



Danesfort Dispatches

October 2015

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Greetings from the U.S. Consulate

Dear American Community,

We are seeking your input! Please let us know what you would like to see in future Danesfort Dispatches.

Here are a few questions that will help us determine where you think we should concentrate our efforts. We would be grateful for your thoughts on the following. Please send your responses to ACSBelfast@state.gov.

- Do you find the information in the Dispatch helpful?
- What kind of information would you like to see more or less of in the Dispatch? What is of interest to you as an American citizen living/working in Northern Ireland?

- Is the format convenient? Would you rather see the Dispatch in another medium (i.e., posted on Facebook)?

Many thanks and here's wishing you a safe, happy, and healthy autumn and winter season!

U.S. Consulate General Belfast



How to Contact the consulate

- Email: ACSBelfast@state.gov
- Website: <http://belfast.usconsulate.gov>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Consulate-Belfast/189796969657>
- Twitter: <https://mobile.twitter.com/USAinNI>
- Telephone: 02890-386104

Fall and Winter Travel Plans? Think Ahead

Do you or your family have plans to hit the slopes this Fall or to visit family or friends over the October school break? Or maybe you are planning a long sun break in winter? If so, be aware the country you are planning to visit may require that your passport be valid for a specified minimum period. Some European countries recently changed their regulations in this regard, and you may now

be required to have a passport that is valid from 3 to 8 months beyond your entry date.

It is your responsibility to ensure your passport meets the requirements for the country in question. Airlines may refuse to board you if your passport is not valid for the required period.

Requirements for several European countries are listed on the next page. We hope this information will help you have a smooth and successful journey.

If the requirements for the country you are planning to travel to are not listed, refer to [Country Specific Information](#).

Fall Travel (cont'd)

[Watch our video on the importance of having six months' validity left on your passport.](#)

Austria: Passport must be valid for three months beyond your planned date of departure. One blank page in your passport for entry/exit stamps.

Czech Republic: Passport must be valid for three months beyond your planned date of departure. Two blank pages for entry/exit stamps.

Croatia: Passport must be valid for six months. One blank page in your passport for entry/exit stamps.

France: Passport must be valid for six months at entry and an additional three months beyond your planned date of departure. One blank page for entry/exit stamps.

NOTE: Emergency U.S. passports issued at consulates and embassies overseas may not be valid for entry into France.

Germany: Passport must be valid for three months beyond your planned date of departure. Two blank pages for entry/exit stamps.

Iceland: Passport must be valid for three months beyond your planned date of departure. Two blank pages for entry/exit stamps.

Italy: Passport must be valid for three months beyond your planned date of departure, but six months is

recommended. Two blank pages for entry/exit stamps.

Netherlands: Passport must be valid for three months beyond your planned date of departure. Two blank pages for entry/exit stamps.

Poland: Passport must be valid for three months. No requirement for blank pages.

Portugal: Passport must be valid for three months beyond planned date of departure. Two blank pages for entry/exit stamps.

Spain: Passport must be valid for three months beyond your planned date of departure. One blank page for entry/exit stamps.

Switzerland: Passport must be valid for three months beyond your planned date of departure. One blank page for entry/exit stamps.

Turkey: Passport must be valid for eight months beyond date of entry. One blank page for entry/exit stamps. **NOTE:** Turkey Travel Warning issued on September 3, 2015 can be found at this [link](#).

If you need to renew your U.S. passport, you will find application forms and detailed instructions on the process on our [Passport](#) page.

New School Term: Be Safe, Be Sensible

Every student wants to take away good memories from their time at university. To do that, you need to be sensible. It is important all students — particularly “freshers” who are new to campus life or exchange students who may not be familiar with their new environment — take sensible precautions to reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime. There are some simple steps you can take:

- ◆ Keep bank cards and check books separate; keep a note with your card details so you can cancel them quickly.
- ◆ Always lock your car; never leave the keys in the ignition, and don't leave valuables unattended in the vehicle whether it is parked on or off campus.
- ◆ Don't be an easy target. Walk in groups at night, stay over with friends, or travel by taxi. Remember your safety is worth more than the cab fare home!
- ◆ Don't leave drinks unattended.
- ◆ If possible, use cash machines during the day, be aware of your surroundings, and never write down your PIN.

Spotlight: Diversity Visa Green Card Lottery Now Open for Applications

The annual Diversity Visa (DV) Program, commonly known as the “Visa Lottery” or “Green Card Lottery,” makes available up to 55,000 immigrant visas each year to randomly selected entrants from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States.

Who can enter?

Anyone born in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland may be eligible to enter the DV lottery if they also meet the other entry requirements. For a detailed description of the eligibility criteria, refer to this link: [DV-2017 Program Instructions](#).

How do I enter?

The only way to enter the DV Lottery is through the official U.S. Department of State website during the specified registration period. Applications must be submitted online at www.dvlottery.state.gov. Applications must be submitted between Thursday, October 1, 2015, at 12:00 noon, Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) (GMT-4), and Tuesday, November 3, 2015, at 12:00 noon, Eastern Standard Time (EST) (GMT-4). It is FREE to enter. Only ONE ENTRY per person is permitted. Entrants who submit more than one entry will be disqualified.

Keep a Record of your Entry Confirmation Number

After applying, you receive a confirmation number. Print a copy of the confirmation information for your records. It is extremely important you retain your confirmation number. If you lose the number, you will not be able to check the status of your entry.

When/How will I know if I have been successful?

The Department of State does not mail out notification letters or notify selectees by email, and U.S. embassies and consulates will not provide a list of selectees. On or about May 3, 2016, you will be able to check whether your application has been successful through the Entrant Status Check site at www.dvlottery.state.gov. The only means by which an entrant can confirm selection is through the Entrant Status Check.

Fees

It is FREE to apply. Successful applicants will have to pay fees for the visa application and issuance. These fees are paid to the cashier at the embassy. The U.S. government will never ask you to send payment in advance by check, money order, or wire transfer.

Beware of Scams

There are many websites not affiliated with the U.S. government. [Beware of scams](#) and only use official U.S. government sites below:

www.dvlottery.state.gov

<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/immigrate/diversity-visa/entry.html.html>

<http://london.usembassy.gov>

<http://belfast.usconsulate.gov>

“Anyone born in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland may be eligible to enter the DV lottery if they also meet the other entry requirements.”

SMART: Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

*Get in “STEP” to receive
the ACS Newsletter -
Spread the Word!*

Please remind your American friends and family to enroll in the U.S. State Department’s free Smart Traveler Enrollment Program <https://step.state.gov/step/> to be included on the ACS newsletter mailing list.

It is a great way to keep abreast of any public announcements on safety and security issues in Northern Ireland. In addition, the newsletter is a helpful resource for the latest voting news, cultural events, and other activities concerning Americans living in Northern Ireland.

Another benefit is that if you move to another country, updating your enrollment in STEP ensures you continue to get timely information for

your new country of residence! You can also download our free Smart Traveler App, available through [iTunes](#) and the [Android market](#), to have travel information at your fingertips.

STEP is also an important tool that consular officers around the world use during crises to distribute up to date information on emergency situations so that travelers and expatriates, like you, can make informed decisions regarding their safety.

To register, go to the [STEP](#) site.

Additional Visa Pages: Discontinued in 2016

For cost and security reasons, the U.S. Department of State will phase out the option of additional visa pages for U.S. passports.

Beginning October 1, 2014, all embassies/consulates worldwide will issue only 52-page passport books for full-validity passports. The thinner 28-page book option is no longer available. **Requests for additional visa pages will be accepted for existing passports only through December 31, 2015.** Starting January 1, 2016, applicants who need extra pages will need to apply to renew their passports and be issued the standard 52-page book.



Ulster American Women's Club

Announcement from the Ulster American Women's Club:

The Ulster American Women's Club is gearing up for the busy holiday season; stop by the webpage or sign up for the newsletter for details!

Fancy a family fun Double Decker Bus Tour of Belfast? Fancy a grown-up night out to a Piano Concert (free tickets courtesy of Belfast

Intl Arts Festival)? Clueless about the schooling process here and want to find out more? Enjoy crafting and want to join forces with fellow crafters? Well, in October you can indulge in them all!

Love the book club? Love to eat? November is your month, with the annual Thanksgiving Potluck on Saturday, 28 November, in South Belfast.

Need moral support before hitting up the Christmas Market? Bundle up and join us in December for a coffee morning.

If you haven't signed up yet, you can do so by emailing memphisqueen@hotmail.com.

We'd love to hear from you!

Belfast Giants Host Friendship Four

Belfast Giants Hockey team bring one of the most exciting tournaments in amateur hockey to the SSE Arena this November !

The Odyssey Trust, owners of the SSE Arena in Belfast and home of the Belfast Giants, announced that four top collegiate universities from the prestigious National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) will play in Belfast's first Festival of Hockey over Thanksgiving weekend (Friday, November 27th and Saturday, November 28th, 2015).

This will be a world first for the NCAA, as it is the first time the league has taken to the ice to play competitive games outside the United States. The four-team tournament is expected to draw large numbers of spectators from across Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, the UK, and the United States.

The University of Massachusetts (UMass Lowell), Northeastern University, Brown University, and Colgate University all agreed to play in the SSE Arena as part of the festival. Each team competes in the NCAA division 1 — the top level of university sports.



To complete a bumper weekend of hockey, there will also be Elite League matches on Saturday and Sunday involving the Belfast Giants.

Tickets will be on sale from mid-September from www.ticketmaster.ie. For more information visit www.ssearenabelfast.com/festival-of-hockey.

Find out more at the Giants website, and the Belfast Visit website at Friendship Four.

Important Information



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TWITTER



TUMBLR



FLICKER



In the event of a genuine emergency involving a U.S. citizen in Northern Ireland, our after-hours phone number is 01253 501106.

The Culture Spotlight

U.S. Consulate Belfast often provides partial grants for cultural events which have an American element. Some of the events are free; for others there is a charge. This quarter, we encourage you to check out:

Ulster Bank Belfast International Arts Festival, October 9 – November 1, 2015, various venues. This year's festival will be full of cinema, lectures, debates, and discussions on all things cultural. For more information, see: www.belfastinternationalfestival.com.

Twilight Market, November 11, 2015, St. George's Market in Belfast. Mark your calendar for a one-off at the lovely venue in the city center. Pop along to soak up the beautiful market atmosphere at what is being tipped to be one of the city's trendiest food events of 2015. Additional information can be found at: [Twilight](#).

Friendship Four Tournament, November 27 - 29, 2015, SSE Arena. The first of its kind held here in Belfast. Four college ice hockey teams compete at Belfast's SSE Arena, hosted by the Giants. See more on the

Belfast Giants website:
www.belfastgiants.com.

Belfast Christmas Light Switch-On, November 14, 2015. 'Tis the season once again! Bring the kids and enjoy the magnificent setting of Belfast City Hall as it lights up for the 2015 season! Visit [Christmas Lights](#) for all the details.

Disclaimer: Listing of events and performances is for information purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Consulate Belfast. All opinions expressed by the artists, writers, and performers participating or contributing to the events listed are those solely of the participants and contributors and not the U.S. government or its designated representatives. Information is believed to be correct at the time it is listed but the U.S. consulate accepts no liability for subsequent changes to these details and no reliance should be placed upon them.

Holiday Calendar Consulate Closure Dates

The U.S. Consulate
will be closed on the
following dates

**Wednesday, November 11,
2015 - Veteran's Day**

**Thursday, November 26,
2015 - Thanksgiving Day**

**Friday, December 25, 2015
- Christmas Day**

**Monday, December 28,
2015 - Boxing Day**

**Friday, January 1, 2016 -
New Year's Day**

Kids Corner



HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!

Celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November, it is considered an important holiday by most Americans. It is a time to reflect and give thanks for your health, happiness, and family!



HALLOWEEN JOKES... TO CRACK YOU UP!!!

What does the ghost eat for supper? *Spooketi!*

Why didn't the skeleton cross the road? *He didn't have any guts!*

Who did Frankenstein take to the dance? *His "goul-friend"*

Why didn't the skeleton want to go to school? *His heart wasn't in it!*



HALLOWEEN :

DID YOU KNOW?



Trick-or-treating first became popular in the United States in the 1800s, and children were more likely to play a mischievous prank than ask for candy. By the 1950s, though, the focus had switched to more family fun and dressing up in costumes.

- Chocolates make up about three-quarters of a trick-or-treater's loot.
- In North America, around three billion dollars is spent every year on Halloween costumes .

Veteran's Day - Veteran's Day is the official U. S. federal holiday observed annually on November 11, honoring people who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

