These 7 major tourist destinations now have COVID-19 booster requirements

(Courtesy of Victoria M. Walker, The Points Guy)

The highly transmissible omicron variant continues to spread around the world, causing destinations to scramble to respond and keep travel going during the pandemic.

Some destinations have shifted gears by changing the definition of "fully vaccinated" — having both doses of a two-dose vaccine or one dose of a single-dose vaccine — to include a booster dose. That means travelers who would be considered fully vaccinated in some places may need to get a booster dose if they want to visit certain tourist destinations in 2022.

A lot has changed since COVID-19 vaccines were rolled out in the U.S., but here's what you need to know about booster requirements in some popular destinations before you travel this year.

Austria

Austria's government says vaccine credentials will lose validity 270 days after the second vaccination with a two-dose vaccine or 270 days after inoculation with a single-dose vaccine. However, booster doses received at least 120 days after the second dose (or 14 days after a single dose) extend the validity for an additional 270 days.

Travelers who have received a booster shot do not need to show proof of a negative PCR test to enter Austria.

France

France is also adding a booster requirement for tourists. All travelers 18 and older who visit the country must show proof of a COVID-19 booster shot received five to seven months after their final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to use France's health pass. Getting a booster is essential, as France uses a health pass (also known as a "pass sanitaire" or "pass vaccinal") that travelers without a booster won't be able to access.

Maui

Hawaii's "Safe Travels" program requires travelers to upload proof of vaccination to avoid quarantine. Fully vaccinated travelers no longer have to get pre-travel testing or quarantine upon arrival, while those who are unvaccinated can skip quarantine with a negative COVID-19 test from a trusted facility.

In addition to the statewide program, individual islands have created their own rules to handle the spread of the virus. Just being vaccinated against COVID-19 will no longer be enough on one island.

Diners and gym patrons at Maui establishments will need to show a negative COVID-19 test or receive a booster shot "as soon as they are eligible." The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says people should receive a booster if it's been five months since the second dose of Pfizer, six months since the second dose of Moderna or two months after a dose of Johnson & Johnson.

However, Maui County Mayor Mike Victorino says patrons can still eat outdoors without needing a COVID-19 booster or negative test, though the requirement could soon apply to other islands, like Oahu, and even statewide, according to Hawaii News Now.

The Netherlands

As I reported last month, the Netherlands announced the only vaccine certificates that would be accepted are those that show that the holder has received a COVID-19 booster shot. If you don't have a booster yet, it shouldn't be a barrier to travel to other parts of the European Union. Travelers without a booster would have to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test. The Netherlands' policy is expected to go into effect in February.

Singapore

Starting Feb. 14, Singapore will only consider travelers 18 and above fully vaccinated if they received their final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in the last 270 days. This rule will also apply to travelers 12 years and older starting March 14. Singapore's Ministry of Health says people who receive a booster "will continue to be considered as fully vaccinated beyond the 270 days."

Spain

Tourists visiting Spain will need to show proof of a COVID-19 booster shot taken within 14 to 270 days of entering the country starting Feb. 1. Fully vaccinated EU Digital COVID Certificate holders will be able to cross the border freely within the 27 member EU states without a negative COVID-19 test starting next month.

"If more than 270 days (9 months) have passed since receiving the last required dose of their COVID-19 vaccine, U.S. citizens must show proof of having received a booster shot at least 14 days prior to arrival in Spain," per the U.S. Embassy in Spain.

Spain is following several other European countries in adding a booster dose requirement in light of the European Union's decision to validate the EU Digital COVID Certificate for 270 days after the holder's first dose.

United Arab Emirates

Unlike other countries on this list, the United Arab Emirates doesn't require foreigners or even expats to abide by its new booster stipulation.

According to the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, only residents will be required to obtain a booster dose to travel outside the country. But it is a sign that more people may be required to get boosted to travel there in the future.

For now, tourists older than 12 who travel to Dubai must have a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken within 72 hours of departure. Fully vaccinated travelers entering Abu Dhabi from Dubai or another emirate must complete a registration form and download an app to show "Green Pass" requirements are met to visit Abu Dhabi's attractions.

Unvaccinated travelers arriving in Abu Dhabi from another emirate still need to quarantine and test if they are from countries not on its "green" list.

How to show proof of a booster dose

If you've already received a booster shot, you're probably wondering what you're supposed to do to show you comply with a destination's rules. ==Here are several ways to show proof that you've received a booster dose of a COVID-19 vaccine:==

- CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record card: As with your first vaccine series, your health provider can fill in your booster shot vaccination details, including the lot number and date you received your dose, on your CDC vaccine card.

- Excelsior Pass Plus: This is another version of New York state's vaccine passport. This version of the app includes information about booster doses. All Excelsior Vaccination Passes Plus retrieved by individuals who received a booster shot will have this information contained on their Pass Plus between three and four days after their dose, with no expiration date.

- Clear Health Pass: Clear's Health Pass feature is already being used to verify negative tests at some sports arenas and can hold test results and vaccine and booster status.