

BRITISH TOURISTS NOT ALLOWED TO TRAVEL ABROAD UNTIL AUGUST



The UK government will not lift travel restrictions for British travelers to Europe and the United States until August, according to Paul Charles, the market expert at PC Agency travel consultancy. The announcement comes after the most recent warnings to British tourists issued by the British Ministry of Health advising against traveling abroad, and instead opting for domestic travel. As a response to the uncertainty, **thousands of British tourists with reservations for this summer are moving them to 2022.**

Currently, travelers can choose from only two destinations - Gibraltar and Iceland. According to the expert, "there are so many more safe countries out there which could have been added to the green category [of the traffic light system]," he said while citing the case of Portugal and Malta. However, to him, postponing the lifting of international travel restrictions until August is actually a political decision that is not based on data.

According to the expert, what is happening is that "ministers have lined up to protect their future careers and potentially benefit from an upcoming cabinet shakeup, and that means sacrificing the open borders. Now, thousands of jobs are at risk, as well as some airlines and travel companies because June and July will be lost in terms of travel."

According to the analysis, there is an internal battle between ministers that has taken place, in which the decision of Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps, to lift the restrictions has been annulled by the Secretary of State for Health, Matt Hancock, and the Home Secretary, Priti Patel.

"Encouraged by opinion polls, they have now all come together to focus on reopening the UK in mid-July, once the vaccination program has reached young people of 18 and over, and when the Delta variant that originated in India is eradicated." 90% of the new Covid cases in the UK are currently caused by the Delta variant. It spreads more easily and is more resistant to vaccines. It is also associated with a greater risk of hospitalization. According to Public Health England, the cases of the virus are doubling between every 4.5 and 11.5 days.

Once the restrictions have been lifted, including domestic ones, "travel abroad will be on the agenda again", which would happen by August.

However, Paul Charles believes that the British government has made a "serious mistake" by not allowing 20 million fully vaccinated people from the United Kingdom to travel, which would have saved thousands of jobs, both for outbound (agencies, operators, airlines) and inbound travel (UK hotels, restaurants, etc).

"The financial support measures, although welcome, have not been up to the scale of the challenge facing the sector," warned the executive president of the association of employers of travel agencies in the country (ABTA), Mark Tanzer. The summer season represents two-thirds of the annual revenues of travel agencies, he added. 37% of jobs in the tourism sector are at risk if the resumption of tourism is delayed beyond June 28.

The last conclusion drawn by the expert is that the COVID traffic light system implemented by the British government to regulate travel abroad no longer works: it is unpredictable so consumers cannot rely on it, and it no longer instils travel confidence.

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