

Turkey eases lockdown as restaurants reopen, flights resume

June 1 2020



A woman applauds as people sing in a public garden as only senior Turks over 65 have been allowed to go out for six hours during a curfew declared by the government in an attempt to control the spread of coronavirus, in Ankara, Turkey, Sunday, May 31, 2020. The country has opted to impose short weekend and holiday curfews, instead of full lockdowns, fearing possible negative effects on the already troubled economy.(AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici)

Turkish Airlines resumed limited domestic flights, restaurants welcomed sit-in customers and beaches and museums reopened as Turkey's broadest easing of coronavirus restrictions came into effect Monday.

A Turkish Airlines flight, with 156 people on board, departed from Ankara airport for Istanbul as Turkey lifted a travel ban between 15 of its worst-affected provinces. The air routes between Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Antalya and Trabzon are the first start, with others scheduled to follow gradually.

Traffic jams returned to Istanbul, Turkey's most populous city, while intercity roads filled with people heading for hometowns or to resorts.

Meanwhile, restaurants and cafes opened their doors to a limited number of customers after some two months of takeout services only.

Istanbul's 15th-century Grand Bazaar, museums, libraries, gyms, swimming pools, [child care centers](#) and nurseries were among other venues allowed to resume operations.

Businesses will be required to ensure social distancing and strict hygiene conditions are maintained.

Bars, nightclubs and hookah bars, however, will remain closed. A stay-at-home order for people age 65 and older and minors also remains in place.

The easing of restrictions follows a slowdown in confirmed COVID-19 infections and deaths in the country. Turkey has registered more than 4,500 COVID-19 deaths and nearly 164,000 confirmed infections.

Last month, shopping malls were allowed to go back into business along with barber shops, hairdressers and beauty salons. Worshippers held

their first communal Friday prayers in more than two months last week.

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