

Traveling in 2026: What to know before you go

1.21.2026

Agenda

Changes in 2026

TSA updates

Industry updates

Travel Manager checklist

Traveler tips





TSA & industry updates

Traveler changes in 2026: TSA updates

New fee for lack of Real ID, or other accepted form of identification (\$45.00) Effective February 1st, 2026

- Verification lasts for 10 days
- Under 18 years old exempt from Real ID (Unless traveling alone)

Stricter guidelines regarding lithium batteries in carry on bags (spare batteries, charging blocks, mobility device batteries)

- Not allowed in checked baggage
- Size limitations and airline specific policies may be in place



Traveler changes in 2026: TSA updates

Shoes no longer need to be removed (2025).
Some limitations still in effect

Guest pass programs available at
certain airports

- Online application in advance on participating airport's website
- Electronic pass delivered via email



A photograph of an airplane wing in flight, viewed from the passenger side. The wing is white and extends from the top right towards the center. Below the wing, a thick layer of white clouds is visible. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text "Airline loyalty programs and new entry requirements" is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

Airline loyalty programs and new entry requirements

Traveler changes in 2026: Airline changes

Southwest Airlines – *January 27, 2026*

Open seating policy eliminated in favor of assigned seating

Boarding group changes: A,B,C gone in favor of Grp 1-8

New fare classifications: Basic, Choice, Choice Preferred, Choice Extra

Plus size passenger charges

Airline specific

A stricter adherence to carry-on limits

Airlines may charge for gate-checked carry-ons

Evolving changes in airline loyalty programs: Award earning, redemption, elite status, etc.



Airline loyalty program summary

AIRLINE	VALUE PER MILE	CALCULATION	FARE CLASS MULTIPLIER	PARTNER PROGRAMS	BASIC ECONOMY CREDIT
Delta	1.2 cents	Fare paid	Yes	No	No
United	1.3 cents	Fare paid & distance	Yes	Yes	Half credit
American	1.4 cents	Fare paid & distance	Yes	No	No
Southwest	.8 cents	Fare paid & distance	No	No	No



International travel changes in 2026

Phased rollout of ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorization System) Will apply to visa free travelers traveling to Schengen countries.

- Projected cost \$20.00, valid for 3 years
- Projected start 4Q 2026
- Online application (Must be completed before traveling)

EES (Entry/Exit System)

- Complementary with ETIAS, used at border crossings. Fingerprint and facial recognition process
- Underway, full roll out planned 4/2026
- No traveler action required at this time, however early rollout is causing delays

More reliance on Biometrics at airports

- Always have backup ID available if needed



Travel manager takeaways

Communication of relevant changes to travel base

- Update internal travel pages
- Consider messaging on itineraries
- Add messaging to online booking tools for greater visibility
- Reinforce to travelers to always check with carrier website for any questions they have
- Always check traveler entry requirements for international itineraries

Proactive measures

- Travel policy review to ensure program alignment with any changes
- Survey traveler base to identify relevance
- Distribute FAQ document highlighting detailed information on changes
 - Traveling with no Real ID
 - TSA Guest passes
 - Southwest Airlines changes
 - International travel checklist
 - European Travel Information & Authorization System



Traveler tips

Pre-trip

- Update travel profile (credit card exp, legal name, loyalty programs, contact information)
- Necessary travel identification (Real ID, passport, trusted traveler programs)
- Mobile app programs (Andavo traveler app)
- Travel routing strategies

Post-trip

- Alert travel/procurement department to any issues experienced
- Complete a travel survey upon return
- Document any issues, written/photographic





Thank you