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Next Generation US Passports Get a New Look and Enhanced Security Features

IMPACTING TRAVEL | LAURIE BARATTI | MARCH 10, 2022



Features of the State Department's redesigned Next Generation Passports. (screenshot via U.S. State Department)

Travelers awaiting their new or renewed [U.S. passport](#) this year may notice some changes in the appearance of their freshly issued travel document, but the State Department's upgraded [Next Generation Passport](#) books contain more than mere aesthetic alterations.

The standard passport book that's currently in circulation contains an electronic chip (and is hence known as an [ePassport](#)) that carries the same information that's printed on the document's data page, such as the holder's name, birth date, and other biographic information. It also contains a biometric identifier, as the U.S. requires these chips contain a digital photograph of the holder. The present passports already have embedded security features that prevent unauthorized "skimming" of the information stored on the chip.

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"Looking to the future, we are steadily working on modernization efforts," a U.S. Department of State spokesperson told TravelPulse. "We continue to rollout the NGP—redesigned to be smarter, safer, and better—at our passport agencies and centers."

"While the U.S. passport book currently in circulation (known as the ePassport) is already an extremely secure travel document, our Next Generation Passport uses new technologies and has enhanced security features, such as a polycarbonate data page, laser engraved personalization, and updated artwork," said the spokesperson

"The most noticeable changes to the new passport book are the polycarbonate data page and the location of the endorsement page (now page 3). Visa pages have also been updated with linkwork and ink colors that showcase imagery of U.S. architecture, history, culture, landscapes and traditions," they added.

The Next Generation Passport's rollout actually began last year, but is occurring in stages, as equipment needed to produce the new documents is gradually installed at passport centers around the country. "The rollout of the Next Generation Passport is a multi-year process," the State Department spokesperson confirmed. "More than two million Next Generation Passports (NGP) have been issued to customers across the country since March 2021."

“We will issue both the ePassport and Next Generation Passport until August 2022, when all 29 passport agencies and centers will be printing the new Next Generation Passport books,” said the spokesperson. They also went on to say, “We are on track to offer the NGP nationwide by the end of 2022.”

Still, you shouldn’t count on getting your own modernized passport document any time soon, since current ePassports already meet or exceed international security standards and remain valid through their existing expiration dates. And, if you’re among those awaiting a new or renewed passport, you can’t request a specific version of the passport book—it just comes down to the luck of the draw.

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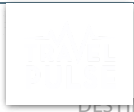
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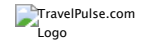
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