

Mobile Passport Will Get You Through Customs and Immigration in Under 60 Seconds

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cntraveler.com, Feb, 27, 2018



Around the *Condé Nast Traveler* offices, not having [Global Entry](#) is a badge of shame. What kind of travel editor wouldn't want to make re-entering the U.S. as easy and seamless as possible? Well, this kind. Six years after [the official launch](#) of Global Entry, which includes the security-line-skirting [PreCheck membership](#), I still haven't ponied up the \$100 enrollment fee or gone through [the application process](#). It's not because I love standing in line—obviously that sucks—and it's not because I don't have one of [the many credit cards](#) that would pay the fee for me. I don't have Global Entry because I can get through customs and immigration in less than 60 seconds without it.

My secret is the Mobile Passport app, which was first released in 2014 but has yet to catch on the same way Global Entry has. The app, which is completely free, has been downloaded about 3.5 million times since launch, according to its developers. While that number may sound big, it's less than the number of people using Global Entry, which has at least 4.7 million members and “thousands of additional travelers applying for membership each day,” according to [a November statement](#) from Customs and Border Protection. That may explain why every single time I've used

Mobile Passport to re-enter the U.S., I didn't have to wait behind a single person in line. On my most recent arrival at JFK, on Sunday, I breezed through customs and immigration *faster* than the people stuck fiddling with Global Entry kiosks, exchanging exactly one word—"Thanks."—with one CBP agent on my way.

What the Mobile Passport app actually looks like.

Courtesy Mobile Passport

If you haven't tried it yet, here's how it works: Download the Mobile Passport app for either Android or iOS, and save some of your basic information, like passport number, expiration date, and a photo; you can do the same for family members traveling with you. When you arrive back in the U.S. from overseas, switch off airplane mode, open the app, and answer a few basic customs questions, like *Are you bringing back fruits and vegetables?* and *Are you carrying more than \$10,000?*—the same sort of stuff you normally answer on that blue paper customs form. Hit submit while you're taxiing, and the app will provide a QR code "receipt" that you can use at customs and immigration in lieu of the traditional paper form. Inside the arrivals hall, you'll often find a designated Mobile Passport lane, where, in my experience, there's never anyone waiting. An agent will check your passport, scan your receipt, and send you onward to customs, where you can once again take the special Mobile Passport lane to skip any lines.

It remains, as we reported back in 2015, "[the fastest way through customs.](#)" That's still true, even if it's not the be-all, end-all: The app works at [24 U.S. airports—and Fort Lauderdale's cruise port—so far](#), including many major ports of entry including Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International, Chicago O'Hare, and Los Angeles International, but it isn't everywhere just yet. And though using Mobile Passport feels for the moment like a genius hack, things can always change. Just look at PreCheck: What launched as a program to speed up security lines now has more than five million members who often find themselves [just as stuck at a checkpoint as everyone else](#). For now, though, Mobile Passport is still the quickest way to get through customs and immigration—and [a secret I'm no longer keeping to myself](#).