



us adds israel to visa waiver program/ Esta

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Through a September 27, 2023 joint announcement from the Departments of State and Homeland Security, the US government has added Israel to the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), also commonly known as ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization). Citizens and nationals of Israel may soon travel to the United States for tourism or business purposes for up to 90 days without a visa. Previously, Israelis were required to obtain B-1/B-2 visas at US consular posts abroad in order to visit the United States for tourism or for business trips.

This new development, set to take effect on or before November 30, 2023, will allow eligible Israelis to register for a small fee (currently US \$21), at least 72 hours ahead of intended US travel, at the website esta.cbp.dhs.gov, to seek a travel authorization valid for up to two years. Eligible travelers must have a valid Israeli passport, a round-trip (or onward) ticket on a signatory commercial carrier, and not be inadmissible to the United States for any reason (such as past overstays, immigration violations, or criminal convictions). In addition, previous travel to Cuba, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, or Yemen may disqualify one for admission on the VWP/ESTA.

Individuals not eligible for the VWP/ESTA may continue to seek B-1/B-2 visas at US consular posts. Admission on the VWP/ESTA does not allow the traveler to change status to any other type of visa, and an individual admitted on VWP/ESTA may not extend his or her granted duration of stay.

Israel becomes the 41st nation to join the VWP.

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practice areas

immigration