

Republic of Costa Rica
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship
General Directorate of Protocol, State Ceremony and Worship

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The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship - General Directorate of Protocol, State Ceremony and Worship greets the Honorable Diplomatic Missions, international Organizations and Honorary Consulates accredited in the country, and hereby issues this official communication regarding the gradual opening to international flights as of August 1, 2020

Please find attached a list of questions and answers on this opening process. In addition, this Directorate wishes to communicate other points specified by the governing bodies in the matter:

1- The sanitary isolation order upon entering the country will be mandatory for all persons, even those bringing a negative COVID-19 test result.

2- In the attached text, it will be understood that the Diplomatic Agent and his/her nuclear family are all residents.

3- Diplomatic Agents accredited or entering the country for the first time. Whether or not they come from an authorized country, diplomatic officials already accredited or coming for the first time to assume their role in Costa Rica, may enter the country by filling out the respective form. They do not have to meet the insurance requirement or the COVID-19 test, but do have to observe with 14-day home isolation. The application for admission must be processed before the Immunity and Privileges Department in due time, which will, in turn, send the request for authorization in advance by the Ministry of Health and the General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship -General Directorate for Protocol, State Ceremony and Worship- takes the opportunity to reassure the Honorable Diplomatic Missions, international Organizations and Honorary Consulates accredited in the country, that they are held in its highest and most distinguished consideration.

San José, July 28, 2020.

TO THE HONORABLE DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND HONORARY
CONSULATES

Gradual opening to airline flights as of August 1

Questions and answers

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I. Authorized countries and flights 1.

1. What countries' commercial flights will be allowed in the country?

Starting on August 1, commercial flights with passengers from the following countries can arrive in Costa Rica:

Germany, Austria, Spain, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Belgium, Finland, Liechtenstein, Portugal, Canada, Denmark, Slovakia, France, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Sweden, Slovenia, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland

Every two weeks, the COVID-19 international epidemiological situation will be reviewed to assess the list of countries and territories from which flights will be received.

2. Will repatriation flights continue to take place?

Yes, repatriation flights will continue from any other country that is not on the list of countries with commercial flights. Some of the countries with the most repatriation flights are the United States and the Central American countries.

3. Can a passenger fly from another country to one of the authorized countries to then fly to Costa Rica from there? For instance, flying from the US to Canada and then to Costa Rica, or going from Russia to Germany and then Costa Rica?

A passenger can do this as long as they remain in the authorized country (Canada or Germany) for at least 14 days, and do not experience symptoms before taking the flight to Costa Rica. In other words, the passenger will only be able to make a stop in the authorized country and then fly to Costa Rica.

The Immigration Officer will verify this, and upon determining that the passenger only made a stopover, they may deny entry to the passenger, who will have to return to their country.

4. Is the opening for these nationals and/or residents? For example, will a Mexican citizen living in one of these countries be allowed to enter the country?

The opening is for residents in authorized countries. In other words, any person living in the countries to which access has been authorized. People of other nationalities will also be admitted if they show that they have stayed in any of the countries on the list over the last 14 days, and have no symptoms of the disease (although usually living in another country).

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5. What happens if a passenger travels from one of these countries, but has an irregular immigration Status in that country?

The passenger may enter Costa Rica if:

- They have the required documentation to leave said country, e.g., a valid passport.
- They comply with the Costa Rica immigration requirements according to their nationality (e.g., a visa)
- They are able to demonstrate that they have spent the last 14 days in the country to which Costa Rican borders have been opened.

6. Can a Canadian, residing in Canada, or of any other nationality, take a flight to the US and then to Costa Rica? Are they allowed to enter?

No, that passenger would not be allowed to enter since US repatriation flights are permitted, in which only Costa Ricans (and their families) and residents in Costa Rica will be travelling. Neither Canadians, nor citizens of other nationalities, will be able to enter Costa Rica this way, as those would be considered tourist flights.

7. Will an American traveling to Canada and flying from there to Costa Rica be allowed to enter the country? They will only be admitted if able to prove that they have been in Canada during 14 days prior to the flight. Passengers in-transit through the authorized countries wanting to arrive in Costa Rica will not be admitted.

8. Will the issuance of visas resume at Costa Rican consulates? No. A general restriction on immigration services is in place both domestically and internationally, which will be in force until September 18. Anyone requiring a consular or special visa, will not be allowed to enter, but only those travelers under Group I and II nationalities as per the entry guidelines (and their exceptions).

9. Can private flights arrive from authorized countries with residents of those countries?

Yes, private flights from authorized countries with residents of these countries are allowed to arrive in the country. Likewise, private flights can arrive from authorized countries with residents of other countries, as long as it is evident that the passengers remained in the authorized country during the 14 days prior to the trip to Costa Rica.

10. Can private flights arrive to the country from countries that are not on the list of authorized countries? For example, a private flight from the US?

Only private/charter (non-commercial) repatriation flights with Costa Ricans and residents can enter the country from unauthorized destinations. At present, private flights from the US bringing non Costa Ricans or non-residents cannot enter the country.

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11. Can a private flight enter with passengers from an unauthorized country (for example, the US) after stopping in an authorized country (for example, Canada)?

Yes, but only if it is evident that the passengers have stayed in the authorized country for the past the last 14 days. The Immigration Officer will verify this, and upon determining that the passenger only made a stopover, they may deny entry to the passenger, who will have to return to their country.

12. Can a Costa Rican or resident in Costa Rica pay for a private flight to an unauthorized country?

Yes, a Costa Rican or resident can pay for a private flight to an unauthorized destination. There are no restrictions on leaving the country, as these people are not subject to home isolation. In leaving the country,

they must do so by air, and present their current identification document and other travel documents. Upon returning, they are to complete the Health Pass form and receive a home isolation order. They may not enter Costa Rica by land or by sea.

13. Can US airlines provide service by flying to Canada, overnight staying in Canada and then leave for Costa Rica?

Yes, as long as said passengers are Canadian residents or are able to prove that they have stayed in that country during the 14 days prior to their Costa Rica trip.

II. Requirements

1. What are the new entry requirements?

For tourists, there are 3 requirements:

- a) Travel insurance to cover medical expenses, for at least US \$ 20,000 (twenty thousand US dollars) and isolation (lodging) expenses for at least US \$4,000 (four thousand US dollars). This insurance must cover medical expenses generated by COVID disease 19 and be purchased from an insurer in Costa Rica.
- b) A COVID-19 negative test. The sample for the test must be taken no more than 48 hours before the passenger flies to Costa Rica.
- c) Filling out the digital Health Pass form. The form will be available at address <https://salud.go.cr>

Costa Ricans and residents should complete the Health Pass form only.

2. What happens if the passenger does not meet the requirements?

The 3 requirements are considered as travel documents, such as a passport, and must be presented in order to enter the country. If the tourist does not fulfill the requirements, they will be denied entry by the Immigration Officer, and must return to their country of origin. According to the Political Constitution, the entry of Costa Ricans and residents cannot be denied even in the case that they do not present the Health Pass form.

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3. Will travel insurance purchased in the country of origin be accepted?

No, at the time, only the travel insurance offered by the National Insurance Institute (INS) will be accepted, which covers, COVID-19 medical expenses for up to US \$20,000 (twenty thousand US dollars), isolation expenses for up to US \$4,000 (four thousand US dollars).

4. What happens if you have already purchased travel insurance in the country of origin?

That travel insurance does probably not include COVID-19 medical expenses, so tourists will also have to purchase insurance from the National Insurance Institute (INS).

5. How much does the travel insurance cost?

The cost of travel insurance from the National Insurance Institute (INS) varies according to the passenger characteristics, such as age, the number of days they will be in the country, and whether they are purchasing individual or family insurance. As an example, travel insurance for a 30-year-old passenger visiting Costa Rica for two weeks costs approximately US \$280.00 (two hundred and eighty US dollars).

6. Who should I prove that I carry travel insurance?

Tourists: When completing the Health Pass form, the passenger will see a question about the insurance policy number. You can purchase insurance directly from there, in which case you will be redirected to the INS. After making the purchase, the passenger must enter or copy/paste the insurance policy number in the Health Pass form box. Neither Costa Ricans nor residents should purchase travel insurance.

7. Who should I deliver the COVID-19 test to?

Tourists: The test result must be loaded (uploaded) in the Health Pass form. When filling out the form, the passenger will see a question asking them to upload (upload) the test result. The result can be in PDF format or a photograph (JPG format). Costa Ricans and residents must not present proof.

8. Do spouses of Costa Ricans bearing a different nationality need to meet requirements: PCR proof and insurance?

If the couple returns to Costa Rica on a repatriation flight, the same requirements apply to both people: they will not have to present insurance or the test, but need to complete the Health Pass form and observe the home isolation order.

If the couple is visiting but does not reside in the country, (for example, an Italian husband from Costa Rica who lives with his spouse in Italy), they must comply with the requirements as tourists, namely, fill out the health pass form, COVID-19 test and travel insurance.

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III. "Health Pass" Form

1. Does the Health Pass form make a distinction between tourists and Costa Ricans, or residents?

Yes, on the Health Pass form, the passenger is prompted whether they "live in Costa Rica". If the answer is No, it is assumed that the passenger is a tourist and then the tourist questions will pop up. If the answer is Yes, it is assumed that the passenger is a Costa Rican or resident, and then the respective questions will be shown.

2. What will the passenger see upon completing the Health Pass form?

Tourists who successfully complete the Health Pass form will receive a green check and an alphanumeric code (consisting of numbers and letters). Tourists who do not complete the Health Pass form will not get the green check or the code. Without this code, the Immigration officer will not be able to search for them in the system.

Costa Ricans and residents who complete the form will obtain one of the following results:

Green: Passenger has completed the form and does not have COVID-19 related symptoms.

Yellow: Passenger has completed the form but some of the answers indicate that they could have been exposed to COVID-19.

Red: Passenger has completed the form and has COVID-19 related symptoms.

All Costa Ricans and residents are to undergo a medical evaluation upon arrival in the country, regardless of whether their result is green, yellow or red.

3. What happens if the tourist did not complete the Health Pass form?

If the tourist did not complete the form, they can complete it at the airport. Yet, for this they must purchase the insurance online and have taken the COVID-19 test before the flight. Plus, they must have the results at hand to complete the form. If the passenger did not take the test before flying, they will not be able to enter the country.

Costa Ricans and residents in Costa Rica: if the person did not complete the form, they can complete it at the airport.

4. For how long will the Health Pass form information be kept?

Health Pass form is not erased. For example, you may enter the form by viewing the Information completed by the first passenger to fill it out back in April.

5. Is the Health Pass form to be completed per person or per family or nuclear family travelling?

Either or, it can be completed as a family unit or individually. If completed as a nuclear family, some of the information is filled out only once, and applies to everyone in the group, such as flight details.

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6. I am a tourist travelling with other people. What happens if I complete the Health Pass form but someone in my group did not?

The person who has not completed the Health Pass form will not be able to do it while at the airport, but for this you they purchase insurance online and have taken the COVID-19 test before the flight. Plus, they must have the test result at hand to complete the form. If the passenger did not take the test before flying, they will not be able to enter the country, denied entry by the Immigration Officer and then have to return to their country of origin.

7. I am a Costa Rican/resident travelling with other people. What if I did complete the Health Pass form, but someone in my group did not?

The person who did not complete the Health Pass may do so while at the airport.

IV. COVID-19 test

1. Must the test must be less than 48 hours at the time of starting the flight or entering the airport?

The sample for the test must be taken no more than 48 hours before flying to Costa Rica. That is to say, if the flight is on August 5 at 2:00 p.m., the passenger would have to take the sample as of August 3 at 2:00 p.m.

2. Where should I take the test?

The test must be done in a laboratory approved by the health authority of the country in which the passenger is located. For example, if the passenger lives in Germany and their flight departs from Germany, they will have to present the test result from a laboratory authorized by the health authority in Germany.

3. What type of test should I have? How is the test requested?

The only acceptable test is the real-time polymerase chain reaction test, also called PCR-RT for COVID-19. Rapid test kit results, serological tests, or immunity tests will not be accepted as valid.

4. What language should the test result be in?

The test result will be received only in English or Spanish.

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5. What happens if, due to the flight time or connections, the passenger takes more than 48 hours to arrive in Costa Rica?

The traveler cannot have gone through immigration entry on their trip to countries or territories not showing on the authorized countries list. Currently, authorized flights do not stop in countries outside the list. If this situation occurs, travelers must remain on an in-transit condition (do not clear immigration at the stopover country). This will need to be determined for entry of the passenger.

6. If the PCR-RT tests for COVID-19 are not available in the country or region where I live, can I submit a medical statement indicating that I do not have COVID?

No, any documents presented other than the PCR-RT test result for COVID-19 will not be acceptable.

7. What is the traveler minimum age to meet the PCR-RT test requirement?

The PCR-RT test is required for all travelers over 12 years of age.

V. Travel insurance

1. Can I purchase travel insurance before filling out the Health Pass form?

Yes, you can purchase travel insurance before filling out the Health Pass form.

2. Where can I purchase the insurance?

Insurance can be purchased on National Insurance Institute (INS) website:

<https://cotiza.ins-cr.com/frmDatosIncluir.aspx?P=431>

3. How much does the insurance cost?

As with all insurances, the cost varies according to passenger characteristics. For example, for a 30-year-old person travelling for two weeks, the costs of insurance is approximately US \$280 (two hundred and eighty US dollars).

VI. Passenger arrival

1. How will the passenger know that they have to meet new requirements?

The Costa Rican Tourism Institute will coordinate with the airlines in order to inform their passengers of the new entry requirements.

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2. How should the airline act in cases of tourists who have not completed the form?

Airlines can check that the tourist has completed the Health Pass form before taking the flight. If the tourist has not completed it, and thus does not meet the requirements (for example, the COVID-19 test was not taken), the airline must return the passenger to the country where the flight was taken.

3. Do I have to wear a mask on the flight?

Yes, all passengers (tourists, Costa Ricans and residents) will have to wear a mask or face shield (mask) throughout the flight, and wear it while at the airport. Passengers will also have to review other requirements defined by the airline.

4. Can sick passengers or passengers with symptoms get on the plane?

No, passengers with symptoms must not take the flight. Airlines may prohibit any passengers with COVID-19 symptoms from boarding the plane.

5. What happens if a passenger develops symptoms during the flight?

For humanitarian reasons, the passenger with symptoms will be admitted by Immigration upon arrival in Costa Rica.

VII. Home isolation

1. Will people entering the airport with negative test results also be given a 14-day quarantine order?

Tourists flying from authorized destinations will not receive a sanitary isolation order. Costa Ricans and residents returning to the country, regardless of their place of departure, must not present negative COVID test results or travel insurance, but will receive a home isolation order for 14 days.

2. To whom will the sanitary isolation order apply when entering the country?

Sanitary isolation orders will be issued to Costa Ricans and residents in Costa Rica entering the country on repatriation flights. If a tourist is diagnosed as COVID 19 positive while in the country, they will receive a sanitary isolation order.

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3. What if the person will be in the country for less than 14 days?

Tourists: There will be not be a home isolation order issued, regardless of the number of travel days. If during their stay, the person gets a COVID-19 positive result, they will receive a 14-day home isolation order. The cost of accommodation during said period will be covered by the insurance. No tourist with a home isolation order may leave the country before the 14 days of isolation have ended.

Neither Costa Ricans nor residents will be able to leave the country if not having completed the home isolation period imposed upon entering the country.

4. Can Costa Ricans or residents flying directly to Costa Rica, on special charter flights from unauthorized countries, be tested for COVID 48 hours before the flight to avoid home isolation?

No, presenting negative COVID 19 results does not exempt them from observing home isolation for 14 days, as it is mandatory for all passengers travelling on a -commercial or private- flight from a destination to which Costa Rica has not yet opened its borders.

VIII. Costa Ricans and residents in Costa Rica

1. In the case of Costa Rican passengers traveling to countries whose borders have been opened, what will happen when they return to Costa Rica?

Costa Ricans and residents traveling to these countries must complete the Pass Health form upon their return. They will not be required to provide a COVID test, or need to purchase travel insurance, but are to receive a home isolation order for 14 days.

2. What will be the procedure in the case of Costa Ricans and residents returning on humanitarian flights? Costa Ricans and residents returning to the country on humanitarian repatriation flights must complete the Health Pass form. They will not be required to provide a COVID test, or need to purchase travel insurance, but are to receive a home isolation order for 14 days.

3. Will health insurance and negative proof be requested also for repatriation flights from other countries (through August)? Do these measures apply to both Costa Ricans, residents and entry exceptions as approved by the authorities?

No, test results and insurance will not be required for passengers on repatriation flights. However, all passengers on these flights must comply with home isolation for 14 days, including the strategic and humanitarian exceptions approved by the immigration and health authorities.

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4. Can Costa Ricans and residents not do home isolation if they have negative test results? No. All Costa Ricans and residents returning to the country will have to comply with the sanitary isolation order. If they wish so, they can have a test scheduled at either of the private laboratories authorized by the Ministry of Health. However, they will also have to observe the home isolation, even upon getting a negative test result.

5. What happens if I go out during home isolation?

In accordance with Article 378 of the General Health Law, failure to comply with the sanitary orders or special sanitary measures issued by the Health Authorities, will result in a base salary fine. In the case of sanitary measures ordering the isolation of people, the fine will be increased to 3 or 5 base salaries, as provided by Law No. 9837 of April 3, 2020. Base salary is currently in the amount of c464,300.00.

6. Will exit and re-entry conditions in force as of August 1 be maintained for residents? Could a Canadian residing in Costa Rica travel to their country and return to Costa Rica without losing their residency?

All permanent and temporary residents in Costa Rica, who present their current DIMEX (active residence), can enter the country -if coming by air and from any of the authorized destinations-, and as long as they have remained in that country for at least 14 days. They may not enter Costa Rica by land or by sea.

7. As of August 1, could people with valid permanent or temporary residency enter the country after leaving the country later than March 23?

All permanent and temporary residents in Costa Rica, who present their current DIMEX (active residence), can enter the country -if coming by air and from any of the authorized destinations-, and as long as they have remained in that country for at least 14 days. They may not enter Costa Rica by land or by sea.

