Dear Traveller,

Your visa applications will soon be starting and this update includes important information about them.

Please read all the information and carry out any actions requested by the times advised.

***Actions to take now:***

* Those travelling through Iran: **Apply online for you Iran authorisation number**
* Those travelling through Turkmenistan: **Email us a scan of your passport, passport photo and fill out and return the form to us.**
* Those travelling through China: **Email us a scan of your passport.**
* Those starting in Istanbul: **Apply online for your e-visa if required**
* Those travelling through Armenia: **Apply online for your e-visa if required**
* Everyone: **Check other countries on your trip to see if you require a visa**

**Turkey**

If you require a visa, you can now apply, any time up to 48 hours before entering.

You can check if you do need one by starting the application on this website:

<https://www.evisa.gov.tr/>

**Georgia**

Most nationalities are visa free but check here:

<https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article_id=160&clang=1>

**Armenia**

Most nationalities are visa free but check here:

<https://evisa.mfa.am/> :

* Canadians

The Armenia MFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) website states that you can apply for a 21 day (don’t apply before 1st May) or a 120 day e-visa (you can apply now) or apply on arrival at the border.

We do not have recent experience of applying at the border although online forums also say it is possible.

If applying for an e-visa, we suggest you apply for 120 day duration so that you can apply before the trip starts. Also, if there are any issues with your application, you have time to deal with these and also still have the border as an alternative option.

* Contact information in Armenia: Envoy Hostel, 54 Pushkin Street, Yerevan 0002  
  Tel: +374-10-530369
* Purpose: Tourism
* Duration: 12 days

Entry date 10 May (we expect to arrive a bit later but this gives us flexibility)

Entry place Guguti

Exit date 22 May (we expect to leave a bit earlier but this gives us flexibility)

Exit place Julfa

**Iran**

You can now start your Iran visa application process. The first step is to apply for a Visa Authorisation Number. All nationalities are required to do this – please see the attached document for instructions of how to do this online. This sends your details directly to our operator in Iran, TAP Persia, who will apply on your behalf. The process costs €28 which you pay online. This is separate to the cost of the visa which you collect and pay for at the Iran Embassy or Consulate. NOTE – You can also purchase travel insurance from TAP Persia to cover your time in Iran – details on their website.

**UK, US and Canadian passport holders must also fill out the ‘New Update Resume Form’** and email it directly to Rasool at [tappersia@gmail.com](mailto:tappersia@gmail.com).

Your authorisation number application may take several weeks to process, especially for UK, US and Canadian passport holders, so it’s important that you apply now. Please make sure you apply by 6th March to allow enough time.

If you are in the United States, you should use a VPN (virtual private network) while applying online, to show that your computer is in a different country (any country other than the US) – this will enable you to make payment. Please ask a friend to assist if you do not have a VPN app yourself.

If your application is approved, your authorisation number is valid for 2 months and you must collect your visa within this time.

Those starting their trip in Istanbul and Tbilisi will collect their visa all together in Tbilisi. If you are joining later than this (e.g. Yerevan) you will need to collect your visa before joining us.

**Turkmenistan**

We will soon be submitting your documents for the Turkmenistan LOI (letter of invitation). If you haven’t already, please send us your passport and passport photo scan and complete the form below by the end of February. Following are details of how your scans should be sent – officials are very particular about this so please ensure the format and quality are as stated:

**Scans**

|  |
| --- |
| 1.       Passport (the full page that clearly shows all text, photo, signature, bar code). **Note**: Please remember your passport must be valid for at least 6 months AFTER your trip finishes. |
| 2.       One recent passport-sized photo |
| **Scans must be of the following quality and format, otherwise they will not be accepted by the authorities:** |
| ·         *Quality: the documents must look sharp and clear in electronic format, not checkered, glossy or blurry; scans must be delivered to us in JPEG or PDF format and must be minimum 250KB and maximum 1MB in size* |
| ·         *Black and white scans are not accepted by the State Migration Services* |
| ·         *Scans of paper passport copies are not accepted; they must be scans of originals* |
| ·         *The whole photo page of the passport must be scanned, and to avoid any confusion, it is best if the scan simply shows all four edges of the page* |
| ·         *The original size of passport-sized photo scans must be 3x4 cm minimum and cannot be a Photoshop version of the photo from the passport scan (we will have to print them out on color photo paper, as if we received real original photos from you); a digital passport-sized photo is best* |
| ·         *If you do not have access to a scanner, a digital photo made with a digital camera or smart phone could be acceptable as well, as long as the quality is as described above, and there is no flash/gloss/shine, making any part of the scan unclear* |

**Information**

*If you are travelling through Turkmenistan, please could you fill in and return the page below document with the information completed. Please also email us the scanned documents detailed above.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **EN** | **Last name** | **First name(s)** | **Any other name(s) used before (e.g. before marriage)** | **Name of highest educational institution completed** | **City and country of that institution** | **Occupation** | **Place of work** |
|  | *Smith* | *John William* | *None* | *Cambridge University* | *Cambridge, UK* | *Archaeologist* | *The National Trust for Scotland* |
| **01** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **02** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **EN** | **Previous visits to Turkmenistan (dates, purposes)** | **Marital status** | **Full name, date of birth and citizenship of spouse** | **Full name(s), date(s) of birth and citizenship of child(ren)** | **E-mail address** | **Home address** |
|  | *15 Mar 2012; tourism* | *Married* | *Louise Volker; 10 Nov.1981, UK* | *1. Thomas Volker, 1 Jan.2005; UK 2. Emily Volker, 10 May 2015; UK* | [*smith\_john@gmail.com*](mailto:smith_john@gmail.com) | *48 Barry Road, Carnoustie, Scotland* |
| **01** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **02** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Uzbekistan**

Most nationalities are visa-free. You can check here: <https://e-visa.gov.uz/main> (start the application and it will tell you if a visa is required or not).

US citizens can apply for an e-visa online here: <https://e-visa.gov.uz/main>

***The earliest date you can apply is 7th March otherwise the visa may expire before we arrive.***

You will need to upload a copy of your passport and a passport photo. See <https://e-visa.gov.uz/what-you-need-to-know> for an example of how your photo and passport scan should look.

You should choose a **double entry visa** which costs US$35

The following information will help you fill out your form:

Arrival date: 1st June 2024

Departure date: 16th June 2024 (we expect to leave a bit earlier but this gives us flexibility*)*

Preliminary place of residence in Uzbekistan: Hotel Asia, 50 Kosh-khauz Str, Samarkand, 703000

**Tajikistan**

Many nationalities do not require a visa but you can check here: <https://www.consular.tj/visa-system-with-foreign-countries.aspx>

UK and South African passport holders do currently require an e-visa.

***The earliest you can apply is 15th March otherwise the visa may expire before we arrive.*** You can apply online here: [www.evisa.tj](https://www.evisa.tj/index.evisa.html)

The following information will help you complete the form:

* GBAO Permit: No
* Purpose of visit type: Tourism
* Entry: Single
* Date of arrival: 5th June (will be later but allows us leeway to be early)
* Address in Tajikistan: Green House Hostel, Khusravi Dehlavi 98a, Dushanbe, 734024

**Kyrgyzstan**

Most nationalities are visa free but check your nationality here: <https://www.evisa.e-gov.kg/get_information.php?lng=en>

**Kazakhstan**

Most nationalities are visa free for a stay of up to 30 days but you can check your nationality here: <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa/press/article/details/6764?lang=en>

**China**

Our local operator will provide a Letter of Invitation and Travel Plan to support your application and we will forward these when we receive them in March, along with information to help you complete the application form.

**Please send us a colour scanned copy of your passport by the end of February at the latest. This is required by our China operator in order to produce the above documents.**

Most nationalities will need to apply online and then in person (in order have finger prints and a photo taken) through their nearest Chinese Visa Application Service Centre.

The Centres advise that you should not apply for your visa earlier than 3 months before your date of entry to China which means the earliest date is 2nd April 2024. There have been some changes to China visas and the application process since we last ran a trip pre-Covid resulting in the visa having to be applied for very close to our Istanbul departure date. This may not apply to all nationalities. We have been advised by the UK Centre that you can now apply any time from now as they issue a 2 year visa whereas Canberra and Paris have advised that you must apply within 3 months because the visa they issue is only valid for entry for 3 months. You should contact the Centre you intend to apply at to check this directly with them.

If you are advised that you must apply within 3 months but you wish to try applying earlier, we can provide a letter explaining our itinerary and timings. As we don’t have previous experience of this, we can’t guarantee it will work and you may still be issued with a visa valid for entry for 3 months.

As previously mentioned, it is recommended to apply for your China visa in your home country as most people need to go in person to a visa centre or embassy to provide finger prints.

Additionally, if you apply somewhere where you are not resident, it’s not always possible to know in advance how long your visa will be valid for, as their rules regarding this frequently change. Some Embassies or Service Centres may not issue visas to non-residents.

If you will not be able to apply in your home country, we suggest you investigate which Embassy or Consulate you will be able to apply at and what their requirements are.

Please note that the London Centre is closed for Easter from Friday 29th March to Monday 1st April inclusive. Please check your nearest centre for this or any other closures. If you need to apply within 3 months of entry to China, we suggest you submit your online application before Easter and then go to the Centre on 2nd April.

**Istanbul starters:** Please let us know if you will be away from home in the weeks leading up to our start date of 17 April and where you plan on applying for your China visa.

The London Centre offers the following visa processing services:

* Regular – 4 working days to process your application (from when you submit it in person at the Centre). Costs £66 in addition to the visa fee.
* Express – 3 working days. Costs £93 in addition to the visa fee.
* Postal – 2 weeks. Costs £90 in addition to the visa fee.

**Tibet**

Following the recommendation of our Chinese partners, we will be applying for our Tibet entry permits AFTER we have already obtained our China visas. We have done this in this order before too. So, do not be alarmed when you receive your Travel Plan from us and it does not show Tibet on the route.

When you have received your China visa, please email us a colour scanned copy. We will forward this to our China operator who need this to apply for the Tibet permits.

**Countries after China**

No action required at this stage.