

Rio de Janeiro lifts outdoor mask requirement

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Attention beach-lovers seeking a break from the pandemic: Rio de Janeiro is lifting its COVID-19 mask requirement for outdoor areas effective from Thursday, the state's governor said, as once-pandemic-

battered Brazil advances quickly with vaccinations.

"We are going to relax the requirement on wearing [masks](#) outdoors, which is cause for celebration," Governor Claudio Castro wrote on Twitter.

"More than a year and a half after the state of public emergency was declared over the pandemic, this is an important victory for us all."

The state legislature passed a bill removing the mask requirement Tuesday.

Masks will now be required in the Brazilian tourism capital only in indoor public spaces.

Nightclubs and concert venues in Rio will be authorized to reopen at half-capacity.

The capital Brasilia meanwhile plans to lift its outdoor mask mandate on November 3.

COVID-19 has claimed more than 600,000 lives in Brazil, second only to the United States.

After its immunization campaign got off to a rocky start, the South American country has now managed to fully vaccinate more than half of its 213 million people, and 72 percent of the population have received a first dose.

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