



## AAA TRAVEL

# Know Before You Go Travel Tips

COVID-19 continues to challenge the travel industry and so many who are eager to travel. AAA urges travelers to work with an experienced travel agent who can alleviate stress by managing cancellations and re-booking travel arrangements. Your AAA travel agent provides you peace of mind by:

- Informing you about testing, vaccine, document and mask requirements for your specific trip whether it is a hotel stay, a tour to a specific destination or a cruise.
- Providing information on where and when to obtain a COVID-19 test before you leave home or before you return home from your final destination.
- Matching the right travel insurance that meets your specific needs and budget.
- Assisting with unexpected delays or changes that may occur during your trip.
- Advocating on your behalf when there is a need to cancel or reschedule travel due to situations beyond your control.

To help you navigate travel in this new environment, AAA's travel experts offers the following travel tips and things to know before you go.

## General Tips

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- For international flights, check with your airline for any required documents needed for your final destination.
- All air passengers two years of age and over entering the United States (including U.S. citizens and Legal Permanent Residents) must present a negative COVID-19 test result taken no more than one day before departure or proof of recovery from the virus within the last 90 days.
- Consider the additional expenses associated with flight delays or cancellations that could extend your time in a particular location.
- Pack masks, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes (sanitizing hand wipes are a good alternative) and disposable gloves in your carry-on bag.
- For road trips, pack food, water, an emergency kit and a blanket in case you become stranded.
- Purchase travel insurance to protect your investment, choosing one that provides coverage for travel interruption and additional expenses associated with COVID-19.
- Notify credit card providers of your travel details (specify location and duration) to reduce the risk of cards being frozen due to unusual activity.
- Bring proof of vaccination. It's also a good idea to take a photo using your phone of your vaccination card and other important documents (like your passport) as a backup.
- Understand the number of daily cases and the transmission rate for COVID-19 in the area where you will travel.

## Cruising

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*(Note: the requirements and protocols listed below are generalizations and vary by cruise line. AAA strongly recommends travelers consult with their AAA Travel Agent regarding the specific requirements and protocols for the cruise you intend to take.)*

- Cruise lines generally require all passengers to provide a negative COVID-19 test taken within 48 hours of embarkation regardless of vaccination status. The type of test required (PCR or Antigen) depends on the cruise line, age of the passenger and are at the passenger's expense. Testing for children varies by cruise line and embarkation port.
- Proof of a negative COVID-19 test is not required to disembark a cruise ship upon completion of a cruise in a U.S. homeport. Testing may be required if you are flying home to a country outside of the U.S. and may be at the passenger's expense.
- Mask protocols vary by cruise line but may be required at all times indoors except when actively eating and drinking. Masks are not required in your stateroom, on deck or while in a pool or hot tub. Cruise lines may not provide masks so make sure to bring a supply of your own.
- Masks are required in U.S. cruise terminals and when embarking and disembarking the ship at the start and end of the cruise.
- Onboard buffets are open but staffed by the crew who will serve you (versus being self-service).
- Cruises are still offering entertainment such as production shows, singers, comedians, musicians, lecturers, arts and crafts, bingo, classes and art auctions although there may be reduced capacity allowed in venues to allow for social distancing.
- Freedom to explore a port independently may be impacted by local authorities and passenger vaccination status. In some cases, passengers may be required to take a ship-organized shore excursion if they want to go ashore.
- Passengers should carry a mask and their vaccination card ashore as they may be required to show it to enter shops, restaurants or attractions.

### Cruising During a Pandemic

- According to Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), [cruise industry protocols](#) comply with CDC guidance, requiring vaccinations and testing for crew and passengers.
  - [Vaccination requirements](#) vary by age, cruise line and where you begin your cruise.
  - Cruise industry protocols are unique in their approach to effectively monitor and detect COVID-19 cases on the ship, which includes onboard testing and contact tracing. The contained environment of a cruise ship allows for quicker tracing and cruise lines have employed methods such as wearable devices for passengers and the use of CCTV to make announcements regarding positive cases onboard. Crews are also trained to notify the ship if they notice a guest is showing symptoms.
  - Cruise lines are proactive in adjusting onboard protocols in response to new variants including strengthening testing, masking and other requirements, as well as encouraging booster vaccine doses for those eligible.

- According to the [CLIA](#), in the U.S. alone, the cruise industry administers nearly 10 million tests per week—21x the rate of testing in the U.S. The latest data shows, even with higher rates of testing, the cruise industry continues to achieve significantly lower rates of occurrence of COVID-19 – 33% percent lower than onshore.
- The majority of cruise lines have protocols in place to isolate passengers who test positive for COVID-19 onboard during the cruise, as to not interrupt the cruise for all other passengers.
- With COVID-19 situations varying around the world, some port substitutions or cancellations may occur due to decisions by local authorities.

## Touring

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- Work closely with your [AAA Travel Agent](#) in the week and/or days before your departure for the most current information on entry requirements (may vary depending on your destination).
- If you are taking a guided tour, be sure to check with your AAA Travel Agent as guided tours suppliers require travelers to be fully vaccinated.
- Be aware that adjustments could be made to the itinerary during your tour based on current conditions in the destination. The Tour Guide will keep everyone informed if changes occur.
- At least one month before departure, make an appointment for a PCR test that will meet the timeline set by your destination. We suggest that a QR code be requested of the PCR tester you select since more destinations are requiring this.
- Confirm that a return test is being arranged by your tour operator, or inquire where at your destination you can obtain one conveniently. Your AAA Travel Agent can assist.
- Bring extra masks to wear throughout your trip where social distancing guidelines cannot be followed.
- In preparation for your trip, be aware that some restaurants/activities may be closed due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Based on your destination, there may be reduced hours and/or masks may be required to enter some establishments (i.e. museums, public buildings).
- Tour providers also will provide current travel information on their websites. Check this before departure.

## Lodging

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- Confirm your hotel's cancellation/change policies before booking so you are not surprised by unexpected penalties.
- Research what the hotel is doing to keep you safe. Most hotel websites publish their safety and cleaning protocols. Larger hotel brands have likely partnered with a third-party organization to authenticate and accredit their efforts to reduce the risk of transmission.
  - Are masks provided and required for all guests and employees?
  - Are EPA-registered disinfectants used in common areas and how frequently?
  - Are alcohol-based hand sanitizers available throughout the hotel?

- Are signs regarding physical distancing and COVID-19 related policies posted in visible areas?
- Are guests and employees required to do a temperature screening?
- When it comes to hotel travel, expectations have changed. That's why AAA enhanced its Diamond hotel evaluation to include objective, scientific validation of the cleanliness of common surfaces throughout hotels. All AAA Diamond-designated hotels must meet established standards of cleanliness and physical condition. With the new addition of surface cleanliness testing, these properties are now recognized as Inspected Clean. Look for this designation when booking your next stay.
- Ask about contactless services. Many hotels offer check-in/check-out and mobile keys (room key on your phone). You will need to download the hotel's app to access your keys and use contactless services.
- Inquire about housekeeping when you arrive. Most hotels now clean rooms based on a guest's personal preference.
- Check with the hotel regarding hours, availability and protocol for amenities like dining, workout facilities and the spa.
- Check with the hotel to see if they offer assistance with finding COVID-19 testing for the return trip to the U.S. (international hotels only).