

# TOURISM IN THAILAND: RESTRICTIONS EASED, TAX POSTPONED



The authorities in charge of tourism in Thailand have announced the suppression of the 2nd PCR test after arrival in Thailand, from March 1st.

Since February 1st, a second test had to be done on the 5th day in Thailand, in an "Extra SHA+" approved hotel, before waiting for the result without being able to leave the hotel.

**This second PCR test and waiting at the hotel will be replaced by an antigenic test ("AKT")** that the tourists will perform themselves and register it in the Morchana mobile application. In case of a positive antigenic test, the tourist will have to contact the local hospital.

After March 1, it will still be mandatory to do a PCR test before departure, as well as a single PCR test upon arrival on the first night. This single PCR test on arrival will give meaning to the name of the "Test & Go" program which allows tourism in Thailand without quarantine for travelers vaccinated with minimum of 2 doses.

A special authorization, called Thailand Pass, must be obtained before departure by any traveler wishing to visit Thailand, regardless of the number of days planned in the country.

Since it can take up to 10 days to obtain the Thailand Pass, travelers wishing to leave between March 1 and 10 are advised to continue to obtain a hotel reservation with a second PCR test for the 5th night and to apply for their Thailand Pass without waiting for this measure to be implemented.

Moreover, Thailand's Minister of Tourism and Sports, Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn, insists that the controversial 300 baht travel tax still stands despite the decision to delay its introduction beyond the target launch date of April 1, 2022.

The Ministry of Tourism and Sports has been lobbying for years to introduce a tax on all incoming tourists. Yet it faces stiff opposition from a travel industry struggling to survive after two years of restrictions due to Covid-19. Earlier this month, **the Thai government postponed the introduction of the head tax for foreign tourists without specifying a new launch date.**

A portion of the fees will fund basic health and accident insurance coverage for travelers to provide emergency services. The balance will fund the restoration of tourist and heritage sites overseen by the permanent secretariat of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

It is likely that the US\$9 fee will be introduced later in the year once collection issues are resolved, particularly at land checkpoints. For air travelers entering the country, the fee will be included in the fare with the 700 baht airport tax.

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