

Unvaccinated Americans to face tighter COVID testing requirements in new US travel system

(Courtesy of Eve ChenBailey Schulz, USA TODAY)

- The U.S. is launching a new travel system on Nov. 8.
- Vaccinated foreign air travelers will need to show proof of full vaccination and test for COVID-19
- The new travel system also adds more stringent testing requirements for unvaccinated U.S. travelers.

The U.S. will roll out a [new travel system](#) in two weeks that will open borders up for millions of vaccinated international visitors.

The system launching Nov. 8 will end the [U.S. travel ban](#) that has been in place for dozens of countries [since the start of the pandemic](#). It will also make reentry more challenging for unvaccinated U.S. citizens and permanent residents and establish stringent testing requirements for the rare unvaccinated foreign nationals allowed entry.

"For anyone traveling to the United States who cannot demonstrate proof of full vaccination, they will have to produce documentation of a negative test within one day of departure," instead of the [current three days](#), according to the White House.

Fully vaccinated Americans will still have a three-day window for COVID-19 testing with negative results, but if they are not able to show proof of vaccination, they too will be subject to the one-day testing requirement.

"These are strict safety protocols that follow the science of public health to enhance the safety of Americans here at home and the safety of international air travel," senior administration officials said in a Monday briefing.

With few exceptions, only foreign nationals with vaccinations approved for emergency use by the World Health Organization will be allowed to board planes to the U.S.

What are the exceptions?

Senior administration officials stressed that exceptions to vaccine requirements for foreign nationals would be rare, but would be made for children under age 18 and travelers from countries with less than a 10% vaccination rate due to lack of vaccine availability. The White House said that currently affects about 50 countries, but the list is continually changing.

Travelers with some medical conditions, including people who have had severe anaphylactic reactions to the COVID vaccine, will also be exempt from the vaccination requirement.

Children under age 2 will not need to test for COVID-19.

Additionally, officials said there will also be testing accommodations for travelers with documented recovery from the coronavirus within the preceding 90 days.

Who will be able to enter the US?

Starting Nov. 8, foreign travelers will be able to enter the U.S. by air if they can show proof of full vaccination as well as negative results from a pre-departure coronavirus test taken within three days of boarding a plane into the country.

Airlines will [collect personal information](#) from all U.S.-bound travelers for contact tracing. Airlines are required to keep the information on hand for 30 days so health officials can follow up with travelers who may have been exposed to COVID-19.

Masking will be required, but there will be no quarantine mandate.

The change will make entering the U.S. possible for travelers from countries currently listed on the U.S. travel ban, which prohibits entry for travelers who have been in any of the regions within the past 14 days. The travel bans [took effect in early 2020 and include](#):

- China
- India
- Iran
- Brazil
- South Africa
- United Kingdom
- Republic of Ireland
- The European Schengen area: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City.
- Travelers arriving from countries not included in the ban will face stricter entry requirements come Nov. 8. Right now, the U.S. asks international air passengers only to get tested within three days of their flight to the U.S. and [show either the negative test result or proof of recovery](#) from COVID-19 before boarding.

What about Mexico and Canada?

New travel rules will also take effect for foreign nationals arriving by land or passenger ferry from [Mexico and Canada](#).

Starting Nov. 8, fully vaccinated foreign nationals can cross the land borders for nonessential reasons such as tourism or visiting friends and family.

Entry rules along the border will change again in early January, with all travelers – including those traveling for essential purposes – required to show proof of full vaccination.