

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## US, UK impose electronic device ban for travelers from select MEA nations

March 21, 2017



*Nordstrom's "You Are Here" campaign*

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By STAFF REPORTS

The United States and the United Kingdom are prohibiting passengers traveling inbound from certain Middle Eastern and African nations from keeping large devices with them in the cabin.

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Both bans target electronics that are larger than a cell phone, requiring travelers boarding flights operated by about a dozen airlines to check devices such as laptops, tablets, e-readers and cameras. In the past few months, a number of proposed regulations and new policies have made international travel more of a hassle and more confusing, potentially deterring affluent travelers from visiting and spending outside of their home countries.

### New rules

The U.S. ban affects travelers journeying from eight Muslim-majority countries through 10 airports in Cairo, Egypt; Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates; Istanbul, Turkey; Casablanca, Morocco; Amman, Jordan; Kuwait City, Kuwait; Jeddah and Riyadh in Saudi Arabia and Doha, Qatar.

This ban only affects foreign carriers, including Etihad Airways, Emirates and Royal Jordanian Airlines.

According to The New York Times, the rules went into effect at 3 a.m. EST on March 21, and airlines impacted must comply within four days.

In a statement, the Department of Homeland Security attributes its decision to worries of terrorism, with officials telling CNN the risk was tied to Al-Qaeda. The agency said, "Evaluated intelligence indicates that terrorist groups continue to target commercial aviation and are aggressively pursuing innovative methods to undertake their attacks, to include smuggling explosive devices in various consumer items."



*Image courtesy of Moncler*

Following the U.S. ban, the U.K. instituted its own similar rules, responding to what officials said was the same intelligence.

There are a number of differences in the U.K. plan, including which locations are impacted, with the U.K. targeting six countries including Lebanon, Tunisia and Jordan, but leaving out the U.A.E, Qatar, Kuwait and Morocco, according to CNN. Unlike the U.S., some of Britain's carriers are included, with British Airways, EasyJet, Jet2, Monarch, Thomas Cook and Thomson among those affected.

Other potential policies could see travelers choosing to avoid certain destinations.

Already in a tumultuous period, the luxury goods sector may be impacted even further now that the European Union is considering requiring a visa for travelers coming from the United States.

With so many luxury goods coming out of Europe, and buyers living in the U.S., the new visa requirement could affect more than just travel and hospitality brands. If the proposed visa requirement is voted into practice, retailers should consider strengthening their online capabilities ([see story](#)).

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