

What you need to know: Airline cleanliness & hygiene: Africa

October 2, 2020

In an effort to reassure travelers that they are doing all they can to protect them against COVID-19, airlines are implementing new and improved cleanliness and hygiene processes. In some cases, these measures may be exceeded by the hygiene procedures implemented by individual airports. When taking it trip, it's worth travelers knowing what hygiene measures airports are implementing, too.

This report summarizes what airlines in Africa are doing.

Major carriers

Egyptair

As its passengers' safety has always been its highest priority, Egyptair has taken a number of measures to ensure its safety and hygiene are of the highest standard and protect against COVID-19.¹

At the airport

- Passengers are encouraged to use electronic tickets to avoid unnecessary contact during check-in
- Because of extra COVID-19 procedures, passengers should arrive at the airport 4.5 hours before departure for international flights, and 2.5 hours for domestic flights
- Passengers should wear a face mask as soon as they enter the airport
- All employees wear personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Both passengers and airline staff have their temperatures checked at airport entry
- Staff at check-in desks wear face shields
- Spacing stickers on the floor help passengers maintain a safe distance
- Hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed around airport terminals

VIP lounges

- Seating is rearranged to enable social distancing
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is available
- Lounge areas are regularly and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected
- Meals are now served pre-packaged

Boarding aircraft

- Measures ensure social distancing at the boarding gate
- Seating areas and frequently touched surfaces, such as handrails, handles and lift/elevator buttons, are disinfected regularly
- Passengers board aircraft in small groups, starting from the back rows
- Cabin baggage is restricted to laptops, valuables and baby items
- Passengers must wear a mask during boarding

On board

- Cabin crew wear full PPE

¹ [Egyptair](#), COVID-19 measures, June 14, 2020

- Aircraft are routinely and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected in accordance with global aviation standards
- HEPA filters clean cabin air, removing viruses and eliminating dust, allergens and germs
- Masks must be worn throughout the flight, except when eating or drinking
- Passengers receive a personal hygiene kit containing a mask, gloves, hand sanitizer and a small waste bag for disposing PPE
- Onboard service has been reduced
- Pillows and blankets are not allowed, while safety cards and sanitized

Ethiopian Airlines

Ethiopian regards the safety, security and good health of its passengers and employees to be its highest priority.² Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the airline has been implementing all recommendations from the World Health Organization and other global health and travel regulators. These include:

- All passengers are thermally screened on arrival at Addis Ababa airport
- All airport areas are thoroughly disinfected and cleaned, including handrails, lift/elevator buttons, baggage trolleys and security areas
- Special attention is given to cleaning high-touch points, including seatbelts, seatback screens, air vents, windows, toilets
- Hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed in the airport at key locations
- Passengers are encouraged to go digital for a contactless experience
- Social distancing is encouraged in passenger contact areas throughout the airport using floor markers, signs blocking adjacent seats in lounges etc.
- Passengers and crew must wear face masks at all times

Ethiopian is covering the medical insurance (repatriation, evacuation and quarantine) costs related to COVID-19 from October 1, 2020, until March 31, 2021.³ The coverage applies to all international flights booked with the airline. The global cover, Sheba Comfort, has been introduced in collaboration with AXA Partners and Awash Insurance and covers passengers for medical expenses up to €100,000 (\$117,00) if diagnosed with COVID-19 during a trip, plus daily quarantine costs of €150 to a maximum of 14 days.

Kenya Airways

KQ Cares has been developed in response to Kenya Airways' commitment to safeguarding the health and wellbeing of staff and passengers wherever it flies.⁴

Arriving at the airport (Nairobi)

- Passengers should arrive 3 hours before an international flight and two hours before a domestic flight
- Floor markers remind passengers to socially distance
- Temperatures are checked at the airport entrance using a thermo gun
- Passengers must wear a mask before entering the airport

Check-in

- Passengers are encouraged to check-in via the airline's website or mobile app
- Airline staff always wear a face mask and will hand sanitize after serving each customer
- Check-in counters are fitted with antimicrobial screens

² [Ethiopian Airlines](#), COVID-19 Latest Updates

³ [Asia Insurance Review](#), October 2, 2020

⁴ [Kenya Airways](#), KQ Cares

- Floor markers ensure passengers keep their distance when in a queue

Immigration and security

- Immigration staff wear masks
- Immigration counters are fitted with antimicrobial screens
- Passengers must maintain a social distance when queuing
- Baggage trays and trolleys are frequently disinfected

Boarding the aircraft

- A strict boarding process is based on seating zone and not passenger priority
- Seats at the departure gate are arranged to maintain social distance
- Sanitizer stations have been installed at departure gates
- Boarding gates are regularly cleaned and sanitized

Inflight

- Cabin crew always wear personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Passengers are required to wear a face mask
- Meals are served pre-packaged
- Cutlery and cleansing wipes are provided individually packaged
- Toilets are regularly cleaned and disinfected
- Blankets and pillows are individually packaged and are single use only
- Passengers must maintain a social distance when disembarking
- Aircraft are deep cleaned and disinfected after each flight

Flight transfers

- Passengers must wear their face masks
- Passengers are screened for high temperatures
- Transfer check-in counters are protected with antimicrobial screens
- Sanitizer dispensers are available
- Capacity is reduced on transfer buses

Arrival

- Passengers must continue to wear their face masks
- Capacity is reduced on transfer buses
- Temperatures are checked on arrival
- Baggage trolleys are regularly disinfected

Royal Air Maroc

Royal Air Maroc has put in place unprecedented health measures throughout the journey, allowing passengers to travel in complete safety.⁵

At the airport

- Web, mobile or self-service check-in is recommended
- Passengers have their temperatures checked at the airport entrance and after arriving at their destination
- Passengers must wear a face mask before entering the airport and change them every four hours

⁵ [Royal Air Maroc](#), Sanitary Measures

- Only traveling passengers may enter airport terminals
- Passengers must maintain a 1.5 meter social distance
- Ground markers and adjoining seats have been closed to ensure social distancing
- Furniture and equipment are regularly disinfected
- Sanitizing gel dispensers are available throughout the airport

VIP lounge

- Buffet service has been replaced by an individual, sterilized service
- Children's area and baby changing facilities are temporarily closed
- Newspaper and magazines are unavailable

Boarding

- Departure gates are regularly disinfected
- Passengers should remain one meter apart
- Airline staff wear masks
- Passengers board aircraft in groups of ten, starting at the rear of the aircraft

On board the aircraft

- Cabin cleaning has been increased and all contact surfaces are intensively disinfected – carpets, seatback pockets and their contents, armrests, shelves and screens
- Jet aircraft are equipped with hospital theater grade HEPA filters
- Cabin air is renewed every 3 minutes
- Cabin air recirculation is suspended on ATR (turboprop) aircraft. Cabin air is refreshed every 7 minutes with fresh air only
- Masks must be worn throughout the flight and replaced every 4 hours. Exemptions are granted to children under six years and people with mask intolerance (upon presentation of a medical certificate)
- Crew offer passengers antibacterial towels as they board the aircraft
- Passengers have their temperatures checked as they board the aircraft
- Onboard service has been modified, with pre-packaged products served
- Newspapers and magazines have been removed
- Cloakroom service in business class has been suspended
- Passengers are asked to limit their movements onboard

Other carriers

RwandAir

RwandAir has developed a five-step health and safety guide for passengers.⁶

Before you fly

- Book tickets and check-in online
- Visit destination airport website for the latest information
- Undertake a COVID-19 test within 120 hours of departure when flying out of Kigali
- Do not travel if experiencing 'flu-like symptoms or have been in contact with a COVID-19 infected person within the previous 14 days

⁶ [RwandAir](#), Five-Step Health & Safety Guide

Arrival at the airport

- Wearing a face mask is mandatory from airport arrival through the entire journey

Inside the terminal

- All departing passengers undergo health screening
- Self-check-in kiosks help reduce contact
- New signage helps travelers observe physical distancing
- Visors are available at all desks to protect passengers and staff
- Surfaces at all touchpoints are disinfected regularly
- Hand sanitizer dispensers are available throughout the airport
- Barcode readers speed up boarding and minimize contact
- Passengers board aircraft in groups, starting from the back of the aircraft
- Only one time of hand luggage is allowed

Onboard our aircraft

- Aircraft are regularly deep-cleaned and disinfected, with all surfaces, including tray tables, video screens, arm rests, safety belts and overhead luggage bins, sprayed and wiped with disinfectant before every flight
- All crew have undergone health and safety training
- Cabin crew wear disposable gowns, gloves, goggles and face masks throughout the flight
- Meal service has been suspended on flights of less than two hours. Pre-packaged meals are served on longer flights
- Blankets and headphones are sanitized and sealed
- All reading material, except safety cards, has been removed from seat pockets

Arrival

- Disembarkation is by zones starting with the front of the aircraft
- Transfer buses at Kigali Airport are marked with social distancing signage
- At the terminal building entrance, arriving passengers walk along a disinfection footpath
- Arriving passengers are tested for COVID-19 at a designated hotel of their choice
- RwandAir aircraft are disinfected after each arrival

Note – HEPA filters

When outlining their safety and hygiene measures, many airlines refer to the use of HEPA filters onboard their aircraft. According to the European air filter efficiency classification, high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters can be any filter element rated between 85% and 99.995% removal efficiency.⁷ Aircraft manufacturers have chosen to install the higher efficiency filters, which are similar to those used in hospital operating theaters. Most modern, large commercial aircraft, which recirculate cabin air, use HEPA filters. Some older aircraft may use less-efficient filters.

Air filters can remove very small particles, such as bacteria and viruses. With an efficiency level of 99.995%, HEPA filters can remove virtually all viruses and bacteria.

⁷ [IATA](#), Briefing Paper, Cabin air quality – Risk of communicable disease transmission

Note

The COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, and the situation is changing on almost an hourly basis. The information presented in this report represents the latest view as at October 2, 2020. We have carefully researched and checked the information contained. However, we do not guarantee or warrant the correctness, completeness or topicality of this article and do not accept any liability for any damage or loss as a result of the use of the information contained within this article.

Do you have questions or comments regarding this report? Please email mike.eggleson@bcdtravel.co.uk to share your thoughts.