

Getting OUT and Staying OUT!

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WARNING: Please note that this document attempts to inform you of certain events which have not yet taken place but which are possibly going to happen in the near future. This particularly applies to any reference to Romania and Bulgaria regarding their 'partly' joining the Schengen Zone on 31 March 2024¹. Kosovo² has also joined the Schengen Zone. Bulgaria had planned to start using the Euro (instead of the Bulgarian Lev) on 1 January 2024³ but this has been postponed, probably until 1 January 2025⁴. Romania's currency change date is yet to be confirmed.

NOTE: Croatia joined the Schengen Zone on 1 January 2023. It also changed its currency from the Kuna to the Euro on this date. Expect prices there to rise! – as is usually the case, the locals aren't happy!⁵

CAUTION: This document is intended for British persons travelling by road directly into Europe. Some of the information presented here may not be applicable to people from Northern Ireland who will have to carry out their own research. It does NOT provide any information regarding air-travel. It does not include information for those travelling directly from Great Britain to non-EU and/or non-Schengen Zone countries. This is particularly relevant to those travelling with pets where the export of pets to non-EU countries requires specific documentation⁶. Although some long-term 'escape' information is provided, this document is primarily written for travellers – tourists - rather than folks wishing to move to another country permanently.

As far as I'm aware, never in human history, and certainly in my lifetime since WWII and probably well before then, have we had so many restrictions to our freedom. As far as travellers are concerned, everyone on the planet is being restricted as to where they can go and for how long they can stay in a particular place. Compiling this document has brought to my attention just how many restrictions have been imposed upon us. This needs to change. We need to restore our freedom before things get even worse – as they do almost month-by-month.

¹ Refer to URL: [Romania and Bulgaria partly join Schengen area after thirteen-year-long wait | Euronews](#) and: [Romania and Bulgaria will enter the Schengen zone in 2024. What will change for travellers? | Euronews](#)

² Refer to URL: [Kosovo celebrates its long-awaited joining of the Schengen zone | Euronews](#)

³ Refer to URL: [Bulgaria plans to adopt euro in 2024 – EURACTIV.com](#)

⁴ Refer to URL: [Bulgaria scraps January 2024 target for adopting euro | Reuters](#)

⁵ Refer to URL: [Croatia celebrates bumper summer season after joining the euro. But locals aren't so happy | Euronews](#)

⁶ Refer to URL: [Taking your pet dog, cat or ferret abroad: Travelling to a non-EU country - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and URL: [Getting a French pet passport is harder in Brexit clampdown - Complete France](#)

With certain restrictions, we are now able to travel abroad again following the ridiculously extreme limitations imposed by governments around the world because of the Coronavirus. There are also a number of extra factors UK travellers need to consider before setting off – particularly for long-term or permanent travellers. None of the information written below takes into consideration the COVID regulations regarding travel, therefore travellers will need to research the rules that apply at the time they are going to travel.

Trying to escape the worst of the UK weather is very important for many long-term travellers. As the UK has now left the EU, there are far more travel (and working⁷) restrictions than during the previous 48 or more years, so we have to adjust our lifestyles accordingly.

We also have to consider that the main areas of travel throughout Europe include all of the EU and many non-EU member countries which form the Schengen Zone. Be reminded that there are now 29 (30 including Kosovo) Schengen nations (22 within the EU plus Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Iceland). Therefore, we have to comply with the travel restrictions that apply to all of this zone – which covers a far greater geographical area than the EU. There is no indication that the UK will ever join the Schengen Zone agreement which requires open borders; which the UK is very much against and was one of the reasons for their leaving the EU. This document is written mainly for those who want to travel using their own vehicle. Most of those folks will be travelling to France⁸, (albeit some to The Netherlands or Scandinavia). Now the UK is no longer part of the EU there are changes that we all need to be aware of. And remember, the Customs rules for what you can take into each country have changed too⁹.

Joining Schengen is a legal obligation for every EU country. Only Ireland, which negotiated an opt-out clause decades ago, and Cyprus, which remains split between north and south, have not applied to enter the passport-free area. It should also be remembered that Northern Ireland is not part of Great Britain. Currently, UK citizens do not need to apply for a Schengen Visa. However, the EU is set to introduce two new travel systems that will affect those travelling to Europe. One is the Entry and Exit System (EES), an electronic passport monitoring system that is now due to come into effect on 6 October 2024¹⁰, with the obligation to provide fingerprints and facial biometrics at the border (more aggravation). Big Brother will be watching. The other is the EU Travel Information & Authorisation System (ETIAS)¹¹. “*Significant and continued disruption for a very long time*”: that was the gloomy worst-case scenario set out this week (last week in May 2023) by Doug Bannister, chief executive of the Port of Dover. As boss of the main surface access point between the UK and continental Europe, he was warning of the consequences of the new EU Entry-Exit System, to which the UK asked to become subject.¹² When it takes effect, every departing British passport holder at Dover will have their fingerprints and facial biometrics taken. At perhaps 10 minutes for a family of four in a car, compared with 90 seconds at present, Kent could quickly become gridlocked. Since Gibraltar has now entered the Schengen Zone¹³, UK citizens may require an ETIAS visa waiver in the future to visit 'the Rock'.

⁷ How remote working by people on the move throughout Europe is affected I have no idea and is beyond the scope of this document.

⁸ Refer to URL: [Everything You Need for Post-Brexit Travel Between France & UK: Document Checklist - FrenchEntrée \(frenchentree.com\)](https://www.frenchentree.com) and: https://www.eutouring.com/uk_post_brexit_travel_regulations.html

⁹ Refer to URL: [Post-Brexit Customs Restrictions & Allowances Between France and the UK - FrenchEntrée \(frenchentree.com\)](https://www.frenchentree.com)

¹⁰ Refer to URL: [EU's Entry/Exit Scheme Launch Confirmed for 2024 \(etias.com\)](https://www.etias.com)

¹¹ Refer to URL: [ETIAS - European Travel Information and Authorisation System \(schengenvisainfo.com\)](https://www.schengenvisainfo.com)

¹² Refer to URL: [A celebration of Brexit benefits for travellers | The Independent](https://www.the-independent.com)

¹³ Refer to URL: <https://www.etiasvisaeurope.co.uk/gibraltar-is-a-member-of-the-schengen-zone/>

the entire Schengen Zone, it is not possible to travel from country to country after the initial 90-day period. This condition also means that visitors must leave the Schengen Zone through that specific country where the extension was applied. These conditions certainly limit the value of the visa waiver to travellers.

Another potential problem is that Britons may be required to show proof of accommodation when holidaying in Spain, with fines of more than £8,000 for hosts whose guests overstay in the popular tourist destination. People who don't hold an EU passport now have to carry proof they have accommodation for the whole of their stay in Spain when visiting as a tourist for 90 days or fewer¹⁸.



Map courtesy of URL: [Schengen Area Countries - List of 29 Member States \(schengenvisainfo.com\)](https://www.schengenvisainfo.com)

¹⁸ Refer to URL: [Brit tourists staying with friends in Spain warned after hosts could face £8,000 fines \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com)

The map above has not been updated to include Kosovo as part of the Schengen Zone. The text on the page of the link also states that Kosovo is not in the EU or the Schengen Zone but other sources state that Kosovo entered the Schengen Zone on 1 January 2024¹⁹.

The European countries that are not part of the Schengen Zone are Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Ireland, North Macedonia, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the Vatican City. However, some of these countries are considered as being an equivalent as they don't have border controls. These include (but aren't limited to): Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican City, and should therefore be considered as being visited in the same 90-day period as the other Schengen countries. Some countries require you to register at the local police station within a short time of entering the country. For example, Bosnia and Herzegovina require that you register with the police within 72 hours of arrival.²⁰ Check the requirements of other countries before you enter them. Sadly, Bosnia and Herzegovina may soon be controlled by the EU²¹.

The tables on the following pages show suggested schedules that will help you meet this '90-day' requirement and keep you within the visa regulations - and keep you on the move in (mainly) good weather throughout a calendar year. If, for example, you set off from the UK in July, you could tour parts of Europe on your way to say, Albania²² (refer to the special supplement at the end of this document), where you would stay during August and September. Head off through Southern Europe in early October to arrive in Morocco²³ for your 90-day winter stay. In February and March, you could slowly make your way across Europe again to the UK for your Spring-time visit. Staying away from the UK almost completely is also an option. This will be considered in more detail later in this document.

Before travelling anywhere out of the Schengen Zone, you should also consider some of the problems associated with this outlined in *Travelling Far Away* in this document.

This is only a rough guide which, although split into calendar months, is not exact as the 90-day maximum visit period stipulated is not exactly 3 months. Also, remember that the 180-day period keeps rolling, therefore, anytime you wish to enter the Schengen Zone, you have to count backwards over the last 180 days, and see if you have been present in the Schengen for more than 90 days throughout that period²⁴.

You'll see that I've specified 95/96 days in the UK. The alternative to this would be 90 days in another non-Schengen zone country which isn't included in your other travel destinations. This in turn would mean that the extra 5 or 6 days would 'move' the calendar after every 360-day period – which is why I've shown a stay of 95 or 96 days in the UK (if you're a UK citizen / resident). Bear in mind that to travel from the UK to any non-Schengen country (except Ireland) by motor vehicle you have to travel through countries within the Schengen Zone. This also applies when travelling from Albania to Morocco. An alternative idea would be to stay in a non-Schengen Zone country which permits you to stay for a much longer period of time.

¹⁹ Refer to URL: [Kosovo joins Europe's visa-free Schengen zone \(lemonde.fr\)](https://www.lemonde.fr)

²⁰ Refer to URL: [Entry requirements - Bosnia and Herzegovina travel advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

²¹ [Brussels recommends opening EU membership talks with Bosnia and Herzegovina | Euronews](https://www.euronews.com)

²² Many car insurance policies do NOT include cover for anywhere outside the Shengen Zone, such as Albania.

²³ Many car insurance policies do NOT include cover for anywhere in Africa – including Morocco.

²⁴ Refer to URL: <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/visa-calculator/> There is also an interesting document at URL: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/6891/html/>

There are legal ways of staying in the Schengen area for more than the 90-day limit²⁵ but most of these methods are not available to the tourist as they may involve working or marriage!

| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------------|-----|-----|---------------------------|-----|------|------|---|------|---------|---------|-----|
| Morocco | Sch | Sch | UK ²⁶ | UK | UK | Sch | Serbia, Montenegro, Albania ²⁷ | Sch | Morocco | Morocco | |
| Number of Days: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 30 | 30 | 30 | 95 (96 in a leap year) | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | |

To help you work out your travelling days, there is a 90/180 day rule Schengen calculator at URL: <https://ninety180.com/> and URL: [Schengen Zone Calculator \(adambard.github.io\)](https://adambard.github.io/Schengen-Zone-Calculator/)

Notes:

- a) The maximum stay in Serbia and Montenegro (and most other non-Schengen zone countries) is 90 days, usually in any 180-day period. However, some countries permit you to stay longer if you apply for temporary residence.
- b) British citizens can enter and remain in Albania²⁸ for a maximum of 90 days in every 6-month period without a visa. The Albanian authorities require anyone staying longer than 90 days to apply at a local police station for a residence permit.
- c) You may need to adjust the length of your stay in the UK and other countries in order to comply with the above restrictions.
- d) The maximum stay in Morocco is 90 days. If you wish to extend your stay, you may request an extension at the nearest Police Precinct in Morocco (<https://visaguide.world/africa/morocco-visa/>).
- e) Refer to **Warning Notes** starting on page 12.

²⁵ Refer to URL: [How to Stay in Europe Longer Than 90 Days—Legally! \(2023\) \(iamaleen.com\)](https://www.iamaleen.com/how-to-stay-in-europe-longer-than-90-days-legal-2023/)

²⁶ Or an alternative non-Schengen Zone country, for example, a tour through Turkey, Georgia and Armenia (and a visit to Albania). Some car insurance policies might NOT include cover for these countries. Check before you go!

Tukey allows you to stay for 90 days in any 180-day period - refer to URL: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/turkey/entry-requirements#:~:text=Visas,in%20any%20180%2Dday%20period.>

Armenia permits you to stay for 180 days per year (a very good option) – refer to URL: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/armenia/entry-requirements#:~:text=British%20Citizen%20passport%20holders%20can,to%20180%20days%20per%20year.> and: URL: [Visa - mfa.am](https://www.mfa.am) – it may be possible to extend your visa if you have good reason.

Georgia permits you to stay for 360 days - refer to URL <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-georgia#:~:text=of%20Georgia%20website-.Entry%20and%20residence%20requirements,Georgia%20through%20Public%20Service%20Hall.>

²⁷ Or a different alternative non-Schengen Zone and Non-EU country.

²⁸ Refer to URL: [Entry requirements - Albania travel advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/albania/entry-requirements)

Staying out of the United Kingdom

For those who want to travel for a whole year²⁹, or more, away from the UK there are a number of options, which, to a certain extent have been mentioned above. Do remember that you can only consider this option if your vehicle doesn't need an MOT Test Certificate. One of the main options would be to stay in the Schengen Zone for the maximum permitted number of days (90 days per rolling 180-day period) and the rest of the year in countries outside of the Schengen Zone, as mentioned in footnotes above. A tour through history and stunning scenery is well worthwhile and getting off the beaten track has great appeal for many travellers. A tour in the Caucasus (and other information about this region) is described at URL:

http://drivethrutours.com/Grand_Tours/mountains/caucasus/Caucasus_tours.html

At the time of writing, the land border between Turkey and Armenia³⁰ is closed, although there are occasional direct flights between Yerevan and Istanbul. For those who are unfamiliar with this part of the world (most of us!) it is useful to remember that Armenia is considered to be one of the safest countries in the world, although one should stay well clear of the Nagorno-Karabakh area where there is a military conflict taking place. The FCDO³¹ advise against all travel within 5 km of the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and along the M16/H26 road between the towns of Ijevan and Noyemberyan (as of 25 March 2021). If you wish to travel into Armenia from Turkey the way to do this, if the Turkey / Armenia border is closed, would be via Georgia³² (and enjoy a tour there and in Azerbaijan), before entering Armenia from Georgia³³.

Returning to our travel calendar, we can make simple changes to follow the law and stay out of the UK for a whole year – or longer. Again, we depart from the UK in July. If staying away for a second year, one could stay in the Turkey and Caucasus area from April to September before heading to Morocco³⁴ for the winter. The permutations are, of course, up to the individual traveller to work out.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|------------------------|---------|-----|-----|------------------------------|-----|------|------|-----------------------------|------|-----|---------|---------|
| Year 1 | Morocco | Sch | Sch | Turkey and the Caucasus Area | | | Sch | Serbia, Montenegro, Albania | | Sch | Morocco | Morocco |
| Year 2 | Morocco | Sch | Sch | Turkey and the Caucasus Area | | | | | | Sch | Morocco | Morocco |
| Number of Days: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Year 1 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 95 (96 in a leap year) | | | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 |
| Year 2 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 185 (186 in a leap year) | | | | | | 30 | 30 | 30 |

²⁹ At some stage you will need to visit the UK, with your vehicle to get an up-to-date MOT Test Certificate (if appropriate). Allow for this in your travelling days allowance in the UE / Schengen Zone.

³⁰ Many car insurance policies do NOT include cover for anywhere outside Europe – including Turkey, Armenia and Georgia.

³¹ Refer to URL: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/armenia/safety-and-security#:~:text=The%20FCDO%20advise%20against%20all,towns%20of%20Ijevan%20and%20Noyemberyan.&text=Armenia%27s%20borders%20with%20Iran%20and,due%20to%20COVID%2D19%20restrictions.>

³² Many car insurance policies do NOT include cover for anywhere outside Europe – including Georgia.

³³ Refer to URL: <https://caravanistan.com/border-crossings/georgia/>

³⁴ Many car insurance policies do NOT include cover for anywhere in Africa – including Morocco. Check before you go!

Note: At some stage you will need to visit the UK, with your vehicle to get an up-to-date MOT Test Certificate (if appropriate). Allow for this in your travelling days allowance in the EU / Schengen Zone.

The (not so good) Alternative

I hardly dare mention this, but the only other option is to work within the 90 days in 180 days restriction by doing just that. Touring abroad for 90 days, then returning to the UK for the next 90 days before heading off again. In this scenario, the choice of dates for maximising the better weather is important. Maybe something as per the table below would be suitable – bearing in mind that 90 days is not exactly three calendar months.

| Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|------|-----|------|-----|-----|
| Travelling Abroad Portugal and/or Spain | | | UK | | | Travelling Abroad Anywhere in Europe | | | UK | | |

Of course, this isn't all bad news. In fact, there are several advantages to this:

- a) Plenty of time to get your vehicle serviced and MOT tested in the UK.
- b) Easier to maintain or adjust your home insurance if there are any time restrictions to that.
- c) The winter months spent in Portugal or Spain means very low site fees if you're camping or caravanning – helps to balance the cost of extortionate site fees during the summer months!
- d) Spring time in the UK can often be very pleasant and tolerably warm.
- e) Plenty of time to spend with family and friends in the UK.

The downside is the question of whether or not 90 days gives you enough time out of the UK to tour the routes you'd like travel – after all, you want to be able to visit places at your leisure, not spend all your 90 days driving the roads of Europe – or beyond. My suggestion would be to allow a total mileage of no more than about 4500 miles in 90 days starting and finishing in Calais. For your total tour, add both time and distance out of the 90 restriction for possibly long drives to and from your home to Dover / Calais. An average of roughly 50 miles per day may not seem a lot, but there will be days where you won't want to be driving at all and many days where short distances will take you to local places of interest nearby where you are staying. Remember that a return trip from Calais to the Algarve region of Portugal is a distance of about 2800 miles, plus the distance from your home to Calais. A return trip to Athens from Calais is about 3800 miles. Add a visit to Istanbul and you have about 4350 miles under your belt – the miles soon add up! As does the cost! The other (probably cheaper) option would be to cover less distance but explore more thoroughly a smaller area – or just sit on a beach in the sunshine.

Another Alternative – Somewhat Better

An option that is well worth considering is that of a holiday home. Now, I realise the same 90/180-day rule still applies unless you have residency, but hear me out!

Buying a holiday home can be quite expensive, as we all know but how about sharing the cost with friends?

Read on.....

In order to maximise your 90 days in 180 day rolling period, you can work it very easily by a system of 30 days in the Schengen Zone followed by 30 days back home in the UK. You can continue this for almost a whole year (360 days and start again) thereby getting your full allowance of days in the sun. By working this approximately month-on, month-off system with another friend, couple or family, the property will be occupied throughout the year and you'll all get the best out of your home abroad.

If the 30/30 day rotation is rather too demanding on travel time and cost, a more relaxed rotation which I believe works within the 90/180 day restriction is a 45/45 day rotation. See next page for an example.

Okay, I know it's not perfect as there is a lot of travelling to and fro to consider, but there are cheap flights to many destinations and you can leave a shared car there for use when you're staying in your holiday home. I suggest buying a car locally as that way you don't have to return it to the UK every year for its MOT test and you can purchase insurance and any road tax locally too. Choose your location carefully so you are not too far from an airport, in an area that gets plenty of sunshine and warmth and, maybe, not too far from the ski slopes in the winter. Doesn't seem like a bad option. Not only that, but by sharing the purchase price and running expenses the cost is immediately halved. By occupying it throughout the year, jobs like cutting the grass and maintenance are also shared. If neither of you needed to use the house for a particular 30-day period it could even be rented out for that time – especially to friends you have that would take care of the place.

Example:

Enter your stays in the Schengen area below, in chronological order.

| Entry | Exit | Duration | |
|---|---|----------|---|
| <input type="text" value="2023-11-01"/> | <input type="text" value="2023-11-30"/> | 30 days | ✘ |
| <input type="text" value="2024-01-01"/> | <input type="text" value="2024-01-30"/> | 30 days | ✘ |
| <input type="text" value="2024-03-01"/> | <input type="text" value="2024-03-30"/> | 30 days | ✘ |
| <input type="text" value="2024-05-01"/> | <input type="text" value="2024-05-30"/> | 30 days | ✘ |
| <input type="text" value="2024-07-01"/> | <input type="text" value="2024-07-30"/> | 30 days | ✘ |
| <input type="text" value="2024-09-01"/> | <input type="text" value="2024-09-30"/> | 30 days | ✘ |
| <input type="text" value="2024-11-01"/> | <input type="text" value="2024-11-30"/> | 30 days | ✘ |

[+ Add a stay](#)

Results

This schedule is ok!

Courtesy of URL: [Schengen Zone Calculator \(adambard.github.io\)](https://adambard.github.io)

Another visa calculator is available at URL: <https://www.visa-calculator.com/>

I believe I'm correct in writing that: 30/30; 45/45; 90/90 day rotations work within the 90/180 day restriction. An example of an approximately 45/45 day rotation is shown below:

| Date of Entry | Date of Exit | Days of Stay | Days of Stay in the Last 180 Day | Last Day to Stay |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 01-04-2024 | 15-05-2024 | 45 | 45 | 29-06-2024 |
| 01-07-2024 | 14-08-2024 | 45 | 90 | 14-08-2024 |
| 01-10-2024 | 14-11-2024 | 45 | 90 | 14-11-2024 |
| 01-01-2025 | 14-02-2025 | 45 | 90 | 14-02-2025 |

OK

If you re-enter the Schengen area on 30-03-2025, you can stay 45 days until 13-05-2025.

If you re-enter the Schengen area on 16-05-2025, you can stay 90 days until 13-08-2025.

www.visa-calculator.com

Alternatively, you could spend 90 days in the Schengen Area followed by 90 days out, as this example:

Enter your stays in the Schengen area below, in chronological order.

| Entry | Exit | Duration |
|------------|------------|----------|
| 2023-11-01 | 2024-01-29 | 90 days |
| 2024-05-01 | 2024-07-29 | 90 days |
| 2024-11-01 | 2025-01-29 | 90 days |
| 2025-05-01 | 2025-07-29 | 90 days |

[+ Add a stay](#)

Results

This schedule is ok!

Courtesy of URL: [Schengen Zone Calculator \(adambard.github.io\)](https://adambard.github.io/Schengen-Zone-Calculator/)

Unfortunately, a 60/60-day rotation doesn't work in complying with the 90/180 day rule, although a 60/90 rotation works fine – as shown below:

Enter your stays in the Schengen area below, in chronological order.

| Entry | Exit | Duration | |
|---|---|----------|---|
| <input type="text" value="2023-11-01"/> | <input type="text" value="2023-12-30"/> | 60 days | ✘ |
| <input type="text" value="2024-04-01"/> | <input type="text" value="2024-05-30"/> | 60 days | ✘ |
| <input type="text" value="2024-09-01"/> | <input type="text" value="2024-10-30"/> | 60 days | ✘ |
| <input type="text" value="2025-02-01"/> | <input type="text" value="2025-04-01"/> | 60 days | ✘ |

[+ Add a stay](#)

Results

This schedule is ok!

Courtesy of URL: [Schengen Zone Calculator \(adambard.github.io\)](https://adambard.github.io)

Share-Rent – a Better Option?

Another, similar option, would be to share-rent a holiday home. A small place in Spain³⁵ or Italy³⁶, for example, can be rented for about £500 / month on a long-term basis. Share that with another friend or family and your bill will be only £3000 / year plus expenses – less than the cost of a seasonal pitch for your caravan in much of the UK or Europe. Split it three ways and you're even better off! That way, each party could rotate on a 30-days in every 90-days basis which would work very well. Another bonus of this is that you can change location – even country - every year if you want a change of scene!

In some ways this may be a better option than buying, especially for older folks and those who don't want to spend all or a large part of their savings on another property – with all the hassle this can involve – especially for the next generation!

As you will have realised, these options do have some considerable benefits. You might also consider your holiday home be used as a base for touring at times – you could even leave a caravan there if there is sufficient parking space, although you might say that there is no point in having a holiday home if you're going to tour away from it – but the option is there.

³⁵ Refer to URL: [Property for rent in Spain - 331 houses & apartments \(thinkspain.com\)](https://thinkspain.com)

³⁶ Refer to URL: [idealista, N.1 in Italy - Houses and flats, rentals and sales, free listings](https://idealista.com)

Warning Notes:

Depending on where you are going, you may need to obtain an International Driving Permit³⁷ obtainable from the Post Office before driving abroad³⁸. There are two versions of this (1949 and 1968) and it is important to obtain the correct version for wherever you're going to need it³⁹. If you decide to stay away from the UK and become an EU resident you need to be aware that the Brexit agreement has made a complete mess of driving licence requirements as there have been no reciprocal agreements negotiated as part of the deal⁴⁰.

You must also display a UK sticker on your car regardless of whether it is included as part of your number plate. In some countries you must carry your vehicle logbook (V5C) or a VE103 to show you're allowed to use your hired or leased vehicle abroad. Renters of motorhomes should be particularly aware of this and make sure the hiring company provides you with the correct documents.

Remember also that some countries have specific regulations for caravans and motorhomes - Spain, for example, states that any car/caravan or motorhome (with or without a trailer) travelling to Spain that is over 12 metres in length must have one long or two small aluminium boards attached to the back. The aluminium boards must have a yellow centre with a red outline, be reflective, and comply with ECE70 standards⁴¹. Apart from these regulations, you may need to purchase additional equipment to enable you to drive legally in other countries⁴².

If you decide to park for the night in the UK, say en-route to your ferry terminal, remember that anyone parking at night on a road, lay-by or lane having a speed limit greater than 30mph can be fined unless you have parking light turned on. Rule 249 of the Highway Code states that all vehicles MUST display parking lights when parked on a road or a lay-by on a road with a speed limit greater than 30 mph⁴³ (48 km/h). Vehicles must also be parked in the same direction as the traffic flow (Highway Code Rule 248)⁴⁴. In fact, I suggest all UK motorists study the latest version of the Highway Code – there may be a few surprises for you!

There may be other laws that might surprise you⁴⁵. You might be surprised to read that in France, Spain and Switzerland, glasses-wearers must have a second pair with them at all times while driving. Fines for motoring offences have recently been increased dramatically too⁴⁶. Also in France, motorists driving on the A1 motorway without any passengers could face fines of up to €135 - or £116 if they use the carshare lane⁴⁷. Lack of a passenger is determined by new thermal cameras.

³⁷ Refer to URL: <https://www.gov.uk/driving-abroad>

³⁸ Refer to URL: [Driving abroad: Check if you need an international driving permit \(IDP\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

³⁹ Refer to URL: [International Driving Permit | Post Office®](#)

⁴⁰ Refer to URL: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/driving-in-the-eu-uk-licence-holders-living-in-the-eu?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=bf459f85-6f47-477d-a5fb-e4c60a9e5588&utm_content=daily

and URL: <https://www.thelocal.it/20210428/how-do-rules-for-exchanging-uk-driving-licences-compare-for-brits-around-europe/>

⁴¹ Refer to URL: https://www.caravanclub.co.uk/media/12967007/spanish_regulations_for_vehicle_combination_over_12_metres.pdf

⁴² Refer to URL: [European Driving Kit | RAC Shop](#)

⁴³ Refer to URL: [The Highway Code - Waiting and parking \(238 to 252\) - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴⁴ Refer to URL: [The Highway Code - Waiting and parking \(238 to 252\) - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴⁵ Refer to URL: [Planning an EU road trip? 9 surprising driving laws to be aware of on your next holiday | Euronews](#)

⁴⁶ Refer to URL: [New traffic fines in Germany | ACSI Eurocampings Blog](#)

⁴⁷ Refer to URL: [Expats and UK motorists warned of new thermal cameras catching people driving alone in France \(msn.com\)](#)

If you're touring in the winter, remember that winter tyres are mandatory in many countries in Europe⁴⁸ between October and March and in countries like France in mountainous regions. Caravanners and Motor-homers take note⁴⁹. You may also need to carry snow chains. Notably in France and Germany⁵⁰, there have been laws recently introduced about winter tyres and snow chains⁵¹ about which some websites may not be up to date⁵². If you're going to Austria and/or Switzerland you need to check their tyre requirements too.⁵³ Scandinavian countries also have very strict tyre regulations. In Sweden, for example, any trailer (i.e caravan) must also be fitted with the correct winter tyres⁵⁴. Do check before you head for the Channel!⁵⁵

Carrying a spare set of lamps for your exterior lights may also be a mandatory requirement in some countries, as well as a warning triangle (some countries specify that you must have two warning triangles⁵⁶ if you're towing a caravan – including Croatia, Spain and Slovakia) and other equipment⁵⁷ although a V16 beacon may be acceptable in some countries instead of the triangle – take both!).

I have found one reference regarding driving in Portugal that all towing vehicles should display a yellow triangle with blue background sign and your caravan contents should be available as a list for the police to inspect if requested⁵⁸ but have not so far been able to verify this.

In countries including Belgium, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, it is a requirement to have a fire extinguisher in your car at all times. Another unexpected item you may be asked to prove, should you be pulled over whilst in Estonia, is that you have blocks of wood or plastic that can be put under your car wheels to prevent it from rolling backwards. Breakdown kits are also required in some European countries. In Bulgaria and Belarus, it is illegal to drive a car that is dirty. In Denmark, it is also a legal requirement to check under your car before you depart, to ensure that there are no animals or children hidden underneath. France placed a ban on all hands-free headsets and any devices emitting sound in the ear in 2015.

In Europe, only children over the height of 1.35 m are allowed to sit in a normal seat without the use of a booster aid in most countries. In some, however, children are required to be even taller than this. In Germany and Italy, for example, the minimum height increases to 150 cm. In some European countries, you'll find that children are permitted to travel in the front, but with booster seats, whereas others, such as Spain, do not permit anyone below the age of 18 to travel in the front of a car.

Remember also that some countries have laws for the protection of cyclists - The Netherlands requires that you give the right of way to cyclists and in Spain, there is a now a law that requires that when overtaking a bicycle the distance between car and bicycle is at least two metres (6' 6") and drivers must slow to at least 20 kilometres per hour below the speed limit. Speed limits have also been reduced in urban areas.

⁴⁸ Refer to URL: [Snow Chains Winter Tyres | AA \(theaa.com\)](#)

⁴⁹ Refer to URL: [winter tyres | ACSI Eurocampings Blog | Camping starts at ACSI](#)

⁵⁰ Refer to URL: [When are winter tyres compulsory in Germany? | ACSI Eurocampings Blog](#)

⁵¹ Refer to URL: [Do Caravan Skiers Need Winter Tyres & Snow Chains? – Winterised](#)

⁵² Refer to URL: [Do I Need Winter Tyres or Snow Chains When Driving in France? - FrenchEntrée \(frenchentree.com\)](#)

⁵³ Refer to URL: [Winter tyre requirement in Austria and Switzerland | ACSI \(eurocampings.co.uk\)](#)

⁵⁴ Refer to URL: [Winter tyres - Transportstyrelsen](#)

⁵⁵ Refer to URL: [Winter tyres or chains - Winter tyres, chains: mandatory equipment in mountainous areas from 1 November 2022 | Service-public.fr](#)

⁵⁶ Refer to URL: [Taking Your Touring Caravan Abroad in Europe - CaravanTalk Directory](#)

⁵⁷ Refer to URL: [Driving in Europe checklist | RAC Drive](#)

⁵⁸ Refer to URL: [Taking Your Touring Caravan Abroad in Europe - CaravanTalk Directory](#)

You will need to check that your car insurance covers you for all of the countries you wish to visit (there are usually some countries excluded - Kosovo⁵⁹ possibly being one - you may also have to buy additional insurance at the border if you wish to proceed into some of these countries). As of the 2nd August 2021, UK drivers will no longer need to take an insurance 'green card' with them when taking their vehicles to EU countries including Ireland, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Serbia, and Switzerland. However, you *may* need to carry a green card and/or obtain additional insurance cover to drive in other countries, including: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine and maybe other countries. This is not an exhaustive list and neither is it necessarily accurate for your particular insurance company. Check before you go! It is a good idea to obtain a list of countries covered from your insurance company before you leave home. If towing, you need to remember that whilst your car may be covered with comprehensive insurance, your caravan may only be covered with third-party insurance. You may also need additional insurance for your caravan.

You will also need to check how many days foreign travel you are permitted during one trip away from home. This is sometimes limited to as little as 30 days in one policy year whilst some permit you 180 days per policy year, for example. I believe only AXA Insurance will provide you with year-round foreign coverage vehicle insurance should you need this. Always check with your insurance company before leaving home. Don't forget vehicle (and caravan) recovery too.

Some countries, including Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland, require you to purchase a vignette if you wish to drive on certain types of their roads - such as motorways⁶⁰.

You may also need to purchase clean air stickers⁶¹ for some cities that have low emission zones that restrict certain vehicles in certain cities or other areas in order to reduce air pollution. This INCLUDES the UK⁶², (particularly London⁶³) and many other European countries, including our main entry point into Europe, France⁶⁴, which have all introduced legislation that requires you to take action before entering these areas with your vehicle – such as obtaining a 'sticker' or other permit before entering. In Spain, a series of Low Emission Zones - or *Zonas de Bajas Emisiones* (ZBE) - were introduced across the country⁶⁵ on 1 January 2023. The new rules will apply to municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants, which number 149 across the Spanish territory. Make sure you research this before you leave home as you may need to purchase stickers before you leave if you are planning to visit these areas⁶⁶. In Germany much the same applies⁶⁷. For guidance on Euro Emission Standards, the RAC produces a useful web-page⁶⁸.

Another restriction, and cost, is that imposed from 25 April 2024 when you will be required to pay €5 to enter the city of Venice as a day visitor between the hours of 0830 hrs and 1600 hrs on certain

⁵⁹ Refer to URL: [Entry requirements - Kosovo travel advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/entry-requirements)

⁶⁰ Refer to URL: [Driving in Europe checklist | RAC Drive](#)

⁶¹ Refer to URL: [Environmental stickers: all rules per country | Eurocampings](#)

⁶² Refer to URL: [Drive in a clean air zone - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/entry-requirements)

⁶³ Later this year, London's Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) will be expanded to include all of the capital on Tuesday, August 29, 2023. Refer to URL: [Millions to be affected by Sadiq Khan's massive London ULEZ expansion in August \(msn.com\)](#)

⁶⁴ Refer to URL: [Crit'Air clean air stickers - need to know for driving in France | RAC Drive](#)

⁶⁵ Refer to URL: [UK drivers warned of huge £176 fines for driving a petrol or diesel car in Spain \(msn.com\)](#) and URL: [Driving in Spain | RAC Drive](#)

⁶⁶ Refer to URL: [How to get the Emissions Sticker for your car! – InSpain.news](#)

⁶⁷ Refer to URL: [German emissions stickers | ACSI Eurocampings](#)

⁶⁸ Refer to URL: [Euro 1 to Euro 6 – find out your vehicle's emissions standard | RAC Drive](#)

days during spring and summer⁶⁹. If you stay overnight in a hotel in Venice you will need to get a code by registering online. This will enable you can pass through the various checkpoints.

From 1 July 2023, the Spanish traffic authority DGT exempts drivers (only) on motorways and trunk roads from the obligation to place triangles on the road when they need to stop. The aim is to prevent people from being run over when they get out of their vehicles. The alternative to the triangle is to place the V16 beacon⁷⁰, which, although only compulsory from 1 January 2026, is recommended because it means you do not have to get out of the car.⁷¹ The V16 sign is ‘a small yellow beacon equipped with connectivity and capable of emitting a high-intensity 360° light intermittently and continuously for at least 30 minutes,’ according to DGT’s website. It has ‘a battery with a useful life of at least 18 months, whether rechargeable or not’.

Do remember that if you have a vehicle that is 3 years old or more, you'll need to keep up to date with your annual MOT test. If you envisage being away for a lengthy period you might find it worthwhile getting a new MOT test certificate immediately before you leave the UK. If staying away longer than your MOT test certificate is valid for, you will probably find it easiest to (temporarily) return to the UK, with your vehicle, through an EU / Schengen Zone country – and exit in much the same way. Allow for this in your 90-day allowance.

MOT Test: On contacting the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) Customer Service Centre, I received the following information:

Thank you for your email enquiry dated 5 December 2023, concerning your MOT.

If a UK registered vehicle is outside of the UK and its MOT expires, then the only journey that the vehicle can make on entering the UK, is directly to a pre-booked MOT test.

You would need to contact your insurance company to see whether they would require any action to be taken, and the Authorities of the countries that you are travelling through to see what requirements they may have.

The UK does not recognise test certificates from other countries on UK registered vehicles. You should also consider that significant changes to the MOT system were introduced on 7 December 2023⁷². Some of the changes listed include:

- Since 1 September 2023, it has been optional to issue a paper VT20 pass certificate when a vehicle is taken in for an MOT test (**Note:** *I suggest it is always a good idea to obtain a printed record of your 'MOT Pass' in case one is requested by authorities overseas*).
- MOT testing businesses will have the flexibility not to issue a paper VT30 fail certificate, however, if the customer makes a specific request to have a paper certificate for their records, the MOT testing garage must issue one.
- Another major change includes emissions test records, with drivers being required to keep emissions records for all test results for three months.

⁶⁹ Refer to URL: [How the new Venice entry fee will work – and when it will come into place | The Independent](#)

⁷⁰ Refer to URL: [DGT Advises Motorists In Spain To Purchase New V16 Beacons From December - Sanitas Health Plan Spain](#)

⁷¹ Refer to URL: [Warning triangle no longer compulsory on some Spanish roads from 1 July – InSpain.news](#)

⁷² Refer to URL: [MOT special notice 04-23: updates to MOT testing guide and test certificates - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

You should also check your home insurance as this too will have a limit as to how many days you can leave your home empty during a trip away. For example, many companies specify that you can leave your home unoccupied for only 60 days consecutively and that your home is only occupied by family members.

If taking your pet (dogs, cats or ferrets) overseas, you'll need to make sure you have the correct documentation for them too⁷³. Be aware that the requirements have changed since the UK left the EU⁷⁴. When travelling to and from Great Britain (different rules for Northern Ireland) to the EU with your pet or assistance dog, they will need: a microchip, a valid rabies vaccination (your dog may also require a rabies titre test) - your pet must be at least 12 weeks old before they can be vaccinated, tapeworm treatment (if needed), an animal health certificate⁷⁵ (AHC) – this needs to be issued within 10 days of the date you are set to travel and can then be used for travel between EU countries for up to four months from the date your animal enters the EU⁷⁶. Be sure to check your route before you travel - you must only travel using approved routes⁷⁷. You are required to acquire a new Animal Health Certificate each time you plan to travel to the EU from Great Britain or from another non-EU country. Animal Health Certificates are valid for one trip across the EU boundary, and for your return to Great Britain. However, if you exit the EU during your trip, a new AHC would be required to return to the EU. Also be aware that Spain has recently introduced new laws regarding pets⁷⁸.

Caution: There are a few countries within Europe with a higher incidence of rabies where you'll also need a rabies titre test to re-enter the EU. These include: Albania, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine and Turkey⁷⁹. For instance, a new AHC and rabies titre test would be required if you wanted to return to the EU after staying in, say, Albania or another non-EU country. According to EU regulations, if you wait until you enter these countries and then get a rabies antibody test you need to wait 3 months before your pet is permitted to re-enter the EU. The better option is to get a rabies antibody test **before leaving the EU**. As long as the test is carried out and documented in your EU pet passport, with a favourable result, before your pet leaves the EU, there is no waiting period.

Warning: Check the list of dogs that are not permitted to enter the countries that you are intending to visit. Not all countries have the same list of what they call dangerous dog breeds, so you do need to check the list for each country you intend visiting if you have a dog that could be on that list⁸⁰. Notice that Belgium is not included and should be researched as needed as laws may well be near to being introduced.

Some countries, such as Armenia, require your pet to also have a CITES Permit⁸¹ issued in the country of origin. Your cat and dog must be vaccinated for rabies between 20 days and 6 months prior to entering Armenia. Dogs should also be vaccinated against distemper, hepatitis, viral enteritis, parvovirus, parainfluenza, adenovirus infections and leptospirosis. Cats should also be vaccinated against panleukemia, viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, and leukaemia⁸².

⁷³ Refer to URL: [Travelling to France with Your Pet Post-Brexit - FrenchEntrée \(frenchentree.com\)](#) and URL: [Getting a French pet passport is harder in Brexit clampdown - Complete France](#) and URL: [Category 1 and 2 dogs known as "dangerous dogs" Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty](#)

⁷⁴ Refer to URL: [EU rules on travelling with pets and other animals in the EU - Your Europe \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁷⁵ Refer to URL: [Information about taking your pet to the European Union and the Animal Health Certificate \(rvc.ac.uk\)](#)

⁷⁶ Refer to URL: [EU countries' specific information \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁷⁷ Refer to URL: [Taking pets abroad after Brexit | Blue Cross](#)

and https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/movement-pets/travellers-points-entry_en

⁷⁸ [The animal welfare law, in detail | El Comercio: Diario de Asturias](#)

⁷⁹ Refer to URL: [Do I Need a Rabies Titre Test To Travel With My Dog? - Travelnuity](#)

⁸⁰ [List of banned dog breeds by countries - Petolog](#)

⁸¹ <https://cites.org/eng/disc/how.php>

⁸² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-armenia#pensions>

To make life a little easier when travelling in the EU (only), you can obtain a European Pet Passport⁸³ after arriving in an EU country - issued by an official veterinarian within the EU. Your pet will require an electronic microchip or a readable tattoo that has been applied before 3 July 2011 with the same code as the one documented in the passport. Once out of the EU, be aware that not all countries have the same requirements. You will need to check the requirements for every country you intend to visit. France have started to clamp down on giving pet passports to non-residents but other countries still amenable. The passport is kept valid by keeping up with rabies boosters (you must do it in EU as you will invalidate an EU pet passport if touched by a vet here). You need to weigh up how often you go abroad and if you can get rabies booster to fit into the dates when it's due and when you're away.

If you are travelling with your pet to Norway, you will have to comply with their rules⁸⁴ as Norway is not part of the EU. For instance, you may be required to obtain further treatment for *Echinococcus multilocularis* prior to entry into Norway.

Before you re-enter the UK, a vet must treat your dog for tapeworm (*Echinococcus multilocularis*) and record it in the pet passport or health certificate every time you want to bring it to Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland). The treatment must have been given no less than 24 hours and no more than 120 hours (5 days) before you enter Great Britain⁸⁵.

Last, but not least, make sure you have appropriate health, medical and accident insurance for all persons travelling with you - including after-care and repatriation cover. I understand that the *Red Pennant* Service of the Caravan and Motorhome Club has a very good reputation⁸⁶. Some countries have different requirements to others. British travellers to the European Union – as well as Switzerland and Norway – are entitled to urgent medical treatment on the same basis as people who live in those countries. The British government defines the right as “healthcare that cannot reasonably wait until you come back to the UK”. Typically, this means care for free or at a much-reduced rate, sometimes with nominal extra charges for hospital meals and the like. So, it is an extremely valuable benefit.

To qualify, you should ideally produce a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). The EHIC was issued while the UK was in the European Union, and any existing card is valid until its expiry date. You should also remember that the EHIC or GHIC is the most convenient way to demonstrate your entitlement to treatment – but there is an equally valid alternative, should you fall ill. You, or someone on your behalf, should call NHS Overseas Healthcare Services on +44 191 218 1999 and ask for a “Provisional Replacement Certificate” (PRC) to be emailed to the hospital. This assures compensation by the UK government for the cost of your treatment. In practice, hospitals in the EU will treat first and ask questions later, so do not hesitate to seek care if you need it⁸⁷. However, not all hospitals recognise this card at all for some reason.

Before travelling abroad, you **MUST** do your research on the requirements which you must have for yourself and other people (and animals) travelling with you and for your vehicle(s). This site has not been set-up for providing you with this information.

⁸³ Refer to URL: [European Pet Passport | The European Parliament | European Parliament Liaison Office in the United Kingdom \(europa.eu\)](#) Also refer to URL: [How to Get an EU Pet Passport in 2020? \[2 SIMPLE STEPS\] \(petsthattravel.com\)](#)

⁸⁴ Refer to URL: <https://www.mattilsynet.no/en/animals/travelling-with-dogs-cats-and-ferrets-from-eu-countries-to-norway>

⁸⁵ Refer to URL: <https://www.gov.uk/bring-pet-to-great-britain/tapeworm-treatment-dogs>

⁸⁶ Refer to URL: [Overseas Insurance policies | The Caravan Club](#)

⁸⁷ Healthcare insurance card information provided by travel journalist Simon Calder

Photography

One of the main activities for travellers is taking those wonderful photographs of tourist destinations as souvenirs of our trip. However, you may be doing it illegally! There are a number of tourist destinations where you could easily find yourself in trouble – even in countries such as the UK, France and Italy (where you can be heavily fined for standing around for too long in some tourist locations!⁸⁸ as well as other ridiculous restrictions⁸⁹) Take care when pointing your camera⁹⁰. This is considered as anti-social behaviour in some countries, so do be aware and do some research before you get *snap-happy*!

An example if this is that it is illegal in Portugal to take a picture of a person who opposes to being photographed, and it is a law which is enforced. Also worth noting, consent is required to publish photographs of people even if the person is in a public place in Portugal. The only exceptions are if the photographs are of public figures, are being published for scientific, educational or cultural purposes or related to facts of public interest⁹¹.

The Ultimate in 'Getting OUT and Staying OUT!'

For really serious travellers, the way to go might be to abandon the UK altogether and take residency (or citizenship) in a European country. However, you need to take into consideration financial matters such as taxation - and dealing with your estate should you happen to die (different inheritance laws apply in different countries). And don't forget that your vehicle needs the correct paperwork too. You may also be required to take language examinations before you can obtain residency⁹². This applies to many European countries so, unless you're already fluent in the language of the country of your choice or are willing to learn, you may find it impossible to live where you choose. How sad is that?

Many folks have dreamed of living in sunny Spain, but I understand that it is now many times more difficult than formerly regarding obtaining the required visa⁹³. I also understand that they are terminating their '*golden visa*' scheme completely⁹⁴. Portugal have also revised their similar scheme⁹⁵.

If you do decide to take this option, remember that your vehicle may need to be re-registered and therefore comply with any checks / tests required in your new 'home' country⁹⁶. In France, you will need to obtain a 'Carte Grise' which is part of the documents required in order for vehicles to be legally owned and driven in France and a copy of it should be kept with the vehicle at all times. Any vehicle owned by a French citizen or resident in France requires this document, and fines apply for vehicles without the correct documentation⁹⁷.

⁸⁸ Refer to URL: [Portofino Introduces €275 Fine for Tourists Lingering in Popular Beauty Spots \(timeout.com\)](https://www.timeout.com/italy/news/portofino-introduces-e275-fine-for-tourists-lingering-in-popular-beauty-spots)

⁸⁹ Refer to URL: [The rules that could catch British tourists out in Italy this summer | Travel News | Travel | Express.co.uk](https://www.express.co.uk/travel/news/1488881-the-rules-that-could-catch-british-tourists-out-in-italy-this-summer)

⁹⁰ Refer to URL: [6 tourist destinations around the world where you CAN'T take photos | Digital Camera World](https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/6-tourist-destinations-around-the-world-where-you-cant-take-photos)

⁹¹ Refer to URL: [A different way of life – Becky in Portugal](https://www.becky.com/life/a-different-way-of-life-becky-in-portugal)

⁹² Refer to URL: [France ups language level for residency: Here are the best European countries for English speakers | Euronews](https://www.euronews.com/en/europe/2023/09/14/france-raises-language-level-for-residency)

⁹³ Refer to URL: [https://www.thelondoneconomic.com/news/expat-expert-warns-brits-moving-to-spain-that-the-process-has-got-ten-times-harder-](https://www.thelondoneconomic.com/news/expat-expert-warns-brits-moving-to-spain-that-the-process-has-got-ten-times-harder-371726/?fbclid=IwAR3OKkyTsh4BI59DC4m416GvzA5aopb2XRIoDsR7liyhSG312W2CkErHpJo_aem_AUxVnrQ_VISbrlx5vrRybXI_PNIeskleleJewJqPnsHhldqFcJHtGmS_zWhUz4TUfcZTBC7TBhDzoDupoCLchm_g)

[371726/?fbclid=IwAR3OKkyTsh4BI59DC4m416GvzA5aopb2XRIoDsR7liyhSG312W2CkErHpJo_aem_AUxVnrQ_VISbrlx5vrRybXI_PNIeskleleJewJqPnsHhldqFcJHtGmS_zWhUz4TUfcZTBC7TBhDzoDupoCLchm_g](https://www.thelondoneconomic.com/news/expat-expert-warns-brits-moving-to-spain-that-the-process-has-got-ten-times-harder-371726/?fbclid=IwAR3OKkyTsh4BI59DC4m416GvzA5aopb2XRIoDsR7liyhSG312W2CkErHpJo_aem_AUxVnrQ_VISbrlx5vrRybXI_PNIeskleleJewJqPnsHhldqFcJHtGmS_zWhUz4TUfcZTBC7TBhDzoDupoCLchm_g)

⁹⁴ Refer to URL: [Spain Announces Termination of Golden Visa Scheme \(eyeonspain.com\)](https://www.eyeonspain.com/en/news/spain-announces-termination-of-golden-visa-scheme)

⁹⁵ Refer to URL: [The Portugal Golden Visa Program: The Ultimate Guide 2024 - bePortugal](https://www.beportugal.com/en/news/the-portugal-golden-visa-program-the-ultimate-guide-2024)

⁹⁶ Refer to URL: [Importing a UK Vehicle and Registering it in France After Brexit - FrenchEntrée \(frenchentree.com\)](https://www.frenchentree.com/en/news/importing-a-uk-vehicle-and-registering-it-in-france-after-brexit)

⁹⁷ Refer to URL: [Driving in France: What is a "Carte Grise"? - FrenchEntrée \(frenchentree.com\)](https://www.frenchentree.com/en/news/driving-in-france-what-is-a-carte-grise)

You will also need to deal with your finances and taxes according to the laws of the country. This can be fairly complicated depending on your circumstances. For example, whilst we were living and working in The Netherlands (pre-Brexit), I had to employ two accountants to sort out my financial affairs; one in the UK and another in The Netherlands. Before deciding on this option, you will need to carry out a thorough programme of research and employ the specialist help you need, including a lawyer familiar with the residency requirements in your new home.

Many British travellers are in receipt of state pensions and this too needs some serious consideration if you're going to live permanently in another country. The reason being that not all countries have a reciprocal agreement with the UK which means you may not be entitled to receive the annual increases in your pension⁹⁸ – which would be a considerable loss when spread over a number of years.

At the start of 2024, France announced changes to immigration laws including increasing language requirements. Applying for a multi-year or long-term residency card will now mean demonstrating a higher level of French than before. Authorities have introduced language tests for certain types of residency permits and a higher language level requirement for citizenship⁹⁹.

While there will continue to be no language test for short-term residency cards, the multi-year *carte de séjour pluriannuelle* will require applicants to demonstrate French language skills of A2 or above of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages¹⁰⁰ (CEFR).

There is a possibility of obtaining a visa for six months (French VLS-T or VLS-TS visa). 'Crib-Sheets' that may help you obtain one are available here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A8YqHnBKBCNVZJqS_TRajdyezFsliYh94Hw_ox4R34M/edit

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MeKCPxPSN3Nvq7UKf8z19momFr_EszhvuSFi-T5GXLw/edit#heading=h.624nj97gh15l

Thanks to the FaceBook page at URL: <https://www.facebook.com/180daysinfrance>

For the *Carte de résident (résident longue durée UE)*, a 10-year card issued to long-term residents who either can't or don't want to apply for French citizenship, the language requirement rises from level A2 to B1.

Under the new law, those considering applying for French citizenship must now demonstrate B2 level language knowledge.

For more information about long-stay visas in France refer to URL:

[Applying For Your French Long-Stay Visa: Step by Step - FrenchEntrée \(frenchentree.com\)](https://www.frenchentree.com/2024/04/16/long-stay-visa-step-by-step/)

[Guide to Visas and the Carte de Séjour - Complete France](https://www.completefrance.com/en/visas/)

⁹⁸ Refer to URL: [Countries where we pay an annual increase in the State Pension - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/countries-where-we-pay-an-annual-increase-in-the-state-pension)

⁹⁹ Refer to URL: [France ups language level for residency: Here are the best European countries for English speakers | Euronews](https://www.euronews.com/en/france/2024/04/16/france-raises-language-level-for-residency-visas)

¹⁰⁰ Refer to URL: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/reference-level-descriptions-rls-developed-so-far>

https://france-visas.gouv.fr/en_US/web/france-visas/long-stay-visa

and: https://www.completefrance.com/home/how-to-apply-for-a-long-stay-visa-in-france-1-6962749?utm_medium=Email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=DM38686

and: [Are You Applying for a French Long-Term Visa? Here Are the 7 Must-Know Facts! - FrenchEntrée \(frenchentree.com\)](#)

If purchasing a property in France, or going to retire there on a permanent basis, don't forget that matters involving inheritance are different in France to those in the UK¹⁰¹. You need to ensure your Will specifies that your estate is dealt with under the legal regime you require, either UK or French. Consult a specialist lawyer to ensure this matter is dealt with to your requirements and satisfaction.

The same can be said for any other country you may consider living in for your retirement. If you're intending to take residency in another country, do realise that driving licenses may be an issue. For example, *A new bilateral agreement between the UK and Portugal on the mutual recognition and exchange of driving licences entered into force on 31 December 2023. This means that if you are resident in Portugal and hold a full and valid driving licence issued in the UK or Gibraltar, you can drive in Portugal on your current licence until it expires, provided you have registered your licence with IMT¹⁰² or exchange your licence for a Portuguese one without needing to take a test. To continue driving in Portugal as a resident, you must register your driving licence with the IMT. You must do this within 60 days of the issue date on your residence certificate, or immediately if you have already been in Portugal for more than 60 days¹⁰³.*

Travelling Far Away

This document has only covered, in the main, some of the countries in the Schengen Zone and those nearby. If you're inclined to be really adventurous and travel, by road, into countries in Africa, Asia, Middle East and other far-away places, you'll need to plan in much greater detail the requirements you have to meet - which is well outside the scope of this document. For instance, many countries along your proposed route may require you to have already obtained a CPD Carnet¹⁰⁴ (*Carnet de Passages en Douane*) document for your car. This allows you to temporarily import your vehicle (and any trailer) into a particular country without having to pay taxes or import duty providing you comply with certain specified conditions.

As usual, you'll need to check the various companies with whom you have insurance to ensure everything you need is covered for you, your passengers, any pets, your vehicle (and trailer).

You'll also need to take into consideration the terrain your vehicle may have to travel along as some roads may be impassable by anything other than a specialised 4x4 vehicle – and certainly not by a car towing a caravan!

Be aware that some countries, or areas within certain countries, are considered to be highly dangerous for travellers and should be avoided at all cost.

Your health is vitally important, so make sure you comply with any mandatory and advisory vaccinations and have a record (signed and dated by the administering doctor) of all vaccinations

¹⁰¹ Refer to URL: [How Does French Inheritance Law Treat Blended Families? - FrenchEntrée \(frenchentree.com\)](#)

¹⁰² Refer to URL: [1st situation \(26\) \(imtonline.pt\)](#)

¹⁰³ Refer to URL: [Living in Portugal - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁰⁴ Refer to URL: [Apply for a CPD Carnet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

you receive – and any boosters. Ensure you have full medical insurance which includes repatriation for any country you are visiting. Many countries have very poor medical facilities – which may be very far apart. You may also consider joining an organisation that will transport blood to you that is considered SAFE¹⁰⁵.

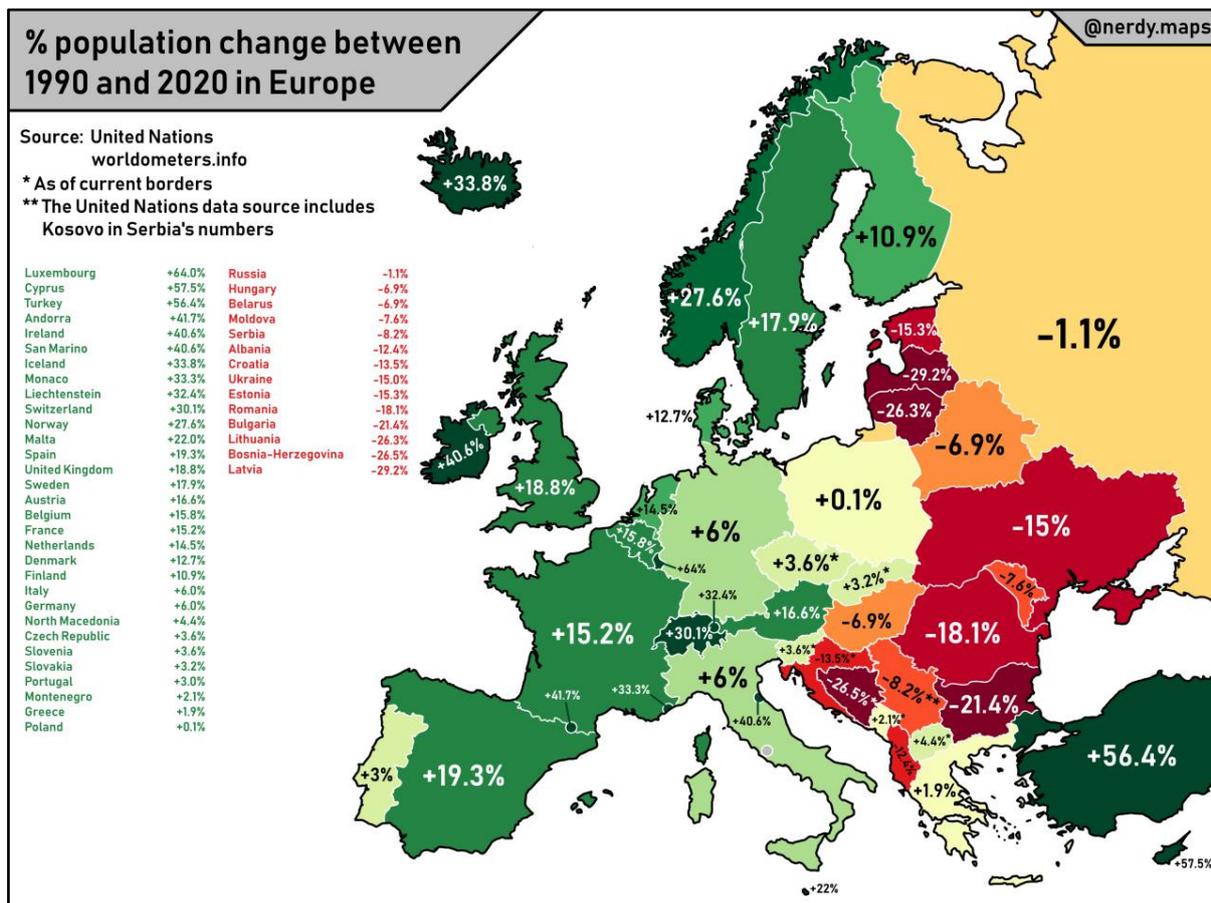
You may also need to plan any prescriptions or medication that you need during your journey¹⁰⁶. You may need documentation¹⁰⁷ that will permit you to travel with certain medication.

Remember also, that you may have to apply for visas well in advance.

Visa requirements and maximum lengths of stay do change from time to time so must be checked immediately before visiting any country.

All information written here is merely for stimulating ideas for potential travelling adventures. It is not intended as a substitute for professional or legal advice. Should you decide to act upon any information provided in this document, you do so at your own risk.

The population of European countries is constantly changing, as shown on this map:



Courtesy of URL: <https://mapsontheweb.zoom-maps.com/post/616185817494421504/percentage-population-change-between-1990-and-2020?fbclid=IwAR19aXrEPxIMHnoHJgNP-ZudV39sXgXoZl58Plx843yLzIpz316wISseHdM>

¹⁰⁵ Refer to URL: [Safe Blood – Safe Blood Donation](#)

¹⁰⁶ Refer to URL: [Your Ultimate Guide To Traveling & Prescription Medications - Air Doctor \(air-dr.com\)](#)

¹⁰⁷ Refer to URL: [Can I take my medicine abroad? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

Special Supplement on Albania

I have included this special supplement about Albania¹⁰⁸ for a number of reasons, as follows:

- It may be an option if Morocco isn't a practical proposition - or Morocco not being to your liking – although Albania won't be as warm as southern Morocco in the winter. Whatever the case, check your vehicle / medical insurance as most companies won't automatically cover you for Albania or anywhere in Africa or many other countries in Europe or Asia.
- Like Morocco, Albania is outside the EU / Schengen Zone, therefore visits here will not be included in your 90-day limit.
- There is a perception in the UK that Albania is not a great place to visit as it has something of a bad reputation for crime. I suggest this is somewhat misguided. In fact, driving is likely to be one of the most hazardous aspects of travelling in Albania!
- The cost of living there is much cheaper than in the UK and most of Europe as it hasn't adopted the Euro currency!
- Southern Albania, in particular has a much more 'Mediterranean' climate than much of Europe (although not the same as southern Spain or Portugal where you can't stay outside your 90-day limit).
- It is well away from the usual tourist routes.
- It is a beautiful country with lots of interesting places to visit – and stunningly attractive beaches.
- In terms of distance, it is much the same as driving to the Algarve, depending on the route you take and your final destination – in the region of 1400 to 1600 miles each way from Calais. Taking a different route each way is definitely a good option.
- It's a great place to visit enroute to Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan (check your car and medical insurance for these countries).

CAUTION: If taking your pet(s), make sure you complete all the medical and documentary requirements for entry and exit of both Albania and the EU for travel in both directions – including an EU Pet Passport (obtainable once you are in the EU), rabies vaccination / rabies titre test certificate¹⁰⁹. Refer to pages 8 and 9 for further information. You'll also have to meet the requirements for re-entry into the United Kingdom upon leaving the EU.

Find out More

Note: I e-mailed the Albanian Embassy in London on 22 October 2022 asking them for information about their country (the form on their website wasn't working), but no reply has been received to date.

Albanian Tourist: <https://www.albaniantourist.com/>

Camping / Caravanning Parks: <https://www.camping.info/en/country/albania>

Camping Albania – Exploring Albania in a Motorhome: <https://the-travelling-twins.com/camping-albania/>

The EuroVelo long distance cycle Mediterranean route (EV8) also includes Albania:

<https://en.eurovelo.com/ev8/albania> refer also to URL:

<https://pro.eurovelo.com/download/document/Welcome%20to%20the%20Mediterranean%20Route!.pdf>

Blog about bicycle touring, outdoor adventures and solo female travel:

<https://wobblyride.com/2022/05/18/cycling-albania-practical-bike-touring-guide/>

Hiking in Albania: <https://www.komoot.com/guide/71719/hiking-in-albania>

¹⁰⁸ Refer to URL: [Albania travel advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/travel-advice)

¹⁰⁹ Refer to URL: [How to Get an EU Pet Passport in 2020? \[2 SIMPLE STEPS\] \(petsthattravel.com\)](https://petsthattravel.com/how-to-get-an-eu-pet-passport-in-2020-2-simple-steps/)

Special Supplement on Montenegro

I have included this special supplement about Montenegro¹¹⁰ for many of the same reasons as Albania.

An interesting figure is that the population density of Montenegro is little short of 1/10th that of England¹¹¹ (Montenegro: 45/km² – England: 424/km²) so you have plenty of space for touring this beautiful country.

WARNING: By law you must register with the local police or tourism organisation in the town/city where you are staying within 24 hours of your arrival in Montenegro, unless you are staying in a hotel or other commercial accommodation where you'll be registered automatically on checking in. If you do not register you may be fined, detained or face a court appearance.

Travelling with Pets to Montenegro¹¹²

CAUTION: If taking your pet(s), make sure you complete all the medical and documentary requirements for entry and exit of both Montenegro and the EU for travel in both directions – including an EU Pet Passport (obtainable once you are in the EU), rabies vaccination / rabies titre test certificate¹¹³.

As you'll be travelling by road, there is a good chance that you'll be entering Montenegro from Croatia or Italy (via the Bari to Bar ferry), both countries being in the EU. Having travelled through Europe to get there, you'll need to have obtained a European Passport for your pet as well as other documents – and make sure you meet all the vaccination requirements. Even if you enter from a non-Schengen Zone country, you'll still have been in the Schengen Zone for part of your journey if travelling from the UK initially.

You also need to bear in mind that you'll be returning to the EU¹¹⁴ after your visit and will therefore have to meet the requirements for re-entry. Refer to pages 8 and 9 for further information. You'll also have to meet the requirements for re-entry into the United Kingdom prior to leaving the EU.

More information may be found here: [Holiday in Montenegro | ACSI Eurocampings Blog](#)

¹¹⁰ Refer to URL: [Montenegro travel advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

¹¹¹ Refer to URL: [Area and population of European countries - Wikipedia](#)

¹¹² Refer to URL: [How to travel with pets to Montenegro \(Relocate with your pets\) \(montenegrodigitalnomad.com\)](#)

¹¹³ Refer to URL: [How to Get an EU Pet Passport in 2020? \[2 SIMPLE STEPS\] \(petsthattravel.com\)](#)

¹¹⁴ Refer to URL: [EU rules on travelling with pets and other animals in the EU - Your Europe \(europa.eu\)](#)

Special Supplement on Bulgaria

I have included this special supplement about Bulgaria as it is considered an inexpensive country in which to stay – however, it has just joined the Schengen Zone so you'll still need to adhere to the 90/180 day restriction.

However, consideration should be given to the fact that Bulgaria is likely to adopt the Euro as its currency on 1 January 2025 at which point costs will likely increase very substantially; very quickly.

Travelling with Pets to Bulgaria¹¹⁵

CAUTION: If taking your pet(s), make sure you complete all the medical and documentary requirements for entry into Bulgaria¹¹⁶ – including an EU Pet Passport (obtainable once you are in the EU), rabies vaccination / rabies titre test certificate. You should be aware that whilst travelling through EU countries is relatively straightforward as long as you have an EU Passport for your pet.

With a few exceptions, your pet can travel with you to another EU country or from a non-EU country to an EU country if it has:

- been micro-chipped (in line with the technical requirements of Annex II of the EU Regulation on the movement of pets) or has a clearly readable tattoo if applied before 3 July 2011
- been vaccinated against rabies
- had treatment against the tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis*, where your destination area is free from this tapeworm (Finland, Ireland, Malta, Northern Ireland and Norway)
- a valid European pet passport, when travelling from an EU country or Northern Ireland to another EU country or Northern Ireland or an EU animal health certificate, when travelling from a non-EU country.

The simplest option for travelling to Bulgaria with your car and pet is to drive to Italy and then get a ferry¹¹⁷ to Greece and then drive to Bulgaria - and return the same way. This would then mean you'd only be travelling in EU countries.

If you decide to travel all the way from your entry port in France to Bulgaria by road, you will have to travel through non-EU countries before and after leaving Bulgaria, which makes life much more complex as you must comply with all the different vaccination and documentary requirements of various non-EU countries prior to entering and leaving Bulgaria. You also need to bear in mind that you'll be returning to the EU after your visit to Bulgaria via non-EU countries) and will therefore have to meet the requirements for re-entry to the EU. Refer to pages 8 and 9 for further information.

You'll also have to meet the requirements for re-entry into the United Kingdom prior to leaving the EU.

¹¹⁵ Refer to URL: [New rules for pet travel from 1 January 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-rules-for-pet-travel-from-1-january-2021) and: [MFA :: Travelling with pets](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mfa-travelling-with-pets)

¹¹⁶ Refer to URL: [EU rules on travelling with pets and other animals in the EU - Your Europe \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/europea/eu-rules-on-travelling-with-pets-and-other-animals-in-the-eu)

¹¹⁷ Refer to URL: [Ferry Italy to Greece | Schedules & Fares | go-Ferry.com](https://www.go-ferry.com/italy-to-greece)