



American Citizen Services News

School's Out For Summer

Our current Travel Warning for Syria advises Americans to depart the Syria now. Still, some have chosen to stay, often because they want their children to finish their school exams.

Now that the school year is nearly over, more families may be preparing to leave and thinking about their summer plans. This issue of our American Citizen newsletter focuses on summer opportunities you may not have known existed, as well as information about how to stay safe and informed while on holiday.

Buy tickets early

Several airlines, including Turkish Airways, BMI, Austrian Airways, Alitalia, Lot, Malev and others have cut their schedules or cancelled their flights to Syria due to lack of passengers during the current unrest. This may mean that demand for outgoing tickets will be unusually high. If you plan to travel, book your tickets early.

If you have already purchased tickets, check with the airline to make sure that the route you are flying still exists. Many airlines are contacting customers whose

flights need to be rebooked, but it is best to check.

Stay informed

If you are receiving this newsletter, you are already enrolled with the Embassy and should also be receiving our Warden messages too. You may use the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at any time to update your mobile phone number. We send SMS's to our enrollees alerting them to new warden messages.

In addition to consular matters that directly affect U.S. citizens living abroad, the U.S. Embassy posts the latest developments in U.S. government policies towards the Middle East and Syria on the [Embassy website](#).

Double-check your travel documents

Is your U.S. passport valid? If you need to renew an expired passport, you may be able to do so by courier. If you are over 16 and are renewing a passport that was also issued to you when you were over 16, you don't have to come to the Embassy in person. You can send your application in using DHL and receive your new passport back the same way. However, if you are still under sixteen years old, or if this is the first time you have applied for a passport as an adult, or if you are replacing a lost/stolen passport, you will need to make an appointment online to apply for a passport.

If you are traveling with family members who have valid green cards, make sure

they have not been out of the U.S. for more than one year.

If you are traveling with family members who have visas to the United States, make sure that their passports have at least six months of validity remaining on the day they plan to arrive in the U.S.

Exiting Syria

Syria requires that people leaving Syria be able to show that they were in legal status while in Syria. If you have stayed beyond the period authorized when you entered Syria, or if your residence permission has expired, you will need to contact the Syrian Immigration and Passports division prior to your departure in order to receive exit authorization. Children who have taken up residence in Syria will generally need their father's permission to depart Syria. We suggest that travelers uncertain about Syrian exit permission procedures approach the Syrian Immigration and Passports division in advance of their departure to make sure they are in compliance with Syrian law and will be able to travel on schedule.

Stay Healthy While Traveling

The CDC publishes extensive information about recommended vaccinations for various destinations: check out <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/vaccinations.htm> for more information.

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Summer Internship Opportunities in the U.S.

Summertime is a great time for students and young professionals to travel to the U.S. for an internship. EducationUSA, our educational advising service, has put together a handy list of internships for both U.S. and non-U.S. citizens. Search online for the various organizations listed below for more information on opportunities available:

Amelia Island Plantation (Hospitality; Tourism/Recreation)

American Geographical Society (Environmental; Science/Research)

Arab American Institute (Government; Law)

BalletMet Columbus (Theater/Performing Arts)

Brick Wall Management (Broadcast & Entertainment; Health Care; Nonprofit)

Capitol Music Group (Broadcast & Entertainment; Music/Records)

Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles (Art/Museum)

Discovery Communications (Broadcast & Entertainment; Education; New/Interactive Media; Publishing)

Dow Chemical Company (Chemicals; Science/Research)

Emerson (Energy)

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (Journalism; Nonprofit)

FAO Schwarz (Toys/Retail)

Farm Sanctuary (Nonprofit; Animal Welfare/ Animal Rights)

Ford Models (Broadcast & Entertainment; Fashion; Public Relations)

Getty Foundation (Art/Museum; Education)

Global Volunteers (Education; Environmental; Health Care; Nonprofit)

Google Inc. (Technology)

Hallmark (Consumer Products; Retail)

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary (Education; Environmental; Science/Research)

Marvel Comics (Broadcast & Entertainment; New/Interactive Media; Publishing)

National Association of College Broadcasters (Broadcast & Entertainment; Nonprofit)

Pro-Found Software, Inc. (Software; Technology)

Rodale Institute Experimental Farm (Environmental; Science/Research)

Roll Call (Government; Journalism)

San Francisco Bay Guardian (Journalism)

San Francisco Opera (Music/Records; Theater/Performing Arts)

Internship Opportunities, Continued

Schlumberger Limited (Energy; Technology)

Sesame Workshop (Broadcast & Entertainment; Education; Nonprofit)

Sotheby's (Art/Museum)

Source Theatre Company (Theater/Performing Arts)

Source, The (Broadcast & Entertainment; Journalism; Publishing)

Southern Center for International Studies (Education; International Relations; Public Relations)

Southwestern Company (Publishing/Retail)

Special Olympics International (Nonprofit; Sports)

Steppenwolf Theatre Company (Nonprofit; Theater/Performing Arts)

Student Works Painting (Management & Strategy Consulting)

Turner Broadcasting System (Broadcast & Entertainment; Journalism; New/Interactive Media; Sports)

Tyco Toys (Consumer Products; Manufacturing)

United Nations Association of the United States of America (Government; Law)

United Talent Agency (Broadcast & Entertainment; Music; Digital Media; Philanthropy)

Voice of America (Broadcast & Entertainment; Journalism)

Westwood One Radio Network (Broadcast & Entertainment)

Wired (Journalism; Publishing; Technology)

Women Express/Teen Voices (Journalism; Nonprofit; Publishing)

More Resources for Summer Opportunities in the U.S.

- AFS Intercultural Programs – The American Field Service (AFS)
- Association for International Practical Training (AIPT)
- Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) – Work, travel, study and exchange programs for students
- FastWeb – Guide to Jobs, Internships and Careers
- InternWeb.com – Internship Search Tools for Students
- Peterson's Internships – Find the right internship for you (Peterson's, published annually).
- Princeton Review: America's Top Internships. Mark Oldman and Samer Hamadeh. Random House, New York (published annually). www.princetonreview.com
- Vault Guide to Top Internships

Beginning August 15, Immigrant Visa petitions (Form I-130) can no longer be Submitted to a Consular Section

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that effective August 15, 2011, overseas petitioners will be required to file the Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative, by mail with the USCIS unless the petitioner lives in a country with a USCIS office.

What does this mean for you? If you are planning to file a petition for a family member to immigrate to the U.S., you should make an appointment to do so before August 15, 2011 by emailing ivdamascus@state.gov. Petitions that are submitted before this date that are clearly approvable will be accepted in Damascus. Petitions will not be accepted after this date.

Get Those Immigrant Visa Documents in Order!

Get it right the first time! When submitting a petition for a relative, make sure you understand the requirements. Visit our Immigrant Visa webpage for accurate information about what you will need to provide to successfully submit a complete petition:

<http://usembassy.gov/visas/immigrant-visas.html>

International Travel as a Legal Permanent Resident

What documents do I need to present to reenter the United States?

If seeking to enter the United States after temporary travel abroad, you will need to present a valid, unexpired “green card” (Form I-551, Permanent Resident Card). When arriving at a port of entry, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officer will review your permanent resident card and any other identity documents you present, such as a passport, foreign national I.D. card or U.S. Driver’s License, prior to authorizing you to enter the United States. For information pertaining to entry into the United States, see U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s webpage at https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/1191

Does travel outside the United States affect my permanent resident status?

Permanent residents are free to travel outside the United States, and short trips do not usually affect your permanent resident status. If, however, you spend more time outside the U.S. than inside the U.S., the CBP may determine that you have abandoned your residence in the U.S. and, therefore, lost your permanent resident status. If you have been outside the U.S. for more than a year, without prior authorization from USCIS, you will generally be considered to have abandoned your U.S. residence. While brief trips abroad generally are not problematic, if, over time, you are spending more time outside the U.S. than inside the U.S., the CBP may review whether you have maintained U.S. family and community ties, maintained U.S. employment, filed U.S. income taxes as a resident, or otherwise established your intention to return to the United States as your permanent home. Other factors that may be considered include whether you maintained a U.S. mailing address, kept U.S. bank accounts and a valid U.S. driver’s license, own property or run a business in the United States, or any other evidence that supports the temporary nature of your absence.

What if I know in advance that my trip abroad will last longer than 1 year?

If you plan on being absent from the United States for longer than a year, you should first apply for a reentry permit on Form I-131. Obtaining a reentry permit prior to leaving the United States allows a permanent or conditional permanent resident to remain outside the U.S. for up to two years without being considered to have abandoned his or her residence in the U.S. Please note that it does not guarantee entry into the United States, but it does assist you in establishing your intention to permanently reside in the United States. For more information, see the “Travel Documents” link to the left under “Green Card Processes & Procedures.”

If you remain outside of the United States for more than 2 years, any reentry permit granted before your departure from the United States will have expired. In this case, if it was not your intent to abandon your U.S. residence, but unforeseen circumstances beyond your control made it impossible for you to return to the U.S., you may wish to apply for a returning resident visa (SB-1) at the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. An SB-1 applicant will be required to establish eligibility for an immigrant visa and will need a medical exam. There is an exception to this process for the spouse or child of either a member of the U.S. Armed Forces or civilian employee of the U.S. Government stationed abroad on official orders. For more information on obtaining a returning resident visa, see the Department of State’s webpage on returning resident visas at www.travel.state.gov. This information is listed under its Visa section for immigrants.

Additionally, absences from the United States of six months or more may disrupt the continuous residency required for naturalization. If your absence is one year or longer and you wish to preserve your continuous residency in the United States for naturalization purposes, you may file an Application to Preserve Residence for Naturalization Purposes on Form N-470. For more information, please see the “Continuous Residence and Physical Presence Requirements” under the Naturalization section of this website.

American Language Center Test Dates

<i>Test</i>	<i>June 2011</i>	<i>July 2011</i>	<i>August 2011</i>	<i>September 2011</i>	<i>October 2011</i>
ITP	Wednesday, June 8 Thursday, June 16 Thursday,	Wednesday, July 13 Thursday, July 28	Wednesday, August 10 Thursday, August 25	Monday, September 12 Wednesday, September 28	Thursday, October 20 Monday, October 31
GRE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Subject Test Saturday, October 15 General Test Saturday, October 22
SAT	Saturday, June 4	N/A	N/A	N/A	Saturday, October 01
TOEFL	N/A	N/A	Saturday, August 13	N/A	Saturday, October 15
TOEIC	Wednesday, June 29	Wednesday, July 27	Wednesday, August 24	Tuesday, September 27	Sunday, October 30

ITP: Institutional TOEFL

TOEIC: Test of English for International Communication

For further info pls. call the American Language Center at 011- 3327236/ 011-3337936 (ext. 21 or 22)

Residential Security Advisory:

In light of several recent residential break-ins reported in Damascus, we remind U.S. citizens to take the following basic precautions with regard to residential security measures:

Make sure all windows and doors are closed and locked before leaving your residence.

All valuables should be kept in a security container (e.g., a small residential safe) that is bolted to the floor.

Keep a light or two on if you expect to return home after dark.

Entrances and exterior areas should be well-lit. Make sure all bulbs and lighting fixtures are working properly.

If you have a back yard, trim bushes, hedges or trees that are near windows or doors.

All gates or doors that allow access to back yard areas should be kept closed and locked.

Do not allow repairmen or technicians unescorted access to your residence.

Keep strict control of your keys. Only **trusted** individuals should have access to your keys.

Be aware of suspicious persons or vehicles in the vicinity of your residence and report any such activity to the U.S. Embassy.



**American Citizen Services
Hours and Contact Information**

For appointments, please go to our website at :
<http://damascus.usembassy.gov/service.html>

U.S.
Embassy Damascus
American Citizen Services
Consular Section
2, Al-Mansour Street, Abu Roumaneh
PO Box 29
Damascus, Syria
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UPCOMING HOLIDAY CLOSURES

The Embassy will be closed for Independence Day on Monday, July 4, 2011.

“The only tired I was, was tired of giving in.”

—Civil rights activist Rosa Parks, on refusing to give up her seat on the bus.