



ESTA-ONLINE.COM - ESTA FOR USA TRAVEL  
*Online Assistance and ESTA Application Form*

# The Visa Waiver Program Guide

FOR EASY TRAVEL TO THE USA

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## Visa Waiver Program and ESTA Introduction

The Visa Waiver Program is a scheme created by the United States Government to promote international travel and business. The Visa Waiver Program allows individuals of specific countries to travel to the United States, under certain conditions, without applying for a visa.

To use the Visa Waiver Program, individuals must first apply for travel authorization through an electronic system called ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization). The ESTA is a screening process that allows the US government to screen applicants for security and other risks before traveling to the US. This electronic application system was converted from a paper form in 2009 to streamline the authorization process and to enhance the screening process.



### Important to Understand

We will oversee the entire ESTA application process to ensure your approval. Our agents personally review your information and check for errors before submitting the application. We've processed thousands of applications and know exactly what to check. Contact us anytime with questions or concerns about the Visa Waiver Program and the ESTA application process.

When your travel authorization is approved after you've applied for the ESTA, you are not guaranteed admittance to the United States. A US Customs and Border Patrol agent will make this final decision as you pass through customs at your arrival port of entry. This travel authorization issued by the US government only allows you to board a plane or ship bound for the United States.

Once you have travel authorization from the US government, you can freely visit the United States, multiple times for stays of 90-days or less over a 2-year period. When your travel authorization expires after the 2-year period, you need to reapply through the ESTA again.

If your passport changes after you've received travel authorization through the ESTA application process, you must reapply with your new passport details. Traveling to the US with a passport that does not match your ESTA approval is not permitted.

## ESTA and Visa Waiver Program Facts

- There are currently 38 countries included in the Visa Waiver program.
- We've process thousands of ESTA applications and have deep Visa Waiver Program knowledge – contact us any time for answers.
- The Visa Waiver Program is reciprocal, meaning Americans can also travel to participating countries without obtaining a visa if they qualify.
- Countries may be removed from the list of 38 participants at any time. Argentina and Uruguay used to be included but were removed due to financial instability and the likelihood of mass emigration.
- The UK was the first country accepted into the Visa Waiver Program in July of 1988.
- The Visa Waiver Program used to be a paper-based system, but in 2009 the electronic system (ESTA) was implemented which eliminated the need for the I-94W form upon entry by air or sea.
- Children are not exempt from travel authorization and they must have a valid passport to qualify.
- Our ESTA applications are typically approved within 15 minutes, if all form application is correct.
- You can stay in the US for 90-day intervals, but visiting Canada, Mexico or adjacent islands does not reset this period and counts towards the 90-days.
- Obtaining travel authorization through the ESTA does not guarantee admittance into the USA via customs.
- Chile was the most recent country to join the list of Visa Waiver Program participants.
- The number of UK visitors to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program is higher than any other participating country.
- We provide a full refund should your ESTA be declined.
- Entry into the United States on a private plane or boat is typically not allowed under the Visa Waiver Program.
- Unless you are seeking asylum or have a fully documented medical emergency, there is generally no way to extend your 90-day visit in the United States.
- Traveling to the US with a post-dated passport (UK citizens) that does not match your ESTA application information is not allowed.
- We can retrieve a lost ESTA approval confirmation easily and quickly, just contact us.

# The Complete ESTA Process Explained

So you are considering traveling to the United States on business or vacation? We've explained the entire ESTA process below to help you better understand.

## Determine if you qualify

Use our web resources to see if you meet the Visa Waiver Program requirements

### | Gather your information |

You will need your home address and phone number, your valid passport, an email address, and a form of payment



### | Complete the ESTA Application Form |

Fill out the ESTA form and submit the payment to begin the application processing



### | Receive your approval by email |

Check your inbox for an email from us



### | Print a copy of the ESTA approval |

Take this with you to the US as a back-up



### | Check in with your air or sea carrier |

Your travel authorization is automatically verified by the carrier at this moment



### | Arrive at the US and pass through customs |

Normally unnecessary, but your ESTA confirmation may be requested by a customs officer



### | Enter the US and enjoy your stay! |

Don't forget, your stay cannot exceed 90 days

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The simple steps above can be further explained in much more detail on our site. Please visit [www.esta-online.com](http://www.esta-online.com) for more information. We want you to get ESTA approved and help you experience travel to the US through this fast and easy method.

Please contact us with any questions or concerns and we will be happy to help however we can.

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## Helpful US Government Resources

- **U.S. Embassies, Consulates and Diplomatic Missions**  
Travel warnings, country specific information and other local resources
- **U.S. Customs and Border Protection**  
Information about customs procedures, tourism, border security and other immigration facts
- **The Office of Travel and Tourism Industries**  
Travel and tourism statistical information
- **The U.S. Government Publishing Office**  
Access to all federal documents and official publications
- **The Federal Register**  
The government's official journal of agency rules, public notices and proposed rules
- **The US Government's Official Web Portal**  
The primary web portal to the United State's governmental information and services
- **The U.S. Department of State and Bureau of Consular Affairs**  
Information about immigration and consular affairs
- **The Department of Homeland Security**  
A wide range of immigration and US security topics
- **The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration**  
Access state transportation websites for road construction and other state-specific information

## Other Helpful Travel Resources

- **Tripadvisor**  
User reviews on hotels, restaurants, activities and other travel related subjects
- **OpenSignal**  
Regional cellphone service provider coverage maps
- **National Weather Service**  
Weather forecast, warnings and news
- **Yelp**  
User reviews and locations for local businesses including restaurants and other services
- **Booking.com**  
Arrange hotel accommodations
- **Amtrak**  
Book various interstate travel via rail
- **National Park Service**  
Find information and news about U.S. National parks across the country
- **America's State Parks**  
Access state park websites for detailed information
- **Driving in the US**  
Find safe driving tips, information about car rental and required documents
- **About the United States**  
Learn facts about the United States
- **US Time Zones**  
Learn about the US time zones

## USA Travel Tips

### | Use Automated Passport Control (APC) Kiosks | when Available

Automated passport control kiosks have been recently installed in several major US airports to speed up the customs clearance process. The kiosks provide an automatic method to scan your passport, take a photo of the traveler, answer a series of standard questions and submit the Customs declaration form. Once these steps are completed at the kiosk, a receipt is printed which is used by the Customs officer to finalize the inspection.

Visa Waiver Program travelers with their ESTA approval can use these kiosks to reduce the time typically needed to clear customs. They do not require any pre-registration and are free of charge, but travelers must have visited the US at least once after 2008 to use this service.

### | Avoid Slow Airports if Possible

Many of America's international airports are plagued with extremely long customs wait times. Avoid these worst airports, especially if you have a connection or a time restriction.

The list below shows the average customs wait time for the 3 worst airports, calculated from the period of June 2014 to June 2015.

- New York John F. Kennedy International Airport – 140 minutes
- Miami International Airport – 50 minutes
- San Francisco International Airport – 45 minutes

The list below shows the average customs wait time for the 3 best airports, calculated from the period of June 2014 to June 2015.

- Seattle-Tacoma International Airport – 29 minutes
- Charlotte Douglas International Airport – 31 minutes
- Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport – 37 minutes

### | Get Familiar with your Arrival/Departure Airport

Find links for the 10 busiest US airports for international passenger traffic below.

- New York John F. Kennedy International Airport
- Miami International Airport
- Los Angeles International Airport
- New Jersey Newark Liberty International Airport
- Chicago O'Hare International Airport
- Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport
- San Francisco International Airport
- Houston George Bush Intercontinental Airport
- Washington Dulles International Airport
- Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport





## Visa Waiver Program and ESTA FAQs

### | Do I need a visa or is the ESTA enough?

Normally, the ESTA is adequate for vacation and most business trips to the US. If your travel purpose is listed below, a visa may be required for traveling to the US.

- study, for credit
- employment
- work as a foreign journalist, press, film, radio or other information media
- permanent residence in the USA

### | Visa vs. ESTA – what is the difference?

Simply stated - the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) is a scheme that provides quick and easy authorization to travel to the United States without forcing an individual to acquire a visa.

### | What countries currently qualify for the ESTA?

The following countries have been accepted into the Visa Waiver Program by the United States and citizens of these countries can use the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA):

The United Kingdom, Taiwan, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, South Korea, Slovenia, Slovakia, Singapore, San Marino, Republic of Malta, Portugal, Norway, New Zealand, Netherlands, Monaco, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Liechtenstein, Latvia, Japan, Italy, Ireland, Iceland, Greece, Germany, Hungary, France, Finland, Estonia, Denmark, Czech Republic, Chili, Brunei, Belgium, Austria, Australia and Andorra

### | How long is the ESTA valid?

Your travel authorization will be valid for two years from the date of issue. If your passport expires or changes within this period, a new travel authorization must be acquired with your renewed passport information.

### | Is my personal information safe with you?

We take privacy and security very seriously. We understand that you are sharing sensitive information with us, and that is why we have established the highest level of security within our system. This site is hosted on a secure server and is continuously monitored for your protection. Your personal information is never shared and is only used to complete the USA ESTA application.

### | Why would an ESTA application be denied?

Although we are not supplied with the exact reason for denial, our experience shows the following conditions that may cause an ESTA rejection.

- Providing a passport number that was reported lost or stolen
- Exceeding the allowable stay in the US on a previous visit
- A previous visa request denial
- Engaging in unauthorized work on a previous visit
- A previous denial of entry into the United States
- Suspicion of immigration
- Connections with criminal or terrorist organizations

We are trained experts in ESTA processing, and we will communicate directly with you if there is any error or omission in the application form data prior to processing. We want your travel authorization to be approved but if it is not, a full refund will be issued.



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