



ESTA

Important information about the ESTA

All travellers to the United States of America who don't have a US or Canadian passport are required to apply for an ESTA or visa before departure. This requirement applies to air, sea and land travel. For UK and Irish travellers, an ESTA is usually enough.

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	3 days on average
Urgent delivery	6 hours on average, mandatory in the 4 days prior to the trip
Cost	£ 49,95 per person
Payment methods	Visa, Mastercard, American Express, PayPal

This document contains information ESTA for the United States of America. You can easily apply online with a digital application form. If you are not eligible for an ESTA, 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 04-07-2025.
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. This travel authorization has long been required to travel to the USA by plane or ship. 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 an 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. You can fill in the application form for multiple people at the same time. It will not take longer than 5 to 10 minutes. All you have to do is answer the questions on the digital application form and submit a copy of your passport and a digital photo ID or selfie. 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 or other transport tickets. You don't need to have booked any accommodation either. In the application form, you can leave empty the fields 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 data required for your application

Applicants who are employed also need to enter their employer's name and address. In addition, since 2020, it is also required to enter the usernames for the different social media. 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. However, they must meet a series of requirements. Otherwise, they will not be able to apply for an ESTA and will have to apply for a visa in order to travel. An ESTA or visa does not guarantee that the traveller will actually be able to enter the United States. That decision belongs to the immigration authorities, who may deny entry into the country upon arrival. However, this is very unlikely to happen if you meet all the requirements.

To apply for an ESTA, the following requirements need to be fulfilled:

- 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 on or after 12 January 2021](#). If you wish to apply for ESTA to travel to the United States through this website, you cannot have been in Cuba on or after 1 March 2011.
- You don't have any physical or mental illness that could make you a danger to your immediate 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 it is combined with a valid passport. Your passport needs to remain valid during your entire stay in the United States. Furthermore, if you travel to the United States with an ESTA, you must meet all of the aforementioned requirements.

Travel purpose

You can travel to the United States with an ESTA for a holiday, a business trip, a visit to family or friends, to make a transfer at a US airport, or to receive medical treatment. An ESTA does not allow you to work for a US employer, nor can this travel authorisation be used to apply for a residence permit in the United States. You may receive remuneration for work-related activities during your trip, but only from a non-US employer. An ESTA also allows you to visit clients and suppliers and attend conferences or other work-related meetings.

Validity period

The ESTA is valid for a maximum of two years from the date of issue. The ESTA is only valid in combination with a valid biometric passport. Passports issued by an EU country, the United Kingdom or Switzerland contain a chip and are therefore eligible for an ESTA application. It is not possible to renew or link an ESTA to a new or different passport. Therefore, if your ESTA has expired or if you have a new passport, you will need to submit a new ESTA application.

Unlimited number of trips

You can use your ESTA during the two-year validity period for an unlimited number of trips to the United States. You can stay in the country for a maximum of 90 days per trip. If you travel from the US to Canada, Mexico or a nearby island such as Bermuda and then return to the US, the maximum length of stay in the US will count from your first arrival in the country. This means that you will not be able to stay in the country for another 90 consecutive days the second time you enter the US. Please note that if you travel to Cuba in the meantime, your ESTA will no longer be valid and you will therefore not be able to return to the United States.

Validity of the 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. If you have renewed your passport, you will need to apply for a new ESTA for your next trip. Your airline will use your passport number to check if you have a valid travel authorisation. This will happen during check-in and sometimes again when boarding. Because the ESTA is linked to your passport, you don't need to print out the confirmation of approval of your ESTA application.

At check-in, an agent will check if your full name, date of birth, your passport's number, issue and expiry dates match those on your ESTA and passport. If you have problems checking in due to an error in the airline's records, but your ESTA details are correct, in most cases your ESTA will still be linked to your flight ticket. Another reason you may have problems when checking in is if there is an error in the information about one of your travel companions. Conversely, if the reason you cannot check in is because your passport information is incorrect on your ESTA, your travel authorisation will not be valid and you will need to apply for a new ESTA.

National Identification Number

In the ESTA application form you will be asked for your national identification number. This is a personal number, such as your identity card number. Not all countries have such a number. If you do not have a national identification number, you can enter "UNKNOWN" in this field.

Verification of personal data

All the information provided on the ESTA form must be correct. Please note that a simple typo may invalidate your ESTA. To avoid having your application rejected or your ESTA invalidated once it has been granted, you must fill in and review your details carefully. After completing the application form, you can review your details again on the verification page. Once your payment has been processed, you will not be able to change your details any more.

Names with accents or punctuation marks, such as umlauts and commas, are automatically converted to the spelling of the name without these characters, as it appears in the machine-readable part of the passport. These are the two lines with many characters '<<' that appear at the bottom of the plastic information page of the passport. Your name appears after the country code. An ESTA with a name that differs from the name written in the machine-readable part of the passport is not valid.

Validity of your ESTA in case of minor changes

Not all mistakes or changes will invalidate your ESTA. If you have moved house after applying for your ESTA but are still living in the same country, this will not affect its validity. Therefore, you will not need to provide your new address details. You won't need to report changes to your arrival date, accommodation address, contact person, company, emergency contact or parents' names. If you want to use your ESTA for a new trip, or for a different travel purpose, you won't need to provide this information either, as long as the purpose of the trip is allowed by the 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 will be directed to a page where you will be able to fill out the ESTA application form. It will take between five and ten minutes per traveller. It is also possible to apply for an ESTA for another person or group of travellers, as long as you have the authorisation of the person(s) in question. You must read out loud the completed application form to the person for whom you are requesting an ESTA. The person in question must confirm that the information filled in on their behalf is 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 completing the ESTA form, you will need to make your payment. You can do this securely via PayPal, credit card (Visa, Mastercard or American Express), Google Pay or Apple Pay. To complete your application, you will need to upload a copy of your passport and an ID photo or selfie via your personal user page. As soon as your payment is received, your application will be created, but will only be processed once the required documentation has been received. You will receive several confirmation emails: one after your payment has been received, another after the passport photo and passport copy of all travellers have been received, and finally, after your ESTA has been approved. In the latter case, you will also receive an SMS.

All the emails regarding your application contain a link to your personal status page, where you can check the status of your application at any time. On this page, you can also download and print your ESTA confirmation, once it has been granted. It is not necessary to print the ESTA. If your ESTA has not been granted within the average processing time, you can check your personal status page to see what to do in this case. It may take some time for a travel authorisation to be approved. The United States immigration service is the only responsible

about the approval of applications. In some cases more time may be required, for example due to random checks.

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

If you can't find our you haven't received an email (check your spam folder as well), you can use your order number to check the status of your application. This number begins with the letter A and consists of 14 characters in total. As well as in emails, you will also find this number in all the text messages you have received from e-visa.co.uk, and in the first part of your payment transaction statement.

Copy of your passport and identity photo in digital format

Once you have made your payment you will only need to submit a photo ID (or selfie) and a copy of each traveller's passport, both in digital format in order to complete your application. Since 29 November 2022, it is mandatory to submit a scan or photo of the passport information page in order to apply for an ESTA. Please ensure that the image is clear and that all passport information is clearly legible. In order for your application to be processed, the information page must be fully visible.

Since May 2025, you also need to submit an ID photo or a selfie in order to apply for an ESTA. The photo must have a clear, sharp background, without filters. The traveller must have a neutral expression and must not wear headwear or sunglasses

If the copy or photo submitted does not meet the requirements, an e-visa.co.uk specialist will contact you with instructions on how to submit the documents correctly. Your ESTA application can only be processed once a photo and a suitable copy of your passport have been submitted for all travellers in the application.

Urgent applications

The ESTA is granted on average within three days. If you are travelling to the United States in less than four days and you want to apply through this website, you will be required to submit an urgent application. You can use the same application form, and then select the option 'Urgent delivery'. Urgent applications have a surcharge of £17.50 per traveller. Keep in mind that you should never submit an urgent application if you have previously submitted an ESTA application being processed. An urgent application for an ESTA USA is usually processed within ten minutes and granted after 6 hours 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.