

Why does having a second passport matter?

Why does having a second passport matter? Ask anyone who has tried to travel, work or move overseas and they will quickly tell you about the drawbacks of having a single passport. With the current political instability and further junk status downgrades South Africa has faced as of late, some might say you would be mad not to have a 'Plan B' if things don't start taking a turn for the better.

Currently ranked 96th in the world with visa-free access to [92 countries](#) – excluding much of Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada – South African passports, however, exclude from access to youth working holiday schemes, automatic working visas and residency options in much of the world.



Alison Johnson

Considering future citizenship

Alison Johnson, co-founder of *wherecani.live* has travelled, worked and lived all over the world – including for a large portion of her life in South Africa.

“My mother applied for my British passport when I was a child before we left Zimbabwe. As a result, I was able to move from South Africa where we were then living at the time to London to start a career. I was then able to move to Australia and have a family before moving to Spain where I currently live. My husband was also eligible for a British passport but because his father never applied on his behalf, he has always had to rely on his rights as a spouse,” says Johnson.

“You may think that the nationality and passport that your child holds today is respected and useful, but this may not be the case in the future. Think about the implications that Brexit could have on UK passport holders. Political unrest, disagreements and uncertainty often bring changes to visa requirements and rulings.

“I am in the process of applying for an Irish passport (which I am entitled to through my Irish grandmother) to ensure that my family and I can live and work in Europe in case of a hard Brexit. Unfortunately, I

only found out about my eligibility two years ago as had I known, and applied before my son was born he would have been eligible for Irish citizenship as well. It was as a result of this missed opportunity that the concept of *wherecani.live* was born,” adds Johnson.

So what if you are not as lucky as Johnson is, having a diligent mother who was a British citizen, and an Irish born grandmother? Well, there are still a few ways to access a second passport.

“Most people know about accessing a passport through your place of birth or your family. There are many instances, however, where people don't know they are eligible for citizenship such as in Italy where you can get citizenship from a great, great, great grandparent. The other opportunities that we are educating people on is citizenship and residency through investment or through showing an annual income,” explains Johnson.

Accessing your options

So where do you start looking into all of this? The first step is to check the family tree as countries around the world have

different ancestry requirements such as Ireland which goes back three generations (Ireland) and some European countries including Germany have very flexible rules such as for descendants of those impacted by the German Nazi party.

Citizenship or residency by investment used to be the preserve of the rich and famous but today an investment as low as a \$5,000 could get you residency in Paraguay. The Portuguese Golden Visa Programme in Portugal has become popular in South Africa – if you purchase property for as little as €350,000 (which you can rent out), you can get a permanent residency visa.

This gives you access to all the Schengen countries (26 European countries including Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Austria, Sweden and Greece) visa-free. After six years you can apply for full Portuguese citizenship achieving all the benefits that come with European Union citizenship for you and your family. The biggest drawback with this programme is you don't need to move there full-time. You only need to spend a week or two in Portugal every year.

“The best place to get started is the internet. There are fantastic resources available for you if you have time to search through and find them. If you prefer a shortcut, our team spent 18 months collating immigration data from official government and other verified sources. We have a very clever engine built into our online portal that then matches these rules to the information you've provided us, and in a couple of minutes you have a personalised report showing you all of your options to a new life,” adds Johnson.

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