Canada expands Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) Program to include 13 additional countries

July 11, 2023

The Government of Canada recently added 13 countries to its visa-free travel list by expanding the scope of the Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) program. This move is aimed at strengthening travel, tourism, international business, and global relations.

Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA)

Introduced on Aug. 1, 2015, Electronic Travel Authorization is an entry requirement for travellers from visa-exempt countries and a few from the list of visa-required countries when travelling by air. The eTA involves pre-travel light screening, is economical for travelers, and extremely time efficient.

An eTA is linked to the passport of the individual electronically and can have a validity of up to five years. However, having an authorization does not guarantee entry into Canada, as the traveller must still demonstrate their eligibility to the border services officer. The Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) will either approve the request or seek additional information.

Expansion announcement

On June 6, 2023, the IRCC announced and made effective an expansion of its eTA program to add 13 countries. Individuals from these countries who have either held a Canadian visa in the last 10 years or who currently hold a valid United States non-immigrant visa can now apply for an eTA instead of a visa, when travelling to Canada by air. The first expansion, which took place on April 28, 2017, had opened visa-free air travel for Brazilian, Bulgarian and Romanian nationals.

The list of additional eligible countries includes the following:

1. Antigua and Barbuda
2. Argentina
3. Costa Rica

4. Morocco
5. Panama
6. Philippines
7. St. Kitts and Nevis
8. St. Lucia
9. St. Vincent and the Grenadines
10. Seychelles
11. Thailand
12. Trinidad and Tobago
13. Uruguay

The strategic expansion of the eTA program is likely to strengthen Canada's economy by promoting travel, tourism and international business, while also positively amplifying international relationships. The Government of Canada's expansion seeks to streamline the immigration process by reducing the timelines, improving access, and affordability for prospective travelers. It is expected that this will encourage Canada's visitor economy, opening numerous job opportunities, and injecting vitality into local communities.

It is important to note that the exceptions from eTA requirements include U.S. citizens and travellers with a valid Canadian visa. Canadian permanent residents must show their permanent resident card or permanent resident travel document when travelling to Canada. Canadian citizens, including dual citizens, need a valid Canadian passport to board their flight.

For more information about how the visa-free travel could impact and ease international business with the listed countries, please reach out to the contacts below from our Business Immigration Group.

By

Brian Dingle, Noah Burshtein, Milica Bijelic

Expertise

Government & Public Sector

BLG | Canada's Law Firm

As the largest, truly full-service Canadian law firm, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (BLG) delivers practical legal advice for domestic and international clients across more practices and industries than any Canadian firm. With over 800 lawyers, intellectual property agents and other professionals, BLG serves the legal needs of businesses and institutions across Canada and beyond – from M&A and capital markets, to disputes, financing, and trademark & patent registration.

blg.com

BLG Offices

Calgary

Centennial Place, East Tower
520 3rd Avenue S.W.
Calgary, AB, Canada
T2P 0R3

T 403.232.9500
F 403.266.1395

Ottawa

World Exchange Plaza
100 Queen Street
Ottawa, ON, Canada
K1P 1J9

T 613.237.5160
F 613.230.8842

Vancouver

1200 Waterfront Centre
200 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC, Canada
V7X 1T2

T 604.687.5744
F 604.687.1415

Montréal

1000 De La Gauchetière Street West
Suite 900
Montréal, QC, Canada
H3B 5H4

T 514.954.2555
F 514.879.9015

Toronto

Bay Adelaide Centre, East Tower
22 Adelaide Street West
Toronto, ON, Canada
M5H 4E3

T 416.367.6000
F 416.367.6749

The information contained herein is of a general nature and is not intended to constitute legal advice, a complete statement of the law, or an opinion on any subject. No one should act upon it or refrain from acting without a thorough examination of the law after the facts of a specific situation are considered. You are urged to consult your legal adviser in cases of specific questions or concerns. BLG does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy, currency or completeness of this publication. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior written permission of Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. If this publication was sent to you by BLG and you do not wish to receive further publications from BLG, you may ask to remove your contact information from our mailing lists by emailing unsubscribe@blg.com or manage your subscription preferences at blg.com/MyPreferences. If you feel you have received this message in error please contact communications@blg.com. BLG's privacy policy for publications may be found at blg.com/en/privacy.

© 2026 Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. Borden Ladner Gervais LLP is an Ontario Limited Liability Partnership.