

Thailand reduces quarantine, paperwork for vaccinated

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A surfer carries his board ashore as the sun sets over Kata Beach on the resort island of Phuket, Thailand on Sunday, May 26, 2019. Thailand hopes to first fully reopen the island of Phuket, its most popular destination, by July 1 for vaccinated visitors without quarantine. But they will be required to spend a certain time, possibly up to a week, on Phuket before they are allowed to travel elsewhere in Thailand. (AP Photo/Adam Schreck)

Thailand on Thursday began halving the quarantine time for vaccinated visitors as a first step to allowing inoculated people into the country without the need to isolate.

The pandemic has devastated Thailand's tourism industry, a key income earner, but strict border measures have left the country relatively unscathed.

Tanee Sangrat, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that travelers—Thais and non-Thais—are no longer required to have fit-to-fly documents issued by Thai consulates from Thursday. Foreigners, however, still have to show a negative COVID-19 test result.

He said that people who are certified to have been vaccinated will be allowed to spend seven days in special quarantine hotels, compared to the previous 14 days. Unvaccinated people have to spend 10 days in quarantine unless they arrive from one of 11 countries—all in sub-Saharan Africa—in which case they have to do the full two weeks.

He said that those vaccinated must have certificates approved by Thai FDA and/or the World Health Organization. Thailand has approved seven vaccines including Sinovac, AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer and Moderna.

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A surfer catches a wave as the sun sets over Kata Beach on the resort island of Phuket, Thailand on Sunday, May 26, 2019. Thailand hopes to first fully reopen the island of Phuket, its most popular destination, by July 1 for vaccinated visitors without quarantine. But they will be required to spend a certain time, possibly up to a week, on Phuket before they are allowed to travel elsewhere in

Thailand. (AP Photo/Adam Schreck)

Businesses on the island hope to vaccinate most residents until May—an ambitious goal given the slow pace of vaccinations in the country.



The sun sets over outlying islands as a plane prepares to land on the resort island of Phuket, Thailand on Wednesday, May 22, 2019. Thailand hopes to first fully reopen the island of Phuket, its most popular destination, by July 1 for vaccinated visitors without quarantine. But they will be required to spend a certain time, possibly up to a week, on Phuket before they are allowed to travel elsewhere in Thailand. (AP Photo/Adam Schreck)

Thailand has essentially been closed to foreign visitors for a year, and kept infections and deaths low. It has reported 28,889 confirmed cases with 94 deaths. On Thursday, it had 26 new cases.

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