

Driving in the U.S.

Only 13 states will consider your foreign driving license as valid and issue you a U.S. driving license upon your arrival. For all the many others, you will have to go through the whole process as any American who applies for a driving license.

As a tourist, the U.S. government will let you drive a rental car, but as a resident you will need a proper driving license in order to drive legally and to be insured (it is illegal to drive in the U.S. without insuring your vehicle). You can check with a local insurance provider to see what are the local rules, as they tend to vary greatly from one state to another.

You can get information from your local DMV (Dept. of Motor Vehicles) office on how to proceed. Usually you will have to pass a written test (often taken on a computer and with no appointment necessary), which should be fairly easy, provided that you study a bit, as many of the rules can be different from what you have learned back home.

If you pass the written test, you might be able to take the driving test right after your written test, if you wish to do so. And if you fail either test, you should be able to take it again as soon as the next day.

The driving test is relatively easy but for those who worry about it, they will ask you to parallel park! If you are unsure about your driving you can apply for a driving permit once you passed the written test. This will allow you to drive with an adult, so you can practice before the test. And of course, if you have no prior driving experience, you can check with the local DMV if you wish to take classes.