



Summer travel in uncertain times

As travel disruptions — from visa cancellations to flight suspensions — increase by the day, many people are wondering what to do about their summer vacations, if anything at all.

While the decision to travel will hinge upon a variety of factors — from your age and personal risk aversion to your reasons for traveling in the first place — there is no need to completely throw out your summer travel plans yet.

It is, however, time to start thinking strategically about them.

How will you go?

Air travel may increase your risk of exposure to COVID-19 due to the number of hours you'll spend at airports in security lines and waiting inside the terminals, which is likely to bring you in close contact with other people and frequently touched surfaces. Once you're on board, air circulation and filtration systems keep most viruses and other germs from spreading easily. Social distancing, however, is difficult to maintain on crowded flights.

Traveling by train for any length of time should involve wearing a face mask (in mandated states) and standing 6 feet apart from others. Note that people on trains are likely to stand within 6 feet of each other, which increases your risk.

Traveling by car or RV will require you to stop at various locations for gas, food and bathroom breaks. Following safety guidelines will put you and your traveling companions at a lesser risk.

Cruise ship travel should be placed on hold for the time being because it places large numbers of people, often from countries around the world, in tight quarters and in close proximity with each other.

Where to go

Assuming you have the appetite to book air travel, where will you go? It's easy to avoid the hardest hit countries right now, but which nations will see health dangers arise next? With travel updates changing by the hour, predicting future circumstances is nearly impossible.

International travelers can access community spread information as well as travel advice at the [CDC risk assessment site](#), which employs a tiered alert system on the potential health risks of visiting various countries.

From the map, it appears that there is no place in the world without some reported risk level or community spread, including Antarctica, so your best options may simply be staycations or travel within your country.

In fact, with gas prices expected to stay low, the summer of 2020 may shape up to be the year people take to the road. You may be more comfortable hopping into your own car or a rental vehicle to get where you want to go for vacation.

Travel ideas within the U.S.

Outdoor trips to less populated areas are one way to avoid crowds.

Camping, cycling and wilderness trips, exploring national parks (while skipping the most heavily visited spots) and touring lesser-known vineyards in popular wine regions are seen as safer choices, for the time being.

If you have young children, consider trading the annual trip to the amusement park for a stay at a lakeside cabin. Or try a rented vacation home, bed-and-breakfast or boutique hotel to reduce your exposure to others. Perhaps instead of one large trip, you could devise a series of day trips to places closer to home.

Remember, though, that while a rural home or remote island may seem like the best chance of a carefree escape, consideration should also be given to the availability of medical expertise and infrastructure in the area, should you become ill while you're away.

Staycation ideas

You can find great staycation ideas online, but our favorites include taking a day road trip on a local scenic route, picnicking or camping out in your own backyard, hosting your own film festival with your favorite movie treats and drinks, planning a family cooking night, and enjoying a spa day. Why not brainstorm with your family to come up with your own ideas for having fun at home?

Do you have extra time to spare?

Should you show symptoms of illness during or following your trip, you may be quarantined for up to 14 days after your return, depending on where you live.

In fact, if you are on an airplane or come into close contact with another traveler who is infected, you may be subject to the same restrictions, even though you are not ill. There is also a chance of travel bans being instituted while you're away, which could delay your return.

Plan trips to end more than two weeks in advance of important business meetings, school tests or other significant events. And make sure your health insurance policy covers your medical expenses at your travel destination.

Are you at high risk?

It's particularly dangerous for older adults and those with underlying conditions to travel these days. The same goes for those living with or in close contact with members of those groups. Anyone who fits those profiles should consider taking a pass on 2020 summer travel.

Visit [Nationwide.com/solutionseries](https://www.nationwide.com/solutionseries) to learn more.

Sources:

"Guide to summer travel: Where to go, what to do — and whether to book at all," CNBC Global Traveler, [cnbc.com/2020/03/13/what-to-do-for-summer-travel-plans-during-coronavirus.html](https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/13/what-to-do-for-summer-travel-plans-during-coronavirus.html) (March 13, 2020).

"Considerations for Travelers—Coronavirus in the US," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html) (updated June 28, 2020).

