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How Travel Rules Are Easing Around the World

Travelers are finding fewer vaccine and testing requirements to enter many countries. Here's what to know about the latest changes.

Bali, Indonesia, allows fully vaccinated travelers from 23 countries, including the U.S., to skip quarantining. JOHANNES P. CHRISTO/GETTY IMAGES

By [Allison Pohle](#)

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PRINT TEXT

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The Covid-19 rules for travelers are changing again. But this time, they're getting easier.

Countries including Ireland, Iceland and Norway have eliminated all rules related to testing and vaccination for travelers. Others, such as France and England, have eliminated pre-departure testing for fully vaccinated people entering the country.

Rules vary greatly and [change often](#). Some countries require [booster shots](#) for travelers to be considered fully vaccinated for entry, while others are dropping Covid-19 requirements completely. Travel advisers suggest looking closely at entry requirements for specific countries and destinations like Hawaii, as well as rules for indoor venues, which can vary by city or region.

"It's not as simple as 'Have you had a shot or not?'" says Samantha Collum, director of operations and senior travel adviser at River Oaks Travel Concierge in Houston.

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Ireland ended Covid-19 requirements for travelers over the weekend. Travelers no longer have to show proof of vaccination, recovery or a negative Covid-19 test to enter. The country's [department of health said](#) that the rapid change was made to ease travels for people leaving Ukraine and neighboring countries for Ireland.

Iceland removed all Covid-19 border restrictions and domestic restrictions in

February, and Norway enacted similar entry measures then.

Beginning April 1, Costa Rica will no longer require unvaccinated travelers to have supplemental Covid-19 medical insurance to enter the country, according to the U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica.

Israel [closed its borders](#) to foreign travelers late in 2021. The country now allows unvaccinated travelers to [enter the country](#), but requires all tourists, regardless of vaccination status, to take a PCR test within 72 hours before flying to the country, and another upon landing in Israel, where they must quarantine for up to 24 hours until they receive a negative result.



Passengers boarding a Qantas flight last week in Australia.
PHOTO: JAMES D. MORGAN/GETTY IMAGES

Other countries that were locked down to tourists have recently opened their borders. Australia began allowing fully vaccinated tourists [into the country](#) without a quarantine in February. Starting Monday, fully vaccinated travelers from 23 countries, including the U.S., can skip quarantining in the Indonesian island of Bali.

Margi Arnold, owner of Creative Travel Adventures in Denver, says many clients traveling to Europe have received booster shots.

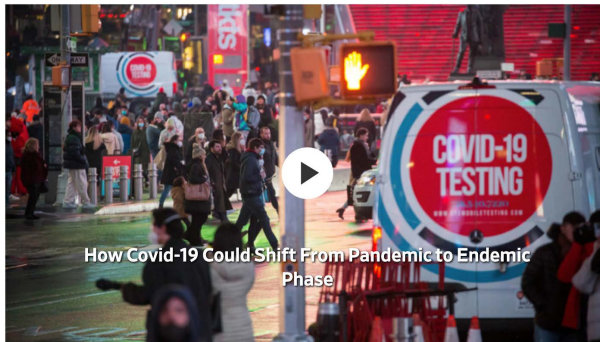
“That’s really going to be the best way to travel and to feel more confident booking your travel plans,” she says.

France is among the countries [requiring a booster dose](#) for some foreign visitors. It does so for travelers 18 and older if it’s been more than nine months since their initial vaccine series.

Many countries have simplified entry requirements for fully vaccinated travelers. In some cases, that means visitors need to have received booster shots. Aruba allows those who have received booster shots at least seven days before travel to skip the Covid-19 test otherwise required for entry.

The U.S. requires travelers to have a negative test taken within one day before traveling back to the country by plane.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention still [advises against travel](#) to more than 130 destinations, including France, Iceland and the United Kingdom, based on the number of Covid-19 cases. Larger destinations are classified as having a “very high” level of Covid-19 if more than 500 new cases reported per 100,000 people have been reported over the past 28 days.



How Covid-19 Could Shift From Pandemic to Endemic Phase
What is an endemic and how will we know when Covid-19 becomes one? WSJ’s Daniela Hernandez breaks down how public-health experts assess when a virus like Covid-19 enters an endemic stage. Photo: Michael Nagle/Zuma Press

Dr. Henry Wu, an associate professor of infectious diseases at the Emory University School of Medicine and director of the Emory TravelWell Center, says more governments are putting more responsibility on individuals to make decisions. But fewer requirements doesn’t mean travelers should abandon all precautions, he says. Dr. Wu suggests travelers get vaccinated and boosted if they are eligible, as well as testing before visiting higher-risk people and [wearing masks](#) in higher-risk places.

“If you want to be a smart traveler, just minimize the chance you get sick somewhere or get somebody sick, this is how you do it,” he says. Travelers should remember that there’s a risk of getting stuck in another country after a positive test result, he says.

Travel industry groups sent a letter late last month to Jeffrey Zients, the White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator, asking for the elimination of the pre-departure testing requirement for fully vaccinated inbound travelers. They also requested a repeal of the federal mask mandate for public transportation, which is in place until March 18.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

What travel plans are you making now that Covid-19 restrictions are easing? Join the conversation.

Destinations are lifting vaccination rules for indoor venues. France won’t require people to show a Covid-19 vaccine pass to access many indoor venues starting March 14, Prime Minister Jean Castex announced last week.

Most domestic destinations have loosened mask requirements. Puerto Rico is eliminating its indoor mask mandate for most venues Thursday, and will no longer require U.S. travelers to show proof of vaccination or a negative test for entry starting then.

One notable exception is Hawaii, the only state that hasn't announced plans to drop its indoor mask mandate. But Hawaii will end its Safe Travels program for domestic travelers later this month. It requires travelers to show proof of vaccination or a negative Covid-19 test to avoid quarantine. Beginning March 26, arriving domestic passengers will face no Covid-19 related requirements.

While many countries in Europe have loosened entry requirements, many in Asia and Africa that are open still require pre-departure testing and proof of vaccination, says Jemica Archer, owner of TruBlue Travels in Jacksonville, Fla.

Ms. Archer says she still exercises caution when booking trips for clients. Although rules are loosening now, [new variants could always emerge](#) and restrictions can change. "Next month it could be, 'We're tightening back up,'" she says.

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