

Don Merry

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PASSPORTS AND VISAS



Customs at Port Said, Suez Canal, northbound April 11, 2017

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Port Klang Malaysia is warm and humid. The port agent drove me to the immigration office where they take my passport, I have my copy though. He drives me to the Aeon Mega Mall in Kuala Lumpur over the roughest roads I have ever been on. Aeon is bigger than the Metro Station mall was in Hong Kong. Starbucks had free internet and the price for the same drink, a Grande iced latte (16oz), was less money than in Hong Kong (\$3.12 USD vs \$4.89). On the second floor I get a Mani-Pedi so nice and only \$33 USD, in Seattle it would be at least \$50. The ladies giggle when I talk, why? Because my name is Donald "like Donald Trump" they finally tell me. We all agree to not talk politics. As one woman said none of us can speak ill about another's leader since everyone has issues with their own. The women customers were mainly Indian, the workers Filipino. No Apple Store in the mall, but everything else you can imagine, a cinema, food, shops, furniture, dried fruit, bowling alley. Not aggressive shopkeepers like in Hong Kong. While in Starbucks, I call the port agent and ask to be picked up around 17:00. Then I see Zoran the electrician officer from

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the ship. He tells me the captain has a tooth issue and went to the dentist in Malaysia during our port stop. It was just a loose filling. One of the worse issues to have at sea is a toothache. We return to the immigration office and I get my passport before returning to the ship.

Unless you find working with foreign governments, embassies, and consulates fun and exciting, I suggest you contact the people who will make this part of your travel documents easier on you. Passport Visas Express (PVE) is the very best company I know of, and they will help you with getting your passport and any visas you will need. They will even help you fill out all the forms and give you step-by-step advice on each country.



PassportVisasExpress.com
Customer Service Phone number 1-888-596-6028

How easy is getting a visa? I filled out the request for Russia and China, well, I filled out the forms as far as I could, sent them the paperwork via e-mail, and they finished them for me. When the visas were done, they sent me back my passport the same day via FedEx. The whole process was very easy.

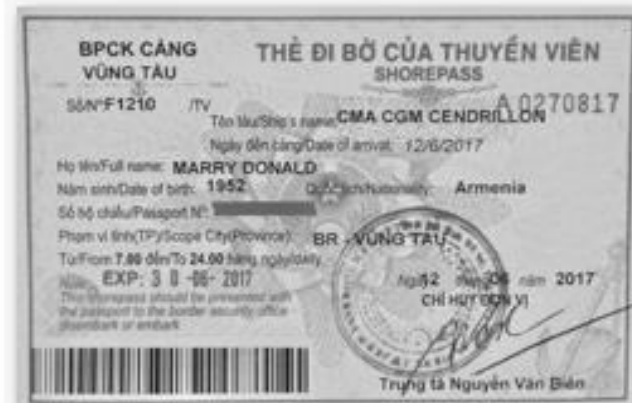
So, here's the story on visas. Traveling by cargo ship is never going to be on any form or online checklist you will fill out. The visa applications are mainly designed for people flying into an airport or arriving by cruise ship, staying at a hotel, taking a group tour, and then flying out. Traveling by container ship simply does not fit into any box on the form. For example, if you contact any visa company, you will find that as a US citizen, you will need a visa to Russia, China, Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia. The Traveller's Tour CMA CGM will contact the necessary people and let you know if visas for any other countries are required. CMA CGM contacted the necessary people in the three

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countries above and found out I did not need visas for any of them, saving me ten weekdays of processing time and several hundred dollars. Partially, this is due to the unique travel type or because the port agent can provide you a day pass or shore pass (Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam) or a crew card to go ashore.

Letter of Invitation

If you do need a visa, such as for China or Russia, the application will ask what hotel you are staying at, and for a copy of your round trip airline ticket. You can't get a Visa without addressing these questions. Upon request CMA CGM will send you a "Letter of Invitation." Without this letter, you cannot get a visa. This will be the easiest part of your preparation, but only if you get a Letter of Invitation from CMA Tour for the visas you will need. You cannot get a visa to most countries by just filling out the online forms, you need a company that does this professionally.



Vũng Tàu Vietnam Shore Pass. Note that my last name Merry was misspelled

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I love to travel, but hate to arrive.
—Albert Einstein



The Mediterranean Sea near the Strait of Gibraltar on April 18, 2017

