

BY KIM-MARIE GALLOWAY

# Taking Flight

ALMOST EVERY COUNTRY HAS DROPPED THEIR COVID ENTRY RULES, AND AMERICANS—ALL OF THEM, LITERALLY—ARE READY TO TAKE TO THE SKIES.

**BEFORE YOU ENTER THE JET SET FRAY, BE PREPARED**

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## OPTIONS FOR HASSLE-FREE TRAVEL

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### START HERE

#### You're A Star



Just as we were going to press, the Department of Homeland Security announced plans to update its deadline requiring travelers to have a Real ID-compliant license or valid passport to fly anywhere in the U.S. Originally scheduled for 2023, the new date is now **May 7, 2025**. But don't procrastinate that trip to the DMV. Book an appointment and be sure you have all the documents you need—they vary by state. Check the official website for a list of requirements. [dhs.gov/real-id](https://dhs.gov/real-id)



#### Global Entry, TSA PreCheck or CLEAR?

**Global Entry** and **PreCheck** are government programs that verify you're a reduced security risk and therefore trusted with wearing your shoes through security and leaving your laptop in your bag. Global Entry includes TSA PreCheck. Once approved for Global Entry (for international travel), you'll receive a KTN, Known Traveler Number, that will give you TSA PreCheck (for domestic travel). It's your job to add it to your flight reservation. TSA PreCheck is \$78 for five years. Global Entry is a one-time fee of \$100 but needs to be renewed every five years. Check your credit card perks. Your issuer may cover the fees.

**CLEAR** is a purely commercial operation. It pays the airlines a lot of money for the ability to put its clients at the front of security lines. It's like being put at the head of the line for the hottest club in town. The standard price for CLEAR is \$189 annually, but if you add family members there are discounts. Thirty-one airports and four cruise ports have CLEAR. [access.cbp.gov](https://access.cbp.gov); [tsa.gov](https://tsa.gov); [clearme.com](https://clearme.com)

#### Get a Pass

**Don't have Global Entry?** There's an app for that. And shockingly, very few people know about it. The free app will help you clear customs and immigration on return to the U.S., often as quickly as you would with Global Entry. Bonus: The entire family can use it at once. Scan everyone's passport into the app ahead of time (or last minute, if you're that type). When you land, select your port of entry and terminal on the app, and you'll get a QR code, flash the code along with your physical passport to the agent in the dedicated mobile passport line and be on your way.



Look for **Mobile Passport Control** in your app store. It's free and secure. Some savvy travelers who have Global Entry also do Mobile Passport and pick the shortest line. It's me. I'm the savvy traveler. But you already guessed that.

#### The More You Know

Airlines have delayed and canceled flights in record numbers over the past year. They also struggle to keep luggage on the same plane with its owner. At one point, British Airways announced it simply was no longer answering the phones.

No one can avoid inevitable travel trouble, but you can see it coming. Download an airline tracking app (I like **Flight Aware**) and set up notifications for your flight. If it is delayed, pull up the app and click through to the plane's previous flight to check its status. If you think you might miss a connection or you're worried your delayed flight will eventually be canceled, protect yourself and book the next flight. The airline or a travel advisor can do this for you. Do it quickly, because there are always limited seats. If a storm is coming and an airline puts out a weather waiver allowing customers to change flights to different days or adjust the route, take them up on it before everyone else does.

### VIP TRAVELER



#### The Fast Track

Ever wish the airport had the equivalent of the Disney Fast Pass—a magical ticket allowing you to bypass all the lines and go straight to your gate? Book yourself a VIP fast-track service at any airport in the world through a travel company. Whether you're arriving, transferring or departing, you can hire someone to help whisk you through the chaos.

We spoke with Hicham Enhaili, founder of **Simply Select**, a VIP travel company based in New York and London. Hicham was about to miss a connection in Johannesburg and luckily had a service provider who could help him make his connection by quickly transferring him from one plane to the other. Rates vary by airport and service but start at around \$250. A fast-track agent will meet you curbside before you even enter the terminal. They will walk you to the front of the check-in or baggage drop line, escort you through security, get you lounge access and wait until they deliver you to the boarding gate. Simply Select can be reached at 212-365-8606 or online at [simplyselect.com](https://simplyselect.com).