

# WORLDKIND

DESIGN ~ JOURNEY ~ LEARN



*If you need to travel, how can you keep yourself safe and minimize the risks of contracting Covid-19?*

## SHOULD WE TRAVEL NOW?

Clearly, the safest place to be is at home. We have greater control over our environment and our cleanliness. But, of course, in some situations you will have to travel for family reasons or because of work obligations. You may also have travel plans that were made in the hope that things would be “normal” by now, and now you may be facing tough decisions about whether to go ahead.

Ideally, make sure you are traveling at least two weeks after the date of your second vaccination. You should make sure that you are feeling as healthy as possible and have all recommended vaccinations (and malaria prophylaxis, if required) for your trip. If you are at increased clinical risk, consider whether your trip is necessary and whether your presence is required in person. If you need to travel, take all precautions to ensure your safety.

Travel has the potential to be more expensive than “normal,” with possible delays, quarantines, and testing. Prepare for rapid developments in the global situation and changes to rules even while you are away.

Check your government’s travel warnings. You may not be permitted to visit countries that your government considers to be high risk.

Local hospitals at your destination may be stretched beyond capacity, so if you need medical care for any reason (not just coronavirus) your access to treatment may be compromised.

Cruises continue to experience a higher rate of transmission than land travel, due to close proximity and multiple households combining. This is despite their high level of precautions and staff working hard to keep everyone safe.

Finally, please remember that the worst-case scenario is not the financial outlay for quarantine or the inconvenience of travel delays. The possibility of contracting Covid-19 and suffering a severe infection with lasting consequences remains a serious risk.

## CONTENTS

Immigration issues

How to prepare

- documents
- entry rules
- health
- insurance

Flying Safely

- at the airport
- on board
- arrival

While you're away

Returning Home

## CAN YOU GET IN?

Check out government resources to find out more about the risks of visiting particular countries. See the [US State Department's Country-Specific Advice](#), [UK Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office](#), and the [Center for Disease Control's travel advice pages](#).

Check that the destination will let you in - just because your government considers them safe, this does not guarantee that they will allow you to enter the country. Some will allow essential travel - with their own definition of what this entails - but not leisure travel. Some companies may let you book, assuming you know what you're doing, without warning you about these restrictions, so make sure you have done your homework! Be aware that your destination may change status while you are away and change the requirements for your return.

You will almost certainly need to provide proof of your vaccination status. Some government or health service apps are acceptable, but you are likely to need a paper record at some point on your journey too.



## DOCUMENTS

If you need visas or a new passport, allow extra time as new procedures mean that things are not happening as quickly as usual. Be prepared for extra costs associated with fast-tracking your application if you need to sort things out quickly. Check out [our video](#) on ordering your first US passport if this applies to you.

If you are traveling in the EU and are an EU citizen, make sure you have your up-to-date European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) so you can receive treatment. If you are a UK citizen, you will need the new Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). Remember that these entitle you to use public services but do not cover quarantine costs or travel delays so they do not remove the need to have comprehensive travel insurance.



## QUARANTINE AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Do you need to quarantine once you get there? And will this be a controlled quarantine program, such as Britain's, where you are assigned a hotel quarantine and must pay a considerable amount of money for it? Some countries only require quarantine if you are not fully vaccinated or if you cannot provide a negative test. You may need to use an approved service for the tests and it will be at your own expense.

You will almost certainly need an approved negative test within 72 hours of your journey. In most cases this is prior to departure, but check that it is not within 72 hours of your landing time.

Check if the testing company is prone to delays and find out if your insurance or travel company will allow rescheduling in the event of a test not coming back in time. Proof of Covid-19 infection may also be accepted; if you are consistently testing positive after a prior infection, there may be a time-limit on how long this will be a problem. However, you should not travel if you are currently symptomatic.

You may have arrival paperwork to complete in advance of your departure, so check government websites for your destination. [Here](#) is Britain's arrival documentation, for example.

## HEALTH PREP

Know the key symptoms of Covid-19 (high temperature, persistent cough, loss of taste or smell) and consider traveling with your own thermometer to monitor your temperature.

Don't fly if you have symptoms - and you are likely to be screened out at the airport anyway.

Take extra supplies of any medications you need, along with your prescription in case you are stuck overseas and need more.

Take extra masks. If you can, take supplies to allow you to wash yours while away- you can take some detergent to wash in a sink if you're unlikely to have laundry access.

Make sure you take (and buy) hand sanitizer. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol is recommended.

## INSURANCE

Make sure you have comprehensive travel insurance and that it covers your needs.

Traveling at all at the moment is a risk. Not all scenarios may be insured, so make sure you are familiar and comfortable with the exclusions.

Even if you are covered, you may find yourself in a situation where you need to pay upfront for something that will later be refunded, so check your terms and conditions and make sure you have access to funds or a credit card.

Prepare for delays and for extending your trip should you have to quarantine after a positive test.



# FLYING SAFELY: WHAT TO EXPECT

## AT THE AIRPORT

You will need to have a ticket to enter most airports. If you need assistance to get inside, contact the airport disability services directly to find out whether they will allow someone to accompany you to an assistance desk, or if they will send someone out to meet you.

As with most places now, you will need to wear a mask or an approved face covering at all times while you are inside the airport. This also applies to children beyond toddler-age (2 and upwards in the USA).

Contactless check-in may be available, even with touchless screen procedures. Your airline may also have remote agent services via an app or in-airport stations, to minimize contact, so it's a good idea to check their website and download their app if possible.

There will normally be additional shields to protect staff and passengers. Look out for social distancing marks on the floor to help show consideration for other passengers, and be aware that there may be new routes or one-way systems in operation.

Practice social distancing and be aware of your fellow travelers. Be aware that you may need to pause for temperature checks by remote scanner. Using hand sanitizing stations along your route will help to minimize the cross-contamination for you and other passengers.

There will be enhanced cleaning and sanitizing procedures at security checkpoints and throughout the airport. This does mean some parts of your journey through the airport may take longer, so be prepared for delays. You can help to minimize these delays by having all documentation to hand: passport, ticket, vaccination record and test results.

Use contactless payments wherever possible. You may need to book a table at airport cafes and restaurants, and check requirements for any lounges you may normally visit. Not all facilities will be open, so prepare to bring some snacks if you are concerned. It is safer to dine in at a restaurant where customers can remain seated and socially distanced than to take food away to eat unmasked where there is more foot traffic.



## ARRIVAL

Most airlines are disembarking row by row, to avoid crowding, so listen carefully to all instructions given by the cabin crew and ask for clarification if you are unsure.

It's not cheap, but some airlines have a baggage service so your luggage can be delivered separately to your destination, cutting out the waiting at baggage carousel. Check their website for their services. Many airline apps are bringing in baggage-tracking features, so you do not have to crowd around a baggage claim but can hang back until you know your bag is coming.



# FLYING SAFELY: WHAT TO EXPECT

## ON BOARD THE AIRCRAFT

Wear a face covering according to your airline's requirements - some airlines require specific medical masks, so check the rules in advance, and bring enough to change them every few hours (four-hourly changes are recommended for hygiene and comfort). Simple bandanas or masks with vents do not meet these standards.

The biggest risk is ill-fitting masks that do not fully protect your mouth and nose, so bring a comfortable fabric mask to place over it if you are struggling to get a tight fit. You will need to wear this at all times when not eating or drinking. Even then, you will be required to replace it between bites or sips if you eat delicately! Of course, if required to use an oxygen mask you will need to remove your face covering first.

Medical exemption to the mask requirement will most likely require you to apply for a certificate of exemption via your airline. If you do not do this and do not follow mask requirements you will not be permitted to fly, so check carefully.

Most commercial aircraft use HEPA filtration systems that completely renew the cabin air every six minutes and filter out viruses very effectively, including COVID-19, so the main risk onboard is close proximity to other travelers and surface contamination. A [Harvard study](#) confirms the low risk, especially in conjunction with other Covid safety protocols and in comparison to indoor dining or shopping. [U.S. Transportation Command \(USTRANSCOM\)](#) also published

[a report](#) that offers reassuring results on the exposure risk in common commercial aircraft, such as the Boeing 767 and 777. Using your overhead vent is advised as it limits the movement of air into your space, across rows.

Armrests and tray tables are the greatest risk, so you may want to bring wipes to clean these when you board. Airlines will, of course, include these in their enhanced cleaning procedures.

Some airlines are operating normally, but some may have a reduced drinks and food service, so check in advance if you need to bring your own supplies (and remember to buy drinks after your final security check or you will need to ditch the liquids!).

You will probably find that pillows and blankets are only provided if you request them, to avoid additional cleaning. Consider bringing your own travel pillow if you will want one.

Move around the cabin only when necessary, to visit the toilet, and avoid joining queues or squeezing past other passengers. Still, especially on long flights, flex your ankles and move your lower limbs to keep the blood flowing.





# WHILE YOU'RE AWAY

Observing good Covid hygiene is as important during travel as at home, if not more so when you are less in control of your environment. Wear a mask, observe social distancing, wash your hands regularly for at least twenty seconds, and carry hand sanitizer to use as needed. As far as possible, limit your time indoors without good ventilation.

Some countries do not have mask exemptions, regardless of reason. Be aware of this. Also remember that masking does not replace other measures, such as social distancing.

For internal travel, check the law of the land when it comes to Covid precautions on buses and trains locally, then decide if you feel comfortable taking public transportation. But avoid public transport wherever possible to minimize exposure to others in confined spaces. Other risky settings include busy nightclubs, swimming pools and gyms without a Covid protocol, elevators, and public

transport platforms. Avoiding busy areas at the busiest times - such as central train stations around rush hour - will help to decrease the risk.

Bear in mind that many hotels will have reduced meal services to allow them to minimize risks, such as closing buffet areas and operating a reservation system for dining. Services may be running at a reduced capacity to accommodate social distancing and additional cleaning measures, so planning ahead and reserving will be worthwhile.

The Department of State encourages all U.S. citizens to enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive security and health updates.

If you develop symptoms, isolate immediately, inform your accommodation provider and find out how to get tested locally. If you're in a malarial area or have traveled to a high-risk area for malaria in the past year, you may need to exclude malaria as a cause. You can check the International Society of Travel Medicine's online [Global Travel Clinic Directory](#) for help finding local medics.



## LINKS

[UK Foreign Office Advice](#)

[US State Department Covid-19 Country-Specific Advice](#)

[CDC guidelines](#)

[The Department of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#)

[UK Quarantine and testing booking](#)

[International Society of Travel Medicine's online Global Travel Clinic Directory](#)

[A great look at flying during the pandemic from the NY Times](#)

[A Harvard study on aircraft ventilation systems](#)

[USTRANSCOM report on aircraft exposure risk](#)

# RETURNING

You will most likely need to arrange an approved test prior to your return. This may involve taking a kit with you and performing a supervised test via video call with a doctor from home, or a medical centre at your destination. Check your airline and immigration requirements at home. You may also need to book a test shortly after your return.

If you're exposed/symptomatic, or your pre-return test is positive, you will need to follow the instructions of the local authorities and contact your travel provider and travel insurance provider to find out what help you are entitled to receive. This may involve quarantining, extending your stay, rescheduling transport, additional testing and any medical costs should your condition require further treatment. These costs will most likely not be covered by the terms and conditions of your travel booking and will need to be covered by insurance. If you are forced to extend your trip, remember to extend your airport parking or change return transfer bookings, contact pet sitters and inform anyone waiting for you at home.

If they change the rules while you are away, you may need to decide whether to curtail your trip or prepare for additional expenses related to quarantine. The rules may not only apply to your main or most recent destination, but may include any countries that you have travelled in over a determined period of time. This may include transit-only stops.

Will you need to quarantine upon your return? Will this be at home or in a mandated quarantine program? In the UK, if you return from a red list country you must quarantine in a hotel at the minimum cost of £1750. Home quarantine may involve a "test-to-release" system whereby you are allowed to leave quarantine after a negative test. If you can work remotely, this may make quarantining more feasible.

You will need all your documentation again to get back into your country, and prepare for delays at immigration.