



U.S. Department of Homeland Security

# Secretary Mayorkas and Secretary Blinken Announce Designation of the State of Qatar into the Visa Waiver Program

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WASHINGTON – Today, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas, in consultation with Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, designated Qatar into the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). The collaboration and information sharing at the core of the VWP will significantly enhance the security interests of the United States in addition to encouraging legitimate travel and commerce between the two nations.

Secretary Mayorkas and Secretary Blinken commend Qatar for meeting the stringent security requirements to join the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). Qatar has been an exceptional partner for the United States, and our strategic relationship has only grown stronger over the past few years. This is further evidence of our strategic partnership and our shared commitment to security and stability. By meeting the VWP requirements, Qatar becomes the first Gulf country to enter the program and we encourage additional partners to meet all program requirements to allow for entry into the program in the interest of advancing bilateral and regional security cooperation.

“The Visa Waiver Program is one of our most successful security initiatives. Qatar’s participation in the program increases information sharing regarding one of the world’s busiest travel and transfer hubs, strengthening the security of the United States,” **said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas.** “I commend our Qatari partners for meeting the stringent requirements in this agreement entails and look forward to our continued work together on behalf of our respective countries.”

“Qatar’s fulfillment of the stringent security requirements to join the Visa Waiver Program will deepen our strategic partnership and enhance the flow of people and commerce between our two countries. Qatar’s entry will make travel between the United States and Qatar safer, more secure, and easier for both Americans and Qataris,” **said Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken.**

The VWP builds comprehensive security partnerships between the United States and designated countries that meet strict requirements related to counterterrorism, law enforcement, immigration enforcement, document security, and border management. These requirements include that the country have a rate of nonimmigrant visa refusals below 3% during the previous fiscal year; issues secure travel documents; extends reciprocal entry privileges to all U.S. citizens and nationals without regard to national origin, religion, ethnicity, or gender; and works closely with U.S. law enforcement and counterterrorism authorities. Qatar put forth a significant whole-of-government effort to meet all program requirements, including entering into partnerships with the United States to share information on terrorism and serious crimes. As with all VWP countries, DHS will continually monitor Qatar’s compliance with all program requirements.

Starting no later than December 1, 2024, the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) online application and mobile app will be updated to allow citizens and nationals of Qatar to apply to travel to the United States for tourism or business purposes for up to 90 days without first obtaining a U.S. visa. These authorizations are generally valid for two years. Travelers with valid B-1/B-2 visas may continue to use their visa for travel to the United States, and B-1/B-2 visas will remain an option for Qatari citizens. ESTA applications may be found on the [ESTA website \(https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/\)](https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/) or download the “ESTA Mobile” app through the iOS App Store or the Google Play store.

U.S. citizens already enjoy visa-free travel to Qatar, and beginning October 1, 2024, will be eligible to stay in Qatar for up to 90 days instead of the previous 30-day limit if they have a passport that is valid for at least three months from arrival and a confirmed hotel booking on arrival.

Under the VWP, citizens and nationals of Qatar will be able to apply for authorization to travel to the United States through the ESTA online or mobile app at a date to be announced shortly after Qatar’s VWP admission. Participating countries are reviewed at least biennially, as required in statute, to ensure they continue to meet all program requirements.

Qatar will be the 42nd member of the VWP and the third country added under Secretary Mayorkas’s tenure (Croatia in 2021 and Israel in 2023). More information on the VWP can be found on the [Visa Waiver Program \(visa-waiver-program\)](#) page.

## Topics

[HOMELAND SECURITY ENTERPRISE \(/TOPICS/HOMELAND-SECURITY-ENTERPRISE\)](#)

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## Keywords

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