

[News story: Travel advice on EXPO 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan](#)

Expo 2017 is an International Exposition scheduled to take place between 10 June and 10 September 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Dates:

Advice for visitors travelling to Kazakhstan for the Expo 2017 International Exposition in Astana from 10 June to 10 September 10, 2017

Venue:

EXPO 2017 Pavilion in Astana is located between main streets of Astana: Kabanbai batyr avenue, Orynbor street, Hussein bin Talal and Turar Ryskulov streets. * during the exhibition, seven new shuttle-BUS routes will be launched, which will have 250 buses, running from all major points of the city – shopping centres, railway stations and the airport to the territory of the EXPO with a minimum number of stops it can take around 30 minutes to get to the exhibition centre from the city centre * the pavilion is about 3 km from Baiterek City Center, 11 km from the central railway station, 8 km from Astana International airport

Astana, Kazakhstan – Expo 2017 site map can be found [here](#) As well as this advice, check out our [travel advice for Kazakhstan](#)

Visas and Passports

- until 31 December 2017 you can travel to Kazakhstan without a visa, provided your stay does not exceed 30 days (the day you arrive counts as day 1, regardless of arrival time).
- if you wish to stay longer than 30 days, you'll need a visa. You should contact your nearest [Embassy of Kazakhstan](#) for further information.
- your passport should be valid for a minimum period of 6 months from the date of your request for a visa. Your passport should also have at least 1 blank page for your visa
- your passport should be valid for the proposed duration of your stay
- if you violate the conditions of your visa, you could face a short term of imprisonment and/or a ban on entry to Kazakhstan for up to 5 years
- you should carry your passport with you for identification purposes
- always take care of your passport, as getting a replacement is costly and time-consuming. Keep a photocopy separately from the original document, this will help speed up the replacement process if needed
- if you lose your passport, you'll need to get an Emergency Travel Document from the [British Embassy, Astana](#). The service is available within the Embassy working hours

Registration

- for most visits, British passport holders don't need to register with

the local authorities

- when entering Kazakhstan, travellers receive a white registration card. You must fill in and retain this card throughout your stay in Kazakhstan.
- if you don't need to register with the local OVIR office (the Department for Visas and Registration under the Ministry of Internal Affairs), you must keep your white immigration card stamped by Kazakh Immigration throughout your journey and present it on departure.
- if you intend to enter through a land or sea border point check with the [Kazakhstan Embassy](#) to see whether registration is required.

Insurance

- take out appropriate [travel insurance](#), even if you're only going for one night; it could save you a lot of money if you get into difficulties. Note there is no reciprocal healthcare agreement between the UK and Kazakhstan.

Local Information

Personal Security:

- be prepared for increased controls and security checks
- most trips are trouble free, however, mugging and theft occur in cities and rural areas foreigners can be targeted.
- although homosexuality isn't prohibited by law, public attitudes are less tolerant than in the UK and public displays of affection may attract negative attention. There's no provision under Kazakhstan legislation guaranteeing freedom from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation
- look after your personal belongings, in particular your passport and your money
- smoking and drinking alcohol is prohibited in public places; this includes airport and its areas, transport, bus stops, underground crossings, cultural, sports and governmental establishments, playgrounds and parks
- don't get involved with drugs – the penalties are severe

Transportation

- get information on how to get to the [Astana International Airport](#) and [Railway Station](#) to the city centre
- use official taxis which display the name and telephone number of the taxi company. agree a price with the taxi driver for your journey in advance
- buses are the only public transport; price for one way route is 90 KZT but can be overcrowded at peak times

Disabled Travellers

- we've been advised that [Astana EXPO Pavilions](#) will have facilities / access for disabled travellers

- the rest of Astana has very limited facilities for the disabled traveller – the pavements, even on the main roads can be difficult to negotiate for those with disabilities
- access to public transport is also difficult

####Currency:

- the official currency in Kazakhstan is Tenge (KZT). US dollars and Euros are the easiest currency to exchange in Kazakhstan. Sterling may also be exchanged at a more limited number of sites. Scottish and Northern Irish notes aren't accepted. Use only official exchange booths.
- ATMs are available and credit cards are widely used in Astana
- the government of Kazakhstan imposes limits on how much foreign currency can be imported or exported, and certain goods are subject to custom regulations. For further information please visit the website of the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan](#)

Climate and Time

- the average temperature in summer is around 20°C – 25°C during the day. Mostly very windy and dry. You can find information on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/1526273>
- Astana is plus 5 hours BST

Language

- the main language is Kazakh. Russian is also widely spoken
- younger generation usually has a good knowledge of English

Religion

- Kazakhstan has predominantly Muslim (70%) population although there are Orthodox Christians (23%) and Catholics (7%)
- respect local traditions, customs, laws and religions at all times and be aware of your actions to ensure they do not offend other cultures or religious beliefs

Consular Assistance

If there's a genuine emergency during your visit to Astana (e.g. one involving accident, injury or loss/theft of your passport) call +7 7172 556 200 and follow the instructions to be put through to a consular officer.

Lost or stolen passports

If your passport is lost or stolen report the loss to the local police as soon as possible and get a copy of the police report. You can't travel back to the UK without a valid travel document. You'll need to apply to the Consular Section of the British Embassy Astana for an Emergency Travel Document (ETD). Please see our [ETD web page](#) for more information.

For more information visit the [British Embassy, Astana](#) Contact the British Embassy Astana 62 Kosmanavtov st, Chubary district Renco Building, 6th floor

Telephone: +7 7172 55 62 00 (including out of hours assistance) Email: astana.consular@fco.gov.uk Office hours: Monday-Thursday 9am to 5pm On Friday 9am to 4pm

Emergency services numbers

101 – Fire 102 – Police 103 – Ambulance

Further information

- EXPO 2017 official website: <https://expo2017astana.com/>

[News story: Journée de souvenir dédiée à toutes les victimes de la guerre chimique](#)

Chaque année, la communauté internationale s'interrompt le 29 avril pour se souvenir des victimes des guerres chimiques. L'ONU promeut une prise de conscience internationale et appelle à agir contre ces armes horribles qui frappent insidieusement et sans discrimination, causant la mort et des blessures terribles à des gens qui n'ont aucun moyen de se défendre.

Cette année sera d'autant plus poignante car les images de l'attaque chimique de Khan Sheikhoun en Syrie sont encore dans nos mémoires. Malheureusement, nous avons déjà vécu cela et ces attaques ne font que souligner la souffrance que le peuple syrien endure depuis trop longtemps.

Mise en œuvre le 29 Avril 1997, la Convention sur les Armes Chimiques a aujourd'hui 20 ans. Cette convention rend illégal la production, le stockage et l'usage d'armes chimiques. Depuis 2005, les Nations Unies ont choisi cette date pour donner l'occasion aux peuples, à travers le monde, de rendre hommage aux victimes de la guerre chimique et de pouvoir exprimer leur soutien à l'Organisation pour l'Interdiction des Armes Chimiques (OIAC). C'est aussi l'occasion pour le monde de s'unir afin de condamner l'usage des armes chimiques n'importe quand, n'importe où et par n'importe qui.

L'OIAC a commencé, à juste titre, le processus visant à lancer une enquête indépendante autour des événements de Khan Sheikhoun. Le Directeur Général a déjà souligné dans un rapport que les premiers résultats de leurs analyses indiquent bien une exposition au gaz sarin ou à une substance similaire.

Ces résultats sont cohérents avec l'évaluation publiée par la France le 26 avril, ainsi qu'avec notre propre étude d'échantillons des victimes et de l'environnement immédiat par des scientifiques britanniques. En effet, les États-Unis, le Royaume-Uni, la France et la Turquie ont tous testé leurs

propres échantillons indépendamment et ont conclu que le gaz sarin avait bien été utilisé.

Comme l'a déclaré le Ministre des Affaires étrangères Boris Johnson, « de part la présence de fragments d'obus dans le cratère, nous savons que, non seulement du gaz sarin a été utilisé, mais que ce gaz porte la signature des armes chimiques utilisées par le régime d'Assad. L'étude des échantillons prélevés sur les victimes démontre qu'elles ont indéniablement été exposées au gaz sarin. Il n'y a donc qu'une conclusion à tirer : le régime d'Assad a utilisé des armes chimiques de manière quasiment certaine contre son propre peuple, en violation du droit international et des règles de la guerre. »

Le peuple syrien devrait être protégé par son gouvernement ; les enfants syriens devraient grandir en sécurité et en bonne santé. Au lieu de cela, ce sont les victimes innocentes d'un conflit qui entraîné des souffrances indicibles, la mort et des déplacements de populations forcés.

Nous sommes clairs sur le fait qu'une solution politique – plutôt qu'une solution militaire – est nécessaire pour mettre fin à cette guerre. Le Royaume-Uni continue de soutenir le processus politique mené par les Nations Unies et la transition vers un nouveau gouvernement syrien qui apportera paix et stabilité de manière durable. Nous travaillons également à soulager la souffrance du peuple syrien. A ce titre, le gouvernement britannique a engagé 2,46 milliards de livres sterling depuis 2012, ce qui constitue l'aide la plus importante jamais apportée par notre pays à une crise humanitaire, et qui fait de nous le second plus large donateur bilatéral en matière humanitaire en ce qui concerne la crise syrienne.

Ainsi, en cette 'Journée du souvenir dédiée à toutes les victimes des guerres chimiques' organisée par les Nations Unies, rendons hommage au peuple de Khan Sheikhoun, ainsi qu'à tous les hommes, les femmes et les enfants innocents qui ont perdu la vie au cours des six dernières années dans ce conflit terrible en Syrie. La communauté internationale doit rappeler fermement que l'usage d'armes chimiques est inacceptable. Le Royaume-Uni et la France sont à l'avant-garde de cet effort. C'est uniquement en travaillant ensemble à ce que les responsables subissent les conséquences de leurs actes que la communauté internationale parviendra à empêcher que ces atrocités se reproduisent.

Speech: Foreign Secretary statement at the UNSC meeting on North Korea

Thank You Mr President.

The United Nations Charter defines the supreme task of this Council as the maintenance of peace and international security. There could hardly be a

clearer threat to world peace, more demanding of a unified response, than the activities of one member of the United Nations, North Korea, breaking its Treaty obligations, ignoring the will of this Council, and making blood-curdling threats to inflict grievous harm on peoples of other countries. For decades, North Korea has doggedly pursued the means to act on these threats.

In a nation whose entire GDP is about \$25 billion and where its people have over recent decades been exposed to terrible suffering, reduced to eating leaves and the bark of trees. The Pyongyang regime has devoted its energies to developing nuclear weapons and the missiles to convey them. Last year alone, North Korea tested two nuclear devices and more than 24 ballistic missiles. This year, we have witnessed more missile tests and I remind the Council that every one of those tests breaks seven UN Resolutions, stretching back to Resolution 1695, passed unanimously in 2006.

So we should reject, I am afraid, we should reject any claims of moral equivalence between North Korea's actions and the defensive and precautionary measures of other nations. The second, the latter, are legitimate; the first are not and, in spite of the strenuous efforts of some to obscure that distinction, that distinction cannot be ignored or elided.

So the United Kingdom believes it is vital for this Council to stand ready to take further significant measures to bring about a peaceful resolution. And sooner or later, the North Korean leadership must realise that their isolation not only holds back their own people – if the regime really cares about their own people – but also weakens their own grip on power.

This Council must be united in its demand that the present course cannot continue and Britain is proud today to have joined its allies to lead the enforcement of sanctions and seek a peaceful solution. We urge other partners with direct influence on North Korea to use their leverage to the full, with the aim of easing tensions and ensuring compliance with the expressed will of the UN.

There is a vital role for China and Russia, both of whom are neighbours of North Korea with influence on Pyongyang and, as permanent members of this Council. Special responsibility they have for preserving international peace and security. The UK calls on Russia and China and other Member States to use whatever influence they possess to restrain North Korea and guide its leaders towards a peaceful settlement.

Last year, this Council decided to toughen sanctions on North Korea, including by restricting the regime's access to foreign currency. But the UN Panel of Experts has shown that not every Member State is fully enforcing those Resolutions. Most members of the UN have yet to obey the requirement in Resolution 2270 to submit a national report on their implementation of sanctions.

The UK believes that all member states should re-affirm their commitment to enforcing UN sanctions against North Korea. But, we also have no doubt that negotiations must, at some point, form part of the solution. But first, it is reasonable to expect North Korea to make verifiable progress towards meeting

its obligations to denuclearise the Korean Peninsula. For as long as Pyongyang continues to defy this Council, the conditions will not be helpful for resuming the Six Party Talks – or negotiations in any other format.

While the most pressing threat is North Korea's ballistic missile and nuclear ambitions, we must never forget the horrifying abuse the regime metes out to its own people, as documented in the UN Commission of Inquiry in 2014. This Council has discussed human rights in North Korea on previous occasions – and there should be no reticence about doing so. The UK fully supports the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in North Korea and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights both of whom perform the crucial task of investigating and recording these violations.

Britain stands alongside our allies in making clear that North Korea must obey the UN and halt its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, disarming in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. Only then can this Council be assured of the peace and security of the region – and only then can the people of North Korea have the chance of a better future.

Thank you.

Speech: PM statement following talks with Japanese Prime Minister Abe: 28 April 2017

The United Kingdom's relationship with Japan is vital to our prosperity and security.

And the fact that Prime Minister Abe is the first world leader I have hosted at Chequers underlines that fact. And it gives me great pleasure to welcome him here today.

With both of our nations facing a range of global challenges, we have discussed ways in which we can deepen our strong and vital partnership.

Today we have reaffirmed our commitment to work together to support the rules-based international system and the promotion of free trade and democratic values.

Throughout our talks, I have been clear that this is not the time for the UK to step back from the world but rather to step up, and continue to stand tall alongside our friends and allies.

Brexit/trade

During our discussions, I updated Prime Minister Abe on our preparations for Brexit and reiterated our determination to make sure the UK remains the best place in Europe to run and grow a business, whether it's one operating at home or abroad.

And we are building from a position of strength.

Japanese companies have already invested a total of more than £40 billion in the UK. The UK is the second most popular destination for Japanese investment after the US.

And around 1,000 Japanese companies including Honda, Hitachi and Mitsubishi employ 140,000 people in the UK.

Since the vote for Brexit, Japanese businesses have continued to show confidence in the UK, with Japan's Softbank making a record £24 billion purchase of ARM Holdings and committing to double the number of jobs.

Nissan announcing that they will build the new Qashqai model at their plant in Sunderland, and Toyota committing to a £240 million investment at its plant in Derby.

It is clear that our strong economy, high level of skills, and low levels of taxation continue to make Britain an attractive destination for investment.

In our talks today, I have reaffirmed the UK's desire for an enduring deep and special partnership with the EU, including a bold and ambitious free trade agreement which gives British companies the maximum freedom to trade with and operate within European markets – and allows European businesses to do the same in Britain.

G7

We remain a global, outward-facing Britain, and the UK and Japan co-operate closely on the international stage, including in the G7.

This is a vital grouping, through which countries with shared views on free trade, democratic values and the importance of the rules-based international system can work to create societies and economies that work for everyone.

And I would like to congratulate Prime Minister Abe on Japan's recent successful presidency, which saw significant progress.

This May the G7 will meet again, in Italy, and today Prime Minister Abe and I discussed our priorities for the summit.

We will once again push to lower barriers to trade and create economies that share the benefits of globalisation across our 2 countries.

And on migration we agreed that we need an international approach that is in

the interests of all those involved, and that protects men, women and children from trafficking, sexual violence and labour exploitation.

Global issues

In an uncertain world, unity among friends and allies is more vital than ever. And Japan is our closest Asian security partner.

Last year RAF Typhoons took part in exercises in Japan, the first time that a country other than the US had done so, while Japanese troops exercised in the UK for the first time ever.

But our strong and well-equipped military is just one of the tools at our disposal.

In our discussions today we agreed that we should continue to stand firm in the face of destabilising Russian activity, whether in Ukraine or Syria.

And that one of the ways to do this is through economic pressure including the use of sanctions.

We are clear that these sanctions must remain in place until the full implementation of the Minsk Agreement.

We have also highlighted our opposition to any actions on the South and East China Seas likely to increase tension. Stability in this region is of global concern and we encourage all parties to resolve their disputes peacefully and in accordance with international law.

As we meet today, North Korea continues to take provocative action in the Asia-Pacific region. And the United Nations Security Council is meeting to discuss this very issue.

In the face of this belligerence we stand steadfast in our condemnation of such destabilising activity.

Their nuclear and missile tests are a violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions and international obligations, and a risk to global peace and stability.

Prime Minister Abe and I have agreed that we will continue to work with our international partners to maintain pressure on North Korea and counter the security threat posed by its illegal pursuit of nuclear weapons and work towards a peaceful solution.

Conclusion

On all of these issues, Prime Minister Abe and I have agreed that the UK and Japan should work closely together for the benefit of both our great nations, standing shoulder-to-shoulder in the face of our shared challenges, promoting our shared values, and looking positively to the shared opportunities that the future will bring.

News story: Vaccination for Meningitis B at University of Surrey

Public Health England (PHE) is working closely with NHS partners following 3 confirmed cases of meningitis among students at the University of Surrey.

Sadly one of the students died while travelling home from a sports club tour to Italy. Passengers from the coach in which the student travelled were offered antibiotics as a precautionary measure. The other 2 students are recovering well after receiving appropriate treatment.

Detailed analysis of the bacteria that caused the disease in 2 of the students confirms that the cases were due to meningococcal group B (MenB) infection. PHE is arranging for all full-time undergraduate students who live in University of Surrey halls of residence to be vaccinated against MenB.

The University has written to students and staff advising them of the planned action and highlighting signs and symptoms of meningitis along with advice on what to do if they suspect they are infected.

The wider population in the town and non-students who visit but do not live on the university site are not considered within the at risk group because the higher risk is associated with the lifestyle of an undergraduate student, rather than simply being on campus.

Dr Peter English, Consultant in Communicable Disease Control, PHE South East of England said:

Meningococcal infection is comparatively rare and the risk of transmission is relatively low. People who have prolonged, close contact with an ill person are at a slightly increased risk of becoming unwell in the following days. This is why immediate contacts of the cases have already been offered antibiotics as a precautionary measure.

After considering the medical evidence, we have decided to offer vaccination to around 4,200 students living in halls of residence at the university to reduce risk of further cases next term.

I would like to reassure other students, teachers, their families and the local community that the risk of catching this infection remains very low, and any higher risk is confined to those being offered the vaccine.

I would still urge everyone to be aware of the symptoms of both meningitis and septicaemia (blood poisoning).

I would also remind students to check their eligibility for the MenACWY vaccine with their GP. This vaccine protects against a number of different strains of meningococcal infection.

PHE is encouraging students to share awareness and care for one another. Don't assume an illness is a hangover or a touch of flu. Learn the symptoms of [meningitis](#) and [septicaemia](#) and if you think a friend or housemate is ill then check on them regularly and if you are worried seek medical help.