

Canada expands Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) Program to include 13 additional countries

July 11, 2023

The Government of Canada recently added 13 countries to its visa-free travel list by expanding the scope of the Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) program. This move is aimed at strengthening travel, tourism, international business, and global relations.

Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA)

Introduced on Aug. 1, 2015, Electronic Travel Authorization is an entry requirement for travellers from [visa-exempt countries](#) and a few from the list of visa-required countries when travelling by air. The eTA involves pre-travel light screening, is economical for travelers, and extremely time efficient.

An eTA is linked to the passport of the individual electronically and can have a validity of up to five years. However, having an authorization does not guarantee entry into Canada, as the traveller must still demonstrate their eligibility to the border services officer. The Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) will either approve the request or seek additional information.

Expansion announcement

On June 6, 2023, the [IRCC announced](#) and made effective an expansion of its eTA program to add 13 countries. Individuals from these countries who have either held a Canadian visa in the last 10 years or who currently hold a valid United States non-immigrant visa can now apply for an eTA instead of a visa, when travelling to Canada by air. The [first expansion](#), which took place on April 28, 2017, had opened visa-free air travel for Brazilian, Bulgarian and Romanian nationals.

The list of additional eligible countries includes the following:

1. Antigua and Barbuda
2. Argentina
3. Costa Rica

4. Morocco
5. Panama
6. Philippines
7. St. Kitts and Nevis
8. St. Lucia
9. St. Vincent and the Grenadines
10. Seychelles
11. Thailand
12. Trinidad and Tobago
13. Uruguay

The strategic expansion of the eTA program is likely to strengthen Canada's economy by promoting travel, tourism and international business, while also positively amplifying international relationships. The Government of Canada's expansion seeks to streamline the immigration process by reducing the timelines, improving access, and affordability for prospective travelers. It is expected that this will encourage Canada's visitor economy, opening numerous job opportunities, and injecting vitality into local communities.

It is important to note that the exceptions from eTA requirements include U.S. citizens and travellers with a valid Canadian visa. Canadian permanent residents must show their permanent resident card or permanent resident travel document when travelling to Canada. Canadian citizens, including dual citizens, need a valid Canadian passport to board their flight.

For more information about how the visa-free travel could impact and ease international business with the listed countries, please reach out to the contacts below from our Business Immigration Group.

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