

Russian Visas

To obtain a visa a foreign national is required to provide:

- The original letter of invitation containing the foreign national's full name and passport details;
- Travel passport with at least 18 months left before its expiry date;
- Completed visa application form in two original signed copies;
- Photographs;
- Additional documents as may be required depending on the foreign national's citizenship and type and term of the visa.

Main stages of getting a Russian visa:

Decide on the dates and frequency of visits: dates of border crossing, number of days of stay in Russia, preferable visa type (single entry or multiple entry).

The visa is issued based on an invitation to Russia, telex invitation number, or a tourist voucher. Business invitation must be issued on the official invitation form of the Federal Migration Service or Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation and added to the visa support documents in the original. Telex number is to be specified in the application form. Australia, Japan, the United States, South Korea, Canada, New Zealand and the European Union nationals are allowed to submit a copy of their tourist voucher (e-mailed or faxed copy). Nationals of other countries will need to obtain the original voucher.

Fill in an online visa application form - only at the official website of the Russian Foreign Ministry; print out the form and sign it. For a location where you will be applying for your visa, you can select a Russian consular department or a visa application center (specify the country and city). Your application form will be available for editing for 2-3 weeks.

Submit your documents to a Russian consulate or a visa application centre (check their working hours on their official website)

When you receive your passport back: do check the visa stamp in your passport as soon as it is returned to you to make sure that you have been given the right conditions and the correct length of time (validity period, number of entries, number of days of stay). If you have been issued with a visa that is not correct, you may ask to change it only before you cross the Russian border. The basic rule applied in such cases is that a foreigner, who has entered the Russian Federation on a certain visa, agrees with the terms and conditions of this visa.

Private Invitation

If you want to invite your friends or relatives living outside Russia to come and stay with you, you need to provide a Private Invitation for them. Based on this invitation, your friends and relatives from abroad can be issued with a Private Russian Visa.

Guide to getting a Private Invitation:

- Specify the expected period of your friends or relatives' visit;
- Provide their passport copies, personal and employment details;
- Specify the visa type – “On private invitation”;
- List cities to be visited and specify the duration of their stay in the RF;
- Apply to the local office of the Federal Migration Service office, pay the state duty;
- Provide proof of financial, medical and accommodation support of the foreigners during the period of their stay;
- Apply for the invitation at the Passports and Visas Department. Normally a reply is received within 30 working days;
- Having received the official invitation form, you then send it to your prospective guest, who can now apply to the Russian Consulate for a visa based on this invitation.

Business Invitation and Business Visa

A business invitation can be issued in two ways:

- It can be issued on the official invitation form of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation or Federal Migration Service, which is characterized by a high level of protection. A hard copy of an invitation form can be mailed to any location. A completed invitation form is then submitted at the place of application for a visa. European Union nationals are required to provide their previous Russian visas to get this type of invitation.
- It can be issued in the form of an e-invitation (Telex Invitation). Such invitations are sent directly by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Consular Department specified as the place of application for a visa. In case of any changes to the place where the visa application is going to be submitted, telex invitation is to be re-addressed, which will take 3 days.

A business invitation does not allow a foreign national to generate revenue and be engaged in business activities or salaried employment. Business visas are intended for

representatives of foreign companies travelling to Russia for business meetings, negotiations, and implementation of joint projects. A foreign national who is not permanently employed cannot be issued with a business invitation.

Business visas are designed for those travelling to Russia for the following purposes:

- Humanitarian: representatives of international organizations (Red Cross, welfare funds, volunteers);
- Scientific and technical relations: congresses, seminars, training programs;
- Cultural relations: museum workers involved in exhibitions, concerts, etc;
- Maintenance works: e.g., technicians travelling to assemble, set up or repair the supplied equipment.

Limitations on length of stay: a foreign national may stay in Russia only 90 days in 180-day period. Violation of this rule results in the cancellation of a business visa.

Processing time for a single-entry invitation is 1 to 5 working days, for a multiple entry invitation - 1 to 3 weeks.

Please make sure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months after your visa expires. Nationals of the Schengen member states are allowed to apply for Russian visas not only in their country of citizenship but also in their country of employment or residence. In such cases, a work permit or a residence permit must be submitted along with their notarized Russian or English translation.