

# CORONAVIRUS CHANGING THE TRAVEL WORLD - GOOD AND BAD NEWS



Records in the USA, the second wave in Israel, regional lockdowns in holiday destinations such as Spain and Melbourne, Australia: the coronavirus continues to rage. But there is also good news.

While many countries such as the USA and Brazil are struggling with devastating corona records and a second wave of the virus is already sweeping across other regions, some islands in the South Pacific, for example, have so far been completely spared by the pandemic. **Here is an overview of successes and failures in the fight of the travel world against the coronavirus.**

The good news

**SOUTH SEASIDE ISLANDS** - Corona-free paradises in the Pacific

Their names alone make for holiday dreams: Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Vanuatu... Now the islands in the South Pacific, which are usually in the headlines because of the dramatic consequences of climate change, seem to have been aided by their geographical remoteness. In addition, the local authorities early on imposed strict isolation rules. "And governments in the region continue to rely on strict measures such as border closures, travel restrictions and lockdowns to prevent the virus from being introduced," said Unicef Pacific representative Sheldon Yett.

**SEYCHELLES** - Few cases due to isolated situation

The island states off the east coast of Africa have also coped quite well with the corona pandemic so far, especially Seychelles. Only 80 cases have been recorded there so far, and no deaths have been recorded in connection with the virus. Here, the island state's isolated location is also seen as an advantage: the holiday paradise in the Indian Ocean was able to cut off international flight connections early on. After a relatively strict lockdown, the measures were eased again as early as May. However, Seychelles recently experienced a setback when, after two months without new cases, sailors from a Spanish fishing fleet tested positive.

**SWEDEN** - Light at the end of the tunnel

As is well known, the Scandinavian EU country reacted less strictly to the pandemic than the rest of Europe - and for a long time had to accept significantly higher infection and death rates than Germany or its Nordic neighbors. However, there is now a positive trend among Swedes, too: both the number of new deaths and the number of new intensive care patients is falling. The national health authority sees this as a consequence of the social distance - which the Swedes are now being constantly encouraged to maintain.

**NETHERLANDS** - Cautious optimism and lower rents

Cautious optimism is spreading in the Netherlands due to the steady decline in the number of infections. Last week, 19 deaths were recorded - the lowest number since the outbreak of the pandemic. Unemployment is falling and consumers are spending more money again. More and more

entrepreneurs now have confidence that their businesses will survive the crisis. The situation is also easing the housing market. Since tourists are staying away, who are also turning to private accommodation via Airbnb, for example, the supply is much higher in Amsterdam, for example. Rents have fallen by up to 20 percent.

CYPRUS - Only a few cases despite opening to tourism

The holiday island has reported few corona infections from travelers or locals since the opening of tourism. Anyone travelling to Cyprus must first register electronically. Those who test positive must stay in isolated accommodation in hotels for 14 days. The island in the eastern Mediterranean Sea has a very low coronavirus infection rate compared to other European countries.

The bad news

USA - record figures and no uniform strategy

With over 60,000 corona infections within 24 hours, the USA has reached a peak in new infections per day, according to figures released by Johns Hopkins University. In total, the country has almost three million infections and more than 131,000 deaths. According to experts, the most significant reason for the very tense situation is the lack of a national strategy: President Donald Trump first denied the corona threat, then staged himself as president in the war against the virus, but lost interest again and now leaves the leadership to the governors of the states. This means that there are 50 strategies for fighting the coronavirus in the USA, not one.

BRAZIL - Now the president is also affected

So far, 1.6 million people in the largest state in Latin America have demonstrably been infected with the novel coronavirus. Now the president is one of them. His corona test was positive, Jair Bolsonaro announced. The right-wing head of state had always downplayed the virus as a "light flu" and was without a mask at many public appearances. The ex-military does not think much of protective measures and exit restrictions, he is overly concerned about the country's economy. As a result, more than 66,000 people have died of Covid-19 so far. This puts Brazil in second place worldwide behind the USA.

INDIA - Cardboard hospital beds

The largest democracy in the world has now overtaken Russia in the number of reported corona cases - only Brazil and the USA currently have more known infections. Last Wednesday the number of infections rose to more than 740,000. In India, measures to contain the pandemic have already been significantly eased to boost the economy - the number of cases has been rising rapidly since then. The capital New Delhi has now become a hotspot, and hospital beds are becoming scarce. The government is, therefore, setting up temporary corona clinics - for example in trains, hotels and a center with 10,000 beds made of cardboard.

SPAIN - Catalonia now requires masks to be worn outside

Following an increase in the number of cases of infection, the holiday region of Catalonia wants to introduce a strict obligation to wear masks outdoors, which will apply practically everywhere and at all times. According to the current nationwide decree of the central government, masks will only be compulsory outdoors if a distance of at least one and a half meters cannot be maintained. The new outbreaks are a particular cause for concern in Segrià: the district with the metropolis of Lleida was sealed off for two weeks. Around 210 000 people are affected. In addition, a five-day lockdown of the

district of La Mariña in Galicia is still in force.

AUSTRALIA - Melbourne, a metropolis of millions, back in lockdown

Melbourne, a metropolis of millions, is once again going into a lockdown due to a sharp rise in infections - and for six weeks at the very least. The second-largest city in Australia had only a few weeks ago slowly reopened its economy. **Now strict curfews are coming into effect again after the health authorities confirmed 191 new infections in one day.**

ISRAEL - Netanyahu criticized for its crisis management

The number of new infections in the Mediterranean state with a population of around nine million was recently at a record-high level. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is increasingly criticized for his crisis management. He is accused of hasty relaxation, a lack of preparation for the expected second wave and a focus on annexation plans in the West Bank. In the meantime, the government has taken follow-up action and reintroduced restrictions.

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Date: 2020-07-13

Article link: <https://www.tourism-review.com/travel-world-after-the-pandemic-news11636>