what I do. We have done many great things during this situation to help ensure our survival. A return to business with travelers going places is needed and that will only help us solidify our existence. We thank you for your trust and business. We would not be where we are today without customers like you, and we look forward too many more years of travel together.