

## What you need to know: COVID-19 and travel bans

April 9, 2020

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), cases of the COVID-19 coronavirus have now been recorded in 206 countries, territories and areas outside of China.<sup>1</sup> To control the spread, governments around the world are recommending against all but essential travel to certain countries, quarantining citizens returning from affected areas and restricting non-resident arrivals. After the WHO classified the outbreak as a pandemic, outright bans on travel have become more common.

This report summarizes some recent travel restriction developments around the world.

### Africa

#### Egypt begins two-week curfew

From March 25, Egypt will impose a partial curfew from 7 pm to 6 am for two weeks as part of government measures to restrict the spread of COVID-19.<sup>2</sup> During these hours, all mass public and private transport is banned.

#### Mali shuts borders

Having recorded its first cases of COVID-19, Mali shut its land borders from March 26.<sup>3</sup> It has also implemented an overnight curfew between 21:00 and 05:00.

#### Morocco enters state of emergency

A state of emergency came into effect in Morocco on March 20 until further notice. As a result, public places have been closed and international and internal travel has been suspended.<sup>4</sup> Moroccan nationals and foreigners must restrict their movement and stay at home. People now need exceptional movement permits to move around the country.

#### South Africa under three-week lockdown

Within days of declaring a state of national disaster, South Africa announced the beginning of a three-week nationwide lockdown from March 26.<sup>5</sup> People will not be allowed to leave their homes except to buy food, medical supplies, collect social grants and seek medical attention.<sup>6</sup>

South Africa had earlier prohibited travel from a number of high-risk countries including China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, Spain, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S.

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<sup>1</sup> [World Health Organization](#), Situation Report 74, April 2, 2020

<sup>2</sup> [Ahrām Online](#), March 24, 2020

<sup>3</sup> [The Bulletin Time](#), March 26

<sup>4</sup> [Morocco World News](#), March 21, 2020

<sup>5</sup> [Comair](#), March 24, 2020

<sup>6</sup> [CNN](#), March 24, 2020

## Asia

### China quarantines foreign arrivals

Having made major progress in its battle against the spread of COVID-19, China is now trying to stop re-importing the virus. In the middle of March, the number of new daily COVID-19 cases had fallen below 30 on some days, but then headed back above 100 as Chinese travelers returned home from abroad (Figure 1).

Concerns about a second wave of imported cases saw screening and quarantine increased for international travelers. All arrivals in Beijing must be quarantined for 14 days, at their own expense, in hotels selected by the government.

China has been steadily easing domestic travel restrictions, with Wuhan city finally ending a 76-day lockdown on April 8. Some restrictions remain in place as the threat of a re-escalation in infections remains.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases in China



Source: WHO

### India suspends most visas and bans international flights

India has suspended issuing most types of visa to nationals of any country, including tourist visas, from March 13 to April 15. Diplomats, Officials, UN/international organizations, Employment and Project visas are unaffected.<sup>8</sup> Visas held by all foreigners already in India remain valid. However, these travelers may need to apply for extensions or conversions to remain in the country.

Foreign travelers with compelling reasons to enter India may request a new visa.

Any travelers, including Indian nationals, arriving from any destination and having visited China, France, Germany, Italy, Iran, South Korea or Spain since February 15, will be quarantined for 14 days.

From March 19, India prohibited airline passengers from EU member states, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, the U.K. and Turkey from entering the country until March 31. Airlines must enforce the ban at the point of departure. Passengers arriving from or transiting through the U.A.E., Qatar, Oman and Kuwait must enter a 14-day quarantine period. The Indian government also announced a ban on all international flights, running from March 22 until the end of the month.<sup>9</sup>

From March 25, India suspended all domestic passenger flights as part of a national lockdown aimed at reducing the spread of COVID-19. The lockdown currently runs until the end of April 14, but there is growing speculation that it will soon be extended for a further two weeks until the end of April.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> [CNN](#), April 8, 2020

<sup>8</sup> [Bureau of Immigration](#), March 12, 2020

<sup>9</sup> [Channel News Asia](#), March 20, 2020

<sup>10</sup> [The Economic Times](#), April 8, 2020

### Indonesia bans foreign arrivals

To curb the spread of COVID-19, foreign visitors are restricted from entering or transiting through Indonesian territory.<sup>11</sup> Exemptions apply to airline and maritime crews, diplomats, people involved in medical or essential work, and holders of temporary and permanent stay permits. All Indonesians returning to the country must hold a health alert card issued by their departure country and undertake a mandatory 14-day self-quarantine at home.

Indonesia's borders, international airports and seaports remain open for foreign travelers leaving the country, but they are closed to transiting passengers. Indonesia has also closed its land borders with Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste.

### Japan begins partial lockdown

From March 9, Japan suspended visa or visa waivers for visitors arriving from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and South Korea. All arrivals from these countries, including Japanese nationals, are quarantined for 14 days. These measures were to remain in place until the end of March and would be periodically reviewed.

Following a sharp rise in COVID-19 cases, on April 7, Japan's prime minister declared a month-long state of emergency.<sup>12</sup> It will last until May 6 and initially applies to Tokyo and six other prefectures; Chiba, Kanagawa, Saitama, Osaka, Hyogo and Fukuoka. Prefectural governors can call on residents to stay at home and for non-essential businesses to close. They will rely on self-restraint rather than penalties to encourage people to keep their travel to a minimum.

### Malaysia closes borders for four weeks

Starting March 18, Malaysia's government placed the country on a movement control order until March 31.<sup>13</sup> Under the order, foreign travelers are barred from entering the country, while Malaysian citizens may not travel abroad. Anyone returning from abroad must undergo a health inspection and a 14-day self-quarantine. Before the end of March, the government extended the lockdown for a further two weeks until April 14.<sup>14</sup>

### Philippines bans foreign nationals and introduces domestic restrictions

The Filipino government has introduced a travel ban for all foreign nationals arriving from countries recording local transmissions of COVID-19 coronavirus. It has also implemented a short-term ban on domestic air travel, following the expansion of a "community quarantine" from metropolitan Manila across the Luzon island group from March 17 until April 14.

### Singapore implements circuit breaking lockdown

From March 4, all new visitors with a recent travel history to Iran, northern Italy or South Korea were barred from visiting or transiting through Singapore. The ban was extended on March 16 to include travelers arriving from France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

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<sup>11</sup> [Directorate General of Immigration](#), March 31, 2020

<sup>12</sup> [The Guardian](#), April 7, 2020

<sup>13</sup> [Business Traveller](#), March 17, 2020

<sup>14</sup> [Bangkok Post](#), March 25, 2020

Since March 20, all travelers entering Singapore (including residents) have been issued a 14-day Stay Home Notice (SHN).<sup>15</sup> They must prove where they will stay during quarantine. This could be a hotel booking covering the entire period or a place of residence.

All short-term visitors, who are nationals of any Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) country, must submit information on their health to the local Singapore Overseas Mission before traveling. The submission must be approved by Singapore's Ministry of Health (MOH) pre-trip.

On April 3, MOH announced a "circuit breaker" to minimize the further spread of COVID-19.<sup>16</sup> This amounts to an elevated set of safe distancing measures. Measures include the closure from April 7 until May 4 of many workplaces, schools, recreation venues and non-essential shops.

### South Korea suspends visa waivers

In response to Japan's suspension of visas for South Korean tourists, on March 9, South Korea's ministry of foreign affairs increased its travel alert to Japan to level 2, advising citizens to reconsider travel. At the same time, it stopped issuing 90-day tourism visa waivers for Japanese travelers and cancelled all visas already issued.

On April 8, South Korea's government temporarily suspended visa waivers for citizens of countries that have imposed travel bans on South Koreans.<sup>17</sup> The move affects travelers from at least 88 countries, including Australia, Canada, France and Russia. The government wants to retain the country's openness but decided to strengthen travel restrictions under the principles of reciprocity, which may complicate the process of lifting them in the future. It also plans to impose restrictions on foreigners traveling to South Korea for non-essential visits.

### Sri Lanka bans all overseas arrivals

From midnight local time (18:30 GMT) on March 16, people arriving from the U.K. or transiting through it were banned from entering Sri Lanka. On March 19, the Sri Lankan Government extended the ban to everyone traveling to the country.<sup>18</sup> The ban initially ran until midnight (local time) on April 7, but was then extended until further notice.<sup>19</sup> Passengers can still depart from or transit through Colombo airport, although transit times are restricted to not more than six hours.

### Taiwan bans foreign passengers

Taiwan introduced a ban on foreign arrivals from March 19. Exceptions were made for foreign residents of Taiwan, as well as those on diplomatic or official business. Those exempted from the travel ban must observe a 14-day self-quarantine upon arrival.

On March 24, Taiwan applied the ban to transiting passengers as well and extended its duration from April 7 until April 30.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> [Singapore Tourism Board](#), March 18, 2020

<sup>16</sup> [Ministry of Health](#), Singapore, April 3, 2020

<sup>17</sup> [Jakarta Post](#), April 8, 2020

<sup>18</sup> [Malaysia Airlines](#), March 18, 2020

<sup>19</sup> [SriLankan Airlines](#), March 29, 2020

<sup>20</sup> [Business Traveller](#), April 2, 2020

### Thailand imposes state of emergency

Thailand initially suspended its visa exemption policy for travelers from Hong Kong, Italy and South Korea. Visa on arrival was also stopped for 18 other countries: Bulgaria, Bhutan, China, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, India, Kazakhstan, Malta, Mexico, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan and Vanuatu.<sup>21</sup>

On March 24, Thailand's government approved a one-month state of emergency from March 26, allowing it to impose stricter measures to control COVID-19.<sup>22</sup> The government can now implement curfews, censor the media, disperse gatherings and deploy the military.

### Vietnam blocks foreign travelers

From March 15, Vietnam refused entry to foreign nationals if during the previous 14 days they had been to the U.K. or any Schengen country, even in transit. It planned to enforce the restriction for 30 days.

Starting March 18, Vietnam stopped issuing new visas to all foreign travelers.<sup>23</sup> The restriction applies to all arrivals from all countries and territories, except travelers eligible for visa waivers, including overseas Vietnamese and people entering the country for special reasons, such as experts and highly skilled workers. Anyone still allowed to enter the country must present an official document confirming they are free of COVID-19 coronavirus.

The suspension does not apply to diplomats and government officials. Any traveler arriving from the U.S., Europe and Southeast Asia will be sent to medical camps for a 14-day quarantine.

## Europe

On March 18, EU leaders agreed to ban travelers from outside the bloc for 30 days with immediate effect.<sup>24</sup> It prevents all non-EU nationals from visiting the EU, except long-term residents, family members of EU nationals and diplomats, cross-border and healthcare workers, and people transporting goods. Although they are not EU members, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland are expected to apply the ban, too.<sup>25</sup> The U.K. and Ireland were also invited to join the program.

The EU recognizes that it is crucial to resolve the issue of closed borders between Schengen area countries, as too many people are stranded away from home.

### Czech Republic and Slovakia close their borders

After declaring a 30-day state of emergency, the Czech Republic closed its borders to travelers from 15 countries: Austria, Belgium, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the U.K.<sup>26</sup> Neighboring country Slovakia also stopped all international travel. Its airports (Bratislava and Kosice) and international bus and train travel have all been affected.

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<sup>21</sup> [Independent](#), March 15, 2020

<sup>22</sup> [ABC News](#), March 24

<sup>23</sup> [VN Express](#), March 17, 2020

<sup>24</sup> [BBC](#), March 18, 2020

<sup>25</sup> [Breaking Travel News](#), March 18, 2020

<sup>26</sup> [Independent](#), March 15, 2020

### Denmark advises against travel abroad

On March 13, the Danish Foreign Ministry advised Danes to avoid all unnecessary travel abroad until April 13.<sup>27</sup> It also recommended that travelers already abroad should return home as soon as possible.

### Estonia closes borders to foreign travelers

From March 17, only citizens, residents and people visiting families could travel to Estonia. Anyone transiting through a high-risk country had to self-quarantine for 14 days. Belgium, China, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, Norway, Singapore and Sweden were among the countries considered to be high-risk.

### France introduces restrictions

From March 14, France implemented restrictions aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19. These included closing restaurants, cafes, cinemas and nightclubs, but could be extended to include essential businesses, such as food stores, chemists, banks and petrol stations. People were also asked to reduce their travel.

### Germany closes most borders

Germany closed its borders with France, Austria, Denmark, Luxembourg and Switzerland on March 16. Germany also has borders with the Netherlands, Poland and the Czech Republic; there is no suggestion that these were closed.

The restrictions did not affect the flow of goods and commerce. Commuters could continue to cross the borders.<sup>28</sup> Germans and residents from the five countries could also cross the border to return home.

The German government discouraged its citizens from traveling in general, to reduce the risk of becoming stranded in a foreign country.

### Ireland expands travel advisory

From March 14, Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs advised against all non-essential travel to the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Malta, Poland and Slovakia.<sup>29</sup> The government previously warned against non-essential travel to Spain, all travel to Italy and exercising caution when visiting other EU countries.

### Italy may extend but relax restrictions

The Italian government restricted movement across the entire country to halt the spread of coronavirus, as the number of confirmed cases doubled in less than one week.<sup>30</sup> Public gatherings and sports events were cancelled. Italian citizens were advised to stay at home, with movement within the country restricted to people with a valid work or family reason for traveling.

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<sup>27</sup> [Bloomberg](#), March 13, 2020

<sup>28</sup> [DW.com](#), March 16, 2020

<sup>29</sup> [Irish Times](#), March 14, 2020

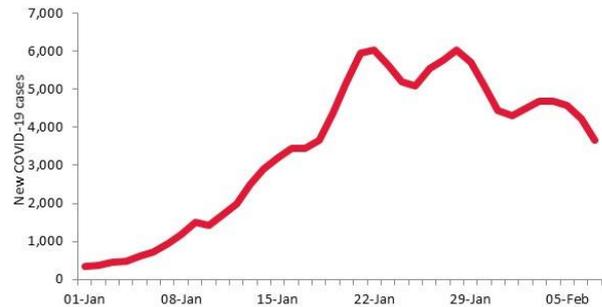
<sup>30</sup> [Business Travel News](#), March 10, 2020

From March 13, the Italian government implemented strict travel restrictions for all flights until April 3. In a normal week, some 95 scheduled airlines operate flights from Italy, providing nearly 1.6 million seats to destinations around the world.<sup>31</sup>

Ryanair, Italy's largest scheduled airline, suspended all Italian domestic services from midnight March 11, and international services from midnight March 13. It had planned to resume flights from April 8. Ryanair and its Austrian subsidiary Lauda operated 2,692 weekly services to Italy in February 2020.<sup>32</sup>

Italy has been under a national lockdown due to end on April 13. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte is believed to be preparing to extend this by two weeks.<sup>33</sup> But with the number of new daily COVID-19 cases starting to fall (Figure 2), the lockdown may be relaxed, with some companies and shops allowed to reopen. Any easing of restrictions may happen on a regional basis, and they may not start on any scale until early May.

Figure 2: New COVID-19 cases in Italy – 3-day moving average



Source: WHO

### Latvia suspends international flights

Latvia's government suspended international travel from March 17, except for Latvian nationals and residents returning to the country, or foreign nationals seeking to leave Latvia. As a result, local airline Air Baltic announced the suspension of all flights from Latvia and Estonia from March 17 until April 14.

### Malta expands travel ban

From March 11, Malta extended its travel ban to include France, Germany, Spain and Switzerland.<sup>34</sup> It had earlier imposed restrictions on travel to and from Italy. Arrivals from the five countries had to observe mandatory 14-day quarantines or face a €1,000 fine (approx. \$US1,115).

### Norway implements travel ban

After reporting its biggest spike in confirmed COVID-19 cases, Norway intensified its efforts to limit the spread of the virus.<sup>35</sup> These included barring travelers from China's Hubei province, South Korea, Iran, Italy and Austria's Tyrol region.

From March 16, Norway temporarily closed its airports and ports as part of wide-ranging restrictions aimed at tackling the spread of COVID-19. In practice, this meant that no one was allowed to travel to the country. The government arranged for Norwegians to return via Denmark, even though the latter country closed its borders on March 14. Copenhagen airport had remained open to transfer traffic and for Danish nationals.

<sup>31</sup> [OAG](#), March 10, 2020

<sup>32</sup> [Cirium](#), March 10, 2020

<sup>33</sup> [Bloomberg](#), April 9, 2020

<sup>34</sup> [Times of Malta](#), March 11, 2020

<sup>35</sup> [Bloomberg](#), March 11, 2020

### Poland closes its borders to foreign travelers

Poland closed its borders to all foreigners for 10 days from March 15. Only Polish citizens can enter the country, subject to a mandatory 14-day quarantine. As a result, all international passenger and rail connections have been suspended. The country subsequently suspended domestic flights, too.

### Portugal tightens containment measures

Portugal declared a state of emergency on March 18.<sup>36</sup> The government tightened containment measures on April 9 through April 13 to limit movement during the Easter holiday weekend. Airports have been closed to all passenger travel and movement between municipalities has been banned.

### Romania enforces strict lockdown

Romania declared a 30-day state of emergency on March 16. To further slow the spread of coronavirus, the government enforced a strict lockdown from March 25.<sup>37</sup> People can now only leave home to go to work, with a signed note from their employers, and to shop for food. People over the age of 65 must stay at home.

### Russia rolls out restrictions and a holiday

After a recent acceleration in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases, Russia temporarily banned foreigners from traveling to the country. Russia limited flights to the U.S., U.K. and the U.A.E. from March 20.<sup>38</sup> The government considered imposing further measures, including banning large gatherings, closing schools and encouraging working from home, which have already been introduced in some cities, including Moscow and St. Petersburg.

From March 27, the Russian government suspended international flights to and from the country. Repatriation flights are permitted.

On March 30, quarantine regulations were introduced in Moscow, largely aimed at making people work and stay at home. But they do not prevent Muscovites from leaving the city or Russians from elsewhere visiting Moscow.<sup>39</sup> The measures also apply across most Russian provinces, and a holiday has been declared across the entire country for the month of April. Long-distance (domestic) travel has so far not been subjected to any restrictions.

### Spain under extended lockdown

The Spanish government declared a state of emergency on March 14, which included restrictions on movement throughout the country from March 16 for 15 days. On April 9, Spain's prime minister asked parliament to extend the lockdown until April 25.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> [Bloomberg](#), April 9, 2020

<sup>37</sup> [Reuters](#), March 24, 2020

<sup>38</sup> [The Moscow Times](#), March 19, 2020

<sup>39</sup> [Hotel News Now](#), April 8, 2020

<sup>40</sup> [Bloomberg](#), April 9, 2020

### U.K. advises against foreign travel indefinitely

On March 17, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) advised British nationals to avoid all non-essential foreign travel.<sup>41</sup> On April 6, it amended its advice, indicating it applied “indefinitely.”<sup>42</sup>

The U.K. entered a three-week lockdown due to end on April 14. Government ministers are now discussing a two-week extension.

## Latin America

### Argentina extends quarantine

Argentina suspended all flights from Europe, the U.S., China, Japan, South Korea and Iran. Non-residents traveling through these countries will be barred from entry.

Argentina’s government introduced a nationwide quarantine on March 17. On April 9, it extended the duration of the quarantine for a second time; this time until April 23.<sup>43</sup>

### Bolivia suspends all international flights until April 18

After banning travelers arriving from China, Italy, South Korea and Spain, Bolivia suspended direct flights to Europe from March 14, extending the ban to all international flights from March 17.

After declaring a national health emergency, the Bolivian government implemented a mandatory nationwide quarantine until April 4. On April 7, it extended the suspension of international flights until April 18.<sup>44</sup>

### Brazil bans citizens from some countries

On March 19, Brazilian authorities announced a ban on citizens from certain countries from entering the country.<sup>45</sup> Those banned include citizens of the European Union, China, Japan, Australia, Malaysia and South Korea, but not travelers from the U.S. Brazil’s Justice Ministry selected the countries based on risk. The ban will be in place until April 23, when it will be reviewed.

Brazil has since applied a ban to all foreign travelers entering the country via its land borders until April 15, and until April 30 for those arriving by water or air transportation.<sup>46</sup>

Soon after the federal government’s March 20 declaration of a state of calamity until December 31, Sao Paulo, Brazil’s biggest state, did the same, making it easier to take action to halt the spread of COVID-19.<sup>47</sup> On March 24, the state commenced a quarantine until April 30, closing schools, non-essential stores, bars and restaurant, events and hotels.<sup>48</sup> Across the country, 24 of Brazil’s 27 states have

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<sup>41</sup> [BBC](#), March 17, 2020

<sup>42</sup> [Breaking Travel News](#), April 4, 2020

<sup>43</sup> [GardaWorld](#), April 9, 2020

<sup>44</sup> [GardaWorld](#), April 7, 2020

<sup>45</sup> [Reuters](#), March 19, 2020

<sup>46</sup> [WorldAware](#), April 2, 2020

<sup>47</sup> [The Brazilian Report](#), March 20, 2020

<sup>48</sup> [Bloomberg](#), March 21, 2020

introduced strict social isolation measures. The states of Mato Grosso, Rondonia and Roraima are reported to have relaxed some restrictions.<sup>49</sup>

### Chile prohibits all international travel

Chile entered a 90-day National State of Catastrophe on March 18.<sup>50</sup> As part of this government-mandated confinement period, it has prohibited all international travel by air, road, sea and river transportation.

### Colombia extends ban to all international arrivals

Colombia initially barred travelers who had visited Asia or Europe in the past 14 days from visiting the country. Residents returning from these regions were required to self-isolate for 14 days.

From March 23, the Colombian government introduced a 30-day ban on international passenger flights arriving at any of the country's airports.<sup>51</sup> The ban does not differentiate between Colombian and foreign citizens. The measure also includes international connections, even if no passengers board or leave the aircraft in Colombia.

### Ecuador closes borders

Ecuador initially required visitors arriving from certain countries to self-isolate for 14 days. The list included: China, Denmark, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the U.S. (Washington, New York, Massachusetts and California). The restrictions applied to anyone transiting through any of these countries.

From March 16, the government suspended all international arrivals by air and barred all foreign nationals from entering the country by air, land or sea.<sup>52</sup> Ecuadorian nationals were given one day to return home, with returning journeys banned from March 17.

### El Salvador imposes tough restrictions

Before it had even recorded its first case of COVID-19, El Salvador imposed some tough controls to curb the spread of the virus.<sup>53</sup> The government banned all foreign visitors to the country (except diplomats) arriving via all ports. El Salvadorans returning home must quarantine for 30 days.

### Guatemala bans European and Asian arrivals

Guatemala banned citizens from Europe, Iran, China, South Korea and North Korea from entering the country from March 12.

### Honduras restricts entry

Honduras is restricting entry of travelers from Europe, China, Iran and South Korea via air or ground transport.

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<sup>49</sup> [The Guardian](#), April 1, 2020

<sup>50</sup> [Gov.UK](#), foreign travel advice

<sup>51</sup> Cirium, March 20, 2020

<sup>52</sup> [GardaWorld](#), March 15, 2020

<sup>53</sup> [Bloomberg](#), March 11, 2020

### Paraguay cancels European flights

All flights to Europe were cancelled between March 13 and March 26. The ban only directly affected Air Europa's five-weekly flights from Asuncion to Madrid.

Paraguay has implemented a quarantine, which the government has extended until the middle of April.

### Peru suspends long-haul flights

As part of a government-mandated 15-day confinement period, all international passenger traffic by air, road, sea and river transportation was prohibited. LATAM Airlines and Viva Air suspended all flights from March 17 to March 30, although Sky Airline Peru continued to sell domestic tickets.

Peru has since entered a state of emergency, which was extended on April 8 until April 26.<sup>54</sup>

## Middle East

### Iran bans intercity travel

With many Iranians not following a stay-at-home policy, the authorities introduced a ban on intercity travel from March 26.<sup>55</sup> To prevent a second outbreak in Iran, the closure of schools, universities, public spaces and sports centers has been extended.

### Israel bans travel

From March 6, Israel required arriving foreign travelers, who had visited Austria, France, Germany, Spain and Switzerland within the last 14 days, to provide a residential address for a 14-day self-isolation. Without proof, entry into the country was denied. Israeli citizens returning from these countries had to self-isolate.<sup>56</sup> By March 9, all arrivals had to self-isolate. Visitors already in the country on that date were given 72 hours to leave.<sup>57</sup>

On April 7, the Israeli government locked the country down, imposing a short-term intercity travel ban until April 10. Public transportation and international flights have been closed until April 12. an intercity travel ban.

### Jordan introduces limited travel restrictions

Travel restrictions introduced by the Jordanian Government prevent non-Jordanian passengers, who visited Italy, China, South Korea and Iran in the previous 14 days, from entering Jordan.<sup>58</sup>

On April 9, Jordan imposed a 48-hour nationwide curfew just two weeks after relaxing a lockdown the government had earlier introduced in March.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> [Republic World](#), April 9, 2020

<sup>55</sup> [GardaWorld](#), March 26, 2020

<sup>56</sup> [easyJet](#), March 12, 2020

<sup>57</sup> UK Government, Foreign Travel Advice, [Israel](#), March 12, 2020

<sup>58</sup> [easyJet](#), March 12, 2020

<sup>59</sup> [Gulf News](#), April 9, 2020

### Kuwait's government halts all air services

Kuwait was the first country to suspend all air travel to and from Japan and Singapore, implementing a ban on Feb. 25.

From March 13, Kuwait's government is suspending all air services to and from the emirate. The suspension remains in effect "until further notice." Only Kuwaiti citizens and their immediate relatives will be permitted to fly into the Gulf state. Local airlines Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways are suspending all flights.

### Saudi Arabia expands travel ban

On March 12, the Saudi government temporarily suspended flights and travel by its citizens and expatriates to a number of markets, including the European Union, Switzerland, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Philippines, South Sudan, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti and Somalia. It also suspended entry to arrivals from these countries. Citizens and residents in the affected countries were given 72 hours to return to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has also suspended all traffic through land crossings with Jordan.

The restrictions exclude health workers currently in Saudi Arabia from the Philippines and India, and evacuation, shipping and trade trips taking necessary precautions.

Prior to these new restrictions, Saudi Arabia had already banned travel to 19 countries, including neighboring states.<sup>60</sup>

### United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) suspends all flights

Since Feb. 25, the U.A.E. has banned all air travel to and from Iran.

The Dubai Health Authority (DHA) conducts a COVID-19 test on all travelers arriving from Beijing, Beirut, Rome, Milan, Venice, Bologna, Bangkok and Phuket if Dubai is their final destination. While passengers transiting through Dubai International airport are not tested, they are still subject to temperate screening before being allowed to board connecting flights.<sup>61</sup>

From March 17, the U.A.E. temporarily suspended issuing entry visas to travelers from all countries except holders of diplomatic passports and passport holders from 45 countries for whom visas are granted on arrival.<sup>62</sup> Travelers in this group are subject to additional medical checks on arrival. The list of 45 countries includes most European countries (with some limits on Italy), as well as Australia, Brunei, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea and the U.S.

The U.A.E.'s National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority (NCEMA) and General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) subsequently suspended passenger flights to, from and through the country from March 25 for two weeks. The suspension affects major global hubs Dubai and Abu Dhabi as well as Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah airports.

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<sup>60</sup> [Gulf News](#), March 12, 2020

<sup>61</sup> [Emirates](#), March 12, 2020

<sup>62</sup> Which School Advisor, March 15, 2020

From March 26, U.A.E. residents were ordered to stay at home for two-three days to allow the authorities to sterilize all public transport services, including Dubai Metro, trams, taxis, buses and all other public or private spaces and roads.<sup>63</sup>

## North America

### U.S. restricts entry from China and Iran

Early in February, foreign nationals who had visited mainland China or Iran within the past 14 days were barred from entering the U.S.<sup>64</sup> American citizens, lawful permanent residents and their families, who had visited either country, were required to undergo health screenings at one of 11 U.S. airports. A 14-day quarantine was required in some cases.

### U.S. imposes European travel ban

The U.S. Department of State had issued a Global Level 3 Health Advisory, recommending U.S. citizens reconsider travel abroad due to the global impact of COVID-19.<sup>65</sup>

Effective from midnight on March 13, the U.S. implemented a ban on all travel from Europe for the next 30 days. The restrictions will be adjusted “subject to conditions on the ground.” The restrictions did not initially apply to travel to and from the U.K., but still affected U.K. residents and all other travelers who had visited the Schengen area within 14 days of departure to the U.S. All foreign nationals traveling to a Schengen country within 14 days of U.S. arrival were to be denied permission to travel (by the airline).

The initial ban **applied only to foreign nationals** who have been in certain European countries covered by the Schengen agreement for 14 days before their scheduled arrival in the U.S. Non-EU countries, including Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland are also part of Schengen, so would be included in the restrictions. Other European countries outside of Schengen include Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine. While Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City are not members of the visa-free zone, these states have opened their borders to it, so should be included in the U.S. restrictions.<sup>66</sup> The Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands are special members of the EU and are part of the Schengen Zone, even though they are islands.

The ban **did not apply** to U.S. citizens, permanent residents or immediate relatives of citizens. Any U.S. citizen or lawful U.S. permanent resident returning to the U.S, having visited a Schengen country within the previous 14 days, had to arrive through an approved airport:<sup>67</sup>

- Atlanta: Hartsfield-Jackson Atlantic International Airport (ATL)
- Boston: Boston Logan International Airport (BOS)
- Chicago: Chicago O’Hare International Airport (ORD)
- Dallas/Fort Worth: Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW)
- Detroit: Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW)
- Honolulu: Daniel K. Inouye International Airport (HNL)

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<sup>63</sup> [Gulf News](#), March 26, 2020

<sup>64</sup> [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

<sup>65</sup> [U.S. Department of State](#), March 11, 2020

<sup>66</sup> [Schengen Visa Info](#)

<sup>67</sup> [American Airlines](#), March 14, 2020

- Los Angeles: Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)
- Miami: Miami International Airport (MIA)
- New York City: John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK)
- Newark, N.J.: Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR)
- San Francisco: San Francisco International Airport (SFO)
- Seattle: Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA)
- Washington, D.C.: Washington-Dulles International Airport (IAD)

Nearly 40 airlines were operating 560 daily return flights between the U.S. and mainland Europe, equating to nearly 17,000 monthly flights and 4.8 million seats.<sup>68</sup> U.S. airlines were already scaling back services to some European cities, including Milan, Rome, Barcelona, Madrid and Paris.

The inevitable drop in demand resulted in fewer transatlantic flights. As the ban relates to travel and not flights, air services could continue, but likely at a much-reduced level. Travelers trying to get back from North America to a Schengen country could fly via Canada, the U.K., Ireland or even Russia and Turkey.

Under the EC261 regulation, travelers may have been due up to €600 (approx. \$US617) in compensation if their transatlantic flight was delayed or cancelled. But it is unclear if the executive order from the U.S. president allows airlines to declare *force majeure*, i.e., circumstances beyond their control, which could result in zero compensation. If due, compensation applied to all flights departing from the EU, but only to those operated by EU carriers back to the EU. Even if passengers had purchased a ticket from an EU airline, they should check that the actual flight (from the U.S.) is operated by an EU and not a U.S. carrier.

The U.S. government suggested it might allow travel to resume earlier than 30 days, should the situation change materially.

### U.S. extends European travel ban to U.K. and Ireland

On March 14, the U.S. announced an extension of its European travel ban to include travelers arriving from the U.K. and Ireland. The ban was effective from midnight EST on March 16, but as with the Schengen area ban, U.S. citizens and legal residents could still return home via 13 specified gateway airports. Foreign nationals who had traveled to the U.K. or Ireland within the last 14 days were denied permission to travel to the U.S.

### U.S. warns against international travel

On March 19, the U.S. Department of State raised its travel warning to Level 4, its highest possible level.<sup>69</sup> The advisory carried a “Do Not Travel” recommendation and urged U.S. citizens living abroad in countries still operating international flights to return home. Those remaining abroad had to prepare to remain outside the U.S. for an indefinite period.

### U.S. and Canada suspend non-essential transborder travel

On March 18, Canada banned arrivals by non-Canadian citizens. Permanent Canadian residents, the immediate family members of Canadian citizens, diplomats and aircrew were unaffected, but were expected to self-isolate for 14-days upon their return. U.S. citizens were initially excluded from the ban.

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<sup>68</sup> Cirium, March 12, 2020

<sup>69</sup> Cirium, March, 19, 2020

From March 18, the U.S./Canada border closed temporarily to non-essential traffic.<sup>70</sup> Essential cross-border travel and trade can continue. There is no set timeframe for how long the closure will last.

### U.S. and Mexico limit cross-border movement

On March 20, the U.S. and Mexico agreed to restrict “non-essential” travel between the two countries.<sup>71</sup>

## Southwest Pacific

### Australia introduces limited ban

Australia initially imposed travel bans on foreign nationals arriving from China, South Korea, Iran and Italy, and required Australians and permanent residents returning from these countries self-isolate for 14 days.<sup>72</sup> Citizens were also asked to reconsider any overseas travel. From March 20, it expanded the ban to cover all foreign travelers, applying to all non-citizens and non-residents.<sup>73</sup> Australians could still return from overseas but had to self-isolate for 14 days. New Zealanders living in Australia as Australian residents are unaffected by the restrictions. Visa holders already in Australia can remain in the country.

On March 22, Australia tightened restrictions on domestic travel, immediately recommending against all non-essential travel, particularly interstate and over longer distances.<sup>74</sup> At this stage, the ban is not intended to prevent people going about normal daily activities, like shopping and traveling to work.

### New Zealand bans foreign arrivals

New Zealand introduced a travel ban on all overseas arrivals by non-citizens and non-residents from March 19. Exemptions include spouses and children of citizens and residents still abroad, key health workers and people traveling for humanitarian reasons.<sup>75</sup> It also excludes people bringing in freight on ship or planes.<sup>76</sup> The ban doesn't apply to Australians living in New Zealand as New Zealand residents.

Starting March 25, New Zealand entered a four-week lockdown to halt the spread of COVID-19.<sup>77</sup> Air travel is only be available to people undertaking essential services or for carrying freight.

### Note

The COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, and the situation is changing on almost an hourly basis. The information presented in this report represents the latest view as at April 9, 2020.

Do you have questions or comments regarding this report? Please email [mike.eggleson@bcdtravel.co.uk](mailto:mike.eggleson@bcdtravel.co.uk) to share your thoughts.

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<sup>70</sup> [BBC](#), March 19, 2020

<sup>71</sup> [BBC](#), March 20, 2020

<sup>72</sup> [Independent](#), March 15, 2020

<sup>73</sup> [ABC](#), March 19, 2020

<sup>74</sup> [The Chronicle](#), March 22, 2020

<sup>75</sup> [NPR](#), March 19, 2020

<sup>76</sup> [The Guardian](#), March 19, 2020

<sup>77</sup> [Cirium](#), March 23, 2020