

## Electrical Appliances

Alternating current (A/C) with a voltage of 110-120 volts is used in the US. If you take any electrical appliances like an electrical razor, a hair dryer or a travel iron with you, you have to make sure that these devices can operate on 110-120 volts. If your appliances work on a different voltage you will need a transformer.

On top of that you will need an adapter, because the outlets and plugs are smaller in America than in Europe. You can buy both items at the airport in Europe. Make sure you buy a transformer from 110-120 volts to 220-240 volts in the US if you buy American electrical appliances.

## Drinking Age

The legal age for buying and consuming alcohol is 21 in all states. If you want to buy alcohol or would like to enter a club or bar, the proprietor is allowed to ask for some formal identification, being a passport or driving license. Laws governing the availability of alcoholic beverages in restaurants and stores vary from state to state. Some restaurants do not serve alcohol but you are allowed to bring your own. They will open the bottle for you and supply the glasses for a small surcharge. It is absolutely forbidden to drink or carry alcohol in public places without having the bottle fully covered. In some states alcohol can only be transported in the boot of the car, because it is illegal to carry it in the car cabin. It goes without saying that you can not drink alcohol while driving.

## Consumer and Tax

The USA lists net prices, unless otherwise indicated, onto which tax is added when the item is purchased.

This tax includes State and City taxes. All states and cities decide independently how high their VAT percentage will be. On average the consumer pays about 5%-8% VAT on goods and services. Some additions might apply for hotel accommodations and car rentals. So before you buy, it is best to check how high the Consumer Tax is in the states you are visiting.

## Immigration and Customs

Visitors from all countries must present a valid passport when entering the United States. You can purchase a passport at your local Town Hall.

All Belgian nationals, regardless the age, must have a valid passport. To apply for a passport, you must submit your ID card, 4 photographs and your expired passport if you have one.

For children up to 11 years old, a passport for a validity of one year costs about 19 EUR (770,- BEF). 12 year olds and older can choose to buy a passport valid one year (about 26.50 EUR - 1070 BEF,-) or 5 years (about 56 EUR - 2270,- BEF)

It will take about 3 weeks but if you pay a surcharge of 12.39 EUR (500,- BEF) you can receive your passport within 3 days.

Citizens from Luxemburg must submit their ID, 3 photographs and their expired passport. Children up to 15 years old may be included in one of the parents' passports. The passport costs 9.92 EUR (400,- LUF) and will take a week. 1 Day delivery is possible in real emergencies for no extra cost. For more information, contact your local Town hall.

Belgium and Luxemburg are part of the visa waiver program. This means that citizens of these countries may travel to the U.S. for a maximum of 90 days for pleasure or business WITHOUT a visa. They must have a valid passport and a return airline ticket.

Citizens of countries which are not included in the US Visa Waiver Program may apply for a visa at the United States Embassy of the country where they are residing.

To save time during the immigration and customs formalities, you should have all your forms ready for presentation: passport, visa (if needed), Customs Declaration and Immigration forms (both supplied by the transportation carriers) and you return airline ticket.

If you are part of a group, you are still personally responsible for obtaining, preparing and presenting these forms.

To expedite the Customs process, pay special attention to Question 9 on your Customs declaration which relates to the import of agricultural products and answer it accurately. Restrictions on agricultural items include fruit, plants, meats, soil, live animals (including birds) and farm products.

You are allowed to import one litre of wine or alcohol (min. age 21); 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars or 2 kg of tobacco (min. age 18) and presents not exceeding \$ 100.

There is no problem in taking chocolates into the USA as long as they do not contain alcohol.

### Climate

Hot and Sunny year-round, with high humidity from June to October, when there can be short afternoon thunderstorms. There is also the risk of the odd hurricane between July and October. A great winter destination (December –February), when there is seldom need for more than a jumper or light jacket, although the north does experience cold snaps.

### Getting There

#### Major gateways

- Miami International Airport (MIA)
- Orlando International Airport (MCO)
- Tampa International Airport (TPA)
- Sanford International Airport (SFB)
- Typical flight time from the UK is 8hrs 30mins.

#### Top Attractions

- Walt Disney World
- Universal Studios Escape
- Sea World
- Busch Gardens
- Kennedy Space Centre
- Miami Seaquarium
- Golf
- Water sports
- Discovery Cove
- The Everglades



#### Special Interests

- Bird watching
- Swimming with Dolphins
- Eco Tourism
- Wildlife activities and conservation
- Golf
- Scuba Diving
- Sailing
- Fishing



#### Major Events

- Daytona Beach bike week (February)
- Miami Boat Show (February)
- Doral Ryder Golf, Miami (March)
- TPC Tournament Players Championship Sawgrass, Jacksonville (March)

#### What to Eat and Drink

Florida is known for its Oysters and wide variety of fish.

#### What to Buy

Clothing and Sports goods.

#### Frequently Asked Questions to the Tourist Board

**Q:** Just how popular is Florida?

**A:** It's the most popular long-haul destination for the British.

**Q:** How big is Golf in Florida?

**A:** There are more than 1200 golf courses in Florida, more than any other US state.

**Q:** How popular is cruising?

**A:** More popular than ever. Cruises depart from some of the biggest ports – Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Palm Beach, Port Canaveral and Tampa.

**Q:** How big is fishing?

**A:** Huge, with nearly three million fishing licences issued annually. Florida is the most popular fishing destination in the US.

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