

Prime Minister declares UK one of the most open countries in Europe and ready for an international tourism boom

- 2022 to be a blockbuster year for the nation, with Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and Unboxed: Creativity in the UK
- PM rallying cry comes as VisitBritain launches £10 million campaign to encourage international tourists to visit

Prime Minister Boris Johnson today calls on international tourists to visit the UK and enjoy the sights and sounds of one of the most open countries in Europe.

As testing and quarantine restrictions end for fully vaccinated visitors, the UK is ready to welcome visitors from around the globe for a blockbuster year of events showcasing the breadth of culture, creativity and innovation on offer, including Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and Unboxed: Creativity in the UK.

It comes ahead of a new VisitBritain £10 million international marketing campaign targeting the UK's most valuable visitor markets of Europe and the USA which will launch in February.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Thanks to the phenomenal success of our booster campaign and the extraordinary efforts of the public, the UK is officially one of the most open countries in Europe and ready to welcome visitors from across the globe.

The UK is home to thousands of world class attractions, unbeatable hospitality and incredible history and culture. 2022 also promises a host of unmissable events – from Her Majesty's Jubilee to the Commonwealth Games.

Now is a fantastic time to book a trip and enjoy the best the UK has to offer.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

There is huge pent up demand from international tourists to visit the UK and my message is clear: our brilliant tourism, hospitality and leisure businesses are ready and waiting to welcome people

back.

2022 is set to be a blockbuster year with an unmissable opportunity to see world-class sports in the Commonwealth Games, culture and creativity through the Unboxed events and royal pageantry as we mark the Queen's 70-year reign.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

We made the right calls at the right time and thanks to our vaccine and booster rollout it's paying off – allowing us to safely remove nearly all COVID-19 travel restrictions for vaccinated travellers.

We already have one of the most open economies in Europe with the least restrictions, and because of these changes we now have a travel sector to match it.

This final step in our stable and safe full return to international travel is a major boost for UK tourism, setting Britain free ahead of the crucial half term and spring holiday season.

VisitBritain's multi-million pound campaign will spotlight cities across the UK including London, Edinburgh and Cardiff which have been hit hard by the lack of international visitors.

It will encourage visitors to see another side of Britain promoting new and exciting experiences such as kayaking on London's iconic River Thames, Edinburgh's famous Fringe Festival and sampling some of the world's finest gins at Cardiff Distillery.

VisitBritain CEO Sally Balcombe said:

We know there is pent up demand for travel and our priority is to build back demand for Britain and visitor spending as quickly as possible, competing hard for international visitors who contribute billions to our economy.

As well as messages of welcome and reassurance, we're shining the spotlight on our vibrant and diverse cities. Telling the stories of our renowned heritage with a modern twist, our buzzing contemporary culture and innovative food and drink scene, we are showing that Britain is packed full of fresh and exciting experiences to come and see today.

This year's landmark events, set to be global tourism draws, also present exciting and timely opportunities to highlight once-in-a-lifetime experiences that visitors can only have here, and to promote our welcome and creativity to the world.

VisitBritain's campaign will build on the government's ambitious Tourism Recovery Plan published in June 2021 which aims to get domestic and international tourism back to pre-pandemic levels a year faster than independent forecasts predict.

The government has backed tourism, hospitality and leisure organisations through the pandemic with more than £37 billion in funding and support.

This includes the ongoing cut to VAT, furlough and 100 per cent business rates relief for leisure, retail and hospitality businesses which have saved thousands of jobs and prevented many business closures. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme at its peak supported 87 per cent of hospitality and entertainment businesses and a UK-wide VAT cut for the tourism sectors from 20 per cent to 5 per cent was in place until September 2021. It will remain at 12.5 per cent until the end of March 2022 to provide ongoing support for businesses.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

The VisitBritain campaign goes live in the major European markets of Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands in the week of 14 February and launches in the USA on 10 February.

Plans for Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee are as follows:

Thursday 2 June

- The Queen's Birthday Parade (Trooping the Colour): Over 1,400 parading soldiers, 200 horses and 400 musicians will come together in the traditional Parade to mark The Queen's official birthday, usually held on the second Saturday in June.
- Platinum Jubilee Beacons: The United Kingdom's long tradition of celebrating Royal Jubilees, Weddings and Coronations with the lighting of beacons will be continued to mark the Platinum Jubilee. Beacons will be lit throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories. For the first time, beacons will also be lit in each of the capital cities of the Commonwealth countries to celebrate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Friday 3 June

- Service of Thanksgiving: A Service of Thanksgiving for The Queen's reign will be held at St Paul's Cathedral.

Saturday 4 June

- The Derby at Epsom Downs: Her Majesty The Queen, accompanied by Members of the Royal Family, will attend the Derby at Epsom Downs.
- Platinum Party at the Palace: The BBC will stage and broadcast a special live concert from Buckingham Palace that will bring together some of the world's biggest entertainment stars to celebrate the most significant

and joyous moments from The Queen's seven decade reign.

Sunday 5 June

- The Big Jubilee Lunch: Every year since the idea began in 2009 The Big Lunch has encouraged communities to celebrate their connections and get to know each other a little bit better, coming together in a spirit of fun and friendship. In 2022 The Big Lunch will bring the Jubilee celebrations into the heart of every community.
- The Platinum Jubilee Pageant: A pageant featuring over 5,000 people from across the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth will take place against the backdrop of Buckingham Palace and the surrounding streets. It will combine street arts, theatre, music, circus, carnival and costume and celebrate the service of Her Majesty's reign, as well as honouring the collective service of people and communities across the country.

Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will take place from 28 July to 8 August 2022 and will be the biggest sporting and cultural event ever held in the city featuring thousands of world-class athletes and over a million spectators. Home to more than 187 nationalities, Birmingham 2022 will be a home Games for every nation.

Backed by £778 million of public funding, Birmingham 2022 will deliver 11 days of amazing sport. Alongside the sport programme, the Games will be accompanied by a six-month cultural festival and the Queen's Baton Relay will travel around the Commonwealth and the UK before arriving in Birmingham for the Opening Ceremony. A £24 million business and tourism programme will convert the excitement and interest generated by the Games into increased trade, tourism and investment opportunities for the West Midlands, promoting the region and the UK to the world.

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK

Unboxed: Creativity in the UK – a once-in-a-lifetime celebration of our world-leading creativity taking place from March to October. Drawing on a £120 million government investment, Unboxed will lift the lid on 10 very different creative projects shaped by some of the brightest minds from across science, technology, engineering, arts and maths. Millions of people across the UK are invited to watch, experience and participate in an extraordinary series of events, installations and activities throughout England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales – as well as online, which will bring people together and showcase the UK's creativity globally.