

QUARANTINE FAQs

WHO CAN COME TO MAURITIUS?

Everyone is allowed to come to Mauritius – in fact, Mauritius is open for business, so long-term tourists are not just encouraged, they are beckoned through the new one-year, renewable Premium Visa (see below). The proviso is that **everyone** – with no exceptions – **will complete a mandatory 14-day quarantine at a hotel or a government-stipulated quarantine facility.**

Return Tickets

Travellers who do not have citizenship, residence status or work/study permits, must have a return ticket, and will be allowed to stay for a maximum duration of three months (see the section Tourists below). If the Economic Development Board (EDB) has approved “in principle” of a permit to live and/or work in Mauritius, you will be granted entry providing you acquire a visa upon arrival, and show the EDB’s letter of principle from EDB.

We list below the criteria for different categories of visitors:

Tourists

Tourists from most countries are allowed into Mauritius visa-free, for a maximum of 3 months, as long as they have a forward/return flight. See conditions of tourist visa below.

Exemptions: Some countries are not exempted from visas. Check your country’s status on this list:

<http://passport.govmu.org/English/Passport%20and%20Visa%20Requirement%20in%20Mauritius/Pages/Visa-Requirements-in-Mauritius.aspx>

Conditions of extended tourist visa: 6 months

The initial maximum duration of a tourist stay in Mauritius is 3 months. You can request an extension of an extra 3 months with the Passport and Immigration Office. Thus, the maximum total duration of a stay in Mauritius is 6 months, and this per year. Tourist visas are free of charge. See also the one-year Premium Visa below

The following are exempted from Visa Regulations:-

- (a) Citizens of Mauritius
- (b) Persons who are residents of Mauritius under the Immigration Act
- (c) The spouse of a citizen of Mauritius
- (d) A citizen’s or resident’s child, stepchild, or legally adopted child (a and b above)
- (e) Holders of Diplomatic Passports

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- (f) Crew of a vessel travelling on duty or in transit to join another vessel
- (g) Holders of Laissez-passer issued by the United Nations, SADC or from other internationally recognised organisations, and
- (h) Persons who intend to remain in Mauritius only during the stay of a vessel by which they arrive and depart.

New One-Year Premium Visa

During October 2020 Mauritius announced the Premium Travel Visa to any non-citizen who intends to stay in Mauritius for a maximum of one year as a tourist, retiree or a professional willing to come with his/her family and carry out his business or work remotely from Mauritius.

To qualify for this visa, interested visitors should produce proof of their long stay plans and sufficient travel and health insurance for the initial period of stay. Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- They should not enter the Mauritius Labour Market.
- The main place of business and source of income and profits should be outside Mauritius.
- They must show documentary evidence to support application such as purpose of visit, accommodation, source, and sufficiency of funds, etc.
- They must meet other basic immigration requirements.

The Economic Development Board <https://www.edbmauritius.org/> will set up an online platform for the e-Visa application shortly.

Investors, Entrepreneurs, Professionals

Investors, entrepreneurs, and professionals who choose to invest, work, and live in Mauritius should have a forward/return ticket, and should request a business visa on arrival. This document is issued for 120 days in a calendar year, but in his/her first visit, the holder should not stay more than 90 days.

Retired Non-Citizens

Retired non-citizens are eligible for tourist visa of 180 days in a calendar year.

Dependents

Dependents of all foreign nationals applying for permits should enter in Mauritius on a tourist visa.

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Students

Students who are non-citizens and non-residents must obtain a study visa prior to arriving in Mauritius.

FLIGHTS

Air Mauritius and Emirates only

Air Mauritius and Emirates are the only two commercial airlines authorised to land in Mauritius during October and November 2020. Passengers can **only** land in Mauritius if they embark in Paris, Dubai, or Reunion.

- **Air Mauritius (MK)** lands in Mauritius every Tuesday and Sunday. MK will accept tickets bought with Air France on the code share principle *but check first!*
- **Air Mauritius (MK)** arrives from Reunion island every Monday.
- **Emirates (EK)** lands in Mauritius every Saturday.

Please do not fall into the trap of booking with any commercial airline other than the two we have highlighted above. Airlines and tour operators are forward selling tickets in the hope that Mauritius will open its skies later, and those flights are being cancelled. The only exception to this rule is where Air Mauritius and another airline operate on share codes, as between MK and Air France. *Check with Air Mauritius before finalising ticket purchases with Air France.*

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: If my flight is cancelled, can I get a refund?

Most airlines will offer you a voucher rather than a refund. However, you may need the money immediately to book a flight on an authorised airline. If your flight with another airline has been cancelled, you may in some instances **reverse** payment. In the UK, for example, the consumer is protected and can ask their bank to retrieve payment.

Q: Do I need travel insurance?

You don't need health insurance to land in Mauritius. However, if you can get insurance to refund tickets for flights cancelled by an airline, go ahead. Dozens of people are booking the cheapest tickets on the market, ignoring the fact that only Air Mauritius and Emirates can land in Mauritius.

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Q: What documents do I need to bring?

A: From the MTPA website:

1. A certificate of a negative COVID – 19 PCR test administered not more than 7 days prior to the date of embarkation. (This means you can do a test within 7 days of the flight. Seven days means literally within 168 hours e.g. if your flight is Monday 7pm next week, don't do the test before 7pm Monday the week before. keep in mind you will need to leave enough time to receive the results before flying). This needs to be printed.
2. A valid air ticket to Mauritius.
3. Proof of purchase of a travel package including accommodation, on a full board basis, at a designated hotel for a mandatory 14-day in-room quarantine.
4. You must also download, print, and fill the Public Health Covid-19 Passenger Health Self-Declaration Form and Passenger Locator Form available below:
<https://booking.mymauritius.travel/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Public-Health-Covid-19-Passenger-Self-Declaration-form.pdf>
<https://booking.mymauritius.travel/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Public-Health-Passenger-Locator-Form.pdf>
5. ONLY FOR NON-RESIDENTS: Evidence of a return flight ticket. This will be required at the immigration counter.

If you travel with Emirates, check the PCR requirements before your flight. Latest advice:
<https://www.emirates.com/english/help/covid-19/dubai-travel-requirements/tourists/>

Q: What test do I need to do before my flight?

A: You will need to get a PCR test from a lab which is approved by the country of departure. The test needs to be a PCR test, also called a swab test and not an antibody test.

Q: Will there be social distancing on the flight?

A: Airlines have said that social distancing on plane is not financially viable so don't expect social distancing on the flight. Flights to Mauritius tend to be busy. Bear in mind the aircrafts are equipped with very efficient HEPA filters making transmission onboard unlikely. Transmission is much more likely in crowded indoor spaces such as the airport. You will also need to wear a mask for the full duration of the flight. During the flight we recommend that you wash your hands regularly with soap and avoid touching surfaces unnecessarily.

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Q: Will I get food on my long-haul flight?

A: Long haul flights usually give two meals to passengers. You can remove your mask during mealtime.

Q: What can I expect when I arrive at the airport?

A: Masks and gloves will be mandatory from the moment you leave the plane to the moment you will arrive at your hotel room. A word of advice: do not rush through the airport because buses do not leave until they are full. You may have to wait over an hour in the sun if you are first in the bus.

You can expect this procedure:

- Firstly, your temperature will be taken.
- Secondly, you will queue for immigration/passport control. Everyone will need to show their hotel booking and passport. A return ticket is also required if you're a non-resident.
- Thirdly, you'll be in line for the health counter. Here you will need to give the yellow health form, your printed pre-flight COVID-19 test results, Public Health Covid-19 Passenger Health Self-Declaration Form and Passenger Locator Form. Next you will undertake a PCR test.
- Fourthly, you will now be able to pick your luggage and go through customs.
- Finally, you will be directed to the bus/coach which will take you to the hotel.

Q: Will the duty free be open in Mauritius?

A: People arriving at the airport in Mauritius will not have access to the duty-free, ATM, cafes etc.

Q: Who is allowed to come to Mauritius?

A: Everyone is allowed to come provided they do the mandatory 14-day quarantine. For more detail about the requirements for visiting Mauritius, see the post "Who can come to Mauritius?"

QUARANTINE HOTEL

The Mauritius Tourism Marketing Authority (MTPA) has authorised a certain number of guesthouses, three-star, four-star and five-star hotels to host quarantiners.

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Hotel Bookings

Guesthouses: Rs29 000

3-star: Rs35 000

4-star: Rs50 000

5-star: own prices (above Rs100 000, up to Rs480 000)

Medical fee

There is an additional charge of Rs 13,500 for non-citizen (residents are still counted as non-citizens) of all ages for medical costs, that is, the three PCR tests and hospitalisation, should there be a need thereof.

Children

Non-Mauritian children aged 5 and below also pay Rs13 500 only, for the cost of swabs and eventuality of hospitalisation.

Non-Mauritian children aged 6 to 14 who are sharing the bedroom with parents need to pay Rs8 500 each for meals, *plus* Rs13 500 for swabs and potential hospitalisation. In other words, the total stay per child costs Rs22 000. They do not pay extra for the room.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Where can I book the quarantine hotel?

Once you have booked your flights, move to the MTPA reservation platform to reserve your hotel: <https://booking.mymauritius.travel/> The platform indicates where to click if you are Mauritian or of another nationality. If you are travelling in a mixed family, with both Mauritians and other nationalities, we suggest you click on Mauritian to make all the bookings. The non-Muritians will pay the extra medical costs (Rs13 500) at the hotel.

Q: Can I book directly with the hotel instead of going through the MTPA?

A: No as there are specific hotels for specific arrival dates.

Q: Can I book a hotel that is not on the MTPA website?

A: No, the hotels on the MTPA are the only ones who have authorisation to offer a quarantine service.

Q: Can I self-isolate at home or in private accommodation?

A: No, there is a strict protocol in place; you will only be allowed to quarantine at designated hotels.

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Q: Will I still have to quarantine if...?

A: YES, *everyone* coming into Mauritius will have to do a mandatory 14-day quarantine at a hotel. This includes:

- Citizens, residents, permit holders, students
- The elderly, people who have travelled overseas for medical treatment
- People who already had COVID and are now free of the virus
- People returning for family emergency
- People with negative PCR test
- Children, including babies

Q: I heard some people had access to quarantine for free. Am I eligible?

A: Before October 2020 returning citizens attended non-paying quarantine. This regulation has changed from 1st of October 2020, and now passengers will be required to pay for their quarantine. Those citizens who are employed but have insufficient savings to afford quarantine will be able to access a low-interest loan of Rs100 000 from the SBM bank.

The following exceptions apply:

- People who went abroad for treatment paid by the Mauritian government are eligible for a free quarantine at a recreational centre.
- Distressed Mauritians stuck overseas are asked to contact the local Mauritian High Commissioner to apply for acceptance into a non-paying Recreational Centre. The application will be forwarded to an inter-ministerial committee in Mauritius for evaluation of personal circumstances. The committee will look at your bank accounts, proof of your lifestyle overseas, reason why you went overseas or need to return, etc., before deciding. This process is tough and on a case-by-case basis. It may also take a while to process.
- Some students will be entitled to spend quarantine in a Recreational Centre. They need to go through the same application process as distressed Mauritians (see above).

Q: When will I have to pay for the hotel?

A: It depends on the hotel but usually you pay a deposit when you book. It can be 30% , 50% or 100%, depending on the establishment. You will then have to pay any outstanding balance when you arrive at the hotel.

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Q: If I can't make the flight on which I was booked, will my deposit be refunded?

A: Your booking is subject to your hotel's refund policies. We suggest you check with the hotel prior to making your booking.

Q: Which hotels will be available when I travel?

A: Information about the availability of hotels is usually given around the 20th of the preceding month. It's a tight schedule, and in order to secure a hotel which matches your taste and pocket, you need to keep checking the MTPA website around this time.

Q: What can I do if there are only 4, or 5 stars hotels for my date?

A: There is a limited choice of hotels for each flight. The bookings are on a first come first serve basis. It's possible that the MPTA will add more hotels for your date but you should try to book your hotel as soon as possible.

Q: Can I stay in the same room as my spouse/partner?

A: Yes, family members/couples/friends who have travelled together can stay together. Most 4-star hotels have family rooms. Other hotels could give you adjoining rooms.

Q: I'm Mauritian but my partner is not a citizen. How do I book the hotel?

A: Citizens and non-citizen have different prices for quarantine, since non-citizen must pay an additional Rs13,500 for health costs. We recommend you book on the website as 2 Mauritians and then contact the hotel directly to say one of you isn't a Mauritian. Alternatively, settle the extra amount when you get to the hotel (you will be asked to produce your passports).

HOTEL REVIEWS

The MTPA has selected a list of three-, four- and five-star hotels as hosts for the mandatory quarantine. Book through their reservation platform after securing your air ticket:

<https://booking.mymauritius.travel/>

Each flight arrival is linked to a specific list of hotels on the MTPA website. There is no flexibility in the system. Select yours early, as the cheaper hotels are in greater demand.

Hotel Fees

All 3-star: Rs35 000

All 4-star: Rs50 000

5-star hotels have their own prices (above Rs75 000, up to Rs420 000)

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Regardless of which hotel you choose, there is an additional charge of Rs 13,500 for non-citizens (residents are still counted as non-citizen) for medical costs, that is, the three PCR tests and hospitalisation, should there be a need thereof. Children also have to pay this fee.

Non-Mauritian children aged 5 and below pay Rs13 500 only, for the cost of swabs and eventuality of hospitalisation. Children aged 6 to 14 who are sharing the bedroom with parents need to pay Rs8 500 each for meals for the duration of quarantine, plus Rs13 500 for swabs and potential hospitalisation. They do not pay for the room.

What to Expect

Some five-star hotels offer spacious villas with lounges, dining spaces, kitchenettes, and even swimming pools. These are exclusive to the Trou aux Biches and Maradiva Hotels. Villas are costed per unit as opposed to per person.

Please remember that quarantine accommodation rates are less than tourist rates. Expect simpler meals, repeat menus, or a smaller selection of food than during normal tourist holidays.

The consensus in November 2020 is that coastal three-star hotels are superior to their inland equivalents. This is a generalisation, so please do your homework before selecting your quarantine hotel.

When searching the group for reviews, identify trends rather than specific opinions. Several hotels, slated at the beginning of paid quarantine, improved their service and menus to excel in subsequent quarantine periods. Some quarantiners' experience didn't match their expectations, and their reviews may differ from the norm for a particular hotel.

MAURITIANS STRANDED ABROAD

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recognises that many Mauritians stranded abroad would like to return home but don't have the means to pay for quarantine. Authorities have extended support for four types of stranded Mauritians who fit in to the following categories:

1. **Mauritians who have a job and some savings**, but insufficient finances to access quarantine hotels: *A Loan for Rs100 000 has been made available with the SBM at 3% interest, repayable over a period of 30 months. Contact the bank directly.*

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2. **Mauritians who have accessed government assistance for medical treatment overseas:** *Submit a set of required documents to the High Commission in the country where you are stuck. If there is no High Commission in that country, deal directly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mauritius: <https://foreign.govmu.org/Pages/default.aspx> or (230) 405 2500, or mfa@govmu.org or the person at the Ministry of Health who helped you with medical assistance.*
3. **Distressed Mauritians** who do not have a job or the financial means to pay for quarantine: *Submit a set of required documents to the High Commission in the country where you are stuck. If there is no High Commission in that country, deal directly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mauritius: <https://foreign.govmu.org/Pages/default.aspx> or (230) 405 2500, or mfa@govmu.org*
4. **Students:** *Apply through the High Commission in the country where you are stuck. If there is no High Commission in that country, deal directly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mauritius: <https://foreign.govmu.org/Pages/default.aspx> or (230) 405 2500, or mfa@govmu.org*

A Note of Caution

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs may not respond to your e-mail or phone call, and overseas missions may tell you they are not aware of the scheme. Please persevere gently but firmly and understand it may take a long time and alternative contacts, wherever you can find them, to get to the point of making the application.

DURING QUARANTINE

Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl, author of Man's search for meaning, said "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms — to choose one's attitude in any set of given circumstances..." When I blame, I give someone else the power, I victimise myself.

If we fight COVID and the quarantine regulations, we will hate everything about our stay. We have to ask ourselves: do we need to come home? If the answer is yes, we have no option – this thing is well beyond our control. So, we may as well choose to enjoy the ride. Here are a few tips to consider before you enter quarantine:

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- **Information:** Draw information from all sources. You'll feel like a bouncing ball: let go of things you can't control.
- **Wait:** This is a patience test. Some things are not announced so you can't find the information; then some things are announced before people and systems are ready, so they don't work. Expect uncertainty when buying tickets and booking quarantine hotels.
- **Travel:** If you dare to wear your pyjamas and slippers, do it. Otherwise find the most comfortable clothing and shoes. You will stand for many hours.
- **Physicality:** Establish a daily routine which includes a leg stretch. Sign up for regular exercise; spend energy cleaning the room.
- **Needs to order:** Your room will lack some home comforts, snacks, etc., which will give you pleasure during your stay. On Day 1 place orders with online shops or ask friends to drop off. Do on Day 1 to avoid the lowering of your morale.
- **Entertainment:** Come with enough reading, playing and entertainment matter to keep you busy; take Netflix, watch inspiring films.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: May I go out of my room during quarantine, to exercise or catch some air?

A: You will not be allowed to leave your room for the duration of quarantine. You will not be able to access any of the hotel facilities (beach, swimming pool, restaurant etc.).

Q: Can my partner who lives in Mauritius come and spend quarantine with me, if we pay for the extra person?

A: No persons living in Mauritius may enter quarantine with their partner or family member from overseas, nor can they come and visit you while you're in quarantine.

Q: What can I expect in terms of services?

A: There will not be any cleaning services in your room; you need to clean your room. You will be given cleaning equipment and chemicals. All meals will be brought to your room. Hotels will provide a limited choice of options for each meal. Some four- and five-star hotels have been providing crockery and stainless-steel cutlery, but you may receive your meals in take-away containers.

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Q: Can I receive a package from someone in Mauritius when I'm in quarantine?

A: Yes, you can. Some limitations include not being able to receive cooked food, though snacks, yoghurt, fruit, etc., are fine. Some hotels will also not let you receive alcohol, and others will not allow cigarettes to be purchased in.

Q: Can I drink/smoke in the hotel?

A: Policies vary widely between hotels as the government regulation is fuzzy. You should contact your hotel before flying to Mauritius. You may be offered alcohol/cigarettes at the hotel; or you may be allowed to drink and smoke the products have brought. However, it is also possible you will not be allowed to buy or consume any at your quarantine hotel.

Q: What health checks do they perform during quarantine?

A: You will do a PCR test on day 0 (the day you land) at the airport. They will test you again on day 7 and day 14. You will receive a certificate on your last day stating you tested negative on all three tests before being allowed to leave. Medical staff will also check your temperature twice a day during the quarantine.

Q: When will I be released from quarantine?

A: Tests are usually done early in the morning of the 14th day (05h00-06h00). The staff will do their best to return the results on the same day (18h00 onwards). There are cases when the tests came back late in the evening. Hey, it's your last day, patience will come easily.

Q: What happens if a person is tested positive on Day 14?

A: The rule is that if a person tests positive on Day 14, the entire cohort (the quarantiners at the hotel) will be retained for a further 7 days. The reality is that no-one has yet tested positive on Day 14, so don't worry. In any case, the government is unlikely to force you to stay an extra week because they may land up paying for an entire cohort's extra quarantine.

TESTING

PCR tests can be conducted through the nose or through the throat. Generally, the throat swab is less invasive but also less accurate, which is why the throat swab is used to test children only. The test is not painful but uncomfortable. Authorities will refuse to test adults through the throat.

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Q: When must I have a PCR test before flying?

A: You can have a PCR test up to seven days before flying. It is best to book for your test 5 to 6 days before flying so that you have time to receive the results. If you are transiting through an airport, for instance, Dubai, check (a) if you need a PCR test result, and (b) if so, how long before you fly. Rules keep changing.

Q: What happens during a PCR test?

A: A soft cotton-tipped swab is inserted inside the nose. It lasts approximately seven seconds.

Q: Will my child/baby need to be tested?

A: Yes, but they will do a throat swab for children/babies instead of a nose swab.

Q: What will happen if I test positive for COVID upon arrival in Mauritius?

A: You will be transferred into the ENT hospital where you will remain until you test negative twice in a row.

Q: What will happen to my booking deposit if I test positive?

A: Hotels have all agreed to refund those days which have not been used.

IF YOU TEST POSITIVE

Testing positive for COVID is an unpleasant experience, especially if you have symptoms of the virus. You are strongly advised to refrain from travelling if you have lost your sense of smell, have a scratchy throat, a runny nose, or a slight temperature – even if you have tested negative!

Less than 1% (0.6%) of passengers who landed in Mauritius since the opening of skies on the 1st October 2020 have been COVID-positive. Diagnosis occurs either as they land in Mauritius, or on their Day 7 swab during quarantine. No-one has yet tested positive after 14 days. The statistics are insignificant and shouldn't be a source of anxiety. Please glean through the following regulations, which apply to positive cases in Mauritius.

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Q: What happens if I test positive when I have my first PCR on arrival at the airport?

A: You will be taken directly to the ENT hospital, which is a new government hospital. The Ministry of Health enforces the rule that in order to be released from hospital, you need to have two consecutive negative results. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Q: How many tests do I have during quarantine?

You have three PCR tests when you arrive in Mauritius:

1. At the airport, upon arrival
2. On Day 7
3. On Day 14

If you test positive for any of these tests, you will be taken to the ENT hospital.

Q: Can I stay in my hotel room if I'm asymptomatic but positive?

No. All persons who test positive need to go to the ENT hospital.

Q: Can I be taken to a private clinic, or see a private doctor if I'm tested positive?

No. If tested positive, you are in the hands of the government and need to follow the Ministry of Health's protocols.

Q: Will I get a refund from the hotel if I am sent to hospital?

Yes. Hotels have agreed with the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority that they will refund all travellers for the time they have been unable to use the hotel room due to a COVID positive result.

Q: Will I be allowed to go with my child if he/she tests positive and not me?

A: This scenario has never occurred. However, it stands to reason that if there are one adult and one child in a hotel room, the child cannot be left alone in the room if his/her parent is removed. Likewise, a child should not be left in a hospital without his/her parent. Assert your child's right to be protected by his/her parents.