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PASSPORT

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BEST-KEPT SECRETS!**

Passport's Forum for Letters, Comments, Information, and Anecdotes

SHOW US YOUR VISA

While making preparations to head down to Florianópolis, Brazil for the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association Convention this month, I had to spend a \$140 and a whole lot of time applying for and getting a Brazilian visa. Because I received a tourist visa, it says that it is good for ten years, unfortunately though, my passport expires next year. What can I do? Should I try to peel it out of my old passport and put it in my new one?

—Michael T., Brooklyn, NY

First things first, don't tamper with a visa. Unless you want to red flag a customs agent. Plus an agent can easily figure out that the visa is older than your passport. When you're applying for your new passport, you will get your old passport back with a hole punched through the cover signifying that it is now expired. (Note: sometimes your new passport will come in the mail before your expired passport.) While the passport may be expired, the visa inside it is not. When you return to Brazil, you can bring your old passport with the not-yet-expired visa. As long as your name on the new passport and the visa match, you should have no problem. Of course, the best way to make sure that this is an acceptable practice is to give the embassy a call.

TRAVELING WITH TWO PASSPORTS?

I just came back from a trip to Egypt, where I was questioned by immigration officers when they noticed a stamp in my passport indicating a prior trip to Israel. I am planning to visit various Middle East countries during the summer, and I would like to avoid being pulled aside and questioned, encountering delays, or not being allowed into certain countries. I've heard about people having a second passport, but have no idea if it's really legitimate. How do I get it, and what features does it have to help my situation? Any light you can shed on this situation is greatly appreciated.

—Tristan S., Philadelphia, PA

Having a second passport is definitely not a myth, Tristan, and it does offer some benefits that can help you and other frequent international travelers. Along with your first American passport, which is valid for ten years, you can apply for another that is valid for two years. To address your first issue with avoiding trouble



Photo: Martin Novak

at the immigration desk in a place like Egypt, you can use a second passport instead of your usual one, thus you won't have to show the Israeli stamp. The US Government allows independent travelers to apply for a secondary passport, as long as they can demonstrate the need for it. The steps are actually quite simple: first you will go to the State Department travel site (www.travel.state.gov) and go to the passport for US Citizens link, that will then take you to the forms section where you will choose to submit the Form DS-11 (the form for another passport). You can fill out the application online and print it. You will also need a short letter explaining why you need a second passport. This reason could be because of business, your career, or just because you are a frequent traveler. You can attach with that a future itinerary, if you have one, or show a past itinerary. Along with the letter, you will need proof of citizenship, an ID, and a passport photo. If you choose to complete the application process yourself, the cost is \$135.

SOUTH AFRICAN HONEYMOON

My fiancé and I are getting married next month, and we're busy planning our honeymoon to South Africa. We've always wanted to go there, but we're concerned about finding a

gay-friendly place to stay. We're also looking for a gay-friendly company to go on a safari with so we can get up close and personal with some of the wildlife. Any suggestions?

—Doug P., New York, NY

*There are so many wonderful places in South Africa where you can spend your honeymoon. Some resorts of note include, **& Beyond** (www.andbeyond.com), which operates boutique hotels like the Rock Lodge and Forest Lodge; Singita Game Reserves (www.singita.com); **Ellerman House** (www.ellerman.co.za), **Kensington Place** (www.kensingtonplace.co.za), and **Manna Bay** (www.mannaabay.com). **Out2Africa** (www.out2africa.com) is a gay-owned travel company that offers safaris throughout South Africa. Also, **Extraordinary Journeys** (www.ejafrica.com) is a wonderful gay- and lesbian-friendly company that can help put together an adventurous trip for you and your partner. When booking your trip, make sure to visit **South African Airways Vacations** (www.flysaavacations.com) for great deals and special offers.*

If you have a question regarding travel, or would like to share one of your experiences with our readers, please write to us at curious@passportmagazine.net