

IMPORTANT NOTE, AUGUST 2022: The French Embassy in Mexico City has changed the application process for Long Stay Visas. Some of the information in this document is still valid and useful, however, several links are broken and the French Embassy website has new information regarding LSVs. If you successfully apply for an LSV in Mexico, please send us the current information about the process so we can update the document. Thanks!

French Polynesia Long Stay Visa Application Process in CIUDAD de MEXICO

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s/v Migration**

**February 2019, January 2020, January 2022
(Version 8 – updated August 2022)**

This is a summary of our experience applying for a Long Stay Visa (*Carte de Long Séjour*) for French Polynesia from the French Embassy in Mexico City (Ciudad de Mexico). This information was originally compiled in February 2019, then updated when we applied again in January 2020 and January 2022. All information and links were correct as of March 2022 but please double-check requirements as they may change. We did receive our 2019 visas but we did not use them as we decided to stay in Mexico another year. We also received our 2020 visas, but were unable to use them due to Covid pandemic restrictions.

1. Download and print out the *Formulaire de demande de visa long séjour* at <https://mx.ambafrance.org/Formulaire-de-demande-de-visa-long>. We downloaded the French and English versions but submitted only the French version after using the English version to aid translation.

Item 26 - *Date d'entrée prévue sur le territoire de la France...*:

Our understanding is that you must arrive in French Polynesia within 90 days of your LSV application date. We waited until the day of our appointment to fill in this item and then chose the date exactly 90 days from that date. In 2019 our appointment was 11 February and we entered 11 June 2019. However, in 2020 our appointment was 10 January and we were advised by the embassy representative to simply enter *April 2020*.

2. Download the list of documents required for a *Larga estadia (mayor a 90 días) - Autre - Visitateur* <https://mx.ambafrance.org/IMG/pdf/visiteur.pdf>. We translated the list into English - see below. However, make sure you check the website for changes.

Fee: The fee is 99 Euros. The exchange rate to pesos is determined by the embassy so you will not know the exact amount until your appointment. Since the exchange rate varies, have small bills and change available as the embassy requires the exact amount.

#3 - Photos: You must have proper photos or your application will not be accepted. This is very important! The French are serious about photos conforming to their rules: white background, no smiling, no teeth showing, no hair around the face (bangs) or hair covering the ears, no glasses, no jewelry. We recommend finding a photo store close to the embassy as they will be familiar with the photo requirements. It would be wise to bring the French Visa Department photo specifications (below) with you to show to the photographer.

Visa Department Photo Requirements: *2 fotografías recientes (tipo pasaporte: 3.5 x 4.5 cm en color con fondo claro) Particularidad el largo del rostro debe cubrir desde la parte superior del cráneo (incluyendo el cabello) hasta la mandíbula: 3 cm – Ancho: de oreja a oreja 2.3 cm*

#5 – FM2 or FM3 (Proof of Mexico Residency): In 2019 and 2020, we had neither an FM2 nor FM3. Via the French Honorary Consul in La Paz*, who was extremely helpful and speaks excellent English, we contacted a representative of the visa department at the Mexico City French Embassy and explained our situation by email (in French). Though you technically should be a resident of Mexico, they are willing to make an exception for sailors. Instead of an FM2 or 3, we included copies of our Tourist Visa and a letter from a marina in Mexico stating that we reside aboard our boat in their marina. Spanish will probably be fine but we included a French translation of the letter. Some marinas may provide you with this letter if you have stayed there previously, or if you just ask nicely.

#6 – I Won’t Work in France Letter: Though the requirement document does not specify this letter be translated, we submitted ours in French. Copy below.

#7 – Motivation Letter: Though the requirement document does not specify this letter be translated, we submitted ours in French. It should simply explain why you want to visit French Polynesia. For example, “To experience the beauty and culture of this unique part of the world by sailboat.”

#8 – Proof of Regular Income. See #10 below.

#9 – Lease in France: We provided a copy of our boat documentation and a page with particulars about the boat (size, color, radios, MMSI, etc.). In 2022, we were asked for the *original* of our documentation which we did not have with us. We would not have surrendered it even if we had it at the time. However, perhaps bring it with you so you can show it to them if asked.

#10 – Economic Resources: We provided relevant pages from bank and retirement account statements for 3 months. (Remember to black out the account numbers.)

#11 – Insurance: We have the DAN Preferred Plan and separate ex-pat insurance through IMG Europe (our agent is Roger Anthony at www.protexcare.com). We provided copies of our DAN cards, the relevant insurance pages from the DAN Benefits manual, and our IMG Europe declaration. As of 2022, IMG provides a letter (printable on their client website) saying the coverage meets Schengen requirements, so we included that as well. The insurance is supposed to be valid for the entire period of your visa. Since most insurance policies will expire sometime during your

time in FP, you either have to renew your insurance early so you can prove you are covered for the period of your visa, or perhaps attach a letter to your proof of insurance stating that you will be automatically renewing the policy on <date>. Though it is reported that insurance with a zero deductible is required when applying for a LSV in the USA, this has not been our experience in Mexico.

#12 – Police Clearance Letter: Request this from your hometown police department and translate into French. Make sure it is an original. A fax or photocopy may be unacceptable. This may take some time to obtain, so start working on it early.

This letter is "evidence of no criminal record". If you are from a small town in the USA, it might be free and you can get it quickly. In big cities, it often takes weeks and costs \$20-30. This is an odd requirement for those from the USA as a police clearance only declares you don't have a record in the local jurisdiction issuing it. France has a national police force so it is countrywide. Still, a local department's letter seems to fulfill the visa requirement.

Important Notes:

- a. *Marriage Certificate:* In 2022 we were asked for a copy of our marriage certificate. When we asked why, they said, "because you are traveling together". We found that odd because not everyone traveling together is married. Nonetheless, we had a scan of our marriage certificate on our laptop, so we were able to find a copy shop to print it and returned with it to the embassy.
 - b. *Originals:* The Requirements Document (referred to in paragraph 2 above) says ORIGINAL + 1 PHOTOCOPY for everything required. However, many of our documents were printed digitally: bank statements, proof of insurance, etc. This was not a problem. Of course, the letters we wrote and signed were original, as well as the police clearance.
 - c. *Copies:* Though we had a copy of everything (as instructed), the embassy did not want them. This was the case in 2019, 2020, 2022. However, the agent did switch out some of the copies from our second set (purportedly for a clearer copy). Keep the entire second set as you will need them when you complete the LSV process after your arrival in French Polynesia.
3. Make a visa appointment. You need one appointment time for each visa applicant. You are supposed to use the embassy's online tool (<https://mx.ambafrance.org/Citas-para-la-solicitud-de-visa-Rendez-vous-pour-la-demande-d-un-visa>). Appointment times are meant to open 30 or 60 days in advance (depending on who you ask). In 2019 and 2020, we could never find an open spot and the site did not seem to work correctly. Finally, we contacted the embassy representative (again via the Honorary Consul in La Paz) and explained our situation. We were then assigned a day (not a time) for our appointment in Mexico City. If you must go this route, make sure you specify how many applicants there are. We believe it is also important that you communicate with the Embassy in French or Spanish, not English. We recommend trying to get an appointment via the website if possible.

In 2022, the website did not show any appointments for months. On contacting the embassy, we were given a different URL and, *voilà!*, there were dozens of appointments available. Here is that URL (make sure you paste it in without a break):

<https://pastel.diplomatie.gouv.fr/rdvinternet/html-4.02.00/frameset/frameset.html?lcid=1&sgid=193&suid=2>

If you get an online appointment, *print out your confirmation and bring it with you; you will need it at the embassy.*

Getting an appointment is the most time-sensitive step in this process, so do it as soon as possible!

4. Gather all items needed from the Required Document list. Do not staple anything together and leave the photos unattached. Note that some items may take time to receive (e.g., the police clearance letter). Also, if you want your visa returned to you via courier, read item #6 below *before your appointment.*

5. Go to your appointment.
 - a. Travel to Ciudad de Mexico: There are scores of daily cheap flights (check *Volaris & Viva Aerobus*). We rented an Airbnb in Polanco which is the barrio where the French Embassy is located. It's an upscale and safe part of town and the AirBnB was quite reasonable. Take a couple of extra days to tour around the city; it's a great place! The Metro is excellent, safe, and only costs 5 pesos! There are several bikeshare companies with lots of bikes available. Bolt had rideshare service in the city as did Cabify and Uber (but please don't use Uber because they are an awful company). Don't miss Teotihuacan, the Zocalo, Ballet Folklorico, and the Anthropology Museum. Remember that museums and Chapultepec Park are closed on Monday. However, Chapultepec Park is open to bicycles passing through on Monday so you can ride around in it.

 - b. Your Appointment: The French Visa Office has its own entry on the west side of the Embassy on *Calle Calderón de la Barca* just off of *Campos Eliseos* - <https://goo.gl/maps/FDhaDP9s8PaAjRjNA>. In 2019, since we only had a date for our appointment and not a time, we arrived just after opening at 0900. There were already 3 people waiting, so take that into account. In 2020 we arrived at 0830 and were second in line. Have your photos and passports ready for the guard. He will buzz you into the anteroom to check your photos, passports, and appointment confirmation. We were not on the printed list but he did have another hand-written list which included our names. You will have to leave your mobile phone with the guard. Once the guard lets you in, take a seat and wait for your turn. You'll eventually be called to a window. It's great if you speak French or Spanish. In 2022 the embassy personnel spoke perfect English.

- c. Travel *from* Mexico City: Remember that you will need to leave your passport with your application at the French Embassy. You will NOT have your passport for your return travel. In 2019, we had Temporary US Passports and used those for our ID. However, in 2020 we experimented with other IDs. We tried our US driver’s licenses (CA & OH) and our GOES cards. They worked just fine. It seems that all that is needed to travel domestically by air in Mexico is a government-issued photo ID. However, things might change. Of course, you could also take a train or a bus on your return trip.

If you are uncomfortable traveling without a passport, or will need to travel outside of Mexico before your LSV arrives, please see the RECEIVING A TEMPORARY PASSPORT FROM THE U.S. EMBASSY IN CIUDAD de MEXICO section at the end of this document.

6. Receive your passport and visa via courier service.

- a. The French Embassy will return your passport and visa to you via a courier service if you provide a pre-paid envelope. Before your appointment, visit the PAKMAIL service center two blocks from the embassy (Ariosto 10, Polanco – <https://goo.gl/maps/m6cogd7w6eLZfoKd7>). They open at 0900 and are familiar with the process. Tell them you want a prepaid envelope for a passport. Make clear it is for a visa from the French Embassy and that you will be sending it to a domicile or business -- NOT a consular office. *You will need to provide a valid address in Mexico where you can receive mail.* They offer FedEx, DHL, or Estafeta. Do not use Estafeta even though it is cheaper. FedEx is probably your best choice. Depending who helps you, this process could take 10 minutes or 40 minutes, so plan your time accordingly.

Don’t forget to include your DHL or FedEx envelope with your application at your visa office appointment. You will need one envelope for *each visa application.*

- b. *Status Check:* At the embassy you will be given a *quittance* (receipt) with a code starting with MEX. You can check the status of your visa online at the *France Diplomatie* website (<https://pastel.diplomatie.gouv.fr/VisaNET-Consultation-Internet/html/frameset/frameset.html>). Be aware that you must type the MEX in CAPS. Even though the website changes MEX to caps automatically, you will receive an error if you don’t enter the MEX in caps. The status check does not tell you if your visa is granted or denied; it only tells you if it is complete.
- c. *Total time from appointment date to delivery of passport:*
 2019: 7 weeks (using Estafeta)
 2020: 5.5 weeks (using FedEx)
 2022: 6 weeks (using FedEx)

7. Sail to French Polynesia. You will need to activate your visa upon arrival. For more information about that process, check out the remarkable and definitive LSV document created by s/v Jacaranda at www.jacarandajourney.com/other-good-stuff.
8. Raise a toast to congratulate yourself on the successful completion of the process and thank the French for *une expérience grande et formidable*.

We will end with a short story about our first experience with this process in 2008. At that time we left *Migration* in Tahiti and flew back to Los Angeles where we stayed for over 3 months waiting for our visas. After our return to Tahiti, while having dinner with some French friends on their boat, we related the story of our travails and the mounds of paperwork it entailed (everything was submitted in triplicate then). Guy, our French host, said “*Oui, there is much bureaucracy in France.*” We responded that there was also bureaucracy in the United States. “*Oh, non, non, non,*” Guy replied, “*Les Etats Unis are only 200 years old. We French have had over 500 years to perfect the bureaucracy!*”

**Cedric Gavrel de La Chapelle, Honorary Consul, Agence Consulaire La Paz
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Translation of SOLICITUD DE LARGA ESTANCIA VISITANTE TIEMPO SABATICO

- 1 The present list of documents in which you must “palomear” (*untranslatable*) the presence of each document and each photocopy that you will submit
- 2 A long stay visa application form filling out all the lines;
- 3 2 recent photographs (passport type: 3.5 x 4.5 cm in color with light background)
Particularly the length of the face should cover from the top of the skull (including the hair) up to the jaw: 3 cm - Width: from ear to ear 2.3 cm.
- Paste one of them in the application, in the space provided for that purpose (Required);
(Note from Migration: We recommend you do not attach the photo to the application)
- 4 ORIGINAL + 1 PHOTOCOPY: Passport whose validity must exceed more than 3 months date of the end of the stay in France + photocopy of the pages containing the personal information;
- 5 ORIGINAL + 1 PHOTOCOPY: Migratory Form FM2 or FM3 valid if the applicant is foreigner resident in Mexico;
- 6 ORIGINAL + 1 PHOTOCOPY: Letter of commitment from the applicant to not do any professional activity during your stay in France;
- 7 ORIGINAL + 1 PHOTOCOPY: Letter of motivation of the applicant explaining the reasons for going to France for a year;
- 8 ORIGINAL + 1 PHOTOCOPY: Proof of the socio-professional situation of the applicant (Curriculum Vitae with documents);
- 9 ORIGINAL + 1 PHOTOCOPY: A lease in France;
- 10 ORIGINAL + 1 PHOTOCOPY: Economic resources during the stay in France:
The applicant must submit his own financial resources: a minimum of 13,176 Euros for the year;
 - Proof of the economic resources of the applicant (Pension, assets or everything type of income);
- 11 ORIGINAL + 1 PHOTOCOPY: Proof of insurance in which it is indicated that the expenses medical and repatriation costs are covered up to an amount of 30000 Euros or 50000 USD (Valid one year).
- 12 ORIGINAL + 1 PHOTOCOPY: Evidence of no criminal record translated into French.

I WILL NOT WORK IN FRANCE
Letter in French

<date>

Re: Lettre d'engagement que ne faire aucune activité professionnelle pendant ma séjour en France

Cher Monsieur ou Madame,

Moi-meme, <your name>, je proms de ne pas engager d'entreprises françaises pendant ma visite en Polynésie française.

Je visite uniquement à des fins touristiques et pour profiter de la beauté des îles.

Signé

<your signature>

RECEIVING A TEMPORARY PASSPORT FROM THE U.S. EMBASSY IN CIUDAD de MEXICO

Thanks to Shellie & Randy of s/v Moondance for providing this information.

Due to having to surrender your original Passport to the French Embassy when applying for a Long Stay Visa, we wanted to have a temporary one with us to ensure we could travel back to the states in the event of an emergency. This qualifies you for an "Emergency Passport" request. To apply for one, bring the following items:

- Completed DS11 Form (Will also be called the DS-82, that's OK and is the one you will need to have completed to give them along with your current passport) found at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/how-apply/forms.html>
- Passport Photo This can be obtained nearby at:
Rio Volga No. 1Primer Piso Col. Cuauhtemoc Ciudad De Mexico, C.P. 06500
Their hours are 6 am to 6 pm.
Phone: 5533-6014. www.usvisa.mx
- Letter Attached (Specific to your names) stating LSV Process
- \$110

Embassy location:

US Embassy
Paseo De La Reforma 305
Colonia Cuauhtemoc
06500 Mexico, CDMX

When you arrive let the staff at the front window on the sidewalk know you are there for an "Emergency Passport". (Due to this status, an appointment is not necessary.) They will ask you for your passport picture, Temporary Passport Letter and DS-82. Once approved by their supervisor they will let you in. No cell phones or bags are allowed beyond security but will be held in safe keeping for you to retrieve when you leave.

The staff shared that mid-day is the best time to arrive. Scheduled appointments are set in the morning and cleared out near noon.

They will issue you a Temporary Passport before leaving the Embassy. It is valid for one year and only recommended for travel back to the United States as travel internationally typically requires the passport being traveled with to be validated beyond a year.

SAMPLE LETTER for EMERGENCY PASSPORT

<date>

<your name>

<your address>

US Embassy Mexico City
Paseo De La Reforma 305
Colonia Cuauhtemoc
06500 Mexico, CDMX

Dear Embassy Staff:

I, <name>, currently have a Passport. I am applying for a Long Stay Visa for French Polynesia. The French Embassy requires keeping my currently issued Passport while my application is in process. I will be traveling by plane while they still have my passport. Due to this I am applying for an Emergency Passport to complete my travel.

Sincerely~