

When visa applications become time-consuming and frustrating

By [Konrad Laker](#)

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Seriously, wouldn't it be simpler to just abolish visa requirements altogether?



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Did you know that according to the [International Passport Index](#), South Africa ranks at 47 in the top 50 most powerful passports in the world? However, according to an [African Development Bank Visa Openness Report](#), only 13 of the continent's 55 countries allow Africans visa-free entry.

Countries visa-free to South Africans		
Antigua and Barbuda	Argentina	Bahamas
Barbados	Belize	Benin
Botswana	Brazil	Chile
Colombia	Costa Rica	Dominica
Dominican Republic	Ecuador	El Salvador
Fiji	Gabon	Georgia
Grenada	Guatemala	Guyana
Haiti	Honduras	Hong Kong
Indonesia	Ireland	Israel
Jamaica	Kenya	Kosovo
Lesotho	Macao	Malawi
Malaysia	Mozambique	Namibia
Nicaragua	Palestinian Territories	Panama
Paraguay	Peru	Philippines
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Saint Lucia	Singapore
South Korea	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Swaziland
Tanzania	Thailand	Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia	Uruguay	Vanuatu
Venezuela	Zambia	Zimbabwe

If you travel often, applying for a visa can be time-consuming and frustrating - what we don't realise about this everyday activity though, is that it is also one of the most tailored and circumstance-based processes we follow. Visa regulations may be subject to wide interpretation, and each country's evaluation process can literally have one rule for one type of traveller

and a completely different rule for another. It might not always seem fair, and it can certainly be a little (or greatly) on the confusing side, but if you are prepared, then you can avoid the issues that often arise.

Enter the visa specialist - for an approximate cost of R350 to R1,800 (depending on the urgency) they can literally take the schlepp out of applying for a visa – they know exactly what documents are required, in what format and in some cases, can even attend the appointment on your behalf, or be waiting at the ready outside the airport doors or Consulate office with all the necessary documentation. Your travel agent can also manage this process for you, for a small fee.

Things to consider:

Be prepared. Some of the documents required may take time in coming from the source, for example, birth or marriage certificates, letters of invitation, etc. – so make sure you give yourself ample time to get them all in order.

Purpose of travel. It is important to be clear about the purpose of your travel agenda, for example, applying for a tourist visa may be a lot simpler than applying for a business one, as are the requirements for a short- vs long-stay.

Be accurate. Follow the list of requirements to the letter. For instance, you need bank stamped, original bank statements, not digital copies downloaded from your online banking app. Make sure that your travel itinerary matches all letters of invitation, hotel bookings and flights – sometimes including a letter of explanation is helpful.

Be aware of a country's visa and immigration rules which will assist you in providing fully compliant documentation.

When in doubt seek professional advice.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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