

Visa and Residence Options for US Expats in France

Do U.S. Citizens Need a Visa to Enter France?

U.S. passport holders can visit France without a visa for up to 90 days within a 180-day period for tourism, business, or family visits. Starting in mid-2025, ETIAS travel authorization will be required for short stays.

Long-Term Stays (Over 90 Days): Overview of Visa Options

To stay over 90 days, you'll need a long-stay visa (visa de long séjour). Types include: Visitor Visa (no work allowed), Work Visa, Self-Employed Visa, Student Visa, Talent Passport, and Family Reunification Visa.

French Residence Permits: Carte de Séjour

Upon arrival with a long-stay visa, you typically transition to a Carte de Séjour. Some visas, like the VLS-TS, act as residence permits for the first year.

Retiring in France: The Visiteur Visa

This visa suits retirees with passive income. It requires proof of funds (~EUR1,400-EUR2,000/month), health insurance, and no employment.

Working in France: Options for Employees & Freelancers

Employees need sponsorship and a work contract. Freelancers and business creators need a viable business plan and proof of income.

Talent Passport: Fast-Track for High-Value Applicants

For highly skilled professionals, this visa offers up to 4 years of residency and allows family members to work. It suits investors, tech workers, and artists.

Renewing Your Residency

Most residence permits are renewable yearly. After 5 years, you may apply for a 10-year Carte de Resident or French citizenship.

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Dual Citizenship

France allows dual citizenship. You can apply by naturalization after 5 years, or 3 if married to a French citizen.

Important Documents You'll Need

Bring your U.S. passport, proof of income, health insurance, lease agreement, translated birth certificate, and consider opening a French bank account.

Final Tips for U.S. Expats

Start visa applications early, validate your VLS-TS within 90 days, track prefecture appointments, and seek help if you're not fluent in French.