



Entering the Kingdom of Thailand



Thailand has several international airports and border crossing points. As with any country, the Kingdom has specific requirements for foreigners entering the country. Upon arrival, you will present your passport to a Thai Immigration official. **Your passport will need to be valid for the intended length of stay.**



General information (What do you need? How long can you stay?)



Visa Exempt (Applies to citizens of 48 countries – permits 30 day stay if entering at an airport and 15 day stay if entering at a land border – passport holders for G7 group are permitted 30 days – USA, UK, Canada, Japan, Germany, Italy, and France) – As of August 29, 2014, period of stay can be extended 30 days



Visa on Arrival (Applies to citizens of 21 countries – permits 15 day stay – available only at 24 points of entry)



Tourist Visa (Permits a 60 day stay and can be extended for another 30 days)



Non-Immigrant Visa (Permits a 90 day stay and only given for certain specified purposes – can be extended up to one year if you meet the specified conditions)



Non-Immigrant “O-A” Visa (Permits a one year stay if you qualify to retire in the Kingdom – consequently it is often called a “retirement” or “long stay” visa)

If you have any comments on the information provided or have questions please contact info@pcecclub.org or info@pattayacityexpatsclub.com.

GENERAL INFORMATION



Thailand exempts the citizens of certain countries from having to have a visa for entry and for others they can obtain a Visa on Arrival. Citizens of other countries may be required to obtain a visa from a Thai Embassy or Consulate and for some it must be from a Thai Embassy/Consulate in their home country. However, for most people, they will qualify for a visa exemption or may obtain a visa from any Thai Embassy or Consulate.

There are two types of visas you can obtain from a Thai Embassy or Consulate – one is a Tourist Visa and the other is a Non-Immigrant Visa. The type of entry will govern the amount of time you will be permitted to stay in Thailand, i.e., Visa Exempt, Visa on Arrival, or Visa (Tourist or Non-Immigrant). Upon entry, an Immigration Officer will place a stamp in your passport showing you are permitted to stay until a certain date.

Visa Exempt - Thailand allows the citizens of several countries to enter the Kingdom without a visa. Upon arrival, Immigration will put an “admitted until date” stamp in your passport. It will show the date you must depart Thailand. The number of days you are permitted to stay will depend on your country of citizenship and whether you enter at an airport or a land border.

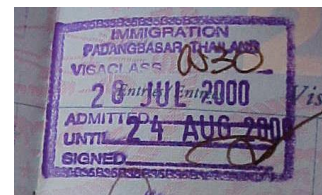


Visa - A visa is a country’s permission to enter their country and is customarily obtained at that country’s embassy or consulate. The visa will usually be placed on a passport page. Thai visas will state the type of visa it is and have an “*Enter Before*” date (this is the expiration date for the visa). Unless the visa holder has been granted “multiple” entries, the visa “*Enter Before*” date will usually be 90 days from date of issue. You must enter Thailand before that date shown on the visa. After the expiration date, it is no longer valid for entry.

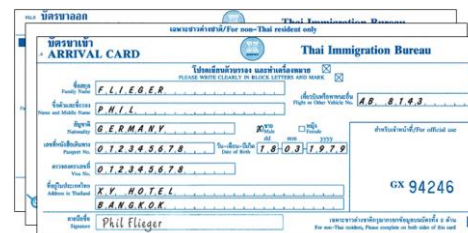


Note: If you enter the day before the visa expires, you will still be admitted for the number of days allowed by the type of visa you have.

Permission to Stay – The permission to stay stamp is often confused with a visa. **It is not a visa.** The permission to stay stamp is placed in your passport upon arrival and will note that you are admitted until a certain date. The date will depend on the number of days allowed by your type of entry – see the sections on the type of entry for information on the number of days you will be permitted to stay in Thailand.



Arrival/Departure Card, TM.6 – You will need to complete this document prior to presenting your passport at the Immigration checkpoint. The card is provided by airline personnel on flights and is available at land border crossings. Complete the two part card before going through immigration. At the Immigration checkpoint, the Arrival portion of the card will be kept and the Departure portion stamped with the date of arrival and stapled into your passport. **Do not remove the Departure card** as you will need to surrender it at the Immigration checkpoint when departing Thailand.



A copy can be [seen here](#).

CAUTION: It is strongly recommended that you do not OVERSTAY the admitted until date. You may hear that it is a simple matter and that you can pay a fine upon leaving Thailand (presently 500 Baht per day to a maximum of 20,000 Baht). However, it is illegal to overstay and if your documents are examined by the police before you arrive at your Thai immigration departure point, you will be arrested, jailed, fined, and deported at your expense. If you should inadvertently overstay, you may wish to visit an Immigration Office - it is our understanding, they will levy the fine, but also extend the date for a short period to allow you time to leave the country (of course, if the overstay is lengthy (months/years), the Immigration Office may not be so lenient).

Thai Immigration in August 2014 announced new penalties for overstays. The penalties are in addition to the monetary fine. Dependent on the number of days overstay, you will be banned from entering Thailand for a specified period. [Click Here](#) for Thai Immigration Notice regarding the period to be banned depending on length of overstay which goes into effect March 20, 2016. NOTE: If you are caught and arrested for overstay, you will be banned from entering Thailand for at least 5 years regardless of the number of days.

TIP - Be sure to check the admitted until date before you leave the immigration counter at time of entry into the Kingdom. Immigration officers will usually enter the correct period, however they have been known to make mistakes. The best time to clear this up is at the checkpoint where you are entering. If discovered later, you may be required to return to the point of entry to have it corrected.

TIP – You may have been on a long flight and/or spent a long time in a queue at the Immigration counter; best to remember, as with most countries, entry is at the discretion of the Immigration Officer. So, it is a good idea to not show your frustration or display anger. Be polite and answer any questions from the Immigration officer. Although not a regular practice, you could be asked to show an onward airline ticket if arriving without a visa - also, if entering at a land border, you might be asked to prove you meet certain financial requirements – as explained under types of entry.

RESOURCE – You may find the following link useful – it is used by the Star Alliance Airline Group to show documents you need for entry into a country – you enter your nationality, departure country, and destination country in the places indicated: <http://www.staralliance.com/en/services/visa-and-health/#>

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Visa Exempt

Holders of passports from 48 designated countries may enter Thailand for the purpose of tourism without a visa. A [list of these countries](#) is shown on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. Please be aware that a visa exemption does not apply if you are an alien holding travel documents rather than a passport issued by these countries.

You may hear people refer to the stamp placed in their passport upon arrival as a 30 day visa (or 15 day if entering at a land border) – this sometimes leads to confusion as the stamp is not a visa; it is a stamp showing how long you are admitted to stay in the Kingdom when you are exempt from having to have a visa. ([Click Here](#) for explanation on Thai Immigration website).

Arriving at an Airport – Upon arrival at one of Thailand’s international airports, when entering as Visa Exempt, you will receive permission to stay for 30 days. Because of bilateral agreements, the citizens of Brazil, Peru, and the Republic of Korea receive a 90 day stay.

Arriving at a Land Border – Except for holders of Malaysian, UK, USA, Japan, Germany, France, Canada and Italy passports, you will receive permission to stay for 15 days. Malaysian passport holders receive 30 days and, since November 2013, the holders of UK, USA, Japan, Germany, France, Canada and Italy passports also receive 30 days. Russia has a bilateral agreement with Thailand; so Russian passport holders also receive a 30 day permission to stay at land borders.

Abuse of Visa Exempt Entry – Thailand has been cracking down on foreigners that are living in Thailand and making “border runs” so they can use the visa exemption as a means of remaining in Thailand. Presently, Thai Immigration Officers at airports and land borders have been instructed to review anyone entering on back to back Visa Exempt status, especially if it has been done several times to determine if the purpose of their entry into Thailand is actually for Tourism and not used to live in Thailand on a continuing basis. [Click here](#) to read an English translation of the guidelines issued by Thai Immigration to their officers (Please note that the translated copy is for information purposes only as the official document is the one in the Thai language).

Extension of Stay – If you enter Thailand under Visa Exempt status, you can apply for an extension of stay at a Thai Immigration Office – effective August 29, 2014, you can apply for a 30 day extension; thus being permitted to stay a maximum of 60 days – the fee for extending the original 30 day stay at Thai Immigration is 1,900 Baht.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: As of May 11, 2014, Thai Immigration land border crossings have been instructed to no longer allow back to back Visa Exempt entry. If you are in Thailand on a Visa Exempt stamp and make a “border run” to cross into a neighboring country at a land border and immediately return for another Visa Exempt stamp, you most likely will not receive one and either not allowed to enter again unless you have a Visa issued from a Thai Embassy/Consulate or given permission to stay of only 7 days to arrange for departure. It also appears this policy is also being applied at airports. On June 24, 2014, Thai Immigration provided guidance to their Officers in determining whether the alien is a tourist or someone abusing the system to be denied entry. [Click Here](#) for translated copy of Immigration Instructions regarding closer scrutiny of those entering Thailand on Visa Exempt status (please note, translated copies are not official – only the Thai version is official and if there are any discrepancies between the two, the Thai version will prevail).

CAUTION: Foreigners entering Thailand under the Tourist Visa Exemption category are also required to have adequate finances for the duration of stay in Thailand (i.e., cash 10,000 Baht per person and 20,000 Baht per family). They are also required to have evidence of onward travel within the 30 day period (i.e., airline ticket). This was usually not checked at Thai airport Immigration counters (may change because of the current crackdown), but some airlines have been known to deny boarding a flight to Thailand if the person is not traveling on a visa and does not have proof of onward travel within the 30 day permitted stay (round trip ticket or ticket to another destination outside Thailand). If you are in this situation, you may want to check with your airline on their policy before arriving at the check in counter.

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Visa on Arrival



Holders of passports from 19 countries may obtain a visa upon arrival in Thailand for a permitted stay of 15 days. [Click Here](#) for a list of these countries. Visa on Arrival is not available at all border crossings. If you plan to enter Thailand at other than an International Airport, you should contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be sure your planned entry point is one of the 24 that you can get a Visa on Arrival.

The applicant must possess the means to cover living expenses in the amount of 10,000 Baht per person or 20,000 Baht per family. The applicant must present a fully paid ticket which is usable within 15 days from the date of entry. Applicants should submit a completed application form and have attached a recent photograph (4 x 6 cm). The application fee is 1,000 Baht.

Visitors who enter the Kingdom with Visa on Arrival generally cannot file an application for extension of stay except in special cases such as illness which prevents them from travelling, etc.

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Tourist Visa



A Single Entry Tourist Visa is relatively easy to obtain, especially in your home country. For specific requirements, you should contact the Thai Embassy or Consulate where you plan to obtain the visa. The category shown on the Visa will be “TR.”

In several countries, Thailand has Honorary Consuls who are citizens of that country. They have the authority to issue tourist visas. The fee will depend on whether you are applying for a single entry or multiple entry visa. The ThaiEmbassy.org website has a [listing of Thai Embassies and Consulates](#) with a link to their website if one is available.

This website has listings of Honorary Consuls in the [Americas](#), [Europe](#), [Asia/Pacific](#) (includes Australia and New Zealand), and [Middle East & Africa](#) (includes Russia). This is a third party website, so we cannot attest to the accuracy of the listings.

Permitted Stay – Upon entry into Thailand at either an airport or a land border, you will receive a Permission to Stay stamp that will show you are admitted to stay 60 days from the date of entry.

Required Documents – Each Embassy or Consulate will have their own requirements for documents needed to obtain a Tourist Visa. This will include the [Application for Visa](#), photograph(s), and your travel document (passport) which may have a requirement of at least 6 months validity and at least one blank visa page available. Some may also require a copy of a round trip airline ticket or itinerary showing you will depart within 60 days of arrival. Other documents may also be required, e.g., the Thai Embassy in Washington, D.C. also requires a bank statement whereas it is not listed as a requirement by the Thai Consulates in Los Angeles or New York. The multiple entry Tourist Visa came into effect in November 2015. It has a 6-month validity and permits multiple entries during its validity period, each entry receiving a 60 permitted stay. It appears to qualify, you must be a resident of the country, provide bank statements with a minimum balance over a period of time, and a letter from your employer showing you have a job to go back to.

Fee – This is usually quoted in the local currency, e.g., the Thai Embassy in London charges £25 for single entry and £125 for multiple entry.

Period of Validity –Tourist visas will have an “Enter before” date – this is usually 90 days from the date of issue for single entry Tourist visas and 180 days for a multiple entry Tourist Visas– you can enter Thailand at anytime up to that date and receive a 60 day permitted stay, e.g., visa expires on November 30, 2015, you can enter on November 29, 2015 and receive a permission to stay stamp until January 28, 2016. A single entry Tourist Visa can only be used once to enter Thailand (even if your stay is less than the permitted 60 days).

Extension of Stay – Holders of a Tourist Visa can apply at an Immigration Office in Thailand for an extension of stay of up to 30 additional days – no further extensions are granted. The fee is 1,900 Baht. Before granting the extension, they may require proof of onward transportation such as an airline ticket. Extensions must be applied for before the “permitted to stay until” date shown in your passport.

Obtaining a Tourist Visa from a neighboring country – We have received reports that Thai Embassies and Consulates in neighboring countries are becoming more restrictive on the number of “back to back” Single Entry Tourist Visas they will issue. This is to hamper people using Tourist Visas to live in Thailand for an extended period. Multiple Entry Tourist Visas are not issued by Thai Embassies/Consulates to non-residents of the country in which they are located.

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Non-Immigrant Visa



The Non-Immigrant visa is available for entry into Thailand for certain specified purposes other than tourism. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Thai Embassies/Consulates have a list of the purposes for which a Non-Immigrant Visa may be issued and the general documentation required. A Non-Immigrant Visa will have one or more alphabetical letters denoting the purpose of the stay. The more common purposes are:

- Non-Immigrant “B” - Business purpose - usually requires letter from business in support of application along with other documents specified by the Thai Embassy/Consulate.
- Non-Immigrant “ED” - Education or study purpose - usually requires a letter of acceptance from the educational institution in Thailand that is to be attended. The educational institution should be one that is approved by the Ministry of Education.
- Non-Immigrant “O” - Other permitted purpose. This designation can cover a wide range, such as being married to a Thai, to visit your Thai family, to retire (if the Embassy/Consulate does not offer the “O-A” visa), for medical treatment, etc.

The ThaiEmbassy.org website has a [listing of Thai Embassies and Consulates](#) with a link to their website if one is available.

This website has listings of Honorary Consuls in the [Americas](#), [Europe](#), [Asia/Pacific](#) (includes Australia and New Zealand), and [Middle East & Africa](#) (includes Russia). This is a third party website, so we cannot attest to the accuracy of the listings.

Permitted Stay – Upon entry into Thailand at either an airport or a land border with either a Single Entry or Multiple Entry Non-Immigrant visa, you will receive a Permission to Stay stamp that will show you are admitted for 90 days from the date of entry.

Required Documents – Each Embassy or Consulate will have their own requirements for documents needed to obtain a Non-Immigrant Visa. This will include the [Application for Visa](#), photographs, and your travel document (passport) having at least 6 month validity and at least one blank visa page available. They will require additional documentation to support the purpose of your visit to Thailand. Therefore, you should contact or visit the website of the Thai Embassy or Consulate where you intend to apply for the Visa. Further, be aware that upon application, Thai Officials may require additional information and documentation in support of the application from that listed on their website.

Fee – This is usually quoted in the local currency, e.g., the Thai Embassy in Washington, D.C., charges 50 for a Single Entry or 125 for a Multiple Entry.

Period of Validity – A **Single Entry** Non-Immigrant Visa normally will expire 90 days from the date of issue – you can enter Thailand at anytime up to that date and receive a 90-day stay, e.g., visa expires on November 30, 2015, you can enter on November 29, 2015 and receive a permission to stay stamp until February 28, 2016. A **Multiple Entry** Non-Immigrant Visa will expire one year from the date of issue. You can enter Thailand anytime during the validity period and receive a 90 day stay on each entry (you are not required to stay the full 90 days – you can leave at anytime during the permitted 90 day period and receive another 90 day stay on return provided you return before the expiration date shown on the visa).

Extension of Stay – Those who enter Thailand on a Non-Immigrant Visa can apply at an Immigration Office in Thailand for an extension of stay of up to 365 additional days if they qualify for the extension. The fee is 1,900 Baht. The documentation needed will depend on the purpose for requesting the extension and is more fully discussed in the [Long Stay Extension](#) section (that topic also explains that a person who qualifies to stay in Thailand for the purpose of retirement can also enter Thailand on Visa Exempt status or with a Tourist Visa and can apply to a Thai Immigration within Thailand for issuance of a Non-Immigrant “0” Visa and then apply for an extension of stay for one year). As long as you continue to qualify for the extension, you can continue to renew the extension at a Thai Immigration Office without having to leave Thailand.

CAUTION: Multiple entry Non-Immigrant visas usually have an expiration date one year from issuance. This does not mean the visa holder can stay for one year. The permitted stay for a Non-Immigrant visa is 90 days. To stay longer, the visa holder must apply for and be granted an extension or leave Thailand and return before the expiration date on the visa. This is often achieved by visiting a neighboring country.

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Non-Immigrant “O-A” Visa



Most Thai Embassies/Consulates refer to the Non-Immigrant O-A Visa as a “Long Stay” Visa because upon arrival in Thailand, the holder will be admitted to stay for one year from the date of entry. To qualify for this category visa, you must meet the age and financial resource requirements for retiring in the Kingdom; thus many refer to this visa as a “retirement” visa. Holders of this category of visa are not permitted to work in the Kingdom. To obtain this Non-Immigrant O-A visa, you generally must apply to a Royal Thai Embassy or Consulate in your home country.¹ Before the one year period is up, you can apply to extend your stay for another year at a Thai Immigration Office in Thailand – the [Long Stay Extension](#) section.

Qualification for an “O-A” Visa – Thailand generally encourages retirees to come to Thailand and live. You must be at least age 50 and have financial resources equivalent to 800,000 Thai Baht. This can be having the equivalent amount in a bank or having an income equivalent to at least 65,000 Thai Baht per month. You may also use a combination of the two (The monthly income times 12 months plus the amount in a bank must be at least equivalent to 800,000 Thai Baht, e.g. equivalent of 440,000 Baht in a bank and an income equivalent to 30,000 Baht per month would total 800,000 Baht - $12 \times 30,000 = 360,000 + 440,000 = 800,000$).

Permitted Stay – Upon entry into Thailand at either an airport or a land border with either a Single Entry or Multiple Entry Non-Immigrant “O-A” Visa, you will receive a stamp admitting you for one year from the date of entry. If you have a multiple entry Non-Immigrant “O-A” Visa, you can leave Thailand and return anytime during the validity period of the Visa (the expiration date will be shown on the Visa). During the validity period of the O-A Visa, each time you re-enter Thailand, you will receive another one year stay. See the CAUTION below about when Re-Entry Permits are required.

¹ If you are residing in, but not a citizen, a country where this category visa is issued, you may be able to apply for it in that country, e.g., Philippines and Japan.

CAUTION: If you enter Thailand on a Single Entry Non-Immigrant “O-A” Visa, you will need to obtain a “Re-Entry Permit” from Thai Immigration if you plan to leave Thailand – [See the section on Re-Entry permits](#). Likewise, if you have a **Multiple Entry Non-Immigrant “O-A” Visa** and you plan to leave but will not re-enter Thailand before the expiration date shown on the Visa, but before your current permission to stay until date, you will need to obtain a Re-Entry permit before you depart. If you reenter Thailand after the expiration date shown on the visa without getting the extension and re-entry permit, you will find that the O-A visa is no longer valid and you will be admitted for the number of days permitted for those entering as Visa Exempt.

Required Documents – The documentation may vary somewhat from each Embassy or Consulate. You should contact the Embassy/Consulate in your home country or visit their website to determine the documents and fees required. Generally, the documents are:

1. Completed Application for Visa (can be downloaded from Embassy/Consulate website or from Ministry of Foreign Affairs website)
2. Passport with **at least 18 months** validity.
3. Recent 2” X 2” passport type photograph.
4. Evidence of Financial Resources
 - a. Letter from Bank attesting to a balance equivalent to 800,000 Thai Baht, OR
 - b. Letter from pension provider or other sources showing the equivalent of 65,000 Thai Baht in monthly income, OR
 - c. Combination of a and b that shows when combined, a year’s income plus the money on deposit at a bank will be equivalent to at least 800,000 Thai Baht.
5. Medical Certificate – Your Doctor may charge for providing the certificate or require a physical examination as part of the process. (The Thai Embassy or Consulate may have a copy of the certificate available for download). Basically it is a doctor’s certification to show you do not have Leprosy, Tuberculosis, drug addiction, Elephantiasis, Alcoholism, or third phase of Syphilis.
6. Police Report – Your local police agency may charge for the report or it may take an extended period to provide. (Thai Embassy in USA states that it must be a letter of verification stating that the applicant has no criminal record – the letter needs to be dated within 3 months of the application)
7. Accompanying Spouse – **If** you will be accompanied by your spouse who is not eligible to apply for the Category “O-A” visa (age and financial resources), he or she can apply for a Non-Immigrant “O” visa. In addition to items 1 through 3, a marriage certificate must be provided as evidence. **Note:** The spouse will be admitted for 90 days from date of entry into Thailand. The spouse will then need to go to Thai Immigration in Thailand and apply for an extension based on their spouse’s category “O-A” Visa – See the [Long Stay Extension](#) section for the process.

The Thai Embassy/Consulate will usually have a limit on how old documents listed in 4, 5 and 6 can be, e.g., not more than 30, 60, days, etc. They may also require one or more of the document(s) listed to be notarized (Los Angeles Consulate states the financial information and the medical certificate must be notarized). Further, each Embassy/Consulate will usually have their own requirements for the number of photographs and copies of each document they will need.

The following links are to Thai Embassy/Consulates in USA, Australia, UK, Canada, and New Zealand on their requirements for the O-A category Non-Immigrant Visa:

Thai Embassy to USA: <http://dc.thaiembdc.org/consular/VISA/Non-Imglong.aspx>
Los Angeles Consulate: http://www.thaiconsulatela.org/service visa_detail.aspx?link_id=48
Chicago Consulate: <http://thaiconsulatechicago.org/pages-non-immigrant-visa-eng.html>
New York Consulate: <http://www.thaiconsulnewyork.com/english/vnon-a.php>

Thai Embassy to UK: <http://thaiembassyuk.org.uk/?q=node/51>

Thai Embassy to Australia: http://canberra.thaiembassy.org/doc/info/visa/info_long_stay visa.pdf
Sydney Consulate: <http://www.thaiconsulatesydney.org/english/visa#country/a/australia>

Thai Embassy to Canada links to Ministry of Foreign Affairs website:

<http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/services/123/15385-Non-Immigrant-Visa-%22O-A%22-%28Long-Stay%29.html>

Extension of Stay – Those who enter Thailand on a Non-Immigrant “O-A” Visa are permitted to stay one year. See the Permitted Stay information above for holders of a Multiple Entry Non-Immigrant O-A Visa. Prior to the date shown on the “permitted to stay until,” you can apply to renew your extension for another year at a Thai Immigration Office in Thailand. The fee is 1,900 Baht. The documentation needed is more fully discussed in the [Long Stay Extension](#) section.

NOTE: If you meet the age and financial resource requirements listed above, you can enter Thailand on Visa Exempt status or with a Tourist Visa. You then obtain a Non-Immigrant “O” Visa from a Thai Immigration receiving a 90 day permission to stay stamp. If using the Chonburi (Pattaya) Immigration Office, you apply for an extension of stay for one year at the time you apply for the Visa. You will then receive a one year extension added on to the 90 days, thus getting a 15 month stay before you need to renew your extension. Other Immigration Offices may be different. Not all Immigration Offices can issue the Non-Immigrant “O” visa. Also, if applying in Bangkok, they will issue the Non-Immigrant “O” visa and advise you to return in 60 days to apply for the extension. **Also, when a retiree applies for a Non-Immigrant “O” Visa and extension in Thailand, a medical certificate or a police report is not required.** However, if you are using the bank deposit of 800,000 Baht in total or in part, it will have to be on deposit in a Thai bank for a specified period of time; whereas if applying for a Non-Immigrant O-A Visa at a Thai Embassy/Consulate in your own country, the funds can be on deposit in your bank there. This procedure is more fully discussed in the [Long Stay Extension](#) section.

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