

## New US COVID Testing Requirements for International Travel Take Effect December 6 IMPACTING TRAVEL DECEMBER 03, 2021

The United States will require all travelers entering the country, regardless of citizenship or vaccination status, to test negative for COVID-19 within one day of departure starting at 12:01 a.m. ET on Monday, December 6. President Joe Biden announced the rollout of the stricter requirements on Thursday in response to the recent discovery of the Omicron variant in South Africa.



France has made changes to its COVID-19 testing policy in order to help combat the new [Omicron variant](#). Travelers from outside the European Union will need to provide a negative COVID-19 test result taken within 48 hours of travel, regardless of vaccination status. "We are getting more worried by the day," Gabriel Attal, a spokesman for the French government, told reporters on Wednesday. "We are not panicking but we have to be as careful as possible," he said, according to a [Bloomberg](#) report.

Several other countries have taken new steps to prevent the spread of Omicron. The United Kingdom is requiring [travelers to quarantine](#) and test on their second day within the country regardless of vaccination status. Once they have a negative test result, they can continue their travels in the country. The United States has changed its own [testing strategy](#) for travelers. Starting December 6, 2021, all travelers, regardless of vaccination status, will need to provide a negative test for COVID-19 taken within 24 hours of traveling to the U.S.



The South American destination of [Ecuador](#) has just updated its entry requirements for foreign travelers, including the rules for travel to the famed [Galapagos Islands](#). As of December 1, all travelers over the age of 16 must provide proof of full COVID-19 vaccination (i.e., it's been a minimum of 14 days since they received their final dose of a vaccine series) and a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours of their arrival in Ecuador.

While not subject to the vaccination requirement, children between the ages of two and 16 will also need to present a negative PCR test administered within 72 hours of arrival.

Any foreign visitors who arrive in Ecuador without PCR test results are required to take one at the airport and must quarantine at a hotel or other authorized accommodation, pending the arrival of their results. Some labs can deliver results within 24 hours, while others can take up to 72 hours, and these must be reported to local authorities before the traveler can resume his or her trip.

Travel health insurance is highly recommended, as anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 while in Ecuador will be quarantined for 14 days, and visitors themselves are responsible for covering the costs of medical care and accommodation.

Special restrictions are still in place for travelers originating in or transiting through India. Such passengers will need to take a COVID-19 test upon arrival in Ecuador and then spend 10 days isolated in their accommodations at their own expense.

And, effective December 1, travelers originating from or transiting through any of the following countries are prohibited from entering Ecuador: South Africa, Botswana, Egypt, Mozambique, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Eswatini (Swaziland) and Namibia. This was announced in the Ecuadorian government's [November 29 resolution](#) in response to the emergence of the [Omicron variant](#) in areas of southern Africa.

There are also some special, additional rules for entry to the enchanting Galapagos Islands, which took effect December 1. According to the [U.S. Embassy in Ecuador](#), all travelers two years old and over must present proof of vaccination, with their final dose administered at least 14 days prior to arrival, or a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours of boarding an aircraft bound for the Galapagos. Anyone wishing to visit the Galapagos will also need to present a “transit control card” issued by the Government of Galapagos, which can be obtained through your tour operator.

### **Travel Insurance Sales Are Skyrocketing Due To Omicron Variant**

"All air travelers, regardless of citizenship or vaccination status, will be required to show a negative pre-departure COVID-19 viral test taken the day before they board their flight to the United States," the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed.

Citing sources, Reuters reported that the CDC is expected to give airlines a three-day grace period to allow for some travelers to return to the United States with tests taken outside of the one-day window. What's more, the White House is still weighing the possibility of granting temporary exemptions for several countries with limited access to same-day COVID-19 testing. Potential exemptions could last for about a week but more information awaits.

Travelers should also know that the federal mask mandate requiring face masks to be worn on planes, trains and public transportation has been extended through March 18.

The first official case of Omicron in the U.S. was recently discovered in California and, so far, the variant has already been reported in over 20 countries.