

## International tourists returning to Vietnam

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For the first time in 600 days, Vietnam is welcoming tourists from more than 30 countries who had been shut out because of the pandemic.

Two charter flights brought more than 400 South Korean and Japanese fully vaccinated passengers from Seoul and Tokyo on Thursday to the southern resort city of Nha Trang.

The area is popular with golfers, beach lovers and scuba divers, and boasts luxury hotels.

The flights came ahead of Vietnam's plans to reopen the resort island of Phu Quoc to vaccinated foreign visitors on Nov 20 □ with hopes to welcome at least 5,000 travellers in coming months.

Foreign tourists seeking to enter Vietnam must show Covid-19 vaccination certificates and negative pre-departure corona virus test results.

The country is desperate to revive its badly hit economy after months of lockdowns. Its borders have been shut to international visitors since March last year and there are almost no commercial flights entering the country.

Vietnam was widely praised for its handling of the pandemic last year, with only dozens of known corona virus cases.

But from April, the highly transmissible Delta variant took hold. Vietnam has since clocked more than a million infections and almost 23,000 deaths, as it scrambles to secure enough vaccines for its 100 million people. So far, only around 32pc of the population have been fully vaccinated.