



ESTA

Important information about the ESTA

All travellers to the United States of America without a US or Canadian passport, are required to apply for an ESTA or visa before departure. This requirement applies to both travel by plane and ship and travel by land. For UK and Irish travellers, an ESTA is usually sufficient.

Mandatory	Yes
Suited for	Tourism, business trips and transit
Validity period	2 years (for multiple trips)
Duration of stay	Up to 90 days per trip
Normal delivery time	Average 3 days
Urgent delivery	Average 60 minutes; mandatory from 5 days prior to departure
Cost	£ 49,95 per person
Payment methods	Visa, Mastercard, American Express, PayPal

This document is about the ESTA for the United States of America. Applying can easily be done online with a digital application form. Are you not eligible for an ESTA? In that case, you can go to the U.S. consulate or U.S. Embassy. For the ESTA, visit e-visa.co.uk/usa or click the button below.

[Apply now >](#)

This document was created by e-Visa.co.uk and was last updated on 8 August 2023. You can find more information and the requirements of the ESTA USA on the following pages.

What is an ESTA and who is eligible?

ESTA is an abbreviation and stands for *Electronic System for Travel Authorization*. The ESTA is an electronic travel permit that allows you to travel to the United States without a visa. The travel authorization has long been required for travel to the USA by plane or ship and since 1 October 2022 an ESTA is also required for arrivals by land from Canada or Mexico. The advantage of an ESTA is that this travel authorisation is easier, quicker, and cheaper to obtain than a US visa. All travellers to the United States require an ESTA, including babies and children.

The ESTA application procedure takes place entirely online. You do not have to make a physical appointment at a consulate or embassy to obtain this travel authorization. Completing the application form can be done for multiple people at the same time and often does not take longer than 5 to 10 minutes. The only thing you need to do is answer the questions in the digital application form and submit a digital copy of your passport. To do so, keep the passport details of all applicants close at hand.

Applying for an ESTA without a booking confirmation

At the moment of applying, you do not need to have booked flight tickets or other transport tickets. You also do not need to have booked accommodations. You can leave the fields in the ESTA application form empty regarding the accommodation address, the point of contact and the emergency contact (inside or outside the USA) if you do not have this information yet. For the question regarding the expected arrival date, you may enter an estimate.

Other information required for your application

Applicants with a job also have to enter the name and address information of their employer. In addition, since 2020, it is required to enter your usernames for different social media platforms if you have them. Only the public information on your profile can be viewed this way. You will never be asked for your password.

Requirements for applying for an ESTA

Most UK and Irish travellers are eligible for an ESTA. To do so, they have to meet several requirements. Do you not meet the requirements? In that case, you cannot apply for an ESTA. You can, however, possibly apply for a visa for your trip. Under no circumstances does an ESTA or visa guarantee entry into the United States. That decision lies with the immigration service and they can decide upon your arrival to still deny you entry to the country. This is extremely unlikely if you meet all requirements.

To apply for an ESTA, you have to meet the following requirements:

- You travel with a valid, biometric passport that was issued by a country that is part of the *US Visa Waiver Program*.¹
- You travel with the same passport that was used when completing the ESTA form.
- You have never had the nationality of Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Somalia or Libya.
- You have not been to Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Somalia or Libya since 1 March 2011.
- You have [not been to Cuba since 12 January 2021](#). It is not possible to apply for an ESTA using this website if you have been to Cuba at any point since 1 March 2011.
- You do not have a physical or mental condition that causes you to be a danger to your direct environment.
- You are not a terrorist, spy or saboteur.
- You have never broken the law in relation to the possession, distribution or use of drugs.
- You have never been arrested or convicted for a criminal offence that led to serious damage or injury.²
- You have never broken a US visa-related law.
- You have never been rejected for a US visa application.
- You have never been denied entry to the United States or been deported from the country.

¹ All Schengen and EU countries, with the exception of Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania, are part of the US Visa Waiver Program. Travellers with a valid (standard) biometric passport of the United Kingdom and [travellers with several other nationalities](#) are eligible for an ESTA. You can recognise a biometric passport by the logo, which has two horizontally superimposed bars with a small circle in the middle. This logo can be found on the front of the passport.

² Travellers who have ever received a traffic fine can simply apply for an ESTA in many cases, unless the traffic offence resulted in serious damage or injury.

Validity

An ESTA is only valid if it is used for one of the below travel purposes and combined with a valid passport. Your passport needs to remain valid during your entire stay in the United States. Furthermore, you must meet all of the aforementioned requirements during each trip to the United States with an ESTA.

Travel purpose

You can travel to the United States with an ESTA for a holiday, a business trip, a visit to family or friends, transit at a US airport, or medical treatment. With an ESTA, you are not allowed to work for a US employer and moreover, the travel authorisation cannot be used to apply for permanent residency in the United States. You can be paid for work-related activities during your trip, but only by a non-US employer. Furthermore, it is also allowed to visit customers and suppliers with an ESTA and to attend conferences and other work-related meetings.

Validity period

An ESTA is valid for two years from the moment of issuance. The ESTA is only valid in combination with a valid biometric passport. Passports issued by the United Kingdom, Switzerland or an EU country contain a chip and are therefore suitable for applying for an ESTA. It is not possible to extend an ESTA or link it to a new or different passport. If an ESTA you previously applied for has expired or if you have a new passport, you have to submit a new ESTA application.

Unlimited number of trips

During the validity period of two years, an ESTA can be used for an unlimited number of trips to the USA. During each trip, you are allowed to stay in the country for up to 90 days. If you first travel from the United States to Canada, Mexico, or a nearby island such as Bermuda, and later travel back to the United States, the maximum duration of your stay will continue from the moment you first arrived in the country. In this case, you are therefore not allowed to stay in the country for another consecutive 90 days the second time you enter the United States. Keep in mind that if you travel to Cuba in the meantime, your ESTA will become invalid, and you therefore cannot travel back to the United States.

Validity ESTA and passport details

The ESTA is linked to the passport used for the application. When this passport expires, the validity of the travel authorisation immediately expires as well. As such, the passport needs to remain valid during the entire stay in the USA. Did you apply for a new passport? In that case, you need to apply for a new ESTA for your next trip. The airline checks whether you have a valid travel authorisation based on your passport number. This happens during check-in and sometimes again when boarding. Because the ESTA is linked to the passport, you do not have to print out the confirmation of approval of your ESTA application.

During check-in, your full name, your birthdate, the issuance and expiry dates of your passport and the passport number on the ESTA will be matched to the details on your passport. Are you unable to check in? If it is due to an error in the details the airline has on you, an ESTA with completely correct data can often still be linked to your airline ticket. If you cannot check in, it may also be due to an error in the data of one of your fellow travellers. Are you unable to check in because your passport details are not correct on the ESTA? Then your travel authorisation is not valid and you will have to apply for a new ESTA.

National Identification Number

In the ESTA application form, you are asked for your National Identification Number. Not all countries have such a number. This includes the United Kingdom and Ireland. If you do not have a National Identification Number, you can enter "UNKNOWN" in this entry field.

Verification personal details

All details in the ESTA form have to be correct. Even a small typo can result in an invalid ESTA. To prevent your application from being rejected or an issued ESTA from being declared invalid, you have to enter and check your details accurately. After completing the application form, you can check all your details on the verification page. Once the payment for the application is processed, the entered details cannot be amended.

Names with accents or punctuation marks, such as umlauts and diaeresis, are automatically changed to the spelling of the name without these marks, as they appear in the machine-readable zone of the passport. This refers to the two lines with many "<<" marks at the bottom of the plastic or laminated information page of the passport. Your name is indicated after the country code. An ESTA with a name that deviates from the name as it is spelled in the machine-readable zone of the passport is invalid.

Validity of your ESTA with small changes

Not all mistakes or changes lead to invalidation of the ESTA. If you have moved since applying for your ESTA but still live in the same country, this will not cause problems with the validity of your ESTA. You therefore do not have to provide your new address details. In case there are any changes regarding your (expected) arrival date, overnight stay, point of contact, emergency contact, or names of your parents, you do not need to provide these either. Do you want to use your ESTA for a new trip? Or for a trip with a different travel purpose than was initially planned? You do not need to provide this information either, as long as the travel purpose is permitted with an ESTA and you meet all the ESTA requirements.

How do you apply for an ESTA?

Go to e-visa.co.uk/usa and click on "Apply Now". You can then complete the ESTA application form on the following page. This does not have to take longer than five to ten minutes per traveller. It is also possible to apply for an ESTA on behalf of someone else or a group of travellers if you have permission from the person or people in question to do so. You also have to read the completed application form to the person for whom you applied for the ESTA. The person in question has to confirm that the entered details for him or her are complete and correct. In the case of a minor, you will need confirmation from one of the parents.

Payment and status of your ESTA application

After filling out the ESTA form, you have to complete the payment. You can do so safely with PayPal, Visa, Mastercard, or American Express. Directly after receiving your payment, your application is processed. You will receive a confirmation of this via email. After approval, you will again receive an email and text message. In order to complete your application, after successful payment you still need to upload a digital copy of your passport page via your personal online account for the application. Directly following receipt of your payment, your application is lodged, but only after fully completing your application it can be processed. After making your payment successfully you will receive a confirmation email. Following receipt of a suitable passport copy per traveller and upon final approval of your application you will receive another e-mail and/or SMS text message.

In these emails, there is a link to the personal status page of the applicant, where the status of the application can be consulted. A confirmation of the issuance of the travel authorisation can be downloaded and printed here as well, after the ESTA USA is granted. Printing the ESTA is not necessary. If your ESTA is not issued within the average delivery time, you can consult the status

page to see what you can do in that case. Sometimes processing a travel authorisation takes a bit longer. The United States immigration service decides over the approval of applications and may require a bit more time in some cases, for example, because of a random check.

Received no email? Use your order number to look up the status

If you have not received an email or cannot find it (check the junk folder as well), you can use your order number to look up the status of your application. This number starts with the letter A (for America) and consists of a total of 14 characters. Aside from the email, this number can also be found in the text messages you received from e-visa.co.uk and in the first part of the transaction statement of your payment.

Submit digital passport copy

After you have completed the payment, you only have to submit a digital copy of the passports of all travellers to complete the application. As of 29 November 2022, it is required to submit a scan or photo of the complete information page of the passport for an ESTA application. Make sure that the image you submit is sharp and that all passport information is readable. To be able to process your application, no parts of the information page can be covered or made illegible in any way.

Does the submitted copy you provided not meet the requirements? In that case, one of the visa specialists at e-visa.co.uk will contact you with instructions on how to submit a suitable passport copy. Only after a suitable passport copy is submitted for all travellers can an ESTA application be processed.

Urgent applications

An ESTA is granted on average within three days. Are you leaving for the United States within five days? In that case, using this website you are required to submit an urgent application instead. You can do so with the same application form by selecting the option 'Urgent delivery'. In the case of an urgent application, there is a surcharge of £17.50 per traveller. Keep in mind that you should never submit an urgent application if you have already submitted an ESTA application that is still being processed. By doing so, you will risk additional delays in the processing of the first application. An urgent application for an ESTA USA is usually processed within ten minutes and granted after 60 minutes in the case of a successful application. However, it is never possible to guarantee delivery times, even with an urgent application.

Do you have any other questions?

Do you have questions about travelling to the USA with an ESTA after reading the information in this document? For questions about an ongoing application, please check your [status page with information on your ESTA](#) at E-visa.co.uk. For other questions, check the [frequently asked questions about travelling with an ESTA](#) on the website. You can also contact us by phone or email.