



TRAVEL UK/ROI TO THE USA

WHAT TO DO & WHEN...

UPDATED 15 MAY 2022

Your passport must be valid for your trip duration

Contrary to popular myth, you do not need an extra 6 months validity on your passport to visit the USA

That said, I like at least a week or two remaining on mine, in case of any hiccups getting home!

Also, you need either 3 or 6 months remaining on your passport to enter EU countries ([check by country here](#)), so bear that in mind if you have an indirect flight...



BUY TRAVEL INSURANCE

The other essential to have in place early, ideally as soon as/before you book, is insurance

Ensure it covers you & your family if one of you tests positive while in the USA, or if travel rules change and there are issues getting home

For more advice, check out this [Instagram post on questions to ask your insurer before travel](#)

If you have had COVID in the 90 days before travel, you do not need to take any US-required test... BUT using this exemption may not be your best route!

You'll need confirmation of your result (harder to get now we can't get NHS PCR tests, so this would likely be a paid service from a private provider) AND a signed letter from a medical professional stating you're clear to end isolation.

These can be tricky to get from your GP, and usually cost at least £20, so it's important to be clear that it isn't a 'fit to fly' certificate, or a guarantee you're back to full health.

(The CDC even state it can say you're 'cleared to attend school / the office' with no mention of travel at all)

That said, your GP may still refuse so you may need to go to a private provider for this too - EEE...

✳ THEREFORE if you recovered more than 10-14 days ago, it will likely be easier and cheaper to just take a rapid antigen Pre-Departure test from the day before travel, [check here](#)

TAKE A US-REQUIRED PRE-DEPARTURE TEST

This can be PCR or rapid antigen (lateral flow) but must be supervised - i.e. taken in a test centre, or at home on a video call

Everyone - vaccinated or not - must **take this test from any time the 1 day before travel**

Departure time doesn't matter - so if you travel on a Saturday, you can test at any time on the Friday, or Saturday before check in

Your certificate must show your name, DOB or passport #, test type, date, and either the test centre location or confirmation a home test was supervised

If travelling with unvaccinated or partly vaccinated children 5yrs or over, check whether there is a vaccine mandate in place at your destination

Cities including New York, Boston, and Los Angeles have had mandates that prevent unvaccinated people over the age of either 5 or 12 years going into indoor spaces

These typically include restaurants, sports venues and entertainment premises (cinema, bowling, museums, etc) - anywhere food & drink are served

Luckily cities are now dropping mandates - for more information, check out this article: [COVID Vaccine and Mask Mandates Relaxing Across the USA](#)

TAKE A DAY 3-5 TEST

Unvaccinated adults travelling on a vaccination exception (excluding being an approved vaccine trial participant) & unvaccinated or partly vaccinated 2-17 year olds must **take a COVID test on day 3-5 in the US**

It can be antigen or PCR & doesn't need to be supervised or uploaded anywhere

(We used [Flowflex tests from Boots](#) - at £1.96 each when purchased in a box of 5 - for our boys in April 2022)

Travel during the pandemic isn't quite as simple as it used to be! But this timeline can help you get all the important testing and paperwork done at the right time, so you can relax and enjoy your travels - though keep an eye on the news (or [our Instagram account!](#)) while travelling, as change is frequent and swift!

SORT ESTA (VISA WAIVER)

Ideally, you shouldn't purchase your trip until you've got your ESTA in place - if there's a problem with an application you may not have time to fix it! (More [here](#))

Apply for a new ESTA or check your existing one is still valid ->



Make sure that if you have a middle name shown on your passport that you include it in the FIRST/GIVEN NAME field on your ESTA application - it is now mandatory to do so

(more info & background on this change [here](#))

Friendly Reminder

Free NHS tests are not permitted by the UK Government to be used for purposes related to international travel.

Also, NHS tests cannot provide required documentation - for example, the certificate you need for the US Pre-Departure Test...

I highly recommend both Qured and DocHQ (I've reviewed the latter [here](#), using their video appointments with £1.96 tests from Boots)

Code BATRAVEL20 gets you 20% off Qured tests, and RETURN30 gives 30% off DocHQ services

BOOK TESTING

Book your testing from a few weeks out from your trip - there is still a chance the rules will change, but if you leave it too late your preferred supplier may book up

Look for suppliers who offer refunds or flexible changes - like Qured

Currently you could need up to 2 tests - the US Pre-Departure Test (for everyone not travelling on the 'Recent Recovery' exemption) and the US Day 3-5 Test (for unvaccinated travellers only)

You will need proof of your vaccinated status

Make sure you install the NHS app before travel!

It's also important to protect against app outages (there have been a few!) - you should add your COVID pass to the 'wallet' on your phone if possible.

You can also:

- Screenshot the QR codes and add to an album
- Email yourself a PDF copy from within the app
- Order a printed copy to be sent [here](#)

The QR codes are only valid for 30 days, so make sure you refresh them in the week or two before travel

NB - there are different ways for children aged 5-17 years to prove their COVID vaccination status, please find the full breakdown by age on [this Government/NHS page](#)

FILL IN YOUR ATTESTATION FORM

In theory it must be **completed in the 72hrs before you fly to the USA...**

...but as you are legally promising within it that you've had a negative Pre-Departure Test, **it can only be done from the day before travel.**

You can print & complete [the official PDF](#), or use your airline's verification tool - for example Virgin Atlantic has [FlyReady](#) and BA & Aer Lingus have the [Verify app \(iPhone | Android\)](#)

Tip - even if you use an airline's online tool or app, please take a printed copy for each person travelling. I've had dozens of reports of them being requested at check-in or arrival in the US...



'Return home' info has been removed from this infographic, as the UK & ROI currently have no testing or paperwork requirements, even for unvaccinated travellers

