

Russia Offers Simplified E-Visas to Visitors of St. Petersburg

July 22, 2019



Roman Pimenov / Interpress / TASS

Tourists and businesspeople from 53 countries will be able to visit St. Petersburg on a simplified electronic visa starting this fall under President Vladimir Putin's new orders.

Putin has [promised](#) to offer e-visas to foreign visitors in 2021 as he vies to collect \$15.5 billion in annual tourism revenue by the end of his presidential term in 2024. Tourists around the world have frequently [cited](#) difficulties with obtaining visas as a barrier to visiting Russia.

Related article: [Russia to Offer Electronic Visas by 2021, Putin Says](#)

The 30-day e-visa program will go into effect in St. Petersburg and the surrounding Leningrad region starting Oct. 1, according to a presidential decree [published](#) Friday.

Visitors will be able to stay in Russia for eight days out of the 30-day validity period.

Potential tourists are directed to apply for electronic visas on the Russian Foreign Ministry

website no later than four days before their arrival, the decree states. Applicants will not be charged a consular fee.

The offer will be open to citizens from 53 different countries, including Bahrain, India, Indonesia, Iran, Qatar, China, North Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Turkey, the Philippines, Japan, as well as all EU member states other than the United Kingdom.

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The move is expected to attract 12 million tourists each year, up from the 8.2 million who visited St. Petersburg last year, a senior tourism official in the administration [told](#) Interfax.

Since 2017, passport holders from 18 countries have been able to obtain free single-entry e-visas to visit Russia's Far East Federal District. Beginning July 1, the e-visa offer was expanded to travelers visiting the country's Western exclave of Kaliningrad.

Russia [offered](#) visa-free entry to foreign fans visiting the country for the 2018 FIFA World Cup with its Fan ID program, [resulting](#) in a 10% tourism boost that year.

This article was updated on Sep. 16 to include information about the list of 53 countries on the list.

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