

Schengen visa rules allow stays of up to 90 days in any 180-day period across the 29 Schengen Area member states. Applicants must submit an application form, valid passport, ICAO-compliant photos, medical travel insurance, and proof of purpose, financial means, accommodation, and intention to return. Entry into the Schengen Area starts a 180-day counter, and overstaying is not allowed. The visa sticker specifies permitted days.

Key Rules

- **Visa validity:** Maximum 90 days within any 180-day period; applies to the entire Schengen Area, not per country.
- **Passport validity:** Must be valid for at least 3 months beyond intended departure.
- **Entry types:**
 - Single-entry: one entry only.
 - Multiple-entry: repeated entries allowed, but stays must follow the 90/180 rule.
- **Competent authority:** Apply to the embassy/consulate of your main destination or the first-entry country if no main destination.

Required Documents

- Completed Schengen visa application form
- Valid passport with minimum three months validity beyond departure date
- ICAO-standard passport photos

- Proof of Schengen medical travel insurance (covers medical emergencies, hospitalization, repatriation; minimum €30,000)
- Supporting documents for purpose of stay:
 - Flight bookings
 - Hotel bookings or accommodation proof
 - Bank statements, payslips
 - Proof of financial means
 - Cover letter explaining purpose
 - Evidence of intention to return
- Fingerprints are collected unless exempt

Recent Changes for Indian Nationals

- Eligibility for **2-year multiple-entry** visa requires at least two previously used Schengen visas in the last three years.
- After using a 2-year MEV, eligibility may extend to a **5-year multiple-entry** visa.

- Visa validity cannot exceed passport expiry.

Schengen Travel Rules (Dos)

1.

Ensure proper validity

- Visa stays max 90 days in 180 days; cannot be exceeded.
- Invalid visa can lead to penalties or bans.

2.

Carry essential documents

- Passport, insurance, accommodation proof, return ticket, and other required docs must be carried.

3.

Respect local customs

- Understand local traditions; behave accordingly.

Schengen Travel Rules (Don'ts)

1.

Don't ignore travel insurance

- Mandatory; minimum €30,000 coverage for emergencies.

2.

Avoid overstaying

- Overstaying can result in deportation or legal consequences.

3.

Don't carry prohibited items

- Must follow each country's customs regulations.

New Visa Rules Summary

- Indians can receive 2-year Schengen visas.
- This can extend to 5-year multiple-entry visas.
- Allows multiple entries without needing new visas as long as passport validity supports it.

FAQ Extract

- **What is a Schengen visa?**
Allows travel across 29 Schengen countries with one visa.
- **Meaning of first point of entry?**
The first Schengen country you will enter; responsible for issuing visa if it's your main entry.
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How to apply?

Apply at the relevant consulate or online; travel brokers can assist.