



# PLAYING BY THE RULES IN THE UK

A guide for international travellers





# WELCOME TO THE UK

The UK Border Agency welcomes millions of international visitors, students and workers to the country every year, including more than two million people issued with UK visas. Collectively, you make a major contribution to the country's economic and cultural life.

This leaflet will help you to enjoy a trouble-free arrival in the UK and will explain some of the important rules you need to be aware of while you are here.

We hope you enjoy your stay in Britain. We want to be able to welcome you back again, but breaking the law while in the country could lead to you being removed or banned from the UK.



- 1 Valid from date:** You cannot enter the UK before this date.
- 2 Valid until date:** You must leave the UK by this date, unless your visa allows you to seek an extension of your stay. If you are allowed to seek an extension, you must do this before your visa expires. For details visit [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk)
- 3 Entry terms:** If your visa says “MULT” (multiple), it means you can enter the UK several times while it is valid. If your visa says 01, you may use it to enter the UK only once. If your visa says 02, you may use it to enter the UK twice while the visa is valid
- 4 Visa category:** Your visa is for a specific purpose, which you must keep to. Different immigration categories have different colours of visa.
- 5 Conditions:** If your visa allows you to work, it will say so here. If you are sponsored to work or study in the UK, your sponsor number will be included here. If your visa says “No recourse to public funds”, you are not allowed to claim benefits or apply for government-funded accommodation. You also cannot use the health service except in an emergency.

**For more information on visas, visit [www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk)**

**For more information on visiting, studying and working in the UK, visit [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk)**

# PLAY BY THE RULES

## KEEP WITHIN THE LAW AND ENJOY A STRESS-FREE STAY IN THE UK

### **Don't work illegally in the UK**

You have been allowed to enter the UK for a specific purpose. If you have been issued a visa, you must keep to the conditions attached to it. For example, if you are not allowed to work, taking up employment will mean that you are breaking the conditions of your visa – you could be fined, deported from the country and banned from returning to the UK for up to 10 years.

If you work illegally, you will not be protected by UK employment law and could end up working in dangerous conditions. Your employer will also be liable to a fine of up to £10,000 – remember that if you work for a family business, they will be liable.

It is illegal to stay longer in the UK than your visa allows. If you overstay, you may face prosecution and detention as well as a 10-year ban. The UK deports an illegal immigrant every eight minutes. Don't risk becoming one of them.

**For more information about the rules on working in the UK, visit [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk)**

## **Don't bring in banned foods**

There are very strict controls on what food products you can bring into the UK from outside the European Union, even for personal use. Certain food products can carry pests and diseases, and these could have a harmful effect on the UK environment and economy.

Foods you **cannot** bring into the UK include:

- all meat and meat products
- all milk and dairy products.

Import restrictions apply to many other food items including fish products, egg and honey products and some fruit and vegetables.

Any illegal products that are found will be seized and destroyed. If you fail to declare such items, you could face criminal prosecution, a fine or even imprisonment.

**For more information on what you can and cannot bring into the UK, visit [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/travellingtotheuk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/travellingtotheuk) or call the food imports hotline on +44 20 7238 6951 from outside the UK.**

## **Other banned and restricted goods**

Other goods you may not bring into the UK include:

- drugs
- offensive weapons, including knives
- indecent and obscene material
- counterfeit, pirated and patent-infringing goods outside the conditions of the “other goods” allowance.

Other items such as firearms, explosives and ammunition, rough diamonds, live animals and endangered animals and plants (and products made from them) are banned unless you have the relevant licence or permit to import them into the UK.

**For more information on current prohibitions and restrictions, visit [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/travellingtotheuk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/travellingtotheuk), or call the advice service on +44 2920 501 261.**

## **Know your duty-free limits**

If you arrive in the UK from a non-EU country (including the Canary Islands, the Channel Islands and Gibraltar), you may bring in the following allowance of goods for your own use (or as gifts) without paying UK tax or duty:

- 200 cigarettes, or 100 cigarillos, or 50 cigars, or 250g of tobacco
- 16 litres of beer
- 4 litres of still wine
- 1 litre of spirits or strong liqueurs over 22 per cent volume, or 2 litres of fortified wine (such as port or sherry), sparkling wine or any other alcoholic beverage under 22 per cent volume.

You are also given an allowance of £340 for all other goods including perfume and souvenirs.

If you are carrying more than the amounts stated above, you **must** declare these goods. You can do this by using the red customs channel or the red point phone when passing through the border on arrival in the UK.

If you do not declare these excess goods, you are breaking the law and you may be prosecuted. Undeclared goods may also be seized.

If you are under 17 years of age, you cannot have the duty-free alcohol or tobacco allowances.

**For more information on the rules relating to duty-free allowances, visit [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/travellingtotheuk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/travellingtotheuk), or call the advice service on +44 2920 501 261.**

## **Help us combat human trafficking**

Human trafficking is a serious crime where individuals are forced, defrauded or coerced into exploitation through prostitution, slavery, domestic service or forced labour.

Further information can be found at [www.blueblindfold.org.uk](http://www.blueblindfold.org.uk)

If your visa allows you to work in the UK, be aware that this right is limited to certain types of employment. Do not accept offers of employment outside your visa entitlement, however tempting, as this may result in exploitation.

## **Help for victims and catching the traffickers**

The UK Government is committed to prosecuting human traffickers and protecting and supporting their victims.

Once you are in the UK, if you become a victim of a crime or are in fear of immediate danger, or if you witness a crime, you should contact the local police or dial 999. If you wish to give information anonymously, you can contact CRIMESTOPPPERS on 0800 555 111.



Produced by UK Border Agency  
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Product description: A guide for international travellers