

Airlines that no longer require masks onboard

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Countries across the globe have started easing Covid-19-related protocols including mask rules and several airlines have followed suit, eliminating their mask policies.

British Airways started allowing customers to go without a mask if the destination they are flying to does not require them. The airline also requires masks on flights to destinations where they haven't been able to "clarify the local restrictions."

The UK-based airline easyJet eliminated mask requirements on its aircraft on March 27 "on flights where masks are no longer legally required at both ends of the route." For easyJet, that includes most UK domestic flights as well as flights between the UK and Denmark, Gibraltar, Iceland, and Hungary.

The Iceland-based airline Icelandair made face masks optional on some flights on March 23, weeks after Iceland lifted all Covid-19-related travel restrictions. Masks are still mandatory on flights to and from Canada, the US, Germany, Paris, and Zurich. Masks are optional on all other European flights as well as flights within Iceland and to and from Greenland.

British airline Jet2 became the first carrier to drop mask requirements in March. Passengers are no longer required to wear masks in England or Northern Ireland, but passengers 6 years and older traveling in Scotland must still wear them.

The Dutch government eliminated the requirement to wear face masks on public transportation on March 23, but still requires face masks to be worn on airplanes and in airports. However, KLM has vowed to stop enforcing its mask policy, saying it was "disappointing that the use of face masks during boarding and during the entire flight is still being considered by the Dutch government, while this has been abandoned everywhere in the Netherlands."

From April 4, mandatory face masks are no longer required on flights across the network of Norwegian due to new guidance in Europe. As more countries loosen their mask wearing restrictions Norwegian leaves it up to passengers on whether or not they will choose to wear masks while flying. The mask requirement was lifted across Scandinavia on February 12.

Swedish airline SAS has dropped mask requirements on domestic flights as well as flights within Scandinavia, but requires them for passengers 6 and older on all other flights. For flights that require a mask, homemade masks, and cloth masks are not accepted.

British carrier TUI allows travellers to ditch their masks. But the airline still requires them for travellers 12 and older if they are flying to or from Wales or Scotland. Passengers 2 and older must also wear a face-covering if they are traveling to the US, and travellers 6 and older must wear one if they are travelling to Italy.

Virgin Atlantic changed its mask policy on March 16, allowing customers to choose if they wear a face covering, including on flights to Barbados, St Lucia, Antigua, Grenada, the Bahamas, Jamaica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. Masks must still be worn on the airline's flights to or from the US as well as for passengers 12 and older on flights to and from Delhi, Islamabad, Hong Kong, Johannesburg, Lahore, Lagos, Mumbai, Shanghai, and Tel Aviv.

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