



Passports and Visas

How would you like to learn all your music, attend all the rehearsals, fly some 17 hours or more, arrive in Johannesburg ready for the PST ... and be told that, for all of that, you will not be allowed into South Africa, that you are in effect arrested at the JNB airport, and that you can either 1.) be booked on the next available flight back to the US – at your expense, or 2.) pay a US Consular official some \$1200 to come to the airport sometime in the next few days to add extra visa pages to your passport?

That need not happen to you. But it could unless you *Stop Reading This Newsletter and Go Find Your Passport...NOW!!* (Then read on.)

Holders of US passports do not need a visa in advance of our trip to South Africa. An entry visa will be issued at the airport when you enter the country. But to insure that the entry visa is issued, check NOW the following 2 areas of your passport:

1. Inside the front cover, next to that fantastic picture of you and just below “Date of issue”, your passport’s “Date of expiration” is clearly shown. Check that the expiration date in your passport is at least 6 months after the date you are scheduled to depart from South Africa. For most of us, that date of departure from RSA will be 6 July, but if you are going on a tour extension or otherwise delaying your departure from RSA, that date may be later. Six months after 6 July 2007 is 6 January 2008. **If your passport expires before 6 January 2008, you must get a new passport** in order to ensure that an entry visa will be issued when you arrive in South Africa..
2. (In Addition) Check the blue “VISAS” pages. Most US passports contain numerous pages clearly marked for Visas. Visa pages clearly say “Visas” at the top. You must have 2 completely clear Visa pages. **If you do not have at least 2 blank Visa pages, completely unused, you can have the passport office add pages to your passport. You must do that prior to departure for South Africa.** (Do not confuse the “Amendments and Endorsements” pages at the back of your passport with Visa pages. E&A pages are for name changes and other special circumstances and are not for visas or entrance/exit stamps. Though they’re almost always left unused, blank E&A pages will not work for you as you attempt to enter South Africa.)



Pages 20 & 21 are Visa pages. Page 20 is a blank Visa page. Page 21 is **not** blank even though there is a space of one more visa. You must have 2 blank



Pages 22 & 23 above are **not** Visa pages. These are Amendments and Endorsement pages. They **do not** qualify as Visa pages.

If your passport does not meet both of the requirements described above, you must either get a new passport, in the first case, or send your passport to the Passport Office to get additional Visa pages put into your passport, in the second case.

You should deal with these matter right away. Because of new Homeland Security regulations, all US citizens traveling to the US from anyplace in this hemisphere (including Mexico, the Caribbean and Canada) must have a valid US passport to regain entry into the US. The passport offices are swamped with people applying for new passports and it will take longer than “normal” to get a new passport or to get Visa pages added to you existing passport. **DO NOT DELAY!**

Sorry to be so vehement about this, but it’s a very long ride to JNB – especially if your next experience turns out to be an immediate return trip to the US.