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Puerto Vallarta Is Slowly Starting to Reopen With Hopes of Welcoming Tourists Back

"We are looking forward to welcoming back international visitors when the time is right."

BY ALISON FOX

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COURTESY OF PUERTO VALLARTA TOURISM BOARD

Puerto Vallarta in Mexico is aiming to welcome tourists back slowly but surely in entering its first stage of reopening this week, allowing for some businesses to open at half-capacity.

The initial phase — called Phase 0 — started on May 18 and will last at least 15 days, according to the Puerto Vallarta Tourism Board.

Restaurants are currently limited to 50 percent capacity and businesses that don't draw crowds can start to reopen. While out in public, people will have to wear masks and maintain social distancing.



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While places like beaches and bars remain closed, the phased reopening creates a glimmer of hope that soon we will be sipping tequila and strolling the breezy Malecón boardwalk as the waves crash down below.

“Tourism is a very important industry in our state, and we are looking forward to welcoming back international visitors when the time is right,” Minister of Tourism of the State of Jalisco, German Ralis, said in a statement provided to *Travel + Leisure*. “However, we remain very cautious with our plans for re-opening Jalisco, including popular tourism destinations like Puerto Vallarta, to ensure that the safest and cleanest conditions await guests upon their return.”



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While the city has started to look to the future, travel restrictions for non-essential travel between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico have been extended through June 22. This comes as Mexico has recorded more than 54,300 confirmed cases of COVID-19, according to Johns Hopkins University, which tracks the virus around the world.

When it does become possible to travel again, Mexico appears to be a popular choice. According to hotel search data, Americans looking for an international trip overwhelmingly chose Mexico with Playa del Carmen, Cancun, Isla Mujeres, Puerto Vallarta, and Los Cabos coming in as the top most-searched for destinations according to Expedia.

Puerto Vallarta is not alone in crafting a plan to welcome visitors once again: Los Cabos and Cancun both started implementing their own reopening plans earlier this month. Los Cabos will start allowing limited travel on June 1,

while Cancun and Riviera Maya expect to reopen for international travel by the beginning of June.