

EMBASSY UPDATES

NEWSLETTER FOR U.S. CITIZENS IN KOSOVO



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U.S. Tourist Visas And You

Have you ever been asked about how a foreigner gets a U.S. tourist visa? To write an invitation letter? To sponsor a visa applicant? There are many misconceptions out there about how U.S. tourist visas work and what you as a U.S. citizen can and cannot do for someone who wants a visa to the United States.

The United States grants two types of visas – Immigrant and Non-Immigrant. The most common Non-Immigrant visa is a B1/B2 visa, used for trips for leisure, business meetings, and medical reasons. It generally does not cover travel for work or study. Kosovo nationals must go to the U.S. Embassy (in Pristina or in Skopje, [depending on certain factors](#)) for a visa interview in order to receive a visa. (Citizens and certain nationals of some countries can use [ESTA](#), an online system that does not require visiting a consular section, to apply for a visa.)



How does someone apply for a visa? First, the applicant fills out the DS-160 form: <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>. Using the barcode generated by this form, the applicant makes an appointment [through the online visa appointment system](#). (This provided link is for Pristina appointments only.) When the applicant comes into the consular section, the applicant must pay the MRV fee. The MRV fee generally covers the costs associated with processing the visa request, (meaning the cost is not borne by the American taxpayer). The applicant then has an interview with a consular officer, who will determine whether the applicant qualifies for the visa.

In general, visa approval or refusal hinges on two things: Is this person an intending immigrant to the United States, and is this person statutorily ineligible for the visa? U.S. immigration law presumes that most applicants for a Non-Immigrant visa are intending immigrants to the United States, and it is the



applicant's responsibility to demonstrate that s/he has sufficient ties to compel his/her return to Kosovo after a temporary stay in the United States. U.S. immigration law also includes a series of factors that may render a person ineligible for a visa, such as a prior criminal conviction or a prior immigration-related violation. Needless to say, those persons who are threats to U.S. national security are also prohibited from receiving visas. Every visa applicant may demonstrate his/her ties to Kosovo during the interview, and convince the consular officers that s/he will return to Kosovo and will not engage in activities inconsistent with the visa classification (for example, accepting unauthorized employment while on B2 tourist status).

Notice what has not been mentioned: a letter of invitation, promises of sponsorship, or assurances from an American citizen that the prospective traveler will use the visa properly. The applicant must qualify for the visa on his or her own merits. The consular officer may request more information about who will finance an intended trip to the United States or whom the applicant intends to visit, but letters of support are not routinely required nor are they generally pertinent to the officer's decision. We understand that you want your foreign friends to visit the United States and to enjoy themselves. We, too, want to facilitate legitimate travel to the United States so that people can experience America, learn about it and enjoy it, visit their family members, and contribute to the U.S. economy. However, the Embassy has a responsibility to uphold U.S. immigration law (which can be quite strict), and to ensure the safety and security of the United States. Remember, a visa refusal is not a negative judgment on the character or worth of the visa applicant, nor an attempt to doubt the good intentions of American citizens. - If you have questions, we are always willing to answer them; email us at PristinaACS@state.gov.

The U.S. Embassy will be closed on these dates:

August 21, 2018 - Eid Al-Addha
October 8, 2018 - Columbus Day

September 3, 2018 - Labor Day



What does this sign mean?

- A. Red cars on the left
- B. No passing
- C. Two lanes wide
- D. Cars only, no trucks

The correct answer is B.

Embassy Events

The primary purpose of the U.S. Embassy in any country is to represent U.S. interests in that country. The U.S. government funds representational meetings, receptions, conferences, and celebrations that further our goals. The majority of attendees are required to be non-U.S. government employees. It does not generally fund meetings, receptions, conferences, or celebrations to foster the American community in the host country. There are also other constraints on the type and frequency of events that the U.S. Embassy can fund: venue size, relevance of the topic, and budget, among others.

Here in Kosovo, that means most Americans (including many Embassy employees) are not invited to the Embassy's Fourth of July celebration. The annual celebration of American Independence is the largest Embassy event of the year and is intended to thank our partners, strengthen our ties to local leaders and influencers, and give guests a taste of America. All Embassy staff participating in the event are

there to work, and work they do. From maintenance workers who set up and pull down the infrastructure, to the interpreters, political officers, and the Ambassador, each has a specific role to play at the event.



There are some activities sponsored by the U.S. Embassy that are open to everyone. These include events at our American Resource Centers, movie festivals, and Embassy-sponsored concerts and other cultural events. You can find out about them by visiting and “liking” our Facebook page here. As for the Embassy community, we come together and spend our own money to celebrate our nation’s Independence. Often, the event is a potluck picnic in a park. No government funds are used for this much smaller celebration.

KFC – An American Franchise in Kosovo

Almost two years ago, on August 9, 2016, the first KFC in Kosovo opened. KFC has since expanded to nine locations in Kosovo, and is also planning to open two locations in Macedonia this September. Last year, Kosovo’s franchise was awarded the New Store Opening Champion Award for Europe after opening four stores just in 2017. KFC currently has more than 200 employees, paying them above the normal industry wage and providing benefits such as health insurance.

I toured one of the stores in June 2018 and I was impressed by the friendliness of the staff and the cleanliness of the store. All stored items were neatly placed on shelves, and refrigerated and frozen items were put up in the



coolers and freezers in a very organized way. The way the crew kept their stations clean and tidy showed a corporate emphasis on cleanliness and food safety.

The general manager, Eremal Bajram, told me his favorite part of the job was opening new locations and bringing a piece of America to Kosovo. Seeing the joy on people's, and especially children's, faces as they get their first taste of fried chicken makes him feel like he is doing something worthwhile for his community. Providing career and learning opportunities for young people also benefits the community.



Mr. Bajram says the atmosphere for business here in Kosovo is slowly improving as the government revises its regulations. There is still a long way to go, but the progress is real. If you know of other American businesses in Kosovo that you believe should be highlighted here, contact us at PristinaACS@state.gov. We will be talking about various American businesses in Kosovo in each newsletter.

Something Buggy

Only two years ago, a new insect was discovered in Kosovo – the [caddisfly](#). Kosovo is full of bugs, as any healthy ecosystem is. One result of a healthy ecosystem is that these bugs try to land on you, or, as is the case with the ever-present mosquito, sometimes they may bite you. Some carry disease and others are merely annoying. How do you avoid these pesky critters?

Here are a few tips from the [Centers for Disease Control](#):

Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.

Use an appropriate insect repellent such as DEET, Picaridin (also known as Bayrepel), or oil of lemon eucalyptus.

Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents). Do **not** use permethrin directly on skin.

Stay and sleep in air-conditioned or screened rooms.

Use a bed net if the area where you are sleeping is exposed to the outdoors.

For many years, citronella has been touted as a mosquito repellent. Lately, there has been much research on the subject that shows citronella is not the best choice. [This article](#) provides a good summary of the research. The best way to keep mosquitos away from your yard is to rid it of standing water.

