

US VISA WAIVER PROGRAM BRINGS RELIEF TO 13 MILLION TOURISTS



The Visa Waiver Program has now been enlarged and citizens of 36 countries may now enter the US without a visa. Growing number of overseas travelers is thus expected. The system is advantageous for everybody as it saves money and energy for tourists and means that tourists have the freedom to spend their cash on American soil whenever it suits them.

Getting to the USA used to be something of a privilege and visa applications could take up to months. There was also the question remaining as to whether applications would be successful and it was not uncommon for tourists to be turned away at American airports even if it seemed that they had all the hard work behind them.

Such horror stories are becoming a thing of the past as the Visa Waiver Program now includes 36 countries, having been upgraded from a previous 27, Greece being added just this year. After the expansion the US authorities expect that the number of overseas travelers coming to the 'land of freedom' will further grow. Over 13 million visitors come to the US through the Program each year, which is about two-thirds of all overseas guests.

It is no coincidence that the new countries in the VWP are those in the financial development process. The newest members of the EU and South Korea have been included. Tourists from, say, the Czech Republic or Estonia can enjoy short-term or leisure travel in the USA without necessarily being dependent upon an embassy in their own country. As a result, more Crowns and Euro land in American hands.

For those still in need of a visa, the conditions have been improved. For example, the American embassy in India now has a waiting time of 14 days for an American visa, whereas Indian nationals used to have to wait for 110 days. **There is also the advantage of being able to register the necessary personal details online before entry to the US.** Time-consuming form filling and standing in queues at airports are now things of the past.

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