

# All that glitters

Heading to World Travel Market next week?

Laura French previews the best sights, sounds and flavours across the stands

Traditional dance  
Tarian  
budayaan

www.1

From sparkling celebrity appearances to colourful carnival performances, immersive culinary experiences to cocktail-and-canape tastings, World Travel Market has always been as much about celebrating the heritage of destinations as it is about networking with the leading figures of the industry – and this year's show promises to be no exception.

Taking place from November 4-6, the UK's biggest travel trade exhibition will once again showcase the very best of the world's cultures,

cuisines and celebrations, with more than 4,000 tourist boards, hoteliers, operators and other exhibitors gathering from across the globe at London's ExCeL centre to do business in an experiential way – and if you're not there, you'll be missing out on some first-class opportunities.

But how do you conquer the 'world'? We've rounded up the highlights to help you decide where to head and when, with wellness treatments, prize draws, dance troupes and West Ham United players among the offerings you'll find filling the halls next week. ➤





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Filipino weaver; Taiwan's Oh! Bear mascot; Indonesian carnival performer; foot massage on Tourism Malaysia's stand; a Japanese geisha

PICTURES: Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Indonesia



## ASIA & THE INDIAN OCEAN

### HAVE A HEALTH CHECK-UP

In need of a wellness kick? Head to the **Malaysia** (AS600) stand at any point during the show to see a certified medical professional, then heal tired muscles with a Malaysian massage. Cultural performances – one at the Grand Opening at 11am on Monday, another at a cocktail reception at 5pm on Tuesday – will also be on hand, transporting you from ExCeL to more exotic lands, and at 9.45am on Monday there'll be a rather novel 'Breakfast Bus'. That's actually a convoy of two buses and eight London liveried taxis emblazoned with Visit Malaysia 2020 branding, and they'll be offering coffee, pastries and entertainment, plus the chance to win a 'golden ticket' to the country.

### GET AN AYURVEDIC MASSAGE

Malaysia isn't the only stand going all out on the wellness front.

**Sri Lanka** (AS200) – which has been announced as this year's WTM Premier Partner – will be offering its own treatments in the form of Ayurvedic massages with local therapists. There'll also be dance performances throughout the show, plus a tea booth where you'll be able to pick up a complimentary cuppa, straight from the country's tea plantations.

### TRY YOUR HAND AT BATIK

Over on the **Indonesia** (AS1000) stand, there'll be plenty more going on, with a schedule of entertainment taking place across the three days, including carnival performances (10am-12pm), traditional dances (5pm-6pm), and a sasando performance using the soothing sounds of this traditional, harp-like instrument. There'll also be a photo booth, coffee corner, henna tattooist and various goodie bag giveaways – but the highlight for creative types is the batik stand, where visitors will have the chance to try this wax-dyeing craft with a local expert.

### WATCH LOCAL WEAVERS AND COOKING DEMOS

There's more in the way of arts and crafts at the **Philippines** (AS900) stand, where local weavers will sit crafting while live performers, including a singer and violinist, get the party going. A Filipino chef will be cooking up local delicacies at 11am and 3pm each day, while local baristas will whip up fresh coffees from 10am to 3pm for those in need of a pick-me-up. If cocktails are more your thing, drop by at 5pm and watch the bartender mix up exotic Don Papa Rum concoctions.

### CATCH A TAIWANESE DANCE SHOW

Head to the **Taiwan** (AS750) stand at 4pm on Monday for an explosive dance performance accompanied by snacks and tipples. While you're there, snap a selfie with the cuddly Oh! Bear mascot and learn more about Taiwan's news, including its decision to legalise same-sex marriage, making it the first country in Asia to do so. Two tickets to the island will also be up for grabs. ➤

## BEST OF THE REST

🌐 The **Maldives** (AS140) will be transporting visitors to white-sand shores and swaying palms via a virtual reality headset, with live Maldivian music and traditional snacks adding to the atmosphere. Cross your fingers and you might just win a holiday to see it yourself.

🌐 Sake, tea and sweets will be on offer on the **Japan** (AS800) booth, where you'll be able to watch original footage from Tom Daley's adventures in the country.

🌐 Head to the **Kyoto Traveler's Inn** stand in the same booth to try on a kimono, then post a selfie tagging #KimonoKyoto and @kyototravelersinn on Instagram, or tagging @kyoto.travellersinn on Facebook to be in with a chance of winning a three-night stay.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Jeff Brazier will join the Las Vegas stand; West Ham players will support Experience Kissimmee; kiteboarder featured in Brand USA's *Into America's Wild* film

PICTURES: MacGillivray Freeman Films/Brand USA



### BEST OF THE REST

🌐 **Brand USA (NA100)** will be hosting networking drinks from 4pm-6pm on Tuesday with destination partners from across the states, while celebrating its big-screen film, *Into America's Wild*, launching next year.

🌐 **Destination Canada (NA400)** will be bringing together representatives from its various provinces at a drinks reception from 5pm-6pm on Monday and Tuesday.

🌐 **West Virginia (NA450)** will be making its WTM debut as the tourist board seeks to invest more in the UK market, so stop by to hear more about the adventures available in this outdoorsy mountain state.

## US & CANADA

### MEET WEST HAM UNITED PLAYERS

Football fans unite: three current West Ham players will be gracing the **Experience Kissimmee (NA330-1)** stand on Tuesday with a highly anticipated meet-and-greet from 2pm-4pm. The event marks the tourist board's extended three-year deal as Official Destination Partner for the Premier League team. Cameras at the ready – this is a good'un.

### SNAP A SELFIE WITH PRESENTER JEFF BRAZIER

There's more in the way of celebrity prowess at the **Las Vegas (NA150)** booth, where presenter and reality TV star Jeff Brazier will be on stand at 11am on Monday to talk about the 'Entertainment Capital of the World' while dishing out alcoholic ice pops (as you do). Meanwhile, on Wednesday there'll be a flashing sign giveaway, so pop by to pick

up one of these iconic souvenirs and learn more about upcoming plans for the city.

### TAKE PART IN A GOLF PUTTING COMPETITION

Fancy yourself as a golfing pro? Head over to the **Great Lakes USA (NA260)** stand at 2pm on Tuesday to take part in an interactive putting challenge and be in with a chance of winning a road trip kit complete with satnav, portable charger and more. It's all in celebration of the Ryder Cup 2020, to be held at Whistling Straits in Wisconsin next September, so stay on to learn how to use this sporting hook to sell the destination to any wannabe Rory McIlroys.

### RAISE A GLASS WITH WASHINGTON STATE

Craft beers and fine wines from the Walla Walla and Washington State vineyards are the order of the day over on the **Seattle (NA140-2)** stand, which will be hosting a drinks

Take part in a putting challenge for a chance to win a Great Lakes USA road trip

reception on Tuesday from 4pm-6pm. Trade and media will have the chance to meet representatives from the region, who'll be able to provide insight into new hotels, itineraries and other experiences in Washington State and beyond.

### BAG A BOTTLE OF TENNESSEE WHISKEY

For more tipples, wander over to the **Shop \*Dine \*Play \*USA (NA140-3D)** stand at 3.30pm on Wednesday and enter a prize draw to win a bottle of Tennessee whiskey. Exhibitors will be talking about the new Fifth + Broadway in downtown Nashville – a sprawling collection of shops, restaurants and

entertainment venues set to open in 2020, which will boast the world's only National Museum of African American Music. CDs celebrating African American singers, from Ella Fitzgerald to Nat King Cole, are up for grabs to promote the attraction.

### WIN VIP TICKETS TO A LITTLE MIX CONCERT

If you're still on the hunt for a prize, look no further than the **Orlando (NA250)** stand, where you'll be in with a chance of winning VIP tickets to a Little Mix concert if you take part in the on-stand Orlando Virtual Tour experience – an interactive, 360-degree tour round Orlando's hotspots that'll have you ziplining over alligators, riding the state's tallest rollercoaster, standing in front of Cinderella Castle and plenty more. You'll also be able to learn more about Visit Orlando's new agent-focused app and meet the mayor of Orlando and Orange County, Jerry L Demings, who'll be attending for the first time. ➔



**CARIBBEAN**

**MEET CRICKET LEGEND SIR VIV RICHARDS**

The Caribbean stands never fail to impress with their vibrant performances, culinary experiences and special guests, and this year **Antigua and Barbuda (CA245)** will be taking to the crease with cricket icon Sir Viv Richards – regarded as one of the greatest batsmen of all time – on stand for all three days. As a tourism ambassador he'll be providing insight into the islands' latest news – including plans to open more than 2,000 hotel rooms by 2021 with new Rosewood, Marriott Autograph Collection and Waldorf Astoria resorts – as well as talking about his cricket career. While you're there, post a photo in front of the flower wall tagging @antiguabarbuda on Twitter to be in with a chance of winning a goodie bag.

**DANCE TO A LIVE TUK BAND**

There's more in the form of cricketing heroes on the **Barbados (CA220)** stand, where Sir Gary Sobers and Desmond Haynes will be gracing the floor from 10.30am-12.30pm on Monday and 2pm-4pm Tuesday. If you're more interested in music, pop by at 5.30pm to see a live tuk band – featuring drums, a triangle and a penny flute – accompanied by Mother Sally, a masked character who'll be dancing along in traditional Bajan style. If that's not enough you'll also be able to check out live cooking demonstrations from 2.30pm-3.30pm each day, fuelling up on delicacies freshly prepared by chef Creig Greenidge.

**SAY HI TO AN OUTLANDISH CARNIVAL CHARACTER**

Nothing brightens up the ExCel like a grimacing giant bedecked in bright red feathers – which is



“See a tuk band with Mother Sally, a masked character who'll be dancing along Bajan-style

exactly what you'll find on the **Dominican Republic (CA300)** stand. The costumed character will be around all day every day in celebration of the country's annual February Carnival. While there, chat to a member of staff to be in



FROM FAR LEFT: Tobago street party; Dominican Republic carnival character  
PICTURE: Ian Cumming

with a chance of winning a place on a 2020 fam trip and learn about British Airways' increased frequency of flights to the destination this winter; then pick up a Dominican-themed gift (available on a first-come, first-served basis).

**INDULGE IN TOBAGONIAN CHOCOLATE**

In need of a sugar fix? Drop by **Tobago (CA250)** to sample the island's rich chocolate, available throughout the show. Agents who've participated in the Tobago 101

specialist online training will also be able to pick up a goodie bag from 11am-1pm and 3pm-4.30pm on Wednesday, while at 5pm on Monday entertainers in national dress will bring a dose of tropical flair to get the crowd bopping. ➤

**DESTINATIONS**

ON THE STANDS | WTM PREVIEW

**BEST OF THE REST**

✪ If Tobago doesn't satisfy on the cocoa front, **Grenada (CA270)** will be holding a business card drop for agents, with chocolate from the island up for grabs.

✪ Fancy a quick Caribbean getaway? **Unico 20° 87°**, **Nobu Hotel Los Cabos** and **Hard Rock Hotel Los Cabos (CA300)** will be offering three-night stays for lucky winners who throw in their business card.

✪ **The Bahamas (CA150)** will be promoting its online BahamAc training programme; complete it and you'll be entered into a prize draw to win a place on a 2020 fam trip.

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Iceland; Parc Asterix; Israeli cooking demonstration; Welsh gin and liqueurs PICTURE: Gijja Einarsdottir

## EUROPE

### GO GIN-TASTING

We all love a cheeky G&T, and after a long hard day you might just be craving one. Fear not: **Wales (UK100)** will be hosting a tasting session at 4.30pm on Monday with produce from the Penderyn and Aber Falls distilleries – from orange marmalade gin to coffee and dark chocolate liqueur – alongside local wines, craft beers and cheeses, plus Welsh cakes hot off the griddle.

### TAKE PART IN A PROJECT WITH A RUSSIAN ARTIST

For something a little different, head over to the **Moscow (EU1950)** stand, where you'll be able to get involved in an art project by adding stickers to an on-stand composition – in the company of renowned Moscow artist Maxim Goshko-Dankov, who'll be offering insight into the city's creative scene. Also on the stand you'll find a VR experience supplied by Moscow's Tretyakov gallery, taking you to paint in iconic Russian artists' studios, with a selection of Russian

treats alongside berry and herbal bitters served in a daily happy hour (5pm-6.45pm Monday and Tuesday, 4.30pm-6pm Wednesday).

### GLEAN COOKING TIPS FROM AN ISRAELI CHEF

Cooking demos, wine tasting, a smoothie stand and pub area are among the treats you'll find from **Israel (EU1550)**, but the highlight is the opportunity to meet Eran Tibi, head chef and co-founder of London's Bala Baya restaurant. He'll be on stand on Monday and Tuesday from 12 noon-1pm and 2pm-3pm to talk about his favourite restaurants, dishes, regions and food experiences across the country, so stop by to pick up some insider tips, then stay on for a wine tasting (1pm-2pm Monday and Tuesday).

### INDULGE IN CROATIAN WINE AND CHEESE

There's more where that came from over at the **Croatia (EU1200)** booth, with a wine and cheese meet-up from 5pm-7pm on Monday, designed to showcase

the country's offering. Twelve wines from across the country will be on offer for sampling, with a virtual reality experience showing the best of this diverse destination.

### RIDE HORSES IN ICELAND

**Iceland (EU1828)** will be offering its own virtual reality experience from 1pm-3pm on Wednesday, immersing agents in lesser-known attractions such as the 'horse corral' – a weekend fiesta where breeders from across the country gather their horses. Exhibitors will be promoting under-the-radar spots such as the new Arctic Coast Way, a 560-mile route opened this year in the north, and the just-opened Torfhus Retreat in the southwest, where rooms are designed like Viking turfhouses.

### WIN ONE OF 40 PRIZES TO MARK WTM'S 40th

**Poland (EU1500)** will be hosting a prize-giving extravaganza from 3pm-5pm on Tuesday, with 40 prizes on offer to mark 40 years of WTM. City breaks, flights, hampers, china sets, Polish food, vodka and more will be up for grabs. ➤

## BEST OF THE REST

🌐 Stop by the West entrance on Monday to see an inflatable sculpture designed for WTM by Lithuanian artist Egle Zvirblyte, and pick up a souvenir postcard of it on the **Lithuania (EU1785)** stand.

🌐 French theme park **Parc Asterix (EU300)** will be hosting drinks and canapes at 4.30pm on Tuesday, so drop by to learn more about the park's new hotel, opening in 2020.

🌐 **Big Bus Tours (TA220)** will be hosting a champagne hour from 2pm-3pm on Tuesday as it celebrates its expansion and growing B2B platform.

🌐 **Slovenia (EU1800)** is promising an 'immersive experience' to showcase the brown bears, bees and more that roam its landscapes.



LATIN AMERICA

BE INSPIRED BY ACTIVIST CELINE COUSTEAU

Environmentalist, activist, explorer, film-maker – there's very little Céline Cousteau hasn't turned her hand to, and if you drop by the **Americas Inspiration Zone (LA570)** on Monday from 2pm-2.45pm you'll be able to hear from her first-hand. An ambassador for the TreadRight Foundation (a not-for-profit organisation created by The Travel Corporation), she'll be giving a speech about how travel can transform communities for the better, while providing a fascinating glimpse into her own adventures – from meeting Amazonian tribes to delivering a talk at the UN.

EXPERIENCE A SLICE OF BRAZILIAN CARNIVAL

If there's anywhere that knows how to throw a fiesta, it's **Brazil (LA250)**,



ABOVE: Environmentalist Celine Cousteau PICTURE: Michael Clark

and this year's booth will be every bit as colourful, sparkly and feather-bedecked as you'd expect. Cultural performances are planned for 5pm on Monday and Tuesday and 4.30pm on Wednesday with lambada, samba and other regional music getting toes tapping, while daily caipirinha tastings will be on hand from 5pm to add to the authenticity.

SIP A PISCO SOUR

That's not the only beverage you'll find in the vicinity. **Peru (LA300)** will be hosting its annual Pisco Sour Hour every day from 12 noon-1pm and 5pm-6pm. Pop by to hear about the country's responsible tourism and archaeological offerings, while sampling the flavours of this foodie hotspot.

BEST OF THE REST

The **Central America Tourism Agency (LA440)** will be holding a cocktail hour from 4pm-5pm, with an awards ceremony for the trade and media.

**Chile (LA500)** will be hosting on-stand wine tasting every day from 12.30-1.30pm and 3.30-4.30pm, with Chilean snacks on hand at the lunchtime sessions.

**Nicaragua (LA145)** will be giving away award-winning, home-grown chocolate and rum to sample, while **Guyana (CA122)** will have a meet-and-greet from 3pm-4pm with authentic Guyanese specialities.

**Costa Rica (LA200)** will be satisfying caffeine cravings with authentic coffee from the country available all day, every day.



FROM LEFT: Former MasterChef South Africa contestant Abigail Mbalo; Sharjah coffee; National Museum of Qatar PICTURE: Iwan Baan

MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

MEET A FORMER MASTERCHEF STAR

**South Africa (AF500)** will be the heart and soul of the Africa region with a host of shenanigans to get involved with, from trying your hand at street art on an interactive graffiti wall, to snapping pictures of the stand's six-metre-high baobab tree installation and indulging in local wines every evening at 5pm. But the highlight has to be sampling South African dishes cooked fresh by Abigail Mbalo, a former MasterChef South Africa contestant and founder of township restaurant 4Roomed eKasi Culture. She'll be there on Monday and Tuesday to talk about her experiences as a South African Tourism ambassador and serve up fresh bunny chow, alongside Johannesburg guide and Soweto local Charles Ncube.

TRY YOUR HAND AT CALLIGRAPHY

Over in the Middle East area there'll be plenty to keep you occupied – not least calligraphy demonstrations on the **Qatar (ME100)** stand,

where an expert will be giving a glimpse into this traditional art form. There'll also be architectural models of the World Cup 2022 stadiums on the stand, as well as mini versions of the National Museum – a new, immersive complex that opened in Doha in March and has since been named among the world's greatest places by *Time* magazine. Stop by for lunch from 12.30pm-2pm on Tuesday to network while enjoying traditional Qatari delicacies.

RIDE A RACING SIMULATOR

Formula One host **Bahrain (ME550)** is inviting visitors to hop in a specially adapted car and race around a virtual track to simulate the Bahrain International Circuit, where Lewis Hamilton raced to victory this March. The contestant with the fastest lap each day will win a

trip to Bahrain for two, including flights, accommodation and tickets to the country's Grand Prix in March 2020.

WIN A TRIP TO DUBAI PARKS AND RESORTS

**Dubai (ME300)** will have plenty of news about what's coming up next year, and why not stop by to see Dubai Parks and Resorts while you're there? The theme park is offering the chance to win a two-night stay with park tickets, plus you'll also be able to glean details of its eight new rides and Legoland Hotel (all opening next year), and hear more about the parks' new agent training and rewards programme.

FUEL UP ON EMIRATI DELICACIES AND COFFEE

Know much about pint-sized emirate **Sharjah (ME400)**? If not, drop by from 3pm-4pm on Tuesday to learn more about its key news – 2020 themes include ecotourism, culture and adventure – while indulging in traditional delicacies and coffee. As a further sweetener, the stand will be hosting giveaways during the session, so you might just land yourself flights out there. **TW**

MasterChef South Africa star Abigail Mbalo will be serving up fresh bunny chow

top tip

Look out for prize draws as you tour the stands. Somabay (AF240) and Louis Hotels (EU1130) will both have stays up for grabs

BEST OF THE REST

Abu Dhabi's Yas Island promotional arm 'Experience Hub' (ME200/201/205) will be giving agents the chance to win a trip to Abu Dhabi if they complete the 'Yas Expert' online training.

Hotel development company Orascom (ME445) will be celebrating its 30th anniversary with free-flowing wine, canapes and a DJ from 5pm-7pm.

On the **Tunisia (AF259)** stand you'll be able to see local craftspeople producing colourful mosaics, while snacking on Tunisian pastries.

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