

# Qatar Airways takes precautionary measures to address COVID-19



Qatar Airways continues to take firm steps in response to COVID-19 as it amends flight schedule, working with governments to take people home, and introducing new policies to ensure the health and safety of staff, and maintaining its vital cargo operations.

In addition, the airline continues to support the State of Qatar's efforts to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, and has acquired and transported 500,000 test kits, which will be donated to local health services.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, H.E. Mr. Akbar Al Baker, said: "At Qatar Airways we continue to work hard to take people home to their families, while also ensuring robust health and safety practices to limit the spread of coronavirus.

We are adjusting our flight schedules on a daily basis, and since the outbreak of the virus we have stepped up our already robust hygiene practices. In these efforts, we do not work alone - I am grateful for the support we have received from local and national governments and entities, whom we are working in close partnership to overcome this pandemic."

## **Flight schedules and bookings**

Qatar Airways continues to temporarily restrict flights to severely affected countries due to entry restrictions implemented by the governments. The airline will place a temporary hold on flights to John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) from 1 April 2020, Madrid Barajas Airport (MAD) from 4 April, and Barcelona El Prat Airport (BCN) from 5 April, with the intention to reinstate flights in line with a return to regular conditions.

In addition to this, Qatar Airways is working on getting those stranded abroad to get home. The airline is working with governments around the world to maintain a strong schedule of flights, and organising charter flights where needed. The airline has received words of thanks from many countries, including the governments of Germany, the UK, France, Pakistan, and Oman for its efforts to return their citizens.

The airline is also offering maximum flexibility to passengers in terms of managing their travel plans. Passengers that have booked are planning to book tickets for travel up to 30 September 2020 can alter their travel date free of charge, exchange their ticket for a future travel voucher valid for one year or get a refund. For more details, visit [qatarairways.com/en/travel-with-confidence.html](https://qatarairways.com/en/travel-with-confidence.html).

## **Health and safety measures**

Strong health and safety measures have also been implemented for employees. Cabin crew have received training on how to minimize their chances of contracting or spreading the infection, are thermally screened before the departure of flights and after their arrival, and are quarantined and tested if any colleagues or passengers on a flight shows any symptoms of infection or test positive for the virus. As the current pandemic has escalated, cabin crew have been authorized to wear surgical masks and disposable gloves.

Qatar Airways has revised its distribution of cabin crew on flights, sending two groups on short-haul and medium-haul flights – the first to manage the outbound trip, the second to manage the inbound trip. For long-haul flights, crew members who have to stay overnight in a foreign city can only travel in Qatar Airways-approved transport and must remain in their rooms, limiting human interactions.

'Social Distancing' is also exercised for passengers where available. This is also implemented during the boarding process, ensuring passengers are allocated seats far apart from each other. The airline is also encouraging passengers to follow hygiene practices recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), such as regular hand washing and refraining from touching the face.

As an airline, Qatar Airways maintains the highest possible hygiene standards, which include the regular disinfection of aircraft, the use of cleaning products recommended by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and WHO.

Qatar Airways' aircraft feature the most advanced air filtration systems, equipped with industrial-size HEPA filters that remove 99.97% of viral and bacterial contaminants from re-circulated air, providing the most effective protection against infection. All the airline's onboard linen and blankets are washed, dried and pressed at microbial lethal temperatures, and then sealed into individual packaging by staff wearing disposable gloves.

## **Qatar Airways Cargo**

As one of the world's largest airlines and cargo operators, Qatar Airways is in a unique position to offer humanitarian assistance to affected countries all over the world.

In February the airline supported China supported by donating and flying 300 tonnes of medical supplies to in five cargo aircraft to Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. It also flew six tonnes of medical supplies free of charge to the Islamic Republic of Iran, which were donated by the State of Qatar, in March. Qatar Airways Cargo has offered to fly any medical supplies to China and Iran free of charge, to continue to support.

In terms of its day-to-day operations, Qatar Airways Cargo is working hard to ensure that importers can maintain supplies of fresh produce and pharmaceuticals to countries around the world through our cargo operations – at significantly discounted rates.

## **Measures at Hamad International Airport**

Hamad International Airport (HIA) is also robustly minimizing any risks to the health and safety of passengers and staff. HIA's remains open as it continues its operations to take people home to their

family through Doha, and to ensure food security of Qatar through cargo.

To limit the number of people at HIA as passenger numbers are below average, there has been a temporary reduction of 40% of staff working onsite at the airport across various areas including food and beverage, retail, and ground services. These staff are either working from home, or taking paid or unpaid leave.

In terms of hygiene measures, HIA has implemented stringent cleaning procedures and closed most of the non-essential passenger facilities. All passenger touch points are sanitized every 10-15 minutes. All boarding gates and bus gate counters are cleaned after each flight. Staff working at the airport have been provided additional training in terms of protecting themselves and others in light of the current situation and implementing the highest health and safety measurements. In addition, hand sanitizers are provided at immigration and security screening points. A social distancing policy has been implemented at the airport, and staff are allowed to wear masks and disposable gloves to protect them from any infection. All staff are briefed to change their masks in line with WHO recommendations.

Transfer passengers are being processed in a strategic way that minimizes contact with staff and each other, to ensure social distancing. Most food courts and food outlets have been temporarily closed following Qatar's Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) guidelines. Some food and beverage outlets remain operational with passengers following social distancing measures. HIA has also suspended retail and service outlets except for some essential stores like the pharmacy. HIA also stopped the use of passenger trains, escalators, moving walkalators and elevators, and have stopped the use of baby strollers and prayer rooms.

In line with WHO guidance, the airport has also developed a hygiene advisory that guides passengers and staff on how to wash hands, when to seek medical advice, whom to inform if they are feeling unwell, what to use if they don't have access to soap and water, and what to avoid. This content is available at all passenger touchpoints and screens across the terminal.

Transfer passengers undergo thermal screening, especially those coming from countries with a severe coronavirus outbreak. Advanced thermal cameras have been installed that can remotely record the body temperature of each passenger. If a passenger is detected to have a fever, they are transferred to the specialised clinic at the airport arrivals side. HIA, in cooperation with MoPH, the Qatari Company for Airports Operation and Management (MATAR), and Qatar Airways, has set up this clinic to conduct medical examinations and handle all COVID-19 related cases on a 24/7 basis. The airport has worked hard to minimize transit hours between flights and assign aircraft as near to the gate as possible.