

U.S. Passports Will Soon Get More Expensive

On December 20, the State Department announced that the cost of passport books will increase by \$20. The price hike applies to all customers, and it will take effect starting December 27.

The \$20 bump specifically applies to the security surcharge fees associated with passports. According to the State Department's [Twitter account](#), "The increased fee is necessary to ensure we continue to produce one of the most secure travel and identity documents in the world."

So how exactly will that extra money be used? Back in 2006, a slew of new features were added to passports, including polycarbonate coating over pages, raised lettering and watermarks, and RFID chips. The surcharges help pay for all those features, therein better protecting travelers from identity theft and fraud

You can find the current passport book prices on the State Department's website, but this is what you can expect to pay in fees beginning next week:

- If you're an adult (16 and older) and applying for the first time: \$165
- If you're an adult (16 and older) and renewing your passport: \$130
- If your child is under 16 and you're applying for their passport: \$135

There are also special fees for rush orders, including \$60 for expedited service and \$17.56 for one-to-two-day delivery. Those fees will not be affected by the upcoming price increases.

This news comes just one week after President Biden signed an executive order to switch mail-in passport renewals to an online system, though we don't know exactly when that change will take place. Right now, the process involves filling out forms, printing them out, and mailing them (along with your expired passport) to a designated center.

In the meantime, the State Department recommends that travelers apply for new or renewed passports several months before they're scheduled to go abroad. The current wait time of 8 to 11 weeks is certainly an improvement from the 18-week period we saw over the summer and fall, but you don't want to wait until the last minute—adding expedited service fees on top of these increased security fees isn't a great way to start a new year of travel.



GOOD BYE 2021

Our upcoming groups for 2022 and 2023

May 4-13, 2022 round trip Cape Liberty- Nine night cruise on Celebrity's Summit with ports of Newport, Charleston, and two night in Bermuda. Includes full beverage package, pre-paid gratuities, and WIFI.

August 7-19, 2022-12 night cruise On Celebrity's Summit sailing from Cape Liberty to Canada, Greenland and Iceland (limited availability). Fly home from Iceland or stay for an optional three night post package. Post package can be done separately from the cruise.

September 5-16, 2022- 11 night Alaska Wildlife Encounter cruise tour on Celebrity's Millennium (4 night land 7 night cruise) Anchorage to Vancouver. Visit Anchorage, Denali, Talkeetna and Alyeska on land and cruise through Hubbard Glacier and visit ports of Seward, Juneau and Skagway. Cruise only option available and will include a full beverage package, pre-paid gratuities and WIFI.

Two Passion Play departures

September 19-29, 2022- Imperial Cities with Oberammergau, featuring Budapest, Vienna and Prague

September 20-28, 2022-Switzerland and Germany with Oberammergau

May 14-25, 2023 Transatlantic NYC to Reykjavik on Norwegian Cruise Line brand new ship, Prima. The special rate of \$2422 includes a balcony cabin, full beverage package, specialty dining and shore excursion credit. You will visit two ports in Canada and in Iceland with overnights.



A PRIVATE PILGRIMAGE TO ROME AND ASSISI WITH FATHER STEVE KLUGE

OCTOBER 26 TO NOVEMBER 3, 2022

INFO NIGHT—FRIDAY, JANUARY 28, 2022

5:00 PM TO 7:00 PM AT THE ST. FRANCIS CENTER

**R.S.V.P. IS REQUIRED TO ATTEND
PLEASE CALL TARA AT 609-597-5100 TO REGISTER**

📷 Where To See the World's Most Epic Christmas Trees

While the Tannenbaum tradition may have originated in Germany, festively decorated fir trees have since become a universal symbol of the Christmas celebration. The yuletide evergreens symbolize the season's spirit of hope and generosity, bringing light and warmth to residences and communities even during the darkest, coldest days of the year. Over the centuries, the lights and decorations we use to adorn them have gotten grander, and so have some of the trees themselves. Ahead are some of the modern world's biggest and most magnificent Christmas trees erected each year.



St. Peter's, Vatican City



Rockefeller Center, NYC



Trafalgar Square, London,



Brandenburg Gate, Berlin



Lisbon, Portugal

Make 2022 Bermudaful With Their Pink Sale!



BERMUDA IS CALLING

Mark your calendar, it's a big deal! Between January 8th and February 6th, book your stay at participating hotels and save up to 50%.

Hotel stays are valid through December 2022 and offers vary*.

Don't miss out, your island adventure is calling.

*Terms and conditions apply

5 Great Reasons to Book Mexico for This Winter Travel Season

Every day, we in the travel industry hear news about another destination that's opening up (and we cheer!) or about changing entry requirements. And aren't we all constantly being asked, "Where's the best place to travel to now?" Well here's one destination that has managed to hold onto its appeal with travelers during the pandemic and now even more as COVID concerns are beginning to ease: the ever-popular, hot-hot-hot Mexico.

"Mexico has always had an allegiance of travel clients and it's being proven post-pandemic as well," said Denise L. Wiggins, global travel & health and wellness advisor, at Denise Wiggins Travel Services & Curran Travel, in Pennsylvania. "It has always been an open, welcoming and inclusive destination. As a country, it has worked hard during and post-pandemic to honor protocols; staff up accordingly and be transparent of their offerings. Mexico continues to be a desired country and is requested often."

Here are five great reasons to book your U.S.-based clients on a trip to Mexico this winter travel season and beyond:



1. Nonstop flights, lots of lift

First off, Mexico is just easy to get to for American travelers. Flights are short, with an abundance of nonstop options, and relatively speaking, lots of lift available.

2. Back-to-normal feeling

Travel advisors who have recently visited Mexico report back that it has an upbeat atmosphere with higher resort occupancies and excellent customer service.

3. Easier COVID protocols

Bottom line, travelers appreciate not having to test prior to travel. The U.S. still requires return testing (and most resorts in Mexico offer complimentary onsite testing to make this easy for travelers), but it is appealing not to have to test prior to arrival.

4. Quality properties with value-added offerings

The luxury resorts, all-inclusives, spectacular beaches, rejuvenating spas, mouth-watering cuisine, well-honed customer service...As an experienced travel advisor, you already know why Mexico is a supreme destination from the perspective of its hospitality-related offerings.

5. Affordable for most travelers

Finally, Mexico is an affordable destination for most travelers. Hotels, attractions, restaurants, airlines, and visiting cruise lines all understand the necessity of offering travelers an excellent value for their vacation dollars. Nothing gets people up and out of their houses like a good travel deal.



Make
2022
the year of travel

CIOPPINO

If you missed making something special for the Feast of the Seven Fishes Christmas Eve dinner, you might want to try this special dinner that will have your friends coming back again and again.

INGREDIENTS

3 tablespoons olive oil, 1 bulb fennel (thinly sliced), 1 onion (chopped), 3 large shallots (chopped), 2 tsp. salt, 4 large garlic cloves (finely chopped), 3/4 tsp. dried red pepper flakes, 1/4 c tomato paste, 1 can (28 oz.) diced tomatoes in juice, 1 1/2 c. white wine, 5 cups fish stock, 1 bay leaf, 1 lb. scrubbed clams, 1 lb. mussels, 1 lb. large shrimp (peeled and deveined), 1 1/2 lbs. assorted fish fillets (halibut or salmon) cut in 2 inch chunks.



DIRECTIONS

Heat the oil in a very large pot over medium heat. Add the fennel, onions, shallots, and add salt until onions are translucent (about 10 minutes). Add the garlic and 3/4 tsp. pepper flakes and saute for about 2 minutes. Stir in tomato paste. Add tomatoes with juice, wine, fish stock and bay leaf. Cover and bring to a simmer. Reduce heat to medium low. Cover and simmer until flavors blend (about 30 minutes).

Add the clams and mussels to cooking liquid. Cover and cook until shellfish begin to open (about 5 minutes). Add the shrimp and fish. Simmer gently until fish and shrimp are cooked through and clams are completely open, stirring gently about five minutes longer. Discard any clams/mussels that do not open. Season to taste with more salt and red pepper flakes.

Free At-Home Testing is Available

The NJ Department of Health and Vault Medical Services have partnered to offer a free, at-home COVID-19 saliva test kit that is available to every New Jerseyan who thinks they need a test – even if you don't have symptoms.



The kit will be shipped through UPS with next-day delivery. Once received, you will connect over Zoom with a Vault healthcare professional who will walk you through the test and answer your questions.

When complete, the test can be sent back in a prepaid package via UPS next-day shipping. You will receive your test results 24 to 48 hours after your sample arrives at the lab.

In addition, in-person testing is available at locations across the state, including free testing. Learn more about COVID-19 testing in New Jersey at covid19.nj.gov/testing.