



Holiday PASSPORT DEADLINES

Your 2026 Countdown to Holiday Travel

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- The Thanksgiving & Christmas deadline table
- A door-to-door date worksheet
- Three checks to do tonight
- Real fees and the \$60 refund rule



Holiday Passport Deadlines 2026

Your countdown to holiday travel

The free companion to the video. Recheck **travel.state.gov** before you apply.





The Countdown

Work backward from your trip. Government "processing time" does not include the mail — the real door-to-door number is about **8 to 10 weeks** for a routine application.

Traveling	Trip Date	Routine — Apply By	Expedited — Apply By	Agency (Last Resort)
 Thanksgiving	Nov 26	Sep 17	Oct 8	Nov 12
 Christmas	Dec 20	Oct 11	Nov 1	Dec 6

Dates above already build in mailing time at both ends.

Routine Processing

~4–6 weeks processing + 2 weeks mail each end = **8–10 weeks total**

Expedited Processing

~2–3 weeks processing + 2 weeks mail each end = **6–7 weeks total**



Run Your Own Date

Traveling on a different day? Do the math:

1	Trip Date Write down your departure date: _____
2	Subtract 2 Weeks Account for return mail delivery: _____
3	Subtract Processing Routine: 6 weeks / Expedited: 3 weeks: _____
4	Subtract 2 More Weeks Account for mail to the agency: _____
5	Apply On or Before This is your deadline: _____



Pro Tip: Paying for faster return delivery (about \$23) buys back up to 2 weeks on the back end.



Three Checks Tonight

Pull every passport in the house — yours and the kids'. Don't wait until packing week to discover a problem that takes months to fix.

1. Expiration: The Six-Month Rule

Many countries — including popular destinations in Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean — will deny boarding or entry if your passport expires within 6 months of your arrival date. This isn't just a suggestion; airlines enforce it at the gate before you ever board. For a late-December trip, if your passport expires before **late June 2027**, you should treat it as already expired and begin the renewal process immediately. Don't assume your destination is lenient — always confirm the specific entry requirement for every country on your itinerary, including layover countries where you clear customs.

2. The Kids

Children's passports are easy to overlook because families renew their own passports and forget the kids follow different rules. Children under 16 receive passports valid for only **5 years** (not the standard 10), meaning a passport issued in 2021 expires in 2026 — potentially before your trip. Unlike adults, children **cannot renew by mail**; every child under 16 must apply in person using Form DS-11. Critically, **both parents must appear together** at the appointment, or the applying parent must provide a notarized Statement of Consent (Form DS-3053) from the absent parent. Plan extra lead time: DS-11 appointments at post offices and libraries are in high demand and can be booked out for weeks.

3. Your Lane

Not everyone applies the same way. Choosing the right form from the start saves you from delays and rejected applications:

- **Renew by mail (Form DS-82):** You qualify if your most recent passport is undamaged, was issued when you were age 16 or older, and was issued within the last 15 years. This is the faster, simpler path — no appointment needed. Mail your completed form, current passport, a new photo, and the fee to the processing center.
- **First passport or child's passport — apply in person (Form DS-11):** Required if you've never had a passport, if your last one was issued more than 15 years ago, if it was damaged or lost, or for any child under 16. Apply at a designated acceptance facility such as a post office or public library. These **appointments book up quickly**, especially in spring and summer — don't delay scheduling.



Cutting It Close

Your Options When Time Is Short

Expedited Service

Adds **\$60** and cuts processing to ~2–3 weeks.
Mail still counts on both ends.

Passport Agency

For travel within **14 days**. Book free at 877-487-2778 or online; appointments are limited and the nearest office may be hours away. Bring proof of travel.

Refund Policy

If the State Department misses its 15-business-day expedited window, the **\$60 is refundable** on request.

  Skip private "rush" couriers — they cannot beat the official channels. The **\$60 government expedite** is the real product.

Fee Schedule

Fee	Cost
Adult renewal	\$130
First-time adult	\$165
Child (under 16)	\$135
Expedited service	+\$60
1–3 day return delivery	+\$23



Official Resources



Passports (Official)
travel.state.gov



Passport Agency &
Appointments
877-487-2778



Find an Acceptance
Facility
iafdb.travel.state.gov

Fees and processing times verified August 2026. Always recheck travel.state.gov before applying.

Need the Full How-To?

See our guide ***How to Get a US Passport 2026*** for step-by-step application help.

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