

EU Exit and travel

Advice for Northern Ireland consumers who are travelling to Europe including the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain.

View the latest information for British passport holders, travelling through airports, driving in Europe, and travelling with pets and animals.

Driving in Europe

Will I need a green card to drive in Europe?

As of 30 June 2021, Green Card insurance documents which have been required for UK motorists in the European Union since exiting the EU will no longer be required, under an agreement between the Motor Insurance Bureau of Ireland (MIBI) and the EU Commission.

The agreement means those travelling from the UK to the EU, including those travelling from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland, will be able to avail of the general exemption afforded to EU-based motorists.

This exemption allows motor vehicles to travel freely between other EU countries without requiring supplementary insurance documentation.

Will I need a driving permit to drive in Europe?

You do not need an International Driving Permit (IDP) to drive in the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein if you have a photocard driving licence issued in the UK.

However, you might need an IDP to drive in some EU countries and Norway if you have either:

- a paper driving licence
- a licence issued in Gibraltar, Guernsey, Jersey or the Isle of Man

You need to be over 18 years of age and have a valid Great Britain (GB) or Northern Ireland driving licence to get an IDP.

Check if you need an IDP for the country you are driving in by checking with the country's Embassy. A list of Embassies can be found on the [GOV.uk website](#).

If you do require an IDP, you may need more than one depending on where you are visiting. Each permit costs £5.50 and is available over the counter from certain Post Office branches. Visit the [Post Office website](#) to find the branch nearest to you that issues IDPs.

More information on IDPs is available on the [GOV.uk website](#).

Travel

Will my current British passport still be valid?

Yes, your British passport will still be valid for visiting EU member countries provided you can answer yes to both of the following questions:

Was your passport issued less than ten years before the date you enter the country?

Does it have three months validity remaining after the day you plan to leave?

Note that these requirements do not apply if you are travelling to the Republic of Ireland.

The UK government's passport rules for travelling to the EU can be found on the [Gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk), where you can also check if you need to renew your passport.

The EU's passport rules can be found on the [European Union website](https://ec.europa.eu/passports).

Will I be kept waiting in long passport queues?

Possibly – if you travel with a British passport it is possible that border controls will take longer than they did. As a British passport holder you will now need to use separate lines from EU, EEA and Swiss citizens when queuing. You may also need to show your return or onward ticket and that you have enough money for your stay.

You should allow more travel time to ensure you do not miss your flight, train or ferry as border checks may take longer.

Will I need a visa to travel in Europe?

No – you will not need a visa when going on short trips to most EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. This means you will be able to stay for up to 90 days in any 180-day period.

Trips to Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania are different. If you visit these countries, visits to other EU countries from there will not count towards the 90-day total.

You may need a visa or permit to stay for longer, to work or study. You can read more on business travel on the [Gov.uk website](#).

Can I still use my European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)?

Yes – you can continue to use your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or get a provisional replacement certificate (PRC) if you need treatment and do not have a card.

Your EHIC will still be valid in the EU until it expires. Once your EHIC has expired you will be able to replace it with a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC).

With the new GHIC and your current EHIC, you will be entitled to healthcare in any of the 27 countries in the EU apart from Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Switzerland.

Any specialised treatment, such as dialysis or cancer treatment, "must be subject to a prior agreement between the insured person and the unit providing the treatment," to ensure the treatment is available.

Even with EHIC and GHIC cover, it is still advisable that you buy travel insurance with healthcare cover before you go on holiday.

The new GHIC card is free from the official NHS website. You should apply at least 2 weeks before travel to make sure the card arrives on time. Beware of unofficial websites, which may charge if you apply through them.

Will I have the same passenger rights if my travel is delayed or cancelled?

Yes – your consumer rights will not change. Current UK government advice is that air, rail, bus, coach, ferry and cruise services will continue to be protected by current passenger regulations after leaving the EU. This means that if your travel is cancelled or delayed, you may be able to claim a refund or compensation.

It is recommended to have travel insurance that will cover you for different types of disruption caused by events outside of the airline's control, such as extreme weather or strike action. Always check your provider's terms and conditions to make sure you have the cover you need if your travel is cancelled or delayed.

[Read our Plane Facts guide.](#)

Will I be covered for EU Exit related travel disruption?

Possibly – some travel insurance policies do not cover EU Exit related travel disruption including cancellations and delays.

If you do want cover for EU Exit related travel disruption, we advise you to speak to your insurance provider as soon as possible to give yourself peace of mind.

Will my package holiday still be protected after EU Exit?

Yes – you will continue to have the same rights and protections on your package holiday unless the government decides to change the law in future.

If you book your package holiday to the EU with an Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) member, your rights will not be affected.

Holidays booked with ABTA members provide financial and legal protection and means the travel company is responsible for making sure passengers get the holiday they paid for.

The UK Air Travel Organisers Licence (ATOL) scheme provides protection for travellers who book a holiday to the EU that includes a flight. Your rights will not be affected.

If an ATOL licenced travel company collapses, it ensures that your money is protected and you can get home.

The majority of bookings made directly with airlines will not be covered by ATOL.

Check that your package holiday is ATOL or ABTA protected and take the booking terms & conditions with you on holiday in case something occurs whilst you are away.

Will I be covered if I buy a package holiday from an EU company?

Possibly – if it is an EU company selling package holidays, you will still be covered as long as the company has advertised to UK customers. If you purchase a package holiday from an EU based trader that does not advertise to UK customers, you will not be entitled to the same protection.

[Read the UK Government's advice on passenger consumer rights when travelling to the EU.](#)

Will I be able to sail by ferry or cruise ship as before?

Yes – when you travel to the EU by sea, you should not experience any difference in your journey.

Will I be able to travel by train cross-border the same as before?

Yes – your rights as a rail passenger using either domestic or cross-border rail services will not change and you will continue to be protected on cross-border rail services.

Pet travel

Traveling between Great Britain and Northern Ireland with a pet

The only requirement is to declare that your pet has been microchipped.

More information on travel

Air travel

Learn your consumer rights if you are travelling by air including compensation, special assistance and what to do if things go wrong.

Ferry travel

Information on your consumer rights when sailing including compensation, special assistance and what to do if things go wrong.

EU Exit and mobile roaming

Information on the impact EU Exit has had on Mobile data roaming charges.

Airport parking and public transport costs

A breakdown of airport drop-off and pickup times and charges as well as public transport costs.