

Saudi Arabia reopens visa on arrival for US, UK and Schengen visa holders

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The Saudi Arabian government has reopened the visa-on-arrival program for holders of valid visas for the US, UK and Schengen area, effective immediately. The move comes two weeks after the country lifted all COVID-related entry restrictions and returns Saudi to pre-pandemic levels of openness.

Citizens of any country who hold one of the three visas and who are travelling on one of the country's national carriers – Saudi, Flynas or Flyadeal – can now receive a 12-month tourism visa on arrival in Saudi Arabia without needing to apply in advance.



Visitors holding a valid US, UK or Schengen visa must have used it at least once to enter the issuing country or region in order to qualify for a visa on arrival in Saudi. Visitors will also need to purchase COVID-19 insurance, which they can do at any of Saudi Arabia's international airports.

Citizens of any country eligible for the e-visa program, which was introduced in 2019, may also receive a visa on arrival, regardless of the airline they are travelling with.

"Restoring the visa-on-arrival program marks the final step in returning Saudi to a pre-pandemic level of openness and makes it one of the most accessible destinations in the world for leisure, business and religious travel," said His Excellency Ahmed Al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of STA. "This decision by the government will further support the many thousands of people who depend on tourism for their livelihoods while welcoming the world back to the destination with the warm hospitality for which the Saudi people are renowned."

On March 6, Saudi Arabia announced the lifting of all travel restrictions put in place to protect people from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Visitors to Saudi no longer need to present

proof of vaccination or a PCR test to enter the country. The red list of countries not allowed entry has been discontinued. Institutional quarantine requirements have been entirely removed, and social distancing rules have been lifted. Masks are required in enclosed public places only.

Saudi Arabia was one of the first countries to close its borders following the emergence of COVID-19. Since then, the government has implemented stringent health and safety protocols at all public venues, including hotels, restaurants, public buildings and offices.

Saudi opened to international leisure travelers in September 2019, less than six months before its borders were closed due to the pandemic. The country shifted its tourism strategy to focus on building domestic visitation, opening 11 destination and creating more than 270 tourism packages. As a result, Saudi recorded two successive years of growth in leisure travel without seeing a concomitant surge in COVID cases.

“Saudi has emerged from the pandemic with a burgeoning leisure and entertainment sector that includes some of the largest events in the world as well as a compelling cultural tourism offer and an increasing number of local companies dedicated to tourism,” said His Excellency Al Khateeb. “We look forward to welcoming visitors from around the world eager to explore the authentic home of Arabia.”

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About Saudi Tourism Authority

Saudi Tourism Authority (STA), launched in June 2020, is responsible for marketing Saudi's tourism destinations worldwide and developing the destination's offering through programs, packages and business support. Its mandate includes developing the country's unique assets and destinations, hosting and participating in industry events, and promoting Saudi's tourism brand locally and overseas. The STA operates 16 representative offices around the world, serving 38 countries.

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STA

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