

France, Spain, Switzerland: Belgium Bans Travel To 12 Covid Red Zones Europe

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 This article is more than 3 years old.



As summer sales started in Belgium on August 1, the country was also battling the ongoing corona ... [+] BELGA MAG/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

It's not just Spain that has become a [travel outcast in Europe](#), added to the red list of some neighbors. Belgium has just banned tourism to several parts of France, Spain and Switzerland, among others, and its “red zone” list is growing.

With much of Europe in the grips of a coronavirus resurgence, a number of countries are sweeping in [new restrictions](#) for travel to

and from parts of the continent. Even closing borders and banning all but essential travel to some countries, or regions within them.

As Belgium experiences a massive spike in new cases, it's also banning travel to certain European spots with a worsening corona crisis. On Saturday, the Foreign Ministry [beefed up its red list](#), adding parts of Switzerland, France, Spain, Bulgaria and Romania to places where travel is “not authorized”. Some 12 new places were added to the list including the whole of Lithuania:

- The **Swiss** Canton of Geneva is red listed.
- So too is the Mayenne department of northern **France** where several Covid-19 clusters have been identified, and masks are mandatory in outdoor public places too in some 69 towns.
- The Basque region of Navarre was added to **Spain's** banned zones which already includes the Barcelona municipality and the Aragón region.
- The whole of **Lithuania** is off-bounds.
- **Croatia**: travel to the province of Vukovar-Srijem is off for now.
- 4 regions in **Romania** were added
- 2 in **Bulgaria**
- The city of Leicester in the **U.K.** (travel *from* there was already on the red list).

That means all non-essential travel to those areas is out of the question. Anyone returning or arriving from red list areas, [must be tested for Covid](#) and go into quarantine says the government.



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“Red zones are municipalities, districts, cities, regions or countries which have been put back into lockdown by the country in question or where Belgian tourists are at a very high risk of infection. For these zones, Belgium has a formal travel ban in place.

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“People who return from these zones will be treated as “high-risk contacts”, which means that they will have to be tested and go into quarantine or self-isolate.”

Belgium Cases Soar: 6th Worst In EU

The irony of course being that Belgium travelers also pose a risk to the rest of Europe with infection levels as they currently are. The move comes as Belgium averages over [500 new Covid-19 infections a day: a 60% surge in a week](#).

Belgium has also expanded its list of “orange zone”—places where visitors are urged to exercise increased caution. Last week Northern Ireland, Wales and four northern regions of England were [orange listed](#).



Belgium is also experiencing a big surge in hospitalisations, as total corona cases soar [above 70,000](#): the sixth worst outbreak to date in the EU. [According to Deutsche Welle](#), the number of intensive care patients have doubled in a month. Health officials warn “younger people account for the bulk of new infections.”

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Not much social distancing on Swiss National Day August 1, though the celebrations were reduced due ... [+] GETTY IMAGES

(Update: On Wednesday evening, Belgium did an about-face and removed the Swiss Vaud and Valais Cantons from prohibited zones after they were added on Saturday).

Cantonal officials in both had branded it “incomprehensible” and asked the federal government to intervene. Over the last 14 days, the cumulative rate of infection in the Vaud is 23 per 100,000 inhabitants, 10 in 100,000 in the Valais. Whereas in Belgium, that figure is 44 reports [Swiss Info](#). “So Vaud’s rate is almost half Belgium’s.”

Switzerland’s criteria on deciding on a “risk zone” is an infection rate of 60 per 100,000 inhabitants. That’s based on a fortnight trend, and fairly high compared to the EU yardstick of around 20.

That's the average the bloc uses in deciding which [countries it reopens its borders for tourism](#).

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France: Travel Warnings Multiply As Virus Gains Pace



An increasing number of French people are flouting Covid barrier measures. (Masks are not mandatory ... [+] NURPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

Could more regions in France soon be red-listed by Belgium? As new daily infections hit [over 1,000 a day](#), compared to as low as 250 a day in July.

France's leading health experts warn that the virus is "circulating more actively again", due partly to flouting of social distancing and mask use.

Already more French regions have been added to Belgium's orange-list in the past week. So joining Greater Paris (except Seine-et-Marne) and the Pays de la Loire, are the Département du Nord, Haut-Rhin, Haute-Savoie, Meurthe-et-Moselle and the Vosges. This means quarantine and a [Covid test are](#) recommended not compulsory on return from those areas.



There is no move yet by Switzerland or [France](#) to reciprocate the Belgium travel bans. Amid talk of a possible second wave across Europe, it may however be a sign of things to come. More countries could choose to add places, at least high-risk regions, to no-go zones.

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