



Before planning that bucket list trip to England, China or wherever outside the USA, be sure you have all necessary and updated paperwork.

Don't mess up your plans by being refused entry into a country. It could be worse, being hauled off to spend a night or more in the local lock-up while waiting for bail-out money. When embarking on your travels, be sure to have the following in-date and in-effect documents with you:     Passport: If you've never had one, check with your travel agent or the U.S. State Department on how to proceed. It's a fairly quick process, and absolutely necessary for travel and your personal protection when outside the United States.

Travel visa: Many countries require a visa before you enter at an airport or cruise ship's dock. A visa is an endorsement stamped on your passport booklet by foreign customs officials. You can also get them online before you travel, or at an embassy or consulate of that country.

If you just plan to visit for several days, or volunteer on a short-term project, a regular visa is usually sufficient. However, if you expect to work in a foreign country for several months or longer, you'll need a special work visa. You can get further information about it online or from the U.S. State Department.

Your passport and most other documents require a recent photo. In some offices, you must bring one of your own, or they can shoot and process them when making your document.

A U.S. driver's license is necessary if you'll actually be behind the wheel while in a foreign country. Additionally, if you plan to do some extensive driving or rent a car, you should apply for an international driver's license several months before you leave home.

Some countries require up-to-date immunization records. Additionally, if you should fall ill in a foreign country and need to contact an American consulate or embassy for medical help, your immunization record can be helpful.