

The US passport is a lot less powerful now



This document will no longer get you in to as many countries as it used to

In what is a double whammy for the United States, the country recently crossed the [three-million mark](#) in terms of the number of registered [COVID-19](#) cases, and more than 132,000 people have died from the disease. Now, its handling of the pandemic has drastically diminished power of its passport. The US passport is currently no more powerful than a Mexican one used to be before the pandemic.

The US regularly features in the top 10 of the [Henley Passport Index](#), an annual ranking of the number of countries a passport gets you into without a visa. The ranking is based on data from the International Air Transport Association. The

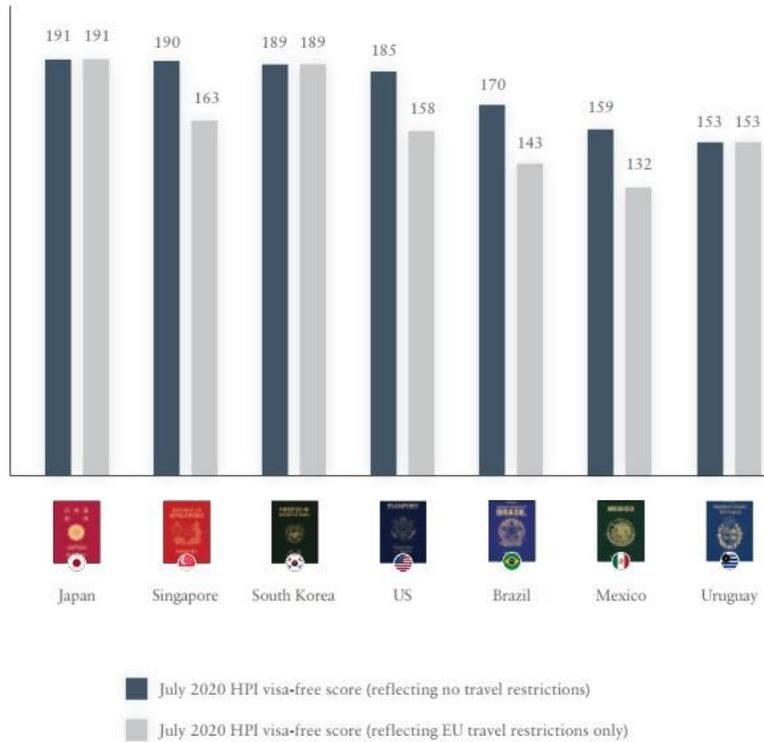
US usually comes in sixth or seventh and topped the list as recently as 2014. Before the coronavirus pandemic, a US passport would get you into 185 destinations around the world without the need for a visa at all or a visa on arrival.

But now, the [European Union has effectively blocked Americans](#) from travelling to its shores citing its poor handling of the pandemic. This means the US passport will only get you into 158 destinations without a visa or with a visa on arrival. This puts it almost on the same level as the South American nation of **Uruguay**, ranked 28th with visa-free travel to or with the option of getting a visa on arrival in 153 states. Uruguay incidentally happens to be on the EU's list of countries from where the bloc is happy to accept tourists.

A wall around the US

In a stroke of geopolitical irony, its handling of the pandemic has brought the US passport down to where the 25th-ranked Mexican passport used to be. Mexico used to have access to 159 destinations without a visa or with a visa on arrival before the pandemic. But Mexicans can now get into 132 countries with ease. The US southern neighbour [recently closed its border with the US](#), blocking Americans trickling into the country for fear of transmission of the virus. While the US passport still officially ranks seventh on the Henley Passport Index, which does not take into account temporary travel bans when coming up with its power list, it is still a significant downgrade for what is one of the most cherished passports in the world.

Henley Passport Index: July 2020



Source: henleypassportindex.com

The information provided here reflects the 2020 Henley Passport Index ranking on 7 July 2020, and in certain instances, coronavirus-related travel bans may take precedence over the visa information recorded here.

The Singaporean and Brazilian passports have taken a hit but none have fallen as dramatically as the US. Credit: Henley Passport Index

Other losers

Other big losers include second-ranked [Singapore](#). Before the pandemic, a Singaporean passport would get you into 190 countries visa-free or with a visa

on arrival. The island state has also been kept off the EU list of countries that can travel to the bloc, and this means Singaporeans can travel to 27 fewer countries without a visa. **Brazil**, another country where the pandemic is taking a startling toll, also finds its freedom of travel diminished. Brazilians, who used to be able to travel to 170 countries without a visa or with a visa on arrival before the pandemic, are now only welcome in 143 countries.

Nations that have managed to bring the virus under control, like [Japan](#) (ranked first with access to 191 countries) and South Korea (ranked third with access to 189 countries), have held onto their positions of power. Both countries are on the EU list of countries from where it is accepting travellers.

India ranks 85th in the world with access to 58 destinations without a visa or with a visa on arrival before the pandemic. It's ranking is not likely to take a hit because Indians have always needed a Schengen visa to travel to EU countries.