

UK's new travel rules take flight

- from 4am on 11 February all testing requirements removed for eligible fully vaccinated arrivals and only a simplified passenger locator form needed, ahead of half term
- arrivals who do not qualify as fully vaccinated will only need to take a pre-departure test and a PCR test on or before day 2 after they arrive in the UK
- changes come as children aged 12 to 15 in England can now prove their vaccination status or proof of prior infection for outbound travel with the digital NHS COVID Pass

Major changes to the UK's coronavirus (COVID-19) travel rules have come into force today (4am, 11 February 2022). This will make international journeys cheaper and easier for passengers ahead of the half term.

The relaxation in requirements is thanks to the success of the UK's vaccine and booster rollout. It means that eligible fully vaccinated travellers arriving in the UK no longer need to take any COVID-19 tests – resulting in the UK having one of the most free-flowing borders and open societies in Europe.

Eligible fully vaccinated travellers are, therefore, only required to fill out a simplified [passenger locator form](#), confirming their vaccination status, travel history and contact details.

Also, from today, arrivals who do not qualify as fully vaccinated will only need to take a [pre-departure test](#) in the 2 days before they depart for the UK and a PCR test on or before the end of day 2 after they arrive in the UK, as well as completing the passenger locator form. These passengers will not need to self-isolate on arrival and will only need to do so if they test positive.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

The UK has eased international travel measures for COVID-19 and now has one of the most free-flowing borders in the world – sending a clear message that we are open for business.

As our travel sector rapidly recovers, and we accelerate towards a future where we want travel to remain open for good, these rule changes coming ahead of half term are good news for families, businesses and the travel sector.

Determined to make travel cheaper and easier for families, the decision to remove testing requirements could save the average family around £100.

Since 3 February 2022, children aged 12 to 15 in England can demonstrate their vaccination status or proof of prior infection via a digital [NHS COVID](#)

[Pass](#) for outbound travel. This makes it easier to travel to countries that require proof of vaccination or prior infection in order to access venues or services, including museums, restaurants and cafes.

By the end of February, people will also have an extra day to fill out the passenger locator form before travelling.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

As we learn to live with COVID-19, we are taking a balanced approach to opening up international travel and removing all tests for people who have played their part and have been vaccinated.

Thanks to the millions of people who have come forward for their COVID-19 jabs, we are one of the most boosted countries in Europe and are able to take these steps today.

As the government goes one step further to reopen the travel sector, the UK will be reconnecting with key global markets, and from today will accept vaccine certificates from an additional 16 countries and territories including China and Mexico. This will bring the total [list to over 180 countries and territories](#) worldwide.

VisitBritain CEO Sally Balcombe said:

Britain's tourism industry is ready to welcome international visitors, we know there is pent-up demand for travel and our priority is to build back visitor spending as quickly as possible, competing hard for international visitors who contribute billions to our economy.

Our £10 million global GREAT Britain marketing campaign is already rolling out across our major overseas markets, showing that Britain is packed full of fresh and exciting experiences to come and enjoy today.

This year's landmark events including HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the Commonwealth Games and the ground-breaking 'Unboxed' events across the UK, set to be global tourism draws, also present exciting and timely opportunities to highlight experiences that visitors can only have here, and to promote our warm welcome and creativity to the world.

With more people travelling overseas, the government is continuing to remind everyone that travelling abroad is still different and countries may change their own rules at short notice.

All travellers are encouraged to check [FCD0 travel advice](#) for the latest entry requirements and COVID-19 rules for their destination beforehand.

Sean Doyle, Chairman and CEO of British Airways, said:

It's great news that restrictions are being lifted in time for families to get away for a much-needed break this half term. We've seen a boost to bookings directly as a result of lifting restrictions and customers can now travel, safe in the knowledge that they won't be burdened by expensive and unnecessary testing to return to the UK. We hope that other countries will soon catch up with the UK's pragmatic approach.

Sophie Dekkers, Chief Commercial Officer of easyJet, said:

We've continued to see pent-up demand each time restrictions are removed and UK bookings increased following the welcome reduction of travel restrictions, which has been sustained in recent weeks with a further boost from the removal of all testing by the UK government.

We have been encouraged to see strong late bookings in the lead-up to half term, which is a key time for many of our customers, with thousands set to enjoy a long-awaited family break and we can't wait to welcome more customers back on board in the coming days.

Andrew Flintham, Managing Director for TUI UK, said:

The recent changes to travel, particularly the removal of testing for everyone is who double vaccinated, is a huge leap forwards in getting travel back to normal. There remains a huge pent-up demand for international travel and we've seen strong and sustained booking patterns since the announcement as customers look to go abroad with ease and without the added expense of testing.

As a result, bookings for February half term and Easter holidays are comparable to 2019, with Mexico, Dominican Republic, Cape Verde and the Canaries the most popular destinations. And we expect this summer to be stronger than 2019 for the UK market.

Mark Tanzer, Chief Executive of ABTA – The Travel Association, said:

Today's changes are a big step forward for the outbound travel industry and holidaymakers, and a recognition of the importance of travel to people's lives and to the UK economy.

Travel rules have been holding people back from taking a foreign break, so these changes should serve as a boost to consumer confidence, leading more people to plan and book their overseas trips.

There are still steps people need to take when heading abroad and ABTA travel agents and tour operators are on hand to guide travellers through the process.

While the [red list](#) will continue to remain on standby as our first line of defence against future variants of concern arriving from abroad, the government is looking to replace the hotel quarantine policy with other contingency measures including home isolation – provided a sufficiently robust digital solution to ensure compliance with home isolation can be found. Further details will be set out on this later in the spring.