

Travelling to US? Travel rules tightened amid Omicron Covid-19 threat

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Air travellers to the United States will face tougher COVID-19 testing rules as several countries moved to seal off their borders amid growing uncertainty around the virulence of the Omicron variant and its ability to dodge existing vaccines.

What are the main requirements?

All adult foreign nationals travelling to the US must be fully vaccinated before boarding their flight. Like before, travellers will still have to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours of departure to the US.

Does everyone need to be vaccinated?

Yes, with some exceptions. Children under 18 don't need to be vaccinated but they do need to take a COVID test. Kids 2 and younger are exempt from testing requirements.

What you need to know if you are travelling to the US

You must be fully vaccinated to travel to the United States by plane if you are a non-U.S. citizen, non-U.S. immigrant (not a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, lawful permanent resident, or travelling to the United States on an immigrant visa). Only limited exceptions apply.

You are required to show a negative COVID-19 test result or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 when you travel to the United States by air. The timing of this test depends on your vaccination status and age.

Wearing a mask over your nose and mouth is required in indoor areas of public transportation (including aeroplanes) travelling into, within, or out of the United States and indoors in U.S. transportation hubs (including airports).

Do NOT travel if...

You have been exposed to COVID-19 unless you are fully vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days.

You are sick.

You tested positive for COVID-19 and haven't ended isolation (even if you are fully vaccinated).

You are waiting for the results of a COVID-19 test. If your test comes back positive while you are at your destination, you will need to isolate and postpone your return until it's safe for you to end isolation. Your travel companions may need to self-quarantine.

Currently, vaccinated international travellers can present a negative test result obtained within three days from their point of departure. The new one-day testing requirement would apply equally to U.S. citizens as well as foreign nationals.

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The administration is also considering whether to require air travellers to get another test within three to five days after arrival in the United States, officials said.

The United States is moving to require that all air travellers entering the country show a negative COVID-19 test performed within one day of departure, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said.