

Frequently Asked Questions about the ESTA Fee

1. What is the Visa Waiver Program?

The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables nationals of certain countries to travel to the United States for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or less without obtaining a visa. In most cases, Portuguese citizens who wish to travel to the United States for business or tourism and will stay less than ninety days do not require a visa under the Visa Waiver Program.

2. What is the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA)?

ESTA is an automated system used to determine the eligibility of visitors to travel to the United States under the VWP. It replaces the I-94W form that VWP travelers used to fill out en route to the US.

All Visa Waiver Program (VWP) travelers are now required to obtain a travel authorization via the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) prior to traveling to the U.S. under the VWP. ESTA is now accessible online at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> for citizens and eligible nationals of VWP countries.

3. Why do Visa Waiver Countries have to fund this Travel Promotion Program through ESTA fees?

The U.S. Government and the private sector will share the cost of the travel promotion program. This is similar to many other countries that fund tourism promotion through airlines or hotel taxes.

4. How much will the new fee charge travelers?

Since ESTA was implemented, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has had the discretion to charge a fee to cover the costs of administering the program. DHS has now determined that cost to be USD 4.00. The Travel promotion Act will add an additional USD 10.00, bringing the total cost to USD 14.00.

5. When will the fee go into effect?

Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) registrations on or after September 8 will be subject to the fee.

6. How do travelers pay the fee?

Initially, the fee must be paid by credit card at the time of enrollment at pay.gov. The Department of Homeland Security is exploring the possibility of adding other payment methods in the future. Some debit cards may be used for payment but only if they do not require a numerical pin. The ESTA registration form already being used by VWP travelers will walk users through the payment process.

7. What types of privacy protections exist on the website?

Pay.Gov uses advanced encryption to protect transactions while applicants are logged in. When accessing a profile, any account numbers applicants have entered will be masked on screen.

8. How long are ESTA approvals valid?

ESTA registrations are valid for two years or until the expiration date of the passport.

9. If I have a valid ESTA approval, will I have to re-register when the new fees go into effect?

No. Each approved ESTA application will be valid for a period of two years unless the traveler's passport expires sooner. It allows for multiple visits to the United States within that period.

10. Is ESTA approval like a visa?

An ESTA approval is not like a visa under U.S. Law, nor does it confer the same benefits as a visa.

11. Will this attract more foreign visitors to the United States?

We believe so. The Travel Promotion Act will create a partnership between the U.S. Government and the private sector to market travel to the United States to overseas visitors. Oxford Economics, a leading economic forecasting consultancy, estimates that the TPA travel promotion program will generate \$4 billion in new visitor spending and create 40,000 new jobs.

12. Will the pay.gov site be available in languages other than English?

Yes, the pay.gov site will be available in the other languages, including Portuguese.

13. What countries are eligible for the Visa Waiver Program?

Visa Waiver Countries are: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

14. What is the Travel Promotion Act?

Travel Promotion Act creates a public/private partnership to promote the United States as a premier travel destination.

15. Where can I get more information?

-Consult our website at <http://portugal.usembassy.gov/>

-Find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/usdos.portugal>

-Email specific inquiries to: visaslisbon@state.gov