

TRAVEL WEEKLY

Mexico rolls with U.S. one-day testing rule

As the omicron [Covid](#) variant makes its way around the world, travel requirements are starting to tighten up. On Dec. 6, the Biden administration announced that all air travelers, regardless of citizenship or vaccination status, are required to show a negative, pre-departure Covid-19 test taken the day before they board their flight to the U.S. What does this mean for travelers returning back to the U.S. from Mexico? We reached out to hotels and destinations to find out.

By and large, the biggest takeaway is that destinations and hotels are adapting to the new restrictions in order to continue to make Mexico a convenient and safe travel option for U.S. travelers.

According to Rodrigo Esponda, managing director for the Los Cabos Tourism Board, Los Cabos' various resorts, timeshares and villa rentals have all shifted to offering on-site testing for U.S. travelers. These accommodations have to be verified to make sure that they are safe, legitimate and that Covid-19 tests they offer will be accepted in the United States.

Similarly, travelers to Puerto Vallarta will find that resorts, medical centers and the airport have adapted. They, too, offer Covid testing with a rapid turnaround times required by the new policy.

"We are happy to report that the state [of Jalisco] remains green on Mexico's traffic light system for Covid-19 risk, with no restrictions in place for travelers visiting Puerto Vallarta and its surrounding areas," said Luis Villasenor, managing director of Puerto Vallarta Tourism Board. "Moreover, 81% of the

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state's population is now fully vaccinated, and shots are now available to all residents ages 14 to 17."

This is indicative of what destinations across Mexico are doing, as well, as evidenced from many of the hotel brands that are also ramping up testing facilities in order to accommodate the fast turnaround required. Hotels across Mexico have already been offering [on-site testing since the beginning of 2021](#), when the U.S. began requiring negative Covid-19 tests for reentry.

AIC Hotel Group, which includes the all-inclusive Hard Rock Hotels, Unico 2087 Hotel Riviera Maya and Nobu Hotel Los Cabos, have increased on-site testing capacity, staffing and availability in order to meet the mandated one-day testing window. All U.S. bookings of three nights or more will continue to include two complementary antigen tests per room, and additional tests can be purchased for \$50.

Palace Resorts continues to offer on-site complementary testing with stays of five nights or more. Should a traveler test positive, Palace Resorts will cover the quarantine costs.

Unfounded fears stoked by the airlines?

"Our partners in Mexico have done such an amazing job at handling these Covid tests that they haven't skipped a beat with this new one-day testing requirement," said Terrah Van Meter, travel advisor with Legacy Travel. "We have been keeping our clients informed and ensuring they feel comfortable."

Van Meter added, however, that the biggest issues have been with emails that her clients are receiving from the airlines.

"These emails are not specific enough to the trip at hand, and it causes the travelers to panic with fear their invested trip may go wrong, so we have been spending a lot of time reassuring them with the facts to calm their worries."

Esponda noted that Los Cabos has not seen any decrease in demand for travel to Los Cabos, even in the face of the new omicron Covid variant. However, some travelers in the United States are concerned about traveling to Mexico for fear of getting stuck there.

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This is a fear that is warranted, but also one that was true prior to the one-day testing mandate. Traveling anywhere is a risk right now. Should travelers test positive for Covid-19 while outside of the U.S., they will not be able to return home until they have recovered.

Those who test negative, however, should remain reassured that Mexico's tourist destinations are adapting in real time to meet the needs of U.S. travelers. There is no reason for travelers to Mexico to worry that they will be able to get their test results in time, especially if they are staying at a hotel or resort.