



H1 2026 · ISSUE 01

The Digital Borders Report

How and where the world's borders are going digital.

Published by **EntryCheck**



ABOUT THIS REPORT

The state of digital entry, measured.

Entry is going digital. Every quarter, more countries replace paper visas and passport stamps with eVisas, eTAs and digital arrival cards. It is one of the biggest quiet shifts in how people move across borders, and until now, no one has measured it consistently.

The Digital Borders Report is that measure. Built entirely on EntryCheck's live registry of official government entry portals, it tracks how many countries have gone digital, what they charge, how fast they process, how their rules changed this period, and what it means as travel discovery moves to AI.

This is Issue 01, the baseline. Every figure is drawn from verified, dated data, with sources cited throughout. We publish it every quarter.

Data as of 30 June 2026.



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Coverage, regions, the eTA rise, arrival cards, cost & speed

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Six country case studies, one per region

Part IV **The AI dimension**

How travel discovery is moving to AI, and the risk

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What's next, glossary, methodology, how to cite



THE HEADLINES

Key findings.

- 01** 138 countries now run some form of digital entry. 108 issue an eVisa. Africa leads the map with 48.
- 02** Borders opened and hardened in equal measure: of 56 policy changes in H1 2026, 23 expanded access and 23 tightened it.
- 03** The EU's EES and ETIAS went live, the single biggest digital-border shift of the year.
- 04** Entry is fast and modest in cost: 68 countries process in a day or less, at a median starting fee near \$32.
- 05** Discovery is moving to AI. 1 in 5 EntryCheck sessions already arrive cited from ChatGPT.



PART I · THE STATE OF DIGITAL ENTRY

The state of digital entry

138

countries tracked
132 verified live

BY AUTHORIZATION TYPE



The eVisa is the default. The eTA and the digital arrival card are the fast-growing edges of the shift.

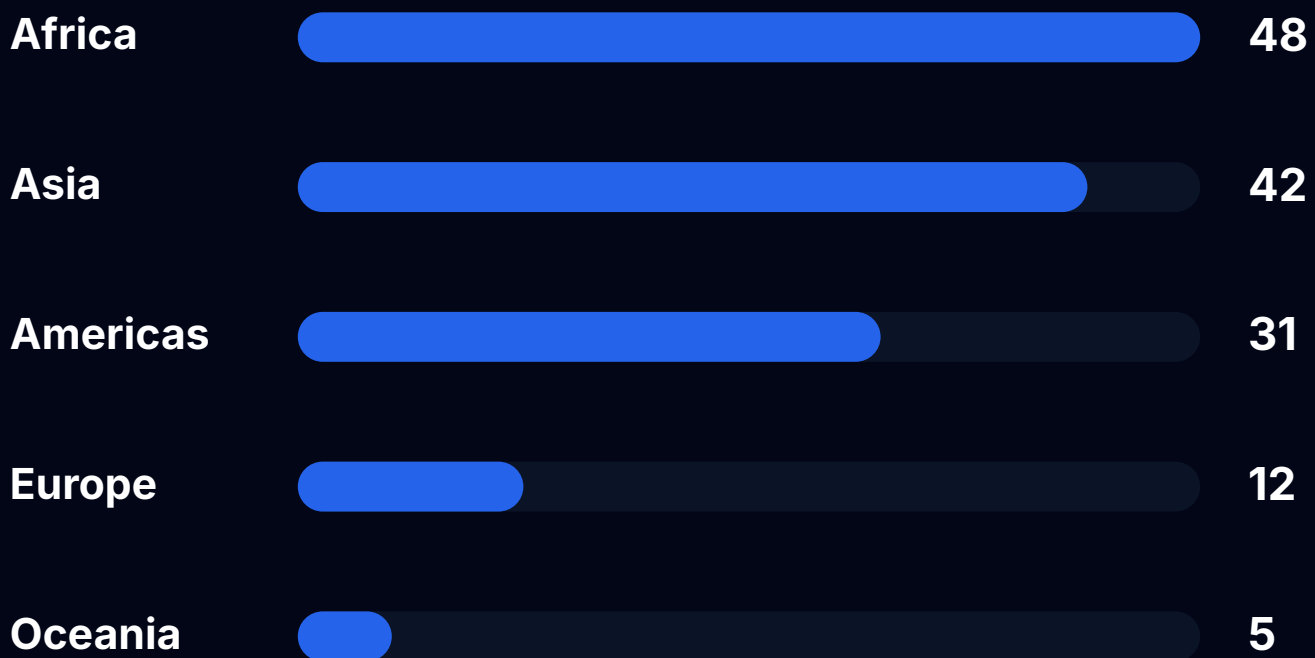
Source: EntryCheck registry. Data as of 30 June 2026.



PART I · THE STATE OF DIGITAL ENTRY

Digital entry by region

Where the world's 138 digital-entry systems live.



Africa leads the digital-entry map with 48 countries, almost all eVisa. Digital arrival cards cluster in Asia (12) and the Americas (14), while Europe skews to eTAs, the ETIAS effect.

Source: EntryCheck registry, mapped by ISO continent. Data as of 30 June 2026.



PART I · THE STATE OF DIGITAL ENTRY

The eTA rise

18 countries now use an eTA-style authorization

The electronic travel authorization is the fastest-growing category, a light pre-screening for visa-exempt travelers. It is the model wealthy, high-volume destinations are adopting to screen before departure without a full visa.

NOTABLE eTA PROGRAMS

 United Kingdom ·  United States ·  European Union ·  Canada ·  New Zealand ·  Australia ·  South Korea ·  Kenya ·  South Africa ·  Saudi Arabia ·  Israel

Source: EntryCheck registry. Data as of 30 June 2026.



PART I · THE STATE OF DIGITAL ENTRY

The digital arrival card wave

31

countries have digitized
the paper landing card

The paper form you once filled out on the plane is going online, submitted before or on arrival. It concentrates in Asia (12 countries) and the Americas (14), and it is the next frontier of a fully digital entry.

EXAMPLES

 Thailand ·  Japan ·  Malaysia ·  India ·
 Indonesia ·  Singapore ·  New Zealand

Source: EntryCheck registry. Data as of 30 June 2026.



PART I · THE STATE OF DIGITAL ENTRY

What it costs

~\$32

median starting fee,
where a flat fee is published

CHEAPEST TO ENTER

Malaysia	Free
South Korea	Free
Canada	\$5
Armenia	\$8
Seychelles	\$11

MOST EXPENSIVE

Ghana	up to \$796
Argentina	up to \$400
Anguilla	up to \$250
Gabon	up to \$200
Venezuela	up to \$180

16 of the 34 countries that publish a flat fee cost under \$30 to enter.

Source: EntryCheck registry, 34 countries publishing a flat fee. Ranges vary by category. Data as of 30 June 2026.



PART I · THE STATE OF DIGITAL ENTRY

How fast it is

68 countries process entry
in a day or less

FASTEST TO PROCESS

Qatar	Instant
Saudi Arabia	Instant to 3 days
Madagascar	24 to 72 hours
Kenya	1 to 3 days
United Arab Emirates	1 to 5 days

Speed is now the norm, not the exception. Digital entry has turned a weeks-long process into a same-day one for most travelers.

Source: EntryCheck registry. Data as of 30 June 2026.



PART II · THE SHIFT, H1 2026

Opening and hardening, at once.

56 official entry-policy
changes in H1 2026



23 expanded access

23 tightened

10 other

Travel is accelerating, but so is the digital transformation of border control. As countries modernize entry policies, crossing borders is becoming increasingly digital.

Source: EntryCheck news registry, 56 changes across 48 outlets, 32 countries. Jan to Jun 2026.



PART II · THE SHIFT, H1 2026

Selected movements of H1 2026

●	Feb 2026	UK completes rollout of mandatory ETA
●	Feb 2026	South Africa launches an electronic travel authorization (eTA)
●	Apr 2026	The EU launches EES across the Schengen area
●	May 2026	Egypt announces a digital visa-on-arrival at Cairo
●	May 2026	Japan launches an eVisa for package tourists
●	Jun 2026	Thailand expands its digital border with the Digital Arrival Card
●	Jun 2026	Saudi Arabia opens an eTA service for UK citizens

Source: EntryCheck news registry. Dates reflect reporting within H1 2026.



PART II · THE SHIFT, H1 2026

The movers

MARQUEE SHIFT

The EU's EES goes live

Biometric entry/exit system (EES) records and a new travel authorization for the whole Schengen area, the largest single digitization of a border bloc to date.

- **Africa**

South Africa launches its eTA to boost tourism

- **Middle East**

Saudi Arabia expands digital entry access

- **Asia**

Vietnam implements Arrival Cards; Japan launches an eVisa

- **Counter-trend**

Thailand reverts its 60-day visa exemption

Source: EntryCheck news registry. H1 2026.



PART III · WHO WENT DIGITAL

Case studies I



United Kingdom

eTA

Official portal

gov.uk/eta

Cost

£20*

Processing

1 to 30 days



Kenya

eTA

Official portal

etakenya.go.ke

Cost

\$30 to \$100*

Processing

1 to 3 days



Saudi Arabia

eVisa

Official portal

ksavisa.sa

Cost

from \$90*

Processing

Instant to 3 days

*Government fees. EntryCheck does not charge or process applications.



PART III · WHO WENT DIGITAL

Case studies II



Canada

eTA

Official portal

canada.ca/eta

Cost

~\$5*

Processing

2 days



Thailand

eVisa + card

Official portal

thaievisa.go.th

Cost

Varies*

Processing

1 to 10 days



New Zealand

NZeTA

Official portal

nzeta.immigration.govt.nz

Cost

Varies*

Processing

1 to 10 days

*Government fees. EntryCheck does not charge or process applications.



PART IV · THE AI DIMENSION

The new front door is AI.

Travelers no longer just search. They ask an assistant and increasingly let an agent act. Roughly 40% of travelers now use AI tools to plan a trip, and about 1 in 5 start planning directly with AI.

The risk: AI models go stale within months and cannot query real-time government databases. In 2025, travelers were stranded at borders and missed flights after chatbots gave wrong visa advice, one paid a \$250 emergency fee after being told, incorrectly, she could get a visa on arrival.

Travelers sense it: 46% say they double-check AI's travel answers, and only 22% rely on it with minimal verification. The demand for a verified source is already there.

The response: EntryCheck maintains a live registry of verified government entry portals, providing a trustworthy reference layer for AI-powered travel assistants.

Sources: Statista (AI travel planning, 2024); Phocuswright; TravelPulse (AI visa hallucinations, 2025).



PART IV · THE AI DIMENSION

It's already happening.

What verified user behaviour is already telling us.

1 in 5

EntryCheck sessions originate from ChatGPT

3x

longer engagement than traditional search

Higher

click-through to official government portals

"Where do I get Kenya's eTA?"

The official portal is etakenya.go.ke.



Verified by EntryCheck

As discovery moves to AI, value shifts from ranking on a search page to being the source machines trust. That layer must be verified, independent and machine-readable.

EntryCheck first-party data, Jan to Jun 2026. Google Analytics session source.



PART V · OUTLOOK & REFERENCE

Looking ahead.

- **Digital border systems mature**

EES and ETIAS move from rollout to operational infrastructure.

- **Electronic travel authorisations proliferate**

More destinations adopt pre-travel authorisation models before departure.

- **The arrival-card wave spreads**

More countries replace the paper landing card with an online form.

- **Verification becomes the next frontier**

The eVisa market is projected to continue growing, increasing the need for trusted, verified digital entry services.

eVisa market: \$1B in 2024, multiple industry forecasts converge near an 11% CAGR (GlobeNewswire, 2024).

PART V · OUTLOOK & REFERENCE

Glossary.

eVisa	An electronic visa applied for and issued online, linked to your passport.
eTA	Electronic Travel Authorization. A light pre-screening for visa-exempt travelers, such as the US ESTA, EU ETIAS and UK ETA.
Visa on arrival	A visa issued at the border on arrival, increasingly pre-registered online.
Digital arrival card	An online immigration or customs form submitted before or on arrival, replacing the paper landing card.
EES	The EU's Entry/Exit System. Biometric records of non-EU travelers crossing Schengen borders.
ETIAS	The EU's new travel authorization for visa-exempt visitors to the Schengen area.



PART V · OUTLOOK & REFERENCE

Methodology & sources.

Registry figures are derived from EntryCheck's directory of official government entry portals, covering 138 countries. Every portal is verified against the EntryCheck Standard, which validates government ownership, domain authenticity, SSL configuration, directness and the date it was last reviewed.

Policy-change figures are based on 56 verified entry-policy changes identified across 48 news sources and official government publications covering 32 countries during H1 2026. Third-party statistics are attributed to their original source throughout the report.

HOW TO CITE

EntryCheck, The Digital Borders Report, Issue 01, H1 2026.
entrycheck.org/reports

Data as of 30 June 2026.



PART V · OUTLOOK & REFERENCE

Build on this data.

Everything here comes from a live API. Put it to work for the people you serve.

- **Booking platforms & travel apps**

Send travelers to the real official portal, in one call.

- **AI travel assistants**

A verified source of truth. No hallucinated visa links.

- **Tourism boards & ministries**

Get your official portal verified and featured.

- **Airlines**

Early access to document validation at the gate.

Start free at entrycheck.org/api



ENTRYCHECK.ORG

The verification layer that travel has been missing.

Partner with us entrycheck.org/partner

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