

Rome airport to allow passengers from the US to skip quarantine

Rome's Fiumicino airport plans to welcome passengers from the US without requiring them to quarantine, as long as they test negative for the novel coronavirus multiple times. Fiumicino says it will be the first airport in Europe to offer the "COVID-tested flights," creating what it calls "safe air corridors" between Italy and the US.

It will test the idea out in December starting with flights from New York's JFK airport, New Jersey's Newark Airport, and Georgia's Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta airport. If those flights are successful, similar flights could be made "widely available" by summer 2021, according to Fiumicino.

It's risky to rely solely on testing

Fiumicino says it will require passengers to take a molecular or antigenic test within 48 hours before taking off. They'll also need to take a rapid test once they get to the airport in Italy. The airport has followed similar procedures on "COVID-tested flights" between Rome and Milan since September.

Delta Air Lines, which along with Alitalia will operate the flights, set out slightly different guidelines in a press release. Its customers will need to take a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test – considered the "gold standard" – up to 72 hours before departure. They'll need to test negative again on rapid tests given at airports on both ends of their journeys.

It's risky to rely solely on testing as a way to prevent the

spread of COVID-19. COVID-19 tests, particularly rapid tests, don't always detect the virus when someone has just been infected and doesn't have much of the virus in their body yet. Testing can give people a false sense of safety and is no replacement for taking precautions like physical distancing and wearing a mask. Both Italy and the US are battling a surge in COVID-19 infections. Public health officials warn that things could get worse as people consider traveling for the holiday season.

<https://www.theverge.com/2020/11/26/21721520/quarantine-flight-s-rome-fiumicino-airport-italy-us-delta-alitalia>