

THE U.S. OPENS COUNTRY BORDERS TO CANADA AND MEXICO



November" is mentioned.

The U.S. will open its country borders to non-mandatory travel from Canada and Mexico in November, according to a new announcement from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The stipulation: only individuals who are fully vaccinated against Covid-19 will be allowed to enter the United States. An exact date has not been formulated in this case either, only "early

During most of the Covid-19 pandemic, entry into the U.S. by land and ferry from Mexico and Canada was prohibited for non-mandatory travel - i.e., for tourist purposes, but also for visiting friends or relatives. However, **with the three largest countries in North America making good progress with their vaccination efforts, the U.S. government has now decided it is time to lift the restrictions.**

Covid-19 vaccination rates in the U.S. are currently 56.8%, 72.2% in Canada and only 37.6% in Mexico. Although vaccination rates in the U.S. are far lower than in Canada, the northern neighbor allowed access for fully vaccinated Americans back in August.

Oddly, "essential workers" entering the U.S. are not currently required to be vaccinated, and the Department of Homeland Security does not mandate vaccination for these individuals until January 2022. "This approach gives travelers such as truck drivers, students and healthcare workers ample time to get vaccinated," DHS wrote in a statement.

Entry Only for the Fully Vaccinated

Roger Dow, president of the U.S. Travel Association (USTA), said he was pleased with the decision to open the country borders: "We welcome the Biden administration's plan to ease entry restrictions for vaccinated visitors. This measure will lead to a welcome increase in travel from our two main source markets for inbound travel."

At the same time, he recalled that the decline in international visitors since the pandemic began has resulted in a loss of more than \$250 billion in export revenue and more than one million U.S. jobs. Therefore, "full reopening of international travel to the U.S. for fully vaccinated persons is overdue."

Opening of Country Borders Will Not Save Tourism

The opening of the borders to Canada and Mexico, and shortly thereafter to the entire previously excluded world - including Switzerland - has sparked a lively discussion in the U.S. about what else might be possible in the fourth quarter. This may well produce black figures for inbound tourism in the USA for the first time in a long time. But it will fall far short of saving the year.

According to figures from the government's National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO), the U.S. has seen 4,732,369 foreign visitors so far in 2021. That's down another 27 percent from the poor year of 2020 (but back then, three "normal" months were still recorded at the beginning of the year).

The decline from Western Europe was 80%, that from Asia around 65%, and that from Oceania 90%. **In contrast, South America was able to increase again, by 70%, and Central America even**

by 207% (always measured according to "Country of Residence"). The top source markets to date have been Colombia, Peru and Ecuador; this says a lot about the importance of entry procedures. Interesting in this context: China and India are back in the top 15 overseas markets - but this has to do with a large number of students from China and India.

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