



# AMERICA *Assist* AMERICA

SUMMER ISSUE 2025



assist america®  
Innovative Assistance Solutions





# SUMMER

2025

ISSUE

## CONTENTS

About Assist America	1
Visa Review	3
Hospital Stay in Hawaii	5
Redefining the Day	7
Trip Beating the Blaze	9





# ABOUT US



**assist america®**  
*Innovative Assistance Solutions*

Since 1990, Assist America has been a trailblazer in the world of travel assistance - the very first to work collaboratively with insurance companies and employee benefits groups to extend travel assistance to employees and their families as part of comprehensive

benefits packages. With seven strategically-located branches spanning the globe and a 24/7 multilingual operations center, we are wholly focused on the care and safety of our members. Assist America has spent over thirty years helping millions of members travel confidently.





# VISA REVIEW



The application process for travel visas today can vary from traditional paper forms to increasingly popular modern digital systems. Regardless of the application method, understanding the specific conditions and procedures of your destination can help you avoid delays and ensure a seamless experience during travel.

### Pre-Travel

Research the requirements for your destination. Visit official websites to gather up-to-date information on eligibility criteria, application fees, and processing times. Double-check all details, including any restrictions based on your previous travel history, as some systems may require additional documentation if you have visited high-risk areas.

Gather all necessary documents, such as your passport, travel itinerary, proof of accommodation, and evidence of sufficient funds.



and evidence of sufficient funds. These supporting documents may be required both during the application process and later at border control. Make sure that your information is complete and accurate; even minor errors can lead to delays or, in the worst-case scenario, a denial of entry.

**Gather all necessary documents, such as your passport, travel itinerary, proof of accommodation, and evidence of sufficient funds.**

Although many applications are processed automatically within minutes, some cases may trigger additional checks that could extend processing times up to 30 days. Apply for any visa well in advance of your travel date to minimize the impact of any potential delays.

### Use Official Channels

Always use official channels for all visa and travel authorization applications. Fraudulent websites that mimic official portals are increasingly common, and using them can lead to extra fees, compromised personal data, or delays in processing your application. To safeguard yourself, bookmark the

official website of your destination country's travel authorization system, and double-check the URL before submitting any sensitive information.

### Digital Visas

Many countries are shifting toward digital travel authorizations. For example, the EU will introduce the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) for visa-exempt travelers beginning in 2025. Similar to the U.S. Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), ETIAS requires an online application and a nominal fee. Following approval, the authorization is electronically linked to your passport and remains valid for three years or until your passport expires, whichever comes first.

Similarly, the UK mandates an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) for non-visa nationals. Most ETA applications are processed within three working days, and once approved, the authorization allows for multiple entries over a two-year period or until your passport expires.

Verifying your passport is a critical first step in preparing for an electronic visa. Many digital systems will only accept biometric passports that are valid for at least three to six months beyond your intended departure date, and not older than 10 years.



If necessary, renew your passport as early as possible to ensure that you meet these requirements for your application.

### Stay Prepared and Flexible

After receiving your travel authorization, keep your documents accessible and be prepared for potential technical glitches. Even though digital systems are designed to be efficient, they can occasionally experience problems. Maintain both digital and physical copies of your approved travel visas along with any supporting paperwork. These backups will come in handy if authorities request for additional verification, and can help you prove your status and get through immigration even if technical issues occur at border control.

Remain adaptable for any unforeseen circumstances as international travel policies are subject to change. Stay informed about any updates or changes in

**Make sure that your information is complete and accurate; even minor errors can lead to delays or, in the worst-case scenario, a denial of entry.**

visa procedures during your trip. Geopolitical developments can result in rapid policy shifts that may affect entry requirements. Regularly check official websites or subscribe to travel alerts to ensure that you are aware of any last minute changes that could impact your journey. If visa requirements

change while you are already in the host country, act promptly to stay compliant. Many nations offer a grace period for tourists to adjust their status, though in rare cases, new rules may apply retroactively, requiring you to reapply or briefly exit the country.

Despite thorough preparation, unforeseen delays or visa denials can occur. If your visa application experiences a delay or is rejected, start by reviewing all submitted documentation for errors or omissions. Correct any inaccuracies and, if possible, resubmit your application. If you are uncertain about the reasons for the delay or denial, contact the issuing authority for clarification.





# Returning Home

— From Hawaii —



Derek\* contacted Assist America by phone while staying with friends in Hawaii. After a brief stint in the hospital while away, he was placed on oxygen to treat his condition and worried about how he would manage to return home while still recovering. During the call, the Case Manager advised the member that we would contact his insurance provider's Medical Management team to advise them of the situation and obtain the necessary medical information required to engage services.

Upon receipt, Assist America's consulting physicians carefully evaluated Derek's case and determined the appropriate travel recommendations for his situation. Assist America arranged and paid for commercial business class airfare, a nurse medical escort, and portable oxygen with limo service to and from both airports. Derek managed to return home safely with the oxygen he needed to complete his recovery in the safety and comfort of his own home.

\*Names and situations substituted for privacy.



"Your services were a godsend and enabled me to return from Hawaii with virtually no stress, medical, or physical concerns. The escort was excellent, and the arrangements couldn't have been better." Derek told his Case Manager in a follow-up.





FEATURE

# REDEFINING THE DAY TRIP

## The Rise of Extreme Day Tripping

What do you do when you only have a little time, a little money, but still need to get away? Even planning a vacation is a hefty time investment, between booking accommodations, transportation, and arranging an itinerary for multi-day trips. Skipping a trip isn't the option most want to take, but there is a way to get away more affordably without sacrificing exorbitant amounts of time.



**It's a great way to still enjoy travel while saving for those bigger trips.**

Extreme Day Tripping, or EDT as it's become known in the travel sphere, was a travel fad born out of Europe sometime around 2019. In the near six years since then, it's popularity has ballooned and spread as far as the United States. What started out as a way for intrepid Europeans to country-hop affordably has become one of the most popular methods for travelers to make the most of tiny windows of time.

### What is Extreme Day Tripping?

It is just as it sounds – squeezing as much adventure as you can into one 24-hour period. This isn't just a simple road trip, but a full mini-vacation minus the overnight stay. EDT travelers will book outbound and return flights within the same day, typically one early morning and one late night, and plan their trip around one destination. For Europeans, this could be booking same-day flights to Lisbon and touring the city. Visiting landmarks like the Jerónimos Monastery, the National Tile Museum, enjoying a seafood lunch on the beach, and arriving back home shortly after dinner. While EDT usually means traversing other countries in Europe, travelers in other parts of the world do it a bit differently. A popular EDT trend in the east coast of the United States is to do “Disney for a Day”, or other large theme parks like Busch Gardens, where same-day flights are short – still leaving ample time to enjoy a day full of activities.



### Benefits of a 24-Hour Turnaround

Limited vacation days and modest budgets are obstacles for many travelers looking to get away. Multi-day trips are difficult to organize and require a good amount of saving to afford. An Extreme Day Trip isn't a replacement for a vacation at an all-inclusive resort, but it's a great way to still enjoy travel while saving for those bigger trips. The cost-effectiveness behind EDT is what drives many to gravitate towards it, the ability to save hundreds on accommodation alone lending to the reason many travelers colloquially refer to them as “Notel Stays”. One-day trips also have the benefit of being easy to plan, the limited number of hours only really allowing for focus on one location instead of several over the course of multiple days.

### Getting Ready to Go

The primary goal for many day trippers is keeping costs low. Not needing overnight accommodation eliminates one large expense, but what about flights? Experienced travelers know that some airlines offer discounted flight tickets on certain days, and planning

your trip around these can give you the most bang for your buck. The most important aspect of planning an EDT is staying on schedule and planning carefully. Book the earliest outbound flight and the latest return to maximize the amount of hours you can spend at your destination and allow extra time to arrive at the airport early.

### Conclusion

Extreme Day Tripping proves that travel doesn't have to be long, expensive, or complicated to be meaningful. By turning a single day into a micro-adventure, EDT offers an exciting alternative for those with limited time and budgets. Whether you're exploring a new city, visiting a theme park, or simply enjoying a change of scenery, this creative approach allows you to experience the thrill of travel without the traditional commitments of a full vacation. As more travelers embrace the freedom of spontaneous, low-cost adventures, EDT is reshaping how we think about getting away—one day at a time.



# BEATING THE BLAZE 🔥

## TRAVELING IN WILDFIRE PRONE DESTINATIONS

Wildfires have become a growing concern worldwide. Regions such as California, Idaho, Nevada, and Texas in the U.S. face recurring wildfires, while Canada's British Columbia and parts of its eastern provinces frequently experience similar events. Incidents have also occurred at other popular tourist locations, such as Australia, Greece, and Turkey, in recent years. Being informed and prepared is key to staying safe in these destinations.

Learn the evacuation routes and procedures for bus or boat evacuations, and have a designated meeting point for your group

### Preparation

Begin by checking real-time wildfire conditions at your destination. Use trusted online tools like Global Forest Watch Fires, which leverages NASA satellite data, or Disaster Alert to monitor active blazes and their proximity to your travel routes. Updates from local news outlets and government advisories may include evacuation details or information on emerging fire risks.

Check and familiarize yourself with local evacuation routes. Monitor local weather forecasts and fire reports, so you can adjust your plans if conditions change. Share your itinerary with a reliable contact to ensure someone is aware of your whereabouts in case of an emergency. Keep digital and physical copies of important travel documents, and download offline maps and emergency apps to access crucial information even when connectivity is limited.

Prepare an emergency kit that includes a fully charged mobile phone with emergency numbers saved, a battery-powered radio to receive updates when power is disrupted, and a basic first

aid kit with any necessary medications. Additionally, bring non-perishable snacks, bottled water, a reliable flashlight with extra batteries, and a dust mask or cloth to help mitigate smoke inhalation.

Whether you are staying in a hotel, hostel, or rental, ask about the building's fire safety protocols. Ensure that windows and doors can be quickly opened in an emergency and that clear evacuation procedures are in place. Confirm that the area surrounding the building is maintained and free of excess vegetation or debris that could fuel a fire.

### Surviving a Wildfire

If you are on foot, keep low

to the ground, as smoke tends to rise. Cover your face with a damp cloth or mask to reduce inhalation of harmful particulates, and identify nearby open spaces or clearings that can serve as safe zones if the situation worsens.

If you are traveling by vehicle, close all windows and vents to minimize smoke, and drive cautiously at reduced speeds. Avoid stopping in areas with dense vegetation; if you must pull over, choose an open area away from active fires. Keep your mobile phone handy to receive real-time updates and emergency alerts during your drive.

Follow similar precautions when indoors. Close windows and doors to limit smoke, but keep them unlocked for quick exit if needed. Choose an interior room away from

external walls and windows, and keep your emergency kit nearby. If possible, switch off utilities such as gas and electricity to reduce additional risks during a wildfire.

Cover your face with a damp cloth or mask to reduce inhalation of smoke and ash

### Wildfire Aftermath

Once the immediate danger has passed, additional precautions are necessary in the aftermath of a wildfire. Continue monitoring local news and official updates, as authorities may warn of secondary hazards such as flash flooding or mudflows caused by changes in ground conditions after a fire.

Avoid returning to affected areas until local officials declare them safe, as residual risks can persist. Before settling back into your accommodation or resuming your normal routine, conduct a thorough inspection for lingering embers, hot spots, or structural damage. Exercise caution with local water sources; do not consume tap water until it has been declared safe, since fires can contaminate water supplies and soil.

Long-term hazards such as environmental contamination and weakened structures should not be overlooked. The pollutants released by wildfires can linger in the soil and water, posing ongoing health risks. Buildings and trees exposed to extreme heat may suffer from structural weaknesses, creating additional hazards.







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