

## **IMMIGRATION ENTRY REQUIREMENTS - THE GAMBIA (2012)**

### **BUSINESS VISITOR**

There is no specific category for a business visitor under Gambia Immigration Law. The visitor category covers all types of entry for a limited duration whether for business, personal or family reasons. A visitor can therefore engage in any number of business related activities usually classified under the business categories in other jurisdictions so long he/she is not paid for it, apart from incidental expenses. Where payment or employment in The Gambia is desired, then a Residential Permit must be applied for.

A visiting skilled worker does not need a Residential Permit in advance. His/her employers from the sending country have to notify the Gambian Immigration Authorities who will inform Immigration Officers at the port of the passenger's arrival. The skilled worker will, on arrival be allowed entry as a visitor whereupon he shall be issued with a Residential Permit at any time thereafter and within not more than the 56 days. This will apply for example in the case of a foreign national desiring to work for 1 month.

A short-term visitor (non ECOWAS national) can obtain an Entry Visa prior to travel. It does not make any difference whether they are travelling from inside Africa. A foreign national with a Multiple Visa can depart and re-enter so long as it is still valid. But a single visit visa implies that it expires after 1 entry only.

Expatriate workers in the service of the Gambian Government can apply for a gratis visa. It is discretionary and should be applied for on behalf of the expatriate by the Government Ministry to which he/she is attached. A Residential Permit is issued for free in such a case.

There are 2 types of visas to The Gambia, the Entry Visa and the Entry Clearance Visa.

### **ENTRY VISA**

The Entry Visa is the conventional visa required for entering the country. Entry can only be guaranteed if an Entry Visa is issued whether from a diplomatic post abroad or at the airport.

### **Refusal of Entry Visas:**

An Entry visa can be rejected in the following circumstances:

1. If the passenger's name is on a watch list of wanted persons or prohibited list of persons who are a threat to national security.
2. If the passenger is a person with a communicable disease or is an insane person.

Some nationals of certain countries do not need an Entry Visa. The countries whose nationals require an Entry Visa are:

#### **A. AFRICAN COUNTRIES:**

Cameroon, Algeria, Libya, Chad, Gabon, Egypt, Sudan, Central African Republic, Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Mozambique, Madagascar, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, South Africa, Rwanda.

#### **B. WESTERN EUROPE:**

France, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal

#### **C. ASIA:**

Mainland China, Pakistan, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, Sri-Lanka, Philippines

#### **D. NORTH & SOUTH AMERICA**

The United States of America

All Latin American country nationals need a visa to enter The Gambia except Venezuela and Cuba

Austria, New Zealand and Canadian nationals **do not** need a visa to enter The Gambia.

ECOWAS (The Economic Community of West African States) Nationals do not need a visa to enter The Gambia.

#### **ENTRY CLEARANCE VISA**

The Entry Visa enables checks to be made on a passenger before travelling so in some cases it could facilitate the grant of an Entry visa upon arrival, although that is not guaranteed.

The Entry Clearance Visa is usually applied for by a person having difficulties in obtaining the Entry Visa on behalf of a visitor to the Director General of The Gambia Immigration Department. The sponsor will complete a Responsibility Form

to take financial responsibility for the prospective visitors. The form must be attached to the passport. Details of the prospective visitor can be forwarded or faxed to the would-be visitor who should travel with it for submission to an Immigration Officer on arrival at the airport for an entry Visa to be issued after due examination

#### ***Time limit***

There is no time limit for consideration of an Entry Clearance application but in some cases it can be approved in a day.

The issuance of an Entry Clearance Visa is no guarantee that an Entry Visa will be granted on arrival. This is subject to examination on arrival by an Immigration Officer. The following documents are required for an Entry Visa to be granted on arrival:

1. Valid passport;
2. A genuine reason for travel supported by evidence.
3. The passenger must have a return ticket.
4. The passenger must show visible means of support to sustain himself during the visit in The Gambia.

#### **MULTIPLE VISAS**

Multiple Visas can be issued to visitors for periods of up to 6 months or more. It is discretionary and there is no prescribed time limit. Embassies abroad can issue Multiple Visas. Multiple Visas are usually issued to holders of diplomatic passports or UN passport holders or people who visit frequently. However for security reasons a Visa can be limited to single entry only.

Every visitor to the Gambia whether at the airport or borders must be examined by an Immigration Officer. They must be in possession of a valid passport; a valid Entry Clearance and/ or Entry Visa and a return ticket.

Visitors could be granted entry up to a maximum duration of 1 month, which can be extended upon expiry at Immigration Headquarters. The extension will be granted if a genuine reason is given.

### **Visa Extensions**

An ECOWAS national visitor will get a maximum of 90 days extension before becoming eligible for a Residential Permit. Non-ECOWAS nationals can be given a maximum of 56 days extension. They can then apply for a Residential Permit.

There are 2 types of Residential Permits. Permit A and Permit B.

**Permit A** is generally issued to visitors who wish to stay for periods of up to one year. Students can also apply for Residential Permit A as there is no special student visa category.

**Permit B** is for skilled and unskilled workers. They are entitled to stay under this category to work, do business or engage in any profitable activity.

Both permits are valid for one year after which they expire and must be renewed.

Non ECOWAS Nationals must apply for an Aliens Permit in addition to the Residential Permit.

### **Fees Applicable For Residential Permits and Visas (2011)**

- Residential Permit A - D1, 100

- Residential Permit B - D1,300 (ECOWAS) and D1, 800 for non ECOWAS Nationals.
- Aliens Permit - D1,500 (Non ECOWAS Nationals only)
- Entry Visas - D1,000
- Visa Extension - D500
- Entry Clearances - D1,000
- Emergency Travel Certificates: D250

### **Sanctions For Non Compliance:**

Visitors should adhere to immigration rules and not to overstay. There is discretion to either prosecute and remove or simply to remove offenders.