

Brexit: Travelling into Europe after 1st January 2021

With less than 6 months until the end of the Brexit transition period, it is becoming clearer that our focus should also be on how to offer customers the best advice with regards to Brexit and the new rules to travel to the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein from 1st January 2021.

Below we have put together the latest advice and guidance on Brexit and we seek to address common questions you may be asked by your customers.

1. Do I need to renew my passport?

If you're travelling to the EU from 1st January 2021, you may need to renew your passport earlier, as it will need to be less than 10 years old (even if it has 6 months or more left) and it will need to have at least 6 months left validity.

These rules do not apply to travel to Ireland. You can continue to use your passport as long as it's valid for the length of your stay.

If your passport is burgundy or has 'European Union' on the cover, you can continue to use it until it expires.

Due to the current challenges of Covid-19, the waiting time for processing passport renewals is longer than 3 weeks, so please allow sufficient time for the application. To renew a passport, please follow this link: <https://www.gov.uk/renew-adult-passport/renew>

2. Will I need a VISA to travel into the EU?

If you're a tourist, you will not need a visa for short trips to EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. You'll be able to stay for up to 90 days in any 180-day period.

Brussels has said that British visitors will be visa-exempt 'third-country nationals' initially, which means that there's no need for an application in advance. But within a couple of years, British citizens will be subject to the new European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), which the EU is working to impose no later than 2022. To read more about this visa scheme, please follow this link: <https://www.etiaseurope.eu/>

At border control in the EU, you may need to:

- show a return or onward ticket
- show you have enough money for your stay
- use separate lanes from EU, EEA and Swiss citizens when queueing

3. If I want to drive to EU countries, will I need to get another driving licence?

A British driving licence will continue to be classed as a Europe-wide permit until the end of 2020. After that, it is possible that some EU countries will insist on an International Driving Permit.

Full details about International Driving Permits, including what permit you need for each country can be found by clicking here: <https://www.gov.uk/driving-abroad/international-driving-permit>.

There are a number of different permits available for different countries within the EU, so you should check carefully which permit is required for each country you intend to drive within, as you may need more than one permit to comply with the law.

If required, International Driving Permits cost £5.50 and are available directly from the [Post Office](#).

The Government is also advising that you will need a GB sticker for your car when driving in the EU after Brexit. If you're taking your own vehicle, you might also need a 'green card' - a certificate extending the travel insurance to the minimum legal requirements in EU countries, which will be provided by the car insurance company.

4. Will I still get free health care?

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) allows any EU citizen to access state medical care when they are travelling in another EU country. Your EHIC will be valid up to 31st December 2020.

Spitfire Travel has always advised holidaymakers to make sure they have appropriate travel insurance, whether they have an EHIC card or not, as there are limitations to EHIC.

When travelling in the EU and beyond, it is important travellers take out travel insurance and check that it covers their current circumstances, including any medical conditions. If you have an annual policy, make sure you check the Terms and Conditions and contact your insurance provider if you're not sure.

5. If I already have travel insurance in place, will this cease to be valid after 1st January 2021?

Some travel insurance policies only cover certain types of disruption. Check your provider's terms and conditions to make sure you have the cover you need if your travel is cancelled or delayed.

Your consumer rights will not change from 1 January 2021. This means that if your travel is cancelled or delayed you may be able to claim a refund or compensation. Check your booking's terms and conditions to find out more.

6. What are the new rules with regards to mobile roaming?

Under EU rules, the cost of making calls, sending messages or using the internet on your phone in the EU is the same in the UK. If the UK leaves without a deal these rules will no longer apply – however, some UK companies have said they may continue to offer this benefit to their customers. Before travel, holidaymakers should check with their mobile phone provider about the costs of using their phone in the EU.

A new law means that you're protected from getting mobile data charges above £45 without you knowing. Once you reach £45, you need to opt in to spend more so that you can continue using the internet while you're abroad. Your phone operator will tell how you can do this.

7. What are the new rules on taking my pet abroad?

From 1st January 2021 you will not be able to use the existing pet passport scheme. Instead you'll need to follow a different process, which takes 4 months. To see the full guidance on pet travel to Europe from 1st January 2021, please follow this link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pet-travel-to-europe-after-brexit>