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## Passover Program Operators Slowly Inch Back to Business



London...” In normal times, Passover program operators would be finalizing their ads for placement in Jewish newspapers, magazine, periodicals and on-line banners during and right after the holidays,” said Raphi Bloom of TotallyJewishTravel.com (TJT), the biggest Jewish Travel site on the internet with over 4,000 visitors a day. Instead, he says, they are treading gingerly to preserve an industry which was all but decimated by the global Covid-19 pandemic. For the most part, the Passover program operators are still hoping for a return to normalcy in time for Passover 2021, but like everyone else the whole pandemic is fraught with uncertainty.

“For the operators, it means taking every precaution to assure that they do not end up in the financial bind of 2020,” said Bloom. They are not likely to give deposits without assurances of a refund should the pandemic forestall another Passover season in 2021. Some of the operators reminded us that “it is still a business and we can’t just shut down.” That is why some are slowly restarting programs as early as the upcoming holidays, like Kosher Holiday Resort’s plan to host Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Sukkot at the prestigious JW Marriott Turnberry Miami. The Smilow Family is planning Succot in Orlando at the Omni Resorts (“100% refundable”). Royal Passover is planning Sukkot at the Dreams Natura Resort & Spa. Their ad includes a logo that says “Safe Covid-19 Booking.” Despite the major changes that have taken place in the industry, TotallyJewishTravel.com has only seen a 25% drop in visits to its popular site. Bloom and travel experts say that there is still a significant interest in going away for the holidays. Like last year, large numbers of people will spend Succot in rented homes in Orlando with many already booking now for Passover. Cancun may have several programs for both Sukkot and Passover and there will be at least one program in Italy. Kosher travel has become such a major industry that it is unlikely that even Covid-19 will change that.