

# French Polynesia Long Stay Visa Application Process in MEXICO CITY

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(Version 9 – updated October 2023)

This is a new version of this document with revised information based on our research in October 2023. Unlike the previous versions which were based on our actual experiences, we did not go through the entire process ourselves.

The French Embassy in Mexico City changed the visa process in late 2022. We have removed all references to the previous processes (2019, 2020, 2021/22) and attempted to include all steps in the new process. We've retained other information that may be useful for your trip to *La Ciudad*.

THE GOOD NEWS: The application process is somewhat simplified and requires fewer documents (no police clearance letter or motivation letter) and the documents do not have to be translated into French.

## **READ THIS**

***Make sure you also read [Jacaranda's document on obtaining a long stay visa](https://www.jacarandajourney.com/fplongstayvisa). It is REQUIRED READING as it contains a wealth of information.***  
***<https://www.jacarandajourney.com/fplongstayvisa>***

***We know there is a lot of information in this document, but please read it all;  
you'll probably find the answers to your questions.***

*Thanks to Chuck and Linda formerly of s/v Jacaranda, Ken and Anne of s/v Naida, Joanne & Scott of s/v Fundango, and Kathy and Scott of s/v Sea Bella for helping with this document.*

## **THE STEPS**

1. Use the French government's [visa wizard](https://france-visas.gouv.fr/en/visa-wizard) to check whether you need a visa: <https://france-visas.gouv.fr/en/visa-wizard>. (Note: If you're from the USA, your nationality is *American*. Don't look for *USA* or *United States* in the lists; you won't find them.)
2. Go to the [French Embassy in Mexico's site for obtaining a visa](https://mx.ambafrance.org/Vous-avez-besoin-d-un-visa-12096): <https://mx.ambafrance.org/Vous-avez-besoin-d-un-visa-12096>. This site is available in French or Spanish but your browser can easily translate it if you'd like.
3. Read every one of the drop-down informational boxes to familiarize yourself with the process. Pretty much everything you need to know is on this page. Note: all the links in *this* document came from that webpage.

4. Create an account at the [French government's visa site](https://france-visas.gouv.fr/fr/web/france-visas/demande-en-ligne) and start the application process by completing the online form. <https://france-visas.gouv.fr/fr/web/france-visas/demande-en-ligne>. You can set the language on this site to English if you'd like.

Note the following as you fill in the form:

- a. All dates are usually in day-month-year format. Not the US-style of month/day/year.
  - b. #20: If you have a Residency Permit for Mexico, put the information here. Otherwise, leave blank.
  - c. #23: Select *Private Stay/Visitor*, or select *Other* and write in *Tourism*. Both have been accepted.
  - d. #25: We simply entered “voilier Migration”. Others have entered:  
Sailing Vessel <vessel name>  
Marina Papeete  
98714 Papeete
  - e. #26: This date is very important. See **Part 1e - Explanation of the Visa Dates on the application** in [Jacaranda's LSV document](#). You probably want this date to be 90 days after your appointment. Since you don't have an appointment yet, you either have to guess or adjust this date after you get an appointment and *before* you submit your online application. *This date cannot be more than 90 days after your application date (the date of your appointment)*. See Item #6 below.
  - f. #27: Select *More than one year*
  - g. #28: If you are travelling with your spouse, we recommend having copies of your marriage certificate available. Though it is not on the list of required documents and several 2022/23 applicants were not asked for it, they have requested it in the past. Even if you don't use it, having the copy will be useful if you choose to renew your Carte de Sejour for a second year while in French Polynesia as you will only be required to pay one filing fee if you are a married couple.
  - h. #29: Most people select *CASH* and *CREDIT CARDS*. You could also include *ACCOMMODATION PREPAID* as you are staying on your boat.
  - i. The last page of the online application presents a list of documents needed. You'll find this list (as of October 2023) below including notes on most of the items. The requirements may change so print out the list you are presented with.
5. Gather together all documents necessary and make copies. Do not staple anything together and leave the photos unattached (if you have them already – see #9a below). Note that if you plan to renew your Carte de Sejour for another year while you are in French Polynesia, you will need more photographs and all the same documents again -- though many (like bank statements) will need to be updated.

**INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT:** Though you technically should be a resident of Mexico to submit your application at the embassy, they are willing to make an exception for sailors. However, you must provide some proof of your “residency” in Mexico. We included copies

of our Tourist Visa and a letter from a Mexican marina stating that we were living full-time on our boat. We asked for letters from marinas in La Paz and Banderas Bay and they were very nice to help us out even though we had only been in the marinas for a short period. This worked fine. Other cruisers have done the following: *“We provided a few marina receipts along with where we had anchored during the previous year (since we had not been in Marinas much) and also check in / out documentation from the port captains for each port in Mexico we had been to. I also provided a timeline of where we had been.”*

If you do not provide proof of your residency in Mexico (whether permanent or just cruising), the embassy will not process your application.

In the past, the French Honorary Consul in La Paz has been very helpful with regard to this item if you have any problems:

*Cedric Gavrel de La Chapelle, Honorary Consul, Agence Consulaire La Paz  
lapaz.chfrance@gmail.com consulat.lapaz@gmail.com 52 612 128 4151*

6. Make a visa appointment using the [appointment website](https://consulat.gouv.fr/consulat-general-de-france-a-mexico-service-des-visas/rendez-vous) at <https://consulat.gouv.fr/consulat-general-de-france-a-mexico-service-des-visas/rendez-vous>

Appointments are available 30 days in advance. The site is self-explanatory. **It is very important that you start looking for your appointment as early as is practical since they fill up quickly.** Remember that the INTENDED DATE OF ENTRY INTO FRANCE OR THE SCHENGEN AREA (#26 on your application) **CANNOT be more than 90 days AFTER your appointment. NINETY days, NOT three months.** This is super important. For example, do not make your appointment November 1 and use March 25 as your date of entry. It will not be accepted.

When we applied, the application was not an online form so we were able to fill in the date *after* we made our appointment. Since you now have to fill in your INTENDED DATE OF ENTRY online, you may consider waiting to complete and submit the application until after you have your appointment. Then you can set the Date of Entry based on your appointment date. You could also bring Wite-Out with you to your appointment and ask if you can change the date to be 90 days (*90 days, NOT 3 months*) after your appointment. We don't know if this is allowable.

Once you get an online appointment, print out your confirmation which will be emailed to you. Make sure you bring the confirmation with you to the embassy.

*Getting an appointment is the most time-sensitive step in this process, so mark your calendar 30 days before the date you want your appointment. In the past, new appointments appeared at midnight, Paris-time. That may have changed. If no appointments are available, there is now a waiting list that you can join and you will receive an email if appointments become available. Check your email frequently and act quickly.*

7. Submit your Online Application: Finish the process on the visa website – first adjusting your INTENDED DATE OF ENTRY if necessary. You must certify that you have an

appointment. Download and print the PDF of your application, your Registration Receipt and the checklist of necessary documents.

8. Travel to Mexico City: 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. There are many taxis and various rideshare services including Didi, 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.

9. Before your appointment:

- a. Get proper photographs: See the [Photographies section](https://mx.ambafrance.org/Vous-avez-besoin-d-un-visa-12096) of the Embassy's visa page (<https://mx.ambafrance.org/Vous-avez-besoin-d-un-visa-12096>). The embassy is very particular about photos so we recommend going to one of the photographers [they recommend](https://mx.ambafrance.org/Photographies) so you will be sure the photos will be accepted. <https://mx.ambafrance.org/Photographies>. The actual physical requirements for photos can be found on the embassy's website.
- b. Purchase prepaid mailing envelope(s): Visit PAKMAIL to purchase. The PAKMAIL service center is two blocks from the embassy:

[Pakmail Parque Lincoln](#)

Calle Ariosto No. 10, Loc. A  
 Colonia Chapultepec Polanco, P.C. 11560  
 Del. Miguel Hidalgo, Mexico D.F.  
 Tel: 55 5282 1239 / 55 5282 1913

<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 (like a marina office)*. They offer FedEx, DHL, or Estafeta. Do not use Estafeta even though it's 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.

**You will need one envelope for each visa application.** Don't forget to bring the envelope(s) to your visa appointment.

- c. Make sure you have the correct amount for the visa 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.

10. Go to your Appointment: The French Visa Office has its own entry on the west side of the Embassy on [Calle Calderón de la Barca](https://goo.gl/maps/FDhaDP9s8PaAjRjNA) just off of *Campos Eliseos* - <https://goo.gl/maps/FDhaDP9s8PaAjRjNA>. Have your photos and passports ready for the guard. He will buzz you into the anteroom to check your photos, passports, and appointment confirmation. 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. However, in 2022 the embassy personnel spoke perfect English. Several yachties who had appointments in early 2023 said the appointment only took 5 minutes and the embassy personnel did *not* check that they had all their paperwork in order, so make sure you cover all your bases and double-check your documents before your appointment.
11. 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.*

12. Receive your passport and visa via courier service.

- a. Receipt times in the past:  
2019: 7 weeks (using Estafeta)  
2020: 5.5 weeks (using FedEx)  
2022: 6 weeks (using FedEx)  
2023: 6-7 weeks (using FedEx)

- b. Status Check: This is from the embassy's website:

The processing time for a case is 2 to 3 weeks.

It is therefore not necessary to contact us before this period.

If, after 3 weeks, you have not received your passport, you should first consult the follow-up of your paid envelope to find out whether the shipment is in progress. (You can contact the company Pakmail, which receives passports by telephone at 55 52 82 12 39).

If the sending has not been made, you can contact us to find out how to follow up your file by email at the following address: [visas.mexico-fslt@diplomatie.gouv.fr](mailto:visas.mexico-fslt@diplomatie.gouv.fr).

Passports are handed over only by mailing via the pre-paid envelope deposited at the time of the day. It is not possible to withdraw your passport from the Consulate General.

- c. If your application was approved, your passport will have a visa in it good for three months starting on your *Intended Date of Entry* (#26 on your application) with an end date 90 days later. It will have the words  
VISITEUR  
POLYNESIE(TOM)  
C SEJ A SOLLIC

below your name. This means you have been granted your visa and you must apply for your one-year *Carte de Long Séjour* after you arrive in French Polynesia *before* the end date.

- 13. Sail to French Polynesia. For information about applying for your *Carte de Long Séjour*, check out the definitive [LSV document created by s/v Jacaranda](#).
- 14. 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!*”

## REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

*(per the French Embassy with our additional notes in italics)*

The day of your appointment, thank you for coming with originals and copy of all documents listed below, translated into French /English or Spanish (if accepted by the visa center).

Please note: if any documents are missing, this may lead to the non-issuance of the visa you have applied for. The visa center reserves the right to ask for further documentation and information.

### FORMS

- ☐ Signed and dated application form *(which you created online)*
- ☐ Receipt France-Visas *(this is the registration receipt you could download and print after submitting your online application)*

*(Don't forget your appointment confirmation also)*

### PRE-REQUISITES

- ☐ A travel document, issued less than 10 years ago, containing at least two blank pages, with a period of validity at least 3 months longer than the date on which you intend to leave the Schengen Area or, in the case of a long stay, at least three months longer than the expiry date of the visa requested. Be sure to transmit (scan) ALL PAGES of your travel document containing visas, entry and exit stamps or any other inscription.

*(This, of course, is your passport)*

- ☐ ID photograph. Here is a non-exhaustive list of photographs that can provide the photographs in the required format : <https://mx.ambafrance.org/Photographies>.

*(See step 8a above)*

- ☐ If you are not a national of your country of residence: proof that you are legally resident in that country (e.g. residence permit).

*(See step 5 above)*

### PURPOSE OF TRAVEL/STAY

- ☐ Promise not to exercise any professional activity in France, if applicable accompanied by a letter explaining your project.

*(A copy of a letter in French can be found later in this document, or create your own in English.)*

- ☐ Proof of socio-economic situation (pay slips, work certificate, retirement pension, etc.).

### FUNDS

- ☐ Proof of resources: pension certificate and 3 last detailed statements.

*(Remember to black out the account numbers.)*

**ACCOMMODATION**

- ☐ Proof of accommodation in France: property title deed, tenancy agreement or any other supporting document. Or proof that accommodation will be provided by a person residing in France, or if not, a document explaining the accommodation arrangements planned for France. *(We submitted a copy of the documentation for the boat as well as an ‘info’ sheet about the boat.)*

**TRAVEL HEALTH INSURANCE**

- ☐ Health insurance for the full duration of the stay. The insurance must cover the visa’s entire validity period (1 year at the most). *(We have the DAN Preferred Plan and separate ex-pat insurance through IMG Europe [our agent – whom we highly recommend -- is Roger Anthony at [www.protexcare.com](http://www.protexcare.com)]. If your insurance will expire before the year, you might print a screenshot of your health insurance payment screen showing that auto-renewal is checked. See Jacaranda’s document for more information on this subject.)*

☐ **APPLICABLE VISA 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.*



*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 promis 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. 1 Primer Piso Col. Cuauhtemoc Ciudad De Mexico, C.P. 06500  
Their hours are 6 am to 6 pm.  
Phone: 55 33 60 14. [www.usvisa.mx](http://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

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<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~