

IATA survey reveals confidence and restlessness to travel

The latest survey from the [International Air Transport Association](#) (IATA) revealed growing confidence in a return to air travel, frustration with current travel restrictions, and acceptance of a travel app to manage health credentials for travel.

For the survey a total of 4,700 interviews were conducted online in 11 markets between February 15-23. The sample size was 500 in the US, Canada, UK, France, Germany, India and Australia. In Chile, Japan, UAE and Singapore the sample size was 300. Respondents qualified for the survey if they had taken a plane trip in the past 11 months. [Rockland Dutton Research & Consulting](#) prepared the questionnaire and analysis and contracted the data collection and tabulation to [Dynata](#).

Thoughts on travel restrictions

- 88 percent believe that when opening borders, the right balance must be struck between managing COVID-19 risks and getting world economies going again
- 85 percent believe that governments should set COVID-19 targets (such as testing capacity or vaccine distribution) to re-open borders
- 84 percent believe that COVID-19 will not disappear, and we need to manage its risks while living and traveling normally
- 68 percent agreed that their quality of life has suffered with travel restrictions
- 49 percent believe that air travel restrictions have gone too far

While there is public support for travel restrictions, IATA says it is becoming clear that people are feeling more comfortable with managing the risks of COVID-19.

The survey also revealed a traveling public frustrated with the loss of freedom, with 68 percent of respondents indicating their quality of life is suffering as a result. Nearly 40 percent of respondents reported mental stress and missing an important human moment as a result of travel restrictions. And more than a third have said that restrictions prevent them from doing business normally.

“The top priority of everybody at the moment is staying safe amid the COVID-19 crisis. But it is important that we map a way to being able to re-open borders, manage risks and enable people to get on with their lives. That includes the freedom to travel. It is becoming clear that we will need to learn to live and travel in a world that has COVID-19. Given the health, social and economic costs of travel restrictions, airlines should be ready to re-connect the world as soon as governments are able to re-open borders. That’s why a plan with measurable milestones is so critical. Without one, how can we be prepared for restart without an unnecessary delay?” said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA’s Director General and CEO in today’s announcement of the survey results.

On the subject of future travel trends

- 57 percent expect to be traveling within two months of the pandemic being contained (improved from 49 percent in September 2020)
- 72 percent want to travel to see family and friends as soon as possible (improved from 63 percent in September 2020)
- 81 percent believe that they will be more likely to travel once they are vaccinated
- 84 percent said they will not travel if there is a chance of quarantine at destination (largely unchanged from 83 percent in September 2020)

- 56 percent believe that they will postpone travel until the economy stabilizes (improved from 65 percent in September 2020)

Survey responses are telling us that people are becoming more confident to travel. Those expecting to travel within a few months of “COVID-19 containment” now account for 57 percent of survey respondents (improved from 49 percent in September 2020). This is supported by vaccine rollout which indicates that 81 percent of people will be more likely to travel once vaccinated. And 72 percent of respondents want to travel as soon as possible after COVID-19 is contained to see friends and family.

There are some headwinds in travel trends. About 84 percent of travelers will not travel if it involves quarantine at destination. And there are still indications that the pick-up in business travel will take time with 62 percent of respondents saying they are likely to travel less for business even after the virus is contained. However it is a significant improvement from the 72 percent recorded in September 2020.

“People want to get back to travel, but quarantine is the showstopper. As testing capacity and technology improves and the vaccinated population grows, the conditions for removing quarantine measures are being created. And this points us again towards working with governments for a well-planned re-opening as soon as conditions allow,” added de Juniac.

IATA Travel Pass

- 89 percent of respondents believe that governments need to standardize vaccine and testing certificates
- 80 percent are encouraged by the prospect of the IATA Travel Pass App and would use it as soon as available
- 78 percent will only use a travel credential app if they have full control over their data

Travel health credentials are already opening borders to some countries. IATA believes that such a system needs global standards and the highest level of data security.

The survey produced very encouraging data indicating traveler willingness to use a secure mobile phone app to manage their travel health credentials. Four of five people surveyed would like to use this technology as soon as it becomes available. They also expect that travel health credentials (vaccine or test certificates) must comply with global standards—a work that is still in progress by governments.

Survey respondents also sent a clear message on the importance of data security. Some 78 percent of travelers will not use an app if they are not in full control of their data. And about 60 percent will not use a travel credential app if data is stored centrally.

“We are designing IATA Travel Pass with the traveler in mind. Passengers keep all the data on their mobile devices, and they remain in full control of where that data goes. There is no central database. While we are making good progress with numerous trials, we are still awaiting the global standards for digital testing and vaccine certificates. Only with global standards and governments accepting them can we maximize efficiency and deliver an optimum travel experience,” said de Juniac.