

Passengers from UK, Germany no longer need PCR test prior travel to Dubai

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Dhaka: Passengers coming from the UK and Germany now have the option of taking a COVID-19 PCR test on arrival in Dubai instead of presenting a negative test certificate before their departure, according to reports.

On Emirates airline's website, it said that the PCR test requirements for Dubai have changed. "Tourists must present a negative COVID-19 PCR test certificate that is valid for 96 hours from the date of the test before departure – except for passengers coming from the UK and Germany who have the option to take a COVID-19 PCR test on arrival in Dubai."

UK-Dubai routes are some of Emirates' most lucrative services and will provide a boost for Dubai's tourism economy. Emirates operated eight UK routes before the pandemic but has suspended some amid poor travel demand.

Aviation bodies believe the requirement for a test before travel is blighting demand for air travel and have campaigned for the rules to be changed. A number of countries have entered into travel bubble agreements but most still require tests before departure and quarantines on arrival.

Getting a PCR test before travel can be expensive for travellers coming to Dubai from the UK as the stretched NHS is not offering tests for people who need a negative certificate to be able to travel.

Tourists travelling to Dubai still need to present a negative PCR certificate if they are coming from these countries: Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malaysia, Maldives Islands, Mauritius, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States (New York, Washington DC, Boston, Chicago, Seattle).

Middle East aviation experts that the complication and hassle of air travel amid coronavirus border restrictions is a bigger factor in low passenger confidence than the fear of catching COVID-19 on-board a plane or at an airport.

Experts have called on governments to look at standardised systems and solutions to open up borders and make air travel a much smoother and less complicated process than it currently is.