VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

TRAVELER GUIDE

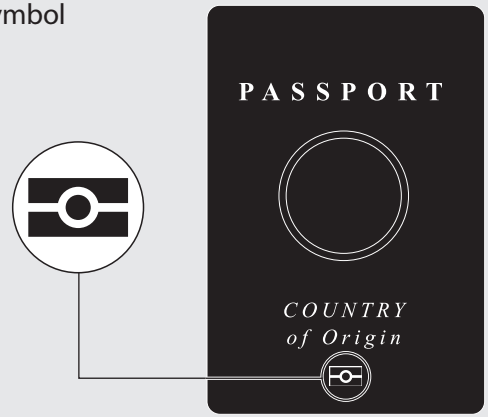
TRAVELERS VISITING THE UNITED STATES

This guide for travelers outlines important changes in passport and e-Passport requirements for travelers from Visa Waiver Program (VWP) countries applying for admission to the United States. Under the VWP, most travelers from the 27 countries participating in the VWP do not need a visa to enter the United States if they are traveling for tourism or business for 90 days or less. Please check with the passport-issuing agency of your country of nationality if you have specific questions. Travelers from countries not in the VWP are required to obtain a visa for entry into the United States.

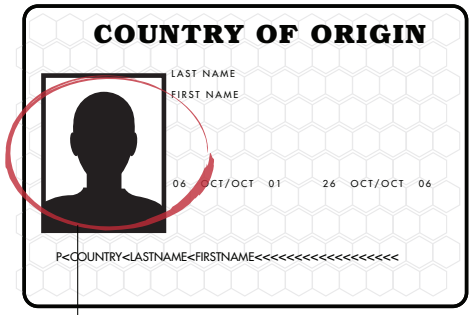
As of **October 26, 2006,** any passport issued ***on or after this date*** by a VWP country must be an e-Passport for VWP travelers to be eligible to enter the United States without a visa.

An e-Passport has an integrated computer chip that holds the same information printed on the passport's data page: the holder's name, date of birth and other biographic information. These e-Passports must comply with international technical standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

An e-Passport has this international symbol on the cover.



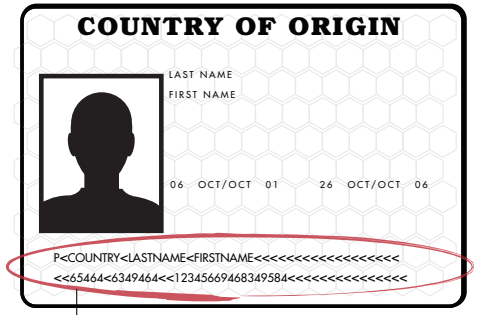
A VWP traveler who **has a valid, machine-readable passport *with* a digital photograph** does not need a new e-Passport until the existing passport expires, if the digital photograph passport was *issued before* **October 26, 2006**.



DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH

A digital photo is printed on the page, not glued or laminated onto the passport.

A VWP traveler with **a valid, machine-readable passport *without* a digital photograph** does not need a new e-Passport until the existing one expires, if the machine-readable passport was *issued before* **October 26, 2005**.



MACHINE-READABLE ZONE

A machine-readable passport has two lines of text as letters, numbers and chevrons (<<<) at the bottom of the personal information page, along with your picture.

Homeland Security

Traveler Guide created by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security • www.dhs.gov • August 2006

VISA WAIVER PROGRAM
TRAVELER GUIDE

TRAVELERS VISITING THE UNITED STATES

GUIDELINES FOR FOREIGN TRAVELERS TO THE UNITED STATES

Traveling Under the Visa Waiver Program

The most common way of visiting the United States without a visa is if you are traveling under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP).

Can I travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program?

There are 27 countries that participate in the Visa Waiver Program.[1]

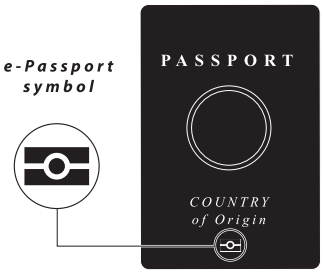
If your country is on this list, and you are traveling to the United States for tourism or business for 90 days or less with a valid passport that meets U.S. requirements, and the conditions below do not apply to you, you do NOT need a visa. Otherwise, you need to obtain a visa. Please see "Getting a Visa" below.[2]

[1] VWP countries are:
Andorra, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Brunei, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (for citizens with the unrestricted right of permanent abode in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man)

[2] You need a visa if you:
- Intend to stay longer than 90 days
- Intend to travel to the United States for a reason other than business or tourism
- Have been arrested, even if not convicted
- Have a criminal record
- Have a serious, communicable disease (including HIV)
- Have been refused entry to the United States on a previous occasion
- Have been deported from the United States
- Have previously overstayed the 90 days permitted under the VWP
- Are a child included on your parent's passport

A.
Passports issued on or after October 26, 2006
e-Passports

New passports issued by Visa Waiver Program countries must be e-Passports, which include an integrated computer chip capable of storing biographic information from the data page, as well as other biometric information, such as the required digital photograph of the holder. You can identify an e-Passport with the symbol below.



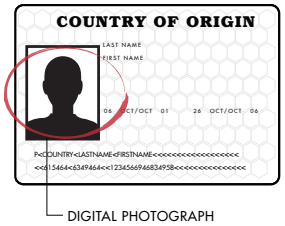
If your passport **does not** have this feature, you can still travel without a visa if it is a valid passport issued:

- **Before October 26, 2005,** and includes a *machine-readable zone*, or
- **Between October 26, 2005, and October 25, 2006,** and includes a digital photograph.

If you were issued a passport **on or after October 26, 2006,** and it is not an e-Passport, you will need to obtain a visa. Please see "Getting a Visa" below.

B.
Passports issued October 26, 2005 - October 25, 2006
Digital Photographs

Older, but still valid passports issued by Visa Waiver Program countries between **October 26, 2005, and October 25, 2006,** must include a digital photo printed on the data page, or the traveler will be required to obtain a visa. A digital photo is one that is printed on the page, not a photo that is glued or laminated into the passport.



A digital photo is one that is printed on the page, not a photo that is glued or laminated onto the passport.

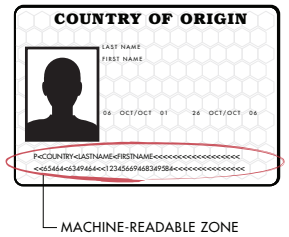
If your passport **does not** have this feature, you can still travel without a visa if you:

- Were issued a valid passport **before October 26, 2005,** with a *machine-readable zone*, or
- Have an "e-Passport," which includes an integrated computer chip capable of storing biographic information from the data page, as well as biometric information such as the digital photograph of the holder.

If you were issued a passport **on or after October 26, 2005,** and it **does not** meet the requirements in either sections A or B, you will need to obtain a visa. Please see "Getting a Visa" below.

C.
Passports issued before October 26, 2005
Machine-Readable Zones

Older, but still valid passports issued by Visa Waiver Program countries before **October 26, 2005,** must have a *machine-readable zone*. A *machine-readable passport* has two lines of text as letters, numbers and chevrons (<<<) at the bottom of the personal information page, along with the bearer's picture. It looks like the image below.



A machine-readable passport has two lines of text as letters, numbers and chevrons (<<<) at the bottom of the personal information page along with your picture.

If your passport does not have this feature, you have two options:

- Get a qualifying, new passport if your country of nationality is producing one, or
- Get a visa. Please see "Getting a Visa" below.

Please contact your passport-issuing agency or your local embassy if you have questions about your country's production of a qualifying e-Passport.

GETTING A VISA

International visitors who need a visa to travel to the United States must apply for one at an American embassy or consulate. For information on how to get a visa, please go to

www.travel.state.gov

A visa does not permit entry to the United States. A visa simply indicates that a U.S. consular officer has reviewed your application and has determined you are eligible to enter the country for a specific purpose. A visa allows you to travel to the United States as far as the port of entry (airport, seaport or land border crossing), where the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer has the authority to permit you to enter the United States.