

Contact:

Lyndsi Jones, Fund for Education Abroad
m: 301-643-7750
ljones@fundforeducationabroad.org

Ellen Yui, YUI+Company, Inc.
m: 301-332-4135
ellenyui@yuico.com

Vaccine Passports, Small Business Closures, and Shuttered Museums May Await Travelers Post-Pandemic, According to Travel Expert Rick Steves

In “The Future of Travel,” the first in the FEAtured Perspectives series, Steves advocates for ethical approaches to travel, including carbon offsets

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 23, 2021 –Vaccine passports, closures of beloved mom-and-pop sites, shuttered museums, and country-specific safety restrictions may be the new normal post-pandemic, according to travel activist, author and television personality [Rick Steves](#). Travel enthusiasts can learn ethical approaches to travel, including tips for reducing their carbon footprint, through “[The Future of Travel with Rick Steves](#),” a recorded interview conducted by global education expert [Karin Fischer](#) now available through event host, [The Fund for Education Abroad](#) (FEA).

Steves explained how to properly prepare for travel and engage meaningfully with a destination, and spoke to the ongoing importance of travel in expanding one’s worldview, with globalization and technology making our world smaller and more connected every year.

Predicting how the COVID-19 pandemic could affect travel as it begins to resume, Steves observed that developed countries would likely receive vaccines and herd immunity sooner. Commenting on the possible shuttering of beloved mom-and-pop restaurants, small local sites and museums, he commented that travel guide publishers and tour providers like himself will have to travel the world to see which businesses and sites survived and update guidebooks and offerings accordingly.

“A friend of mine runs a museum in Arkansas. He figures a good percentage of museums who have had to close will not re-open. That’s my biggest worry...all the little mom-and-pops. These are the charming entrepreneurial ventures that make traveling fun,” explained Steves. “Once this is over, that will be the biggest challenge for companies like ours. We will have to travel all over the world to see which small businesses are still open.”

The virtual event, hosted by FEA Scholar Alumnus and Trustee [John Gabelus](#), was the first of [FEAtured Perspectives](#), a series of conversations on travel, education and access hosted by FEA in celebration of 10 years increasing access to international experiences through scholarships for students underrepresented in the US study abroad population.

Via video, three current [FEA Scholars](#) provided first-hand reports of their experiences of travel, life and study abroad during the pandemic: [Julie Kim](#) of Temple University from Rome; [Joy Bernal](#) of the University of South Carolina from Barcelona; and [Shadia Amir](#) of Western Washington University from Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Explaining the need for ethical travel practices on an industrial scale and predicting next-generation travelers will demand them, Steves shared how his company works to offset its carbon footprint: “I made too much money, because nobody made me pay for the carbon. So, I gave myself a carbon tax of \$30 per person. We invested \$1 million in 10 different organizations in the developing world helping

farmers employ climate smart agricultural practices and organizations that are helping with reforestation and protecting forests. By investing in those organizations, we offset all the carbon it took to take 30,000 travelers to Europe and back. And the consumer gets the good feeling of knowing they went to Europe, at least as far as the flights are concerned, carbon neutral. There's nothing heroic on my part for doing this, it's just ethical."

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About Rick Steves

[Rick Steves](#), America's most respected authority on European travel, empowers Americans to have European trips that are fun, affordable, and culturally broadening. In 1976, he started his business, Rick Steves' Europe, headquartered in Edmonds, Washington, near Seattle. There he produces a best-selling guidebook series, a popular public television show, a weekly public radio show, a syndicated travel column, and free travel information available through his travel center and [ricksteves.com](#). Rick Steves' Europe also runs a successful small-group tour program taking 30,000 travelers to Europe annually.

About Karin Fischer

The work of journalist, researcher and global education expert [Karin Fischer](#) appears regularly in [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#) and her blog, [latitudes](#), as well as the New York Times, Washington Monthly, and other leading media outlets.

About the Fund for Education Abroad

[The Fund for Education Abroad](#) (FEA) is a 501(c)(3) whose mission is to provide scholarships and ongoing support to students who are underrepresented among the U.S. study abroad population, making life-changing, international experiences accessible to all by supporting minority and first-generation college students before, during, and after they participate in education abroad programs. FEA Access Partners participate on the FEA Access Advisory Board (AAB), established to share best practices in international education and actively engage in FEA's mission to increase the number of Americans studying abroad. FEA is a [Guidestar Gold](#) participant, and won the [2019 Scholarship Provider of the Year Award](#) from the National Scholarship Providers Association, the 2015 [Diversity Abroad Excellence in Diversifying International Education Award](#) and [GoAbroad.com's 2015 Innovation in Philanthropy Award](#). Follow FEA at [www.fundforeducationabroad.org](#), and on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Tumblr](#) and on Twitter: [@FEAScholarships](#).