



ALERTS

Omicron COVID-19 Variant Prompts U.S. To Suspend Travel From Eight South African Countries

December 2, 2021

Highlights

The U.S. suspends travel from certain South African countries

For fully vaccinated individuals, a viral test must still be conducted no more than three days (72 hours) prior to entry to the U.S.

For non-vaccinated individuals, a viral test must be conducted no more than one day (24 hours) prior to entry to the U.S.

The Republic of South Africa informed the World Health Organization (WHO) of a new B.1.1.529 (Omicron) variant of SARS-CoV-2, in late November. That notice led the Biden administration to [announce the suspension of travel and restricted entry](#) into the United States, which went into effect on Nov. 29, 2021.

At the moment, these travel restrictions appear to apply to individuals who were physically present – during the 14-day period preceding their entry or attempted entry into the United States – within the Republic of Botswana, the Kingdom of Eswatini, the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Republic of Malawi, the Republic of Mozambique, the Republic of Namibia, the Republic of South Africa, and the Republic of Zimbabwe.

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These travel restrictions do not apply to the following:

- U.S. citizens and their spouses
- Lawful permanent residents and their spouses
- U.S. military personnel, their spouses and children
- Parents or guardians of unmarried U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, and U.S. military personnel under the age of 21
- Siblings of U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, and U.S. military personnel under the age of 21, all of whom must be unmarried and under 21 years of age

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [provided clarification for international travelers](#), regardless of their vaccination status:

- **For fully vaccinated individuals**, a viral test must be conducted no more than three days (72 hours) before the flight's departure from the designated foreign country along with proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Individuals should bear in mind that the testing period may be reduced to 24 or 48 hours before boarding and should check with their respective airlines prior to departure.
- **For individuals who are not fully vaccinated**, a viral test must be conducted no more than one day (24 hours) before the flight's departure from the designated foreign country. A quarantine requirement is also under consideration.

Consideration should be taken for limiting international travel at present, since circumstances and requirements are changing rapidly.

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