

# Why You Need to Check Your Passport NOW if You're Traveling in 2021 or 2022

(Courtesy of Caroline Morse Teel – SMARTERTRAVEL)

If you have an international trip planned for this year or next year, you need to check the expiration date on your passport right now. Many destinations require your passport to be valid for six months after your trip, so even if you think you have time because your passport is good through 2021—you might not.

Due to COVID-19, the U.S. State Department is currently taking significantly longer to process passport applications (including renewals) than normal.

## How Long Are Passport Applications Taking?

Routine passport applications and renewals are currently taking around 18 weeks. The State Department warns that passports are currently taking up to 12 weeks to process and 6 weeks to mail. Even if you've paid the \$60 fee for expedited service, you can't expect to have it back in your hands quickly. Even expedited passports still take 12 weeks from start to finish.

## What Should I Do If I'm Traveling Soon and My Passport Is Expired?

If you have a trip coming up soon and have just realized your passport is expired, all is not lost. The State Department offers a limited number of [urgent travel appointments](#) available at Regional Passport Agencies across the country. You must have an appointment—walk-ins will not be allowed into the building.

Urgent travel appointments can only be scheduled within two weeks of your travel (or four weeks if you need a foreign visa), however, you cannot make the appointment for more than three business days before your departure (or 10 days if you need a visa).

At your urgent travel appointment, you'll need to show proof of travel dates, pay the \$60 expedite fee, and have all your passport documents ready.

If you need a new passport within 72 hours due to a life-or-death emergency (as [defined by the State Department here](#)), you may be able to make an emergency appointment. Follow the steps outlined on this page, and then call 1-877-487-2778 (during business hours) or 202-647-4000 (after hours) to make an appointment. The State Department does not guarantee that you will have your passport in time for travel.