

# Entering the UK

## 1. Overview

Your identity document (for example your passport or identity card) will be checked when you arrive at a UK port or airport to make sure you're allowed to come into the country. It should be valid for the whole of your stay.

You may also need a visa to come into or [travel through the UK](#), depending on your nationality.

[Check which documents you'll need to come to the UK.](#)

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) travel rules

You do not need to fill in a passenger locator form to enter the UK. You usually do not need to take any COVID-19 tests. This applies whether you are fully vaccinated or not.

### If you're travelling to England from mainland China

If you're aged 12 or over, you must show proof of a negative COVID-19 test result to your airline when you leave mainland China. You can take the test up to 2 days before you leave.

You may also need to show proof of your negative test result when you get to border control in England.

You do not need proof of a negative test result if you're travelling through mainland China without passing through border control. For example, you might not pass through border control if you're in China on a layover.

[Check what proof you'll need to come to England.](#)

## What you can bring with you

What you can bring with you depends on where you're travelling from. You must declare to customs:

- anything over your [duty-free allowance](#)
- [banned or restricted goods](#) in the UK
- goods that you plan to sell
- [more than €10,000](#) (or its equivalent) in cash, if you're coming from outside the EU

You and [your baggage may be checked](#) for anything you must declare.

## 2. Before you leave for the UK

Check what documents you'll need to enter the UK.

If you're travelling from mainland China to England and you're aged 12 or over, you'll usually need proof of a negative coronavirus (COVID-19) test result. You can take the test up to 2 days before you leave. [Check what proof you'll need.](#)

### You're a British citizen

You can enter the UK with one of the following identity documents:

- a passport
- a Gibraltar identity card

### If you're travelling from Ireland to Northern Ireland

You do not need any documents to enter.

### If you're travelling from Ireland to England, Scotland or Wales

A Border Force officer may ask to see proof of your identity and nationality. You can use any documents that show your identity or nationality, for example:

- a passport (current or expired)
- proof that you've been given British citizenship - such as a UK citizenship certificate
- a Gibraltar identity card (current or expired)
- a copy of your passport or Gibraltar identity card that clearly shows your identity and nationality

You can use more than one document - for example, a driving licence with a citizenship certificate. If you're using an expired passport or identity card, it must be recent enough that it's clear that it's yours.

# You're from the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein

You can enter the UK with one of the following identity documents:

- a passport
- an Irish passport card
- a national identity card issued by an [EU country](#), Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein, if you're eligible to use one

Your identity document should be valid for the whole of your stay.

If you're travelling with a passport or national identity card, it should be [registered on your UK Visas and Immigration account](#) if any of the following are true:

- you have settled or pre-settled status
- you used the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to scan your identity document when applying for a visa

You may be delayed at the border if your passport or national identity card is not [registered on your UK Visas and Immigration account](#).

## Travelling with a national identity card

You cannot use a national identity card from an [EU country](#), Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein to enter the UK unless you:

- have settled or pre-settled status under the [EU Settlement Scheme](#), or Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man's settlement schemes
- have an EU Settlement Scheme family permit, or the equivalent from Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man
- have a Frontier Worker permit
- are an S2 Healthcare Visitor
- are a Swiss national and have a Service Provider from Switzerland visa

[Check if you need a visa to come to the UK.](#)

## If you're waiting for a decision on your application for settled or pre-settled status

You can still use your EEA or Swiss national identity card to enter the UK if all of the following are true:

- you've applied for settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme, or Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man's settlement schemes

- you've been issued with confirmation your application is valid
- you're not applying as a joining family member

You may also need to [show evidence that you were living in the UK by 31 December 2020](#).

## **If you have not applied for settled or pre-settled status but are planning to**

You must enter the UK with either:

- an [EU Settlement Scheme family permit](#)
- a visa

Your family permit or visa could be issued by the UK, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man.

[Check if you need a visa to come to the UK](#).

## **If you're travelling from Ireland to Northern Ireland**

You do not need any documents to enter Northern Ireland.

You may need a visa if you're planning to stay in the UK - for example, to work or study.

## **If you're travelling from Ireland to England, Scotland or Wales**

A Border Force officer may ask to see proof of your identity and nationality.

If you're an Irish citizen, you can use any documents that show your identity or nationality. For example:

- a passport (current or expired)
- proof that you've been given Irish citizenship - such as a certificate of naturalisation
- an Irish passport card (current or expired)
- a copy of your passport or Irish passport card that clearly shows your identity and nationality

You can use more than one document - for example, a driving licence with a certificate of naturalisation. If you're using an expired passport or Irish passport card, it must be recent enough that it's clear that it's yours.

If you're not an Irish citizen, you'll need to use either a passport or a national identity card, if you're eligible.

Find out more about [travelling to the UK from Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man](#).

## **You're from outside the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein**

You must have a valid passport to enter the UK. It should be valid for the whole of your stay.

You may also need a visa, depending on which country you're from.

[Check if you need a visa to come to the UK](#). You must have your visa before you travel to the UK.

**You may also need a visa if you're ['transiting' or travelling through the UK](#), for example you're changing flights at a UK airport.**

If you need a visa, you'll need to show your airline or transport provider (your 'carrier') either:

- a valid visa
- a 'visa exemption document' such as a UK-issued biometric residence card or EU Settlement Scheme family permit

Before you travel, check that your visa is valid and will not expire before you enter the UK.

### **If you have settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme**

If you [would usually need a visa to come to the UK](#), you'll need to show your carrier one of the following visa exemption documents:

- a UK-issued biometric residence card
- an EU Settlement Scheme family permit
- an EU Settlement Scheme travel permit

If you do not have an exemption document, you may be able to prove your immigration status online using the [view and prove service](#). Check if your carrier allows this before you travel.

If you have a pending application to the EU Settlement Scheme you must have a valid visa or visa exemption document to travel to the UK.

### **If you're travelling from Ireland**

You do not need any documents to travel from Ireland to Northern Ireland. You may need a visa if you're planning to stay in the UK - for example, to work or study.

If you're travelling from Ireland to England, Scotland or Wales, a Border Force officer may ask to see your passport. It should be valid for the whole of your stay.

Find out more about [travelling to the UK from Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man](#).

## **If you're travelling from Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man**

You only need to show your documents if you're stopped by a Border Force officer. They may ask to see proof of your:

- identity
- permission to come to the UK, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man, if you need it - for example, a visa, biometric residence permit (BRP) or work permit

You do not have to use a passport, Irish passport card or identity card to prove your identity. You can use other documents instead - for example, a driving licence or armed forces identity card.

Find out more about [travelling to the UK from Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man](#).

## **Travelling with children**

You may be asked at the border to prove the relationship between yourself and any children travelling with you, if you do not seem to be the parent, for example if you have a different surname.

You can prove this with:

- a birth or adoption certificate showing your relationship with the child
- divorce or marriage certificates if you're the parent but have a different surname from the child
- a letter from the child's parent giving permission for the child to travel with you and providing contact details, if you're not the parent

## **Before you board**

Your carrier will check your passport and other travel documents. They'll send this information electronically to [Border Force](#).

You can [ask to see the information about you](#) that's been sent by carriers.

### 3. At border control

You'll need to show your identity document, such as your passport or national identity card.

If you're travelling from mainland China, you may also be asked to show [proof of a negative coronavirus \(COVID-19\) test](#).

You must:

- have your identity document ready - remove it from a holder or wallet if you use one
- remove your face covering or sunglasses, if you're wearing them
- move through passport control together if you're in a family

If you're travelling from Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man, you'll only need to show your documents if you're stopped by a Border Force officer. [Check which documents you'll need to come to the UK](#).

### Arriving by bus or coach

You have to leave the bus when you arrive at border control.

Make sure you:

- are ready to get off the bus when you arrive
- have your travel documents ready

Read the [guidance for school parties and groups coming to the UK by coach](#).

### If you're a British citizen

You can use the UK/EEA channel to get your passport or Gibraltar identity card checked - this is usually faster than the other channels.

You can use automatic ePassport gates at some airports if your passport has a 'chip' on it and you're 12 or over. If you're between 12 and 17, you must be accompanied by an adult.

These gates use facial recognition technology to check your identity against the photo in your passport.

## **If you're from the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein**

You can use the UK/EEA channel to get your passport, Irish passport card or national identity card checked - this is usually faster than the other channels.

Your passport or national identity card should be [registered on your UK Visas and Immigration account](#) if either of the following are true:

- you have settled or pre-settled status
- you used the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to scan your identity document when applying for a visa

You may be delayed at the border if your passport or national identity card is not [registered on your UK Visas and Immigration account](#).

You can use automatic ePassport gates at some airports if your passport has a 'chip' on it and you're 12 or over. If you're between 12 and 17, you must be accompanied by an adult.

These gates use facial recognition technology to check your identity against the photo in your passport.

You must tell a Border Force officer if you have not applied to the EU Settlement Scheme but are planning to apply.

## **If you're from outside the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein**

Your passport (and visa if you have one) will be checked at border control. You'll usually be asked why you're coming to the UK.

You can use the UK/EEA immigration lanes and the automatic ePassport gates if you're from:

- Australia
- Canada
- Japan
- New Zealand
- Singapore
- South Korea
- United States

## **When you cannot use an ePassport gate**



You must see a border control officer and get a stamp in your passport if you are entering the UK:

- with a Tier 5 Creative or Sporting certificate of sponsorship for up to 3 months (and you want to enter without a visa)
- on a permitted paid engagement

You cannot get a stamp if you use the ePassport gates. Without a stamp you will not be allowed to carry out the activities you came to the UK to do.

## Registered Travellers

You can use the UK/EEA immigration lanes and the automatic ePassport gates.

## Travelling with a UK biometric residence permit

You'll have a biometric residence permit if your fingerprints were taken when you applied.

Your fingerprints will be checked at border control - they'll be checked against the ones stored on your visa document.

## If you're refused entry

You'll be told in writing:

- why you've been refused entry to the UK
- if you can appeal against the decision
- when you will be removed from the UK

You'll usually have to leave the UK immediately.

You may be allowed into the UK temporarily (usually for up to a week) but your passport will be taken from you and you must report to immigration officers at set times.

## 4. Baggage checks

You must co-operate if you're stopped and asked about your baggage.

**If you break [the rules for bringing goods into the UK](#) your goods and any vehicle you use to transport them may be [seized by customs](#).**

## If your baggage is checked

Your baggage is usually checked in front of you.

Customs officers keep a record of:

- all baggage they open and check
- any damage to your baggage or belongings during a check

## If your things are damaged

You may be offered compensation if your baggage or belongings are damaged during a customs check.

## Making a complaint

You can:

- ask for the duty manager if you want to complain about a customs check while you're at the border
- [send your complaint to Border Force](#) if you want to complain later

## 5. Layovers and transiting through a UK airport

Passing through a UK airport while on the way to another country is called 'transiting'. Some travellers call it a 'layover'.

There are 2 types of transiting:

- 'airside' - you do not pass through UK border control before you leave on your connecting journey
- 'landside' - you do pass through UK border control, but come back through it and leave the UK within a short amount of time (usually 24 hours)

Find out [if you need a UK visa](#) for your layover.

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) travel rules

You do not need to fill in a passenger locator form to transit through the UK. You usually do not need to take any COVID-19 tests. This applies whether you're fully vaccinated or not.

If you're travelling from mainland China to England and you're aged 12 or over, you'll usually need proof of a negative coronavirus (COVID-19) test result. You can

take the test up to 2 days before you leave. [Check what proof you'll need.](#)

The country you're travelling to from the UK might still have COVID-19 entry rules in place. Check the rules for the country you're travelling to before you go.

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