

# Where Can I Travel Internationally and Do I Need the Covid-19 Vaccine?

Covid restrictions for international trips are more complicated than ever. Before you dust off your passport, a few words of caution.



**JET LAG** Even as the vaccines roll out, experts say it may take many months before we are able to travel with less emphasis on precautions.

ILLUSTRATION: JOHN W. TOMAC

By [Barbara Peterson](#)

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**THE COVID-19 VACCINES** have arrived. Does this mean we'll soon be free to roam the world, guilt- and hassle-free? The short answer is no. While an inoculation protects you from getting sick, it's not yet known whether the vaccines will prevent an asymptomatic person from passing the virus to others. The shots "are extraordinarily good at preventing symptoms if you contract the virus, but we don't know if you can still spread the virus after vaccination," said Matt McCarthy, associate professor of medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York.

Welcome to the new rules of travel, 2021 edition. “It’s an ever shifting landscape,” said Scott Keyes, founder of Scott’s Cheap Flights, a travel deals site. He said the most accessible destinations—and those that don’t require a quarantine—are south of the border—Mexico, Central America and much of the Caribbean—but rules on tests, insurance and other entry requirements can vary. Further afield, most of Western Europe went into lockdown last month, while Turkey, Egypt and the Maldives are all currently admitting U.S. visitors who can show proof of a negative PCR test. But, as the U.S. State Department warns, foreign governments can change the rules at a moment’s notice. To wit: Earlier this week, the French government—in response to the new, more contagious strain of Covid-19—closed the borders of its overseas territories, including French Polynesia and St. Barts.

Elsewhere, big resorts are throwing in a cheap or even free Covid test to reassure U.S. visitors, said Mr. Keyes. But what if you’re staying in a boutique inn or a rental villa? “What might seem an easy trip to arrange gets a lot more complicated,” said Diana Hechler, president of D. Tours Travel, in Larchmont, N.Y. She recently booked a family on a trip to an eco-lodge in Costa Rica, and tapped her local contacts to find a clinic that could deliver results quickly enough that the clan could make their return flight home.



OFF AGAIN St. Barts reopened for visitors in June. This week, the French government ordered the island to close its borders again.

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