



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

26 May 2020

Dear partners,

Resumption of international air traffic to Cyprus

During this incredibly challenging time for our country, the Cyprus government reacted decisively in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Our strong will and focus has led to excellent epidemiological results, enabling us to gradually re-start our economy on May 4th. Since full containment of the virus is expected by 31st May, our hospitality establishments will open on 1st June, and international air travel will resume on 9th June.

Initially, all passengers arriving to Cyprus will be required to undertake an advance COVID-19 PCR test in the source country, within 72 hours prior to travel, but by 20th June travel restrictions will be lifted entirely for a number of countries. The list of countries is available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Ministry of Tourism websites, and will be updated on a weekly basis from this point forward. Our intention is to include as many countries as possible over the next few weeks, provided of course that their epidemiological status has improved accordingly.

As we look to the day after, and how best to welcome international visitors to our island again, a lot of new protocols have been put in place; protocols which will enable us to safely re-open the destination and avoid the need for quarantining of visitors. A mechanism has been established whereby regular inspections take place, to ensure the strict compliance of everyone involved in the tourism industry. Ultimately, we want visitors to feel safe during their trip, but also to enjoy their stay and experience normalcy when visiting our beautiful beaches, points of interest and infrastructure. A list of simple questions and answers, found attached, describes what can be expected during the travel process, but also during the time spent at the destination.

Cyprus is an island known for its open-air lifestyle, abundance of personal space, slow rhythm of life, clean air, and sparsely populated regions. Of course, what this crisis has also shown, is that it has an efficient and dependable health system too. Its ratio of intensive care units (i.e. critical care beds) per 100'000 population, is higher than the EU average, and one of the highest in the Mediterranean. Moreover, epidemiologically Cyprus has had one of the lowest ratios of coronavirus cases per capita in Europe, having tested more than 10% of its inhabitants. Very few countries worldwide, and especially in the Mediterranean, can boast about such statistics.

In conclusion, we are excited that, after having dealt responsibly with the challenges of COVID-19 in Cyprus, we are now in prime position to take care of our visitors too! With their health and safety in mind, we can't wait to welcome them to our beautiful 'escape'!

Sincerely yours

Nikos Christodoulides
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Cyprus

Yiannis Karousos
Minister of Transport
Republic of Cyprus

Savvas Perdios
Deputy Minister of Tourism
Republic of Cyprus

COVID-19 Destination Protocol - Cyprus

Entry into the country

Q1: *How will travelers be able to enter the country?*

- a. Source countries are divided into two categories (A and B) based on internationally available epidemiological data. As of 20th June, persons flying from Category A countries face no restrictions when traveling to Cyprus; people traveling from Category B countries are required to have a PCR test done at the source country, 72 hours prior to travel. The PCR test certificate will be requested prior to aircraft boarding, and should also be displayed at border control at the destination.
- b. For travelers from Category B, whose country is unable to make PCR testing widely available to the public, compulsory testing will be required upon arrival at Cyprus airports. The cost of testing is borne by the traveler, and the expected cost is estimated at 60 Euros per person (this may eventually drop as technology advances are made and international availability of testing kits increases). Test results will be available up to 24 hours later, so in the meantime travelers will be asked to self-isolate at their booked accommodation.
- c. Travel from countries which are not featured in the above two categories, is allowed only in exceptional circumstances and after receiving prior approval by the Cyprus government. This will also be the case for transit travel via these countries.

Q2: *What other documentation is necessary?*

- a. A 'COVID-19 Traveler Declaration' will be made available on the Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, which can be accessed and filled in electronically. For traveler facilitation, copies will also be made available at airport check-in counters. A filled-in copy of the declaration will be requested prior to boarding, and at border control at the destination.
- b. The declaration will include the following points: a) a questionnaire requesting information on a person's travels in the 14 days prior to visiting Cyprus b) confirmation that a person has not traveled to/from or lived in a country other than those included in Category A and B, in the 14 days prior to travel c) confirmation that a person has not shown any symptoms related to COVID-19 in the 72 hours prior to travel d) confirmation that a person has not knowingly been in touch with COVID-19 patients in the 14 days prior to travel e) disclaimer that travel is taking place at a person's own responsibility, and that the Republic of Cyprus or businesses operating within it, cannot be held liable for infection at any point during the travel process f) disclaimer that upon return to their country of origin, a person will notify the Health Authorities of Cyprus, should they display COVID-19 symptoms in the 14 days after leaving the island.

Q3: *What criteria is taken into consideration before categorizing countries?*

- a. Cyprus has decided to follow a categorization system in order to ensure equal treatment of countries with similar epidemiological results. The system is transparent, avoids discrimination, is dynamic, and evaluated weekly, so that countries can be added and removed based on the latest data available. The team which evaluates country data on a weekly basis, is comprised of scientists, epidemiologists, statisticians and public health professionals.

- b. Examples of data points which are considered for each country (the list is not exhaustive) are: effective reproduction number ' $R(t) < 1$ ' of the virus; daily cases per 100'000 population; weekly deaths per 100'000 population; weekly number of performed tests per 100'000 population; prevalence of the virus within the community; risk assessment of each country based on data from WHO and ECDC. No data point alone can define the categorization of each country; instead, categorization depends on the summary of all data points considered.

Transport protocols

Q4: *What protocols can be expected before/during flights?*

- a. Prior to boarding, travelers will need to show their valid PCR test certificate (if applicable) and 'COVID-19 Traveler Declaration'
- b. Travelers' temperature may possibly be taken prior to boarding
- c. Wearing of masks may be made compulsory during the flight

Q5: *What other protocols can be expected at the Cyprus airports?*

- a. Entrance or passage will only be allowed to travelers and staff
- b. Travelers will have their temperature taken at border control
- c. A physical 'COVID-19 Information Desk' will be made available for travelers requesting information upon arrival

Destination protocols

Q6: *Are there any general protocols that will apply to the whole destination?*

- a. Enhanced health, safety and hygiene protocols have been devised for all hospitality establishments, and extensive training of staff will take place prior to the destination opening for visitors.
- b. Physical distancing measures will be followed in all parts of the destination, so that people who do not belong to the same travel group maintain a reasonable distance from each other (2 sq. meters outdoors, and 3 sq. meters indoors).
- c. Where physical distancing is not possible, wearing of a face mask will be compulsory for both staff and visitors (airplanes, airports, ports, taxis, buses, diving/safari jeeps, lifts).
- d. Frequent aeration will be taking place in all indoor areas, so that air conditioning can be enhanced with regular input of fresh air.
- e. Antibacterial gel will be made available in all establishments, at entrances, reception areas, lounges, public toilets, lifts etc.

Q7: *Buses/rental vehicles/taxis/diving and safari jeeps*

- a. Frequent aeration and disinfection of buses
- b. Disinfection of rental vehicles after their return (including keys)
- c. Disinfection of all touch points after every route, for taxis and diving/safari jeeps (door handles, seats etc.)

Q8: *Archaeological sites, museums, theme parks, mini cruises, diving sites, water sports*

Disinfection of all touch points after every use (artefacts, touch screens, rides, door handles, seats, diving equipment, water sports equipment etc.)

Q9: Swimming pools, beaches and water parks

- a. Disinfection of sun beds, umbrellas and personal safe boxes after every use
- b. Distance of 4m between umbrellas and 2m between sunbeds of persons not belonging to the same group
- c. Physical distancing will not apply to life guards who are called into urgent life-saving action

Q10: Accommodation establishments

- a. Use of masks and carrying out of appropriate hand hygiene, for all housekeeping and service staff
- b. Dispersion of guests at 'group check-in'
- c. Rooms will not be allocated to new arrivals, unless enough time has passed for appropriate cleaning, disinfection and aeration
- d. Disinfection of room keys/cards after every departure
- e. Where food or drink is displayed on self-service stations, appropriate sneeze guards and hand disinfection stations are installed; alternatively, items could be served directly by the staff or guests may be encouraged to use face masks.

Q11: Restaurants, bars, cafes, pubs and night clubs

- a. Use of masks and carrying out of appropriate hand hygiene, for all back-of-house and front-of-house staff; masks will not be compulsory for service staff operating outdoor daytime restaurants, due to the intense heat
- b. Service times will be extended, and advance booking enabled, to facilitate physical distancing
- c. The maximum party size is set at 10 persons
- d. The minimum distance between tables not belonging to the same party, is 2 meters from corner to corner
- e. Menus will be disinfected after every use, unless they are disposable; alternatively they will be displayed at various communal points of the establishment, or made available digitally
- f. Guests will be encouraged to pay by card and not by cash
- g. Disinfection of all touch points will be carried out after each use e.g. chairs, tables, salt/pepper mills, sauce bottles, electronic payment machines etc.
- h. Use of table linen and towels will be discouraged, and should be replaced by disposables
- i. An information sheet will be made available at the entrance, displaying the maximum number of guests allowed in place at any given time

Testing at the destination

Q12: Is random testing going to be done at the destination level?

Some travelers will, on a random basis, be asked to undergo a COVID-19 test upon arrival, irrespective of where they flew from. The cost will be borne by the Cyprus government.

Q13: How will we deal with travelers who test positive during their stay in Cyprus, and what is our capacity to do so? What happens to their close contacts i.e. their co-travelers or family members? Who will cover the cost of hospitalization and treatment?

- a. The Cyprus government is committed to taking care of all travelers who test positive during their stay, as well as their families and close contacts. The government will cover the cost of lodging, food, drink, and medication, in all cases mentioned above; the traveler will only need to bear the cost of their airport transfer and repatriation flight, in collaboration with their agent and/or airline.
- b. A COVID-19 hospital with 100 beds will be made available exclusively for travelers who test positive, and these can be increased at very short notice if required. If travelers show critical symptoms, an additional 112 intensive care units are available for their treatment, with 200 respirators on hand at any time for their perusal.
- c. 500 rooms in dedicated quarantine-hotels will be made available for close contacts of persons who test positive, and again these can be increased at very short notice if required. This will not only ensure that they are properly taken care of, but it will also provide peace of mind to other travelers, that their accommodation establishment is free of COVID-19. Should therefore an accommodation establishment be found to host a person who has tested positive, it will not be ordered into a 14-day quarantine; instead, rooms used by the person who tested positive and close contacts, will undergo a deep clean and disinfection, before being utilized again.

Further information

Q14: How can travelers be kept up-to-date with the latest developments, and informed about protocols implemented at the destination?

- a. A dedicated email address has been set up by the Deputy Ministry of Tourism for this purpose, at travel2020@visitcyprus.com.
- b. All relevant information will also be made available on the website www.visitcyprus.com/cyprus-covid19-travel-protocol.
- c. Moreover, a dedicated team of destination experts will reply to traveler queries on Facebook Messenger (main page www.facebook.com/VisitCyprus.cy). Additional pages are available in the following countries: UK, DE, RU, SWE, FR, AT, GR, IT, UKR, NED, POL, BEL, ES, CH, ISR.