

# U.S. State Department Warns of 4-Month Delays for Passport Renewal

On Friday, the U.S. State Department confirmed what so many future international travelers have found out over the past few weeks and month—it is taking longer than ever to renew a passport.

According to the State Department's update, routine applications are now taking between 10 and 13 weeks, while expedited applications are now taking between 7 and 9 weeks.

Those timelines do not include mailing times—the State Department said that it may take up to two weeks for applications to be mailed, and another two weeks for them to be mailed back, so routine applications could now take up to 17 weeks, or more than four months, from time of mailing.

Just a few months ago, the [time for standard renewal](#) was six to nine weeks.

The main reason for the longer processing time is the higher demand for passports—2023 is on track to set the record for the highest demand year ever for passports, far surpassing its previous record years in 2007 and 2017.

“During some weeks this winter, the Department received more than 500,000 applications, the highest number ever for this time of year, exceeding our official projections,” [the State Department](#) said in its latest update.

There are plans to try and lower those processing times—the State Department is “aggressively recruiting and hiring,” offering overtime to its current employees, and opening satellite offices to help process the large number of applications coming in.

The State Dept. had also been allowing some to [renew their passport online](#). The online portal, which was technically still in testing mode, was open as recently as January, giving passport holders the chance to do everything online. However, that portal is now closed and while the State Dept. told TMR that the plan is to roll it out fully sometime this year, that's not an option for travelers right now.

Still, the best thing international travelers can do right now is to apply for their passports as early as possible.

“We are committed to transparency and will continue to provide regular updates about passport processing times, and to encourage Americans to apply for their passport well in advance of any planned international travel to avoid last-minute issues.”

Those who are traveling with less time to spare are able to schedule an in-person appointment at a regional passport agency in order to expedite the process. Those appointments can be scheduled only via a phone call and only within 2 weeks of the travel date. Applicants will be required to provide proof of travel when making the appointment.

## *Summer travel trends...*

Eighty-five percent of Americans plan to travel this summer, according to the “**Summer Travel Survey & Trends 2023**” report by **The Vacationer**. Nearly half of them (42 percent of all Americans) are planning to travel more this summer compared to last. The 85 percent who intend to travel this summer represent a 5 percent increase over 2022.

As for who's traveling, American adults over 60 years old are the least likely to have intentions of traveling this summer (Only 74 percent of people over the age of 60 intend to travel). That said, 90 percent of American adults aged 30 to 44 intend to travel this summer. Similar rates of those aged 45 to 60 (88 percent) and 18 to 29 (87 percent) have intentions to travel this summer.

Nearly four in five travelers are planning to take a road trip this summer, with distance from their home spread fairly even across various brackets. Seventeen percent will travel within 100 miles of their home, 23 percent within 250 miles and 20 percent within 500 miles, before dipping off a bit among those who will travel within 1,000 miles (11 percent) and more than 1,000 miles (7 percent).



# Groups 2023-2024

## **SEPTEMBER 15-24, 2023—SIX NIGHT BERMUDA CRUISE ABOARD MSC'S MERAVIGLIA**

Sail from New York (Brooklyn) and spend three days at King's Wharf Bermuda enjoying the idyllic, pink sand beaches while imbibing a delicious rum swizzle. Experience everything the Meraviglia has to offer. Our special balcony rate includes accommodations, all current government and port taxes, gratuities, wi-fi for two devices, an upgraded beverage package for \$1,299.00 per person double. Upgrade to Aurea features for \$1,529.00.

## **OCTOBER 4-15, 2023 –11 NIGHT NEW ENGLAND AND CANADA CRUISE ABOARD MSC'S MERAVIGLIA**

Sail from New York (Brooklyn) and visit Newport, RI, Boston, MA, St. John, NB, Halifax and Sydney, NS Charlottetown, PEI returning to New York by way of Portland, ME. The Meraviglia is packed with extraordinary features for the perfect experience at sea. Enjoy gourmet dining, out of this world entertainment with new panoramic areas, an innovative ocean lounge, a two-deck high inside promenade with an LED dome and spectacular amusement area connected to an outdoor water park. Rates include cabin accommodations as selected, all current port and government taxes, beverage package for drinks up to \$9, wi-fi for two devices and gratuities. Ocean view \$1,277.00, Premium Balcony \$1,487.00 and Aurea Balcony \$1,877.00 (includes additional amenities, room service and more).

## **OCTOBER 11-19, 2023—EGYPT AND NILE CRUISE ABOARD THE BRAND NEW H/S NEBU**

Have you always wanted to take a camel ride by the Pyramids or a hot air balloon ride over the Nile while cruising and visiting these ancient sights? Spend two nights in Cairo and visit the new and exciting National Museum, the Great Pyramids of Giza, the enigmatic Sphinx along with a camel ride? Visit Old Cairo. Fly to Luxor and board the H/S Nebu for a four night cruise visiting Karnak & Luxor Temple, Valley of the Kings, Hatshepsut, Edfu, Kom Obo and more. Return to Cairo for a farewell dinner and your return to the U.S. Breakfast daily and full board while cruising, lunch while on Old Cairo tour. Rate per person, based on a minimum of 15 passengers is \$4,935.00 including air from JFK. Single supplement \$985.00

## **NOVEMBER 28-DECEMBER 3, 2023—HOLIDAY SHOPPING IN DUBLIN AND GALWAY'S CHRISTMAS MARKETS**

Enjoy this unique getaway visiting the Christmas Markets in Dublin and Galway. Included in this package is round trip airfare from Newark, a professional tour director for the duration of the trip, four breakfasts (including morning of arrival), two hotel dinners and one traditional Pub dinner, a walking tour of Galway, tour of Connemara, Kylemore Abbey, Clonmacnoise, Newbridge Silver Factory, St. Patrick's Cathedral and Guinness Storehouse. Rate \$2,249.00 per person double occupancy. Minimum participation of 15 is required. Call Tara for more info and reservations.

## **FEBRUARY 7-12, 2024—TENTH ANNUAL ICELAND WEEKEND GETAWAY**

Explore the 'Land of Fire and Ice' witnessing spectacular waterfalls, boiling geysers and spend a few hours relaxing with a cocktail while watching the sunrise in the Blue Lagoon. A visit to Thingvillar National Park is not to be missed; called the Grand Canyon of Iceland because it is where the tectonic plates of North America and Europe merge creating an awesome sight. There is always the opportunity of seeing the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights. Our package includes round trip air from Newark on Icelandair, four nights hotel with a full buffet breakfast daily and a continental breakfast at Viking World Museum on the morning of arrival, all current taxes. Optional tours will be available. Rate is \$1,998.00 per person double. A valid passport is required and insurance is highly recommended.

## **NOVEMBER 23-DECEMBER 3, 2024—ICONIC CHRISTMAS MARKETS CRUISE ABOARD AMA WATERWAYS AMA LEA**

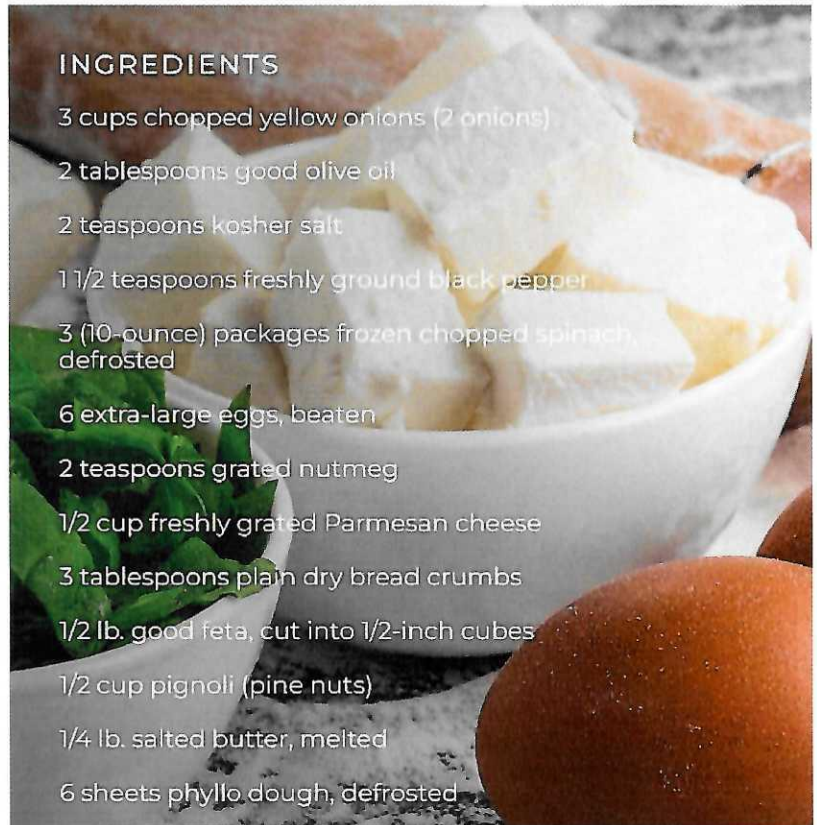
Depart USA on the evening of November 23 flying to Prague where you will board the AMA LEA for your seven night Christmas Market cruise. The intimate AMA LEA was built in 2018 and sails with a maximum of 156 passengers. Sail the Continental Divide and visit Passau, Melk and Vienna enroute to Budapest. Cruise only rates start at \$3,799.00 per person double including port taxes. Single cabins surcharge range from 125 to 150%. Pre and post nights along with airfare will be available at the end of this year. Call Nancy for information and reservations.

## **DECEMBER 7-14, 2024—SAIL THE CARIBBEAN ON STRA CLIPPERS ROYAL CLIPPER**

Details will be available soon

## Spinach Pie

Spinach pie is such a versatile dish, it works as a savory breakfast, brunch, a side dish, or anytime meal. It's rich, but not quite as heavy as a quiche with a deliciously flakey crust. This spinach pie is inspired by spanakopita, which is a Greek pie made with phyllo dough, feta, and spinach. To make our chefs' spinach pie a little easier, he suggested a few short cuts: frozen spinach and frozen phyllo dough. The result is fast, easy, but still just as delicious!...



"We went on a 12 day Azamara Cruise of the Mediterranean and we had a wonderful time. The Cruise and the many excursions were outstanding. Here we are outside the Municipal Buildings in Kotor, Croatia!

Thanks Nancy. for putting this wonderful trip together"

Al and Carol Sicheri

Jeffrey and Debra Hayzler

# EGYPT 2023



## TOUR FEATURES (October 11-19, 2023)

- Round trip air on Egyptair from JFK (also including domestic air CAI-LXR and ASW-CAI)
- All transfer in Cairo (CAI), Luxor (LXR) and Aswan (ASW)
- 2nts accommodation at Conrad Cairo hotel 5\* or similar based on bed & breakfast basis
- 4nts accommodation on board of the H/S Nebu or similar on full board basis starting with lunch & ending with breakfast
- 1nt accommodation at Intercontinental City Stars or similar on bed & breakfast basis
- Full Day tour including the Pyramids, Sphinx, Museum, Old Cairo including lunch in a local restaurant
- Camel ride and balloon ride over the Nile
- Visits on board of the boat : Karnak & Luxor Temple West Bank : Valley of Kings, Hatshepsut and the colossus of Memnon
- Edfu, Kom Ombo
- Aswan : Philae temple, the High Dam & Obelisk
- Felucca around Kitchener islands
- Farewell traditional dinner at El Azhar Park
- English speaking guide throughout

NOT INCLUDED: Visa (approx. \$25 USD on arrival) and gratuities

Price: \$4,935.00 per person (based on a minimum of 15 passengers). A passport (with two empty pages for visa and a six month validity is required), a deposit of \$500 pp plus insurance \$326 (to cover pre-existing conditions this must be taken with deposit, otherwise with final payment). A more detailed itinerary will be provided at deposit. Single surcharge is \$985.

Call Nancy with any questions or to make your deposit. Check or credit card (no AMEX).

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# 2023's BEST BUCKET LIST TRIPS

Put these dream destinations at the top of your bucket list.



## Patagonia

Adventure seekers flock to this vast, wild, and remote region in South America for good reason. Often called “the end of the world,” this rugged wilderness rewards intrepid travelers with wind-sculpted glaciers, snow-capped peaks, and prowling mountain lions.



## Black Forest, Germany

Welcome to the land of the Brothers Grimm, the cuckoo clock, and towering evergreen trees. Germany’s most picturesque region rewards visitors with hilltop trails, fairy-tale castles, and quaint villages lined with gingerbread-style houses.



## Barcelona, Spain

The jewel in Catalonia’s sun-kissed crown offers a dizzying array of traveler treasures. Snap a selfie in front of spindly Sagrada Familia, enjoy iconic vistas from Park Güell, and search the labyrinthine streets of the Gothic Quarter for tinto and tapas.



## Amalfi Coast, Italy

The colorful towns clinging to the Amalfi Coast’s rocky cliffs are perfectly picturesque. Embrace la dolce vita while lazing on pristine beaches, twirling pasta in outdoor cafes, and daring to drive the region’s famously narrow and serpentine roads.



## Santorini, Greece

The shimmering, blue-domed buildings of this Aegean treasure offer a siren’s call to Greece’s most beloved isle. From ancient ruins and enchanting villages to gorgeous vineyards and sun-kissed beaches, it’s no wonder Santorini casts an unforgettable spell.