

Stay or go? Brits in France face virus dilemma over two-week quarantine

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New Zealand is battling its own second wave of infections and extended a lockdown of its largest city by at least 12 days

Hoads of Britons holidaying in France were on Friday faced with the choice of returning in a hurry or staying put, after the UK announced

sudden quarantines as part of a global step-up in travel restrictions.

The two-week self-isolation period for travellers arriving in the UK from over the Channel comes as French authorities battle a spike in new infections and is likely to spark a mass exodus among the estimated 160,000 tourists before the measure kicks in early on Saturday.

France is one of several countries now facing a resurgent second wave of cases since the new disease emerged from China late last year, claiming more than 750,000 lives and unleashing global economic havoc.

"The indicators are bad, the signals are worrying and the situation is deteriorating... The fate of the epidemic is in our hands," the country's national health agency chief Jerome Salomon told France Inter.

Britain had initially imposed a blanket quarantine on all visitors arriving in the country, but later carved out "travel corridors" which exempted travellers arriving from certain countries from having to self-isolate.

It reintroduced the self-isolation for travellers arriving from Spain in late July. France and the Netherlands were among several European destinations removed from the travel corridor list on Friday.

COVID-19: Total deaths vs deaths per million

As of August 13

Highest number

Total deaths

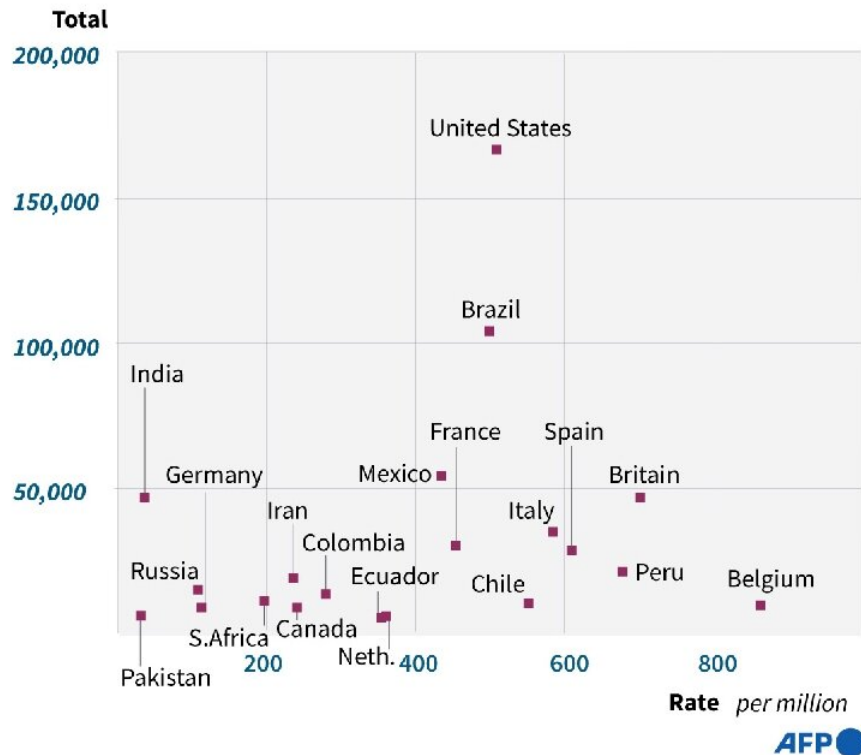
| | |
|---------|----------|
| US | 167,000+ |
| Brazil | 104,200+ |
| Mexico | 54,600+ |
| India | 47,000+ |
| Britain | 46,700+ |
| Italy | 35,200+ |
| France | 30,300+ |
| Spain | 28,600+ |
| Peru | 21,700+ |
| Iran | 19,100+ |

Highest rates

Among top 20, per million

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Belgium | 864 |
| Britain | 702 |
| Peru | 679 |
| Spain | 609 |
| Italy | 584 |
| Sweden | 565 |
| Chile | 550 |
| United States | 509 |
| Brazil | 497 |
| France | 454 |
| Mexico | 433 |

Source: AFP database



Graphic looking at countries with the highest coronavirus death tolls, and their respective death rates.

"If you arrive in the UK after 0400 Saturday from these destinations, you will need to self-isolate for 14 days," British transport minister Grant Shapps wrote on Twitter.

Briton Paul Trower told AFP he decided to cut short his visit to France after receiving several messages from friends warning him of the quarantine measures.

"We looked and tried to book a ferry, cancelled our holidays and come home to avoid it because my wife works and I look after my

granddaughter," he said.

Tony Samson, also from the UK, said: "I think it's very sudden. I think it could be a bit more gradual."

French holidaymakers in the UK will be left to grapple with a similar dilemma after Paris swiftly announced a "reciprocal measure", although it was unclear when it would be imposed.

With more than 41,000 deaths caused by COVID-19, Britain is the worst-hit country in Europe and Prime Minister Boris Johnson has been criticised over his handling of the crisis.



Hundreds of thousands of Britons in France were deciding whether or not to

hurry home

New strain in New Zealand

New Zealand is battling its own second wave of infections and extended a lockdown of its largest city by at least 12 days, giving health authorities more time to trace and contain a variant of the virus previously unseen in the country.

The Pacific island nation's initial response to the pandemic was hailed a success, but a run of 102 days with no reported community transmission was brought to an end on Tuesday after four family members in Auckland returned positive tests.

The country has now detected a cluster of 30 virus cases.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said stay-at-home orders would remain in force across Auckland until August 26 to prevent a mystery outbreak from becoming a fully blown second wave.

Genomic tests indicated the latest infections were not the same strain of [coronavirus](#) recorded in New Zealand earlier this year.



New Zealand has now detected a cluster of 30 virus cases

"This suggests it's not a case of the virus being dormant, or of burning embers in our community, it appears to be new to New Zealand," Ardern said, adding tests were unable to link the outbreak to any cases among quarantined travellers from overseas.

In Latin America—the hardest-hit region in the world—both Mexico and Peru surpassed half a million confirmed infections.

Infections in Peru have also risen sharply since a national lockdown was lifted on July 1, prompting the government to reinstate a Sunday curfew, ban social gatherings and enforce mandatory lockdown in more

provinces.

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