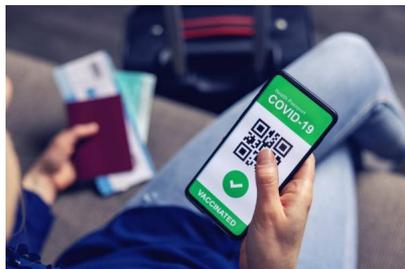


FREE VACCINATIONS TO FOREIGNERS RESULT IN A BOOKING BOOM TO THE USA



Some states in the U.S. offer vaccinations to foreigners. This leads to a massive increase in international flight bookings - especially from one region.

In the U.S., various states offer free corona vaccinations - also for tourists. These include Arizona, Florida, Louisiana and Texas. **New York's mayor even wants to set up mobile vaccination centers at attractions such as Central Park or the Empire State Building to vaccinate travelers.** This is intended to boost tourism.

Obviously, this also has an effect. The free vaccinations have triggered a boom in bookings from abroad, according to analysis firm Forward Keys. For example, international bookings to Florida rose from 44 percent to 67 percent of 2019 levels in the 14 days following the announcement of vaccinations to foreigners, and flights to Texas increased from 58 percent to 91 percent.

The increase is mainly due to travelers from Latin America, where vaccinations are sometimes difficult to obtain. For example, ticket bookings from Peru to Texas increased to 684 percent of pre-crisis levels. For Costa Rica, it's 338 percent and for Mexico, 317 percent.

"Last month we saw countries like Greece and Iceland, which have opened up to vaccinated visitors, receive many more bookings than other destinations. This month, we are seeing the emergence of vaccine tourism," Forward Keys commented. This shows how closely vaccination is linked to the revival of tourism.

Free vaccines across several cities in the U.S. were also the reason for 300,770 Mexicans to travel by plane during April, 35.7% more than in March, according to the International Trade Administration (ITA). The number of travelers in April 2021 is unprecedented, and it was driven by the closure of the U.S. land borders with Mexico.

In March, the high number of visitors was recorded mostly in Texas, California, Florida and Arizona, when 221,610 travelers arrived from Mexico, a figure that represented a 124.1% increase compared to February (which had a drop of 4.8% compared to January).

Among the various travel packages that are offered in Mexico is one to New York under the slogan: "Travel and get your COVID vaccine". Prices start at US\$469 per person (not including air taxes) and the packages include roundtrip flight, 3-night stay and vaccination appointment assistance.

Another package is for Las Vegas and is offered by another Mexican tour operator on social media. The prices start at US\$548, with taxes included, promising a fun trip and vaccine shots. The package includes a 3-night stay at the hotel, flight, carry-on bag, checked luggage and an appointment for a Moderna or Pfizer vaccine.

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