

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## New travel restrictions imposed as Omicron variant spreads

November 30, 2021



*Japan has banned all foreign nationals from entering due to the Omicron variant. Image credit: Four Seasons Hotel Kyoto*

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

At least 70 countries and territories have implemented some form of travel restrictions as the international community works to contain the new Omicron coronavirus variant.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**  
Plus: Just released  
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

South Africa first reported Omnicron to the World Health Organization (WHO) on Nov. 24, and it was designated as a "variant of concern" on Nov. 26 due to its many mutations. While scientists are still learning about the Omicron variant, many governments are limiting international travel as more countries identify confirmed cases.

Concern, not panic

Although it is unclear where Omicron originated, many countries including the United States and European Union member states have limited entry from several nations in Africa, including South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe.

Japan and Israel are among the countries barring all foreign visitors, while Australia has delayed reopening its international borders by at least two weeks.



*Countries are again turning to travel restrictions to combat COVID-19. Image credit: International Luxury Travel Market*

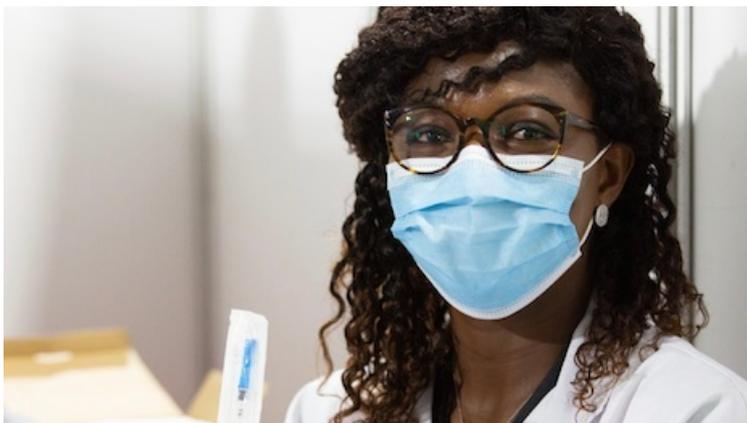
Health officials, including WHO, have criticized travel bans as being ineffective at eliminating the risk from new variants, however. There is also concern that these restrictions which can further hamper countries' struggling economies, including hospitality and tourism industries can discourage countries from being transparent about future variants.

Cases of Omicron have already been identified in several countries outside of southern Africa, including Germany, the U.K., Hong Kong and Canada.

Although Omicron appears to be highly transmissible based on early data from South Africa, scientists are still gathering information about the variant including whether it causes more severe illness than the dominant Delta variant or impacts the effectiveness of existing COVID-19 vaccines.

Uncertainty surrounding Omicron has hit investors, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average falling more than 900 points on Nov. 26 its worst day since October 2020.

U.S. stocks rebounded some on Nov. 29, when U.S. President Joe Biden cautioned consumers not to panic and iterated that lockdowns were not being discussed in response to Omicron.



*Luxury brands have helped UNICEF provide COVID-19 tests, vaccines and treatments. Image credit: Burberry*

Before the new variant was identified, concerns were mounting as COVID-19 cases climbed in Europe, China and the U.S. despite the availability of effective vaccines ([see story](#)). Vaccines have been lauded as the key for ending the COVID-19 pandemic, but government vaccine mandates have not been without controversy ([see story](#)).

Several luxury brands, including Burberry, Gucci and Valentino, have financially supported UNICEF's COVID-19 relief efforts, including the global COVAX program ([see story](#)).

The first case of COVID-19 was identified in China in December 2019, nearly two years ago.

---

© 2021 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.