

Brexit update – Passports/EHIC cards/Delays at ports

1. Will your passport still be valid after Brexit?

Currently you can travel to any European Union (EU) country as long as you have a UK passport that is still valid on the day you return. Yet if the UK leaves the EU without a deal on 29 March, that is set to change.

In this case most EU countries, including Spain, Portugal, Italy, France and Germany, will require you to have **at least six months** left on your passport and you can't have a passport that's older than nine years and six months.

If not, you could be refused entry on arrival. You can use the Government's free EU Europe [passport checker tool](#) to see if yours will need renewing.

If we leave with a deal, then it's likely the current EU passport rules will remain at least until the end of 2020.

It can take up to three weeks to renew your passport, you should only do it via [Gov.uk](#)

Please make sure any non UK passport holders have valid travel documents/visas for travel

2. Is your EHIC still valid?

The free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) means when you go to the EU, you're entitled to the same treatment at state-run hospitals and GPs that locals are. In other words, if they pay you pay, if it's free for them it's free for you. Make sure everyone has a EHIC card or has applied for an EHIC card before the 29th March 2019. You will not be able to apply for one after this point, regardless of whether there is a deal or not.

As for Brexit, if we leave with no deal, it looks like EHICs will no longer be valid. If we leave with a deal, then EHICs should still work until at least the end of the transitional period in December 2020.

To this end, Mercat Tours International took the decision to provide cover, at no cost to the pupils, that will ensure that all staff and pupils have medical cover whilst overseas. It is only for the purposes of emergency medical cover in the event of a no



deal and the EHIC cards becoming invalid.

3. Make sure you have adequate Travel Insurance

Pupils and staff should still ensure that they take out adequate travel insurance to cover them for lost/damaged personal possessions and cancellation of their tour due to personal circumstances.

Half the point of travel insurance is to protect you if something happens BEFOREHAND, and you can't travel. If you don't have travel insurance, you won't be covered should anything happen beforehand, such as a personal illness, family illness or cancellation. Travel insurance is available for as little as £10 a year. The Post Office do a 7 day single trip over the counter policy, which appears to give comprehensive cover and is relatively inexpensive. Alternatively, there are many options online.

4. Delays at the ports

At this point in time, it is unclear just how much disruption will occur at the ports due to additional time being taken at passport control/ security, however this will be continuously monitored by ourselves and our coach company, Bibby's of Ingleton. Depending on how the situation develops, there may be a requirement for tours to depart earlier, however you will be advised of any changes to departure time with as much notice as possible.

We will continue to keep you advised of any further changes as they happen.

Fiona Austin

Mercat Tours International

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