

TRAVELERS TO ENTER SINGAPORE WITHOUT ANY QUARANTINE



Like the city-state, many Asian countries have announced their reopening to tourism this month.

Singapore will lift restrictions on all vaccinated travelers in the coming days, Lee Hsien Loong, the Southeast Asian city-state's prime minister, announced last week, hailing it as a "major step" for the air hub in its strategy to coexist with Covid.

The region has been slower than Europe or North America to lift the restrictions. But Indonesia also announced last week the end of the quarantine for travelers, after Australia and New Zealand while Malaysia will take the step in early April.

From April 1, vaccinated adults and unvaccinated children will be allowed to enter Singapore, the gateway to many Asia-Pacific countries, without quarantine, with only a test before departure. The reopening of the country, will "reconnect Singapore with the world," the Prime Minister said on television. "This will give a much-needed boost to businesses, especially those in tourism, and help Singapore regain its position as an air and economic hub."

"Earlier, we were cautious because of uncertainty over Omicron's impact," Lee said. "Now the Omicron situation is well under control. Nearly all our cases our domestic, originating within the community. Arrivals from abroad constitute only a very small proportion of cases. We can therefore safely open up our borders."

Measures for residents of the city-state have also been relaxed, with an end to mandatory outdoor masks and groupings of up to ten people allowed, compared to only five previously. Singapore moved from a zero Covid target to a more flexible policy last year when the vast majority of its population was vaccinated.

This approach contrasts with that of **Hong Kong, an air hub and competing financial center in Asia, where travelers still have to undergo lengthy quarantines on arrival**. Hong Kong's leader Carrie Lam defended this attitude earlier, stressing that "the policies and measures adopted by each country to combat Covid differ", and assured that the island remained an "attractive" financial center.

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