

Eau de Vie

a wine, spirits, and travel newsletter

Vol.24 December 2020

Update on:



With TSA Pre✓ you don't need to remove:



SHOES



LAPTOPS



3-1-1 LIQUIDS



BELTS



LIGHT JACKETS

and

In November 2019 I wrote about applying to get Global Entry. [You can read that article here.](#)

Sara and I applied soon afterward and our plan was to take an early spring road trip out to Portland and Seattle, then the famous Coho, [Black Ball Express Ferry](#) to Vancouver Island. We would visit Victoria, Nanaimo, Vancouver and then drive back across Canada stopping in Banff National Park and Winnipeg. We'd cross the US-Canada border at Warroad, Minnesota where we'd finish up our Global Entry application with the required interview. The trip was planned, reservations were made, tickets purchased and in March we drove out to Washington.

Then... the pandemic started and borders around the world shuttered. We canceled the rest of the trip and we tuckered tail and ran for home. Canada shut its border with the US (it's still closed) and the US Customs and Border Protection Bureau closed all of its appointment centers. Ah 2020, how I long to see this year in hindsight.

Getting your trusted traveler status requires an online application and an in person interview. Once your application is accepted you have

365 days to schedule and meet an agent at an enrollment center. If you miss this year long window of opportunity your application is canceled and you lose your \$100 application fee.

For us this meant we had until November 2020. You can see where this is going... despite checking periodically, all the offices were closed due to the pandemic.

In September, one office in Minnesota was taking limited applications. I quickly booked two of the time slots and we drove to International Falls on an overcast but pleasant fall day.

The interview agent was great. I imagine her job is much less hectic now. We all wore masks, she had a plexiglass screen on her desk and she asked us simple questions. She took our finger prints (on a digital scanner) and photos. At the end of the interview she said we were approved for the Trusted Traveler Program and asked if we had any questions.

"Funny you should ask," I thought because I do have questions, specifically about bringing more than one bottle of wine home with me in my luggage.

Anything to Declare?

Our interviewing agent told us to declare everything upon entering the United States of America even if we qualify for the exclusion. She said that being a Trusted Traveler has increased trust and responsibility.

Ok I thought, sure. But 2 bottles of wine duty free is still the rule right? What would be the duty (tax) on three bottles? How about a case or suitcase load of wine?

Her answer surprised me. The duty on wine is governed by the [Harmonized Tariff Schedule](#). Chapter 22 details the duty on beverages, spirits and vinegars. The duty is calculated at .41¢ for wine under 14% and .55¢ for wine over 14% per liter. She told us that generally if the duty is less than \$25 they don't collect it. To have \$25 worth of wine in my luggage I'd need over 65 bottles of wine!

Oh la la! That's mighty tempting but I'm sure that my bag would weigh over 50 pounds. Still... when purchased in France, fine wine is much cheaper. Some wines are a 1/4 of the price and others are simply unavailable here.

But there is a catch - depending on the state in which you clear customs you may be limited to the amount you can import.

Duty to your State.

The Federal Government places no limit on the amount of importation of intoxicating beverages for personal use. They rely on individual States to set their own rules. Depending on the state, there may be a strict limit based on amount or they may simply require a direct payment of tax.

When Prohibition was repealed, each state, indeed each county in each state, and in many places each community decided how they were going to enforce local liquor laws. For instance, many states still run a state monopoly on the sale of liquor and some counties are considered dry (prohibiting the sale of intoxicating beverages).

The myriad of state laws on liquor also govern how much you can bring into the state. Customs and Border Agents are supposed to enforce state and federal laws. When you enter the United States CBP agents will [enforce the law of the state you enter](#).

Here's how much you can bring with you across the state border:

[MN](#): Duty free: for international arrivals, 4 liters, for domestic, 1 liter. For more than this you have to contact the Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division.

[WI](#): None. But there are some exceptions: people moving to WI or for members of the military. Check the link.

[IL](#): All sources, 1 gallon.

[WA](#): 1 liter free from state tax. Otherwise the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board requires a remittance of tax. Currently the tax is .17¢ per bottle of wine, .43¢ per 6 pack of beer or \$5.69 per bottle of spirits.

[NY](#): 1 quart per month. Otherwise residents must file a tax return. The current rate is .30¢ per gallon of wine unless you live in NYC where you must pay an additional .264¢ per liter. A New York city resident must first calculate in gallons and then convert to liters. Ok... nice that they made this simple.

[AZ](#): Allows the amount the Federal Government permits duty fee which is 1 liter. Unless you are in the military, then as much as you want. Seriously, that's the rule.

As you can see, the rules are complicated and interwoven and much is left to the discretion of the border agent. Our interviewer agent said that if it doesn't seem excessive she doesn't charge and ignores the Minnesota limit but not all agents are so forgiving. You won't get arrested but you may have to play the paperwork shuffle and could get your excess confiscated.

Oh well, I wasn't going to fill my suitcase full of French wine anyway. I just liked the thought that I could and now I know the rules.



What Does your new Global Entry Card Do?

It allows you to use the much smaller Global Entry lane when clearing into the USA.

It doesn't help you clear into foreign countries quicker and it doesn't replace your passport.

If you applied for Global Entry with TSA Pre-✓ then you can also use your Global Entry card at the TSA pre-check lines at the security in airports.

The Global Entry card also qualifies as a Real ID. So if you do not have a Real ID drivers license ([I talk about getting one of those here](#)) you can use your Global Entry card instead. The deadline for using a Real ID drivers license or other form of acceptable TSA documentation has been extended to October 2021.

Finally, be aware that your Global Entry card is paired to your passport number. If you get a new passport you'll need to update your card. This can be done online with the account that was set up to apply for the card.

Happy Holidays to you! We look forward to gathering in person again in 2021!
-David & Sara