

Embassy of the United States Moscow, Russia

PRESS RELEASES

Historic Visa Agreement Enters Into Force September 9, 2012

Moscow, Russia | August 29, 2012

The U.S. Embassy in Moscow is pleased to announce that the historic U.S.-Russia visa agreement will enter into effect September 9, 2012. The agreement will facilitate travel and establish stronger ties between Russia and the United States, as it will benefit the largest segment of travelers in both our countries: business travelers and tourists. Starting September 9, Russian and American travelers for business or tourism will be eligible to receive visas valid for multiple entries during a period of 36 months. The agreement also outlines other simplifications in the bilateral visa regime and eases visa processing time for travelers from both countries. At the same time, the United States will be reducing the fee charged to Russians issued visas for business or tourism from \$100 to \$20.

Thanks to the agreement, three-year, multiple-entry visas will become the standard “default” terms for U.S. citizens visiting Russia and Russian citizens visiting the United States. No formal invitation will be required to apply for a business or tourism visa, although applicants seeking Russian tourist visas must continue to hold advance lodging reservations and arrangements with a tour operator. Both sides have also committed to keep standard visa processing times under 15 days, although the circumstances of individual cases may require additional processing.

Also on September 9, the \$100 issuance – or reciprocity – fee for Russians issued U.S. visas for business or tourism (visa types B1/B2) will fall to \$20. As a rule, successful visa applicants will receive the full-validity three-year visa. The \$160 application fee will still apply, and validity and fees for other visa types (for example for students, workers, and journalists) will not change.

For Americans in Russia, the agreement lifts the previous restriction limiting stays in Russia to 90 days within any given 180-day period—just like Russian travelers, they will now be permitted stays of up to six months. In addition, “exit visas” will no longer be necessary in the case of U.S. citizens who lose their passports while in Russia. (Russian citizens may already exit the United States without an exit visa). U.S. citizens with current Russian visas are reminded that they are still subject to the terms and dates of the visas already in their possession.

U.S. citizens with Russian travel plans are encouraged to monitor Embassy Moscow’s website for additional details concerning this agreement: <http://moscow.usembassy.gov/russian-visas.html>. Russian citizens may visit <http://www.ustraveldocs.com/ru/index.html> for specific instructions on how to apply for a U.S. visa.

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