

CHART · REFERENCE

The Working Holiday Visa Matrix 2026

The visa behind most ski seasons, summer seasons and work exchanges: who can go where, at what age, for how long. One matrix, then the conditions per destination.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- What a working holiday visa is, and is not
- The matrix: 12 destinations × 16 passports
- Per-destination conditions, ages and durations
- The traps: quotas, ballots, employer caps, insurance
- Planning a two-visa year
- Your eligibility sheet

Edition 2026

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What a working holiday visa is

A working holiday or youth mobility visa is a bilateral agreement: two countries let each other's young citizens live and take casual work for a year or two, with few restrictions on the kind of work. It is the legal basis for most seasonal work abroad by people who are not EU citizens working inside the EU, and it is why so many ski instructors in Japan are Australian and so many chalet hosts in Canada are British.

It is not a work permit for a specific job (you do not need a sponsor), not a path to residence (usually), and not available above the age limit or to every passport. The matrix below is the first check; the official page for the destination is the last one. Agreements change every year, quotas open and close, and a few run ballots; treat the ● marks as "there is a programme, go and read it".

HOW TO USE

- 1. Find your passport's column.
- 2. Note the destinations with a ●.
- 3. Read the row in section 2 for age, length and conditions.
- 4. Open the official page; apply in the window.

This matrix reflects agreements as generally reported in 2026 and is a starting point, not an authority.

01

The matrix

A ● means a working-holiday or youth-mobility agreement exists between the destination and that passport. Blank means none we know of; check anyway.

DESTINATION	UK	IRELAND	GERMANY	FRANCE	SPAIN	ITALY	NETHERLANDS	CANADA	US	AUSTRALIA	NZ	JAPAN	SOUTH KOREA	BRAZIL	ARGENTINA	TAIWAN
Australia	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●
New Zealand	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●
Canada	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●			●
United Kingdom								●		●	●	●	●			●
Ireland								●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Japan	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●
South Korea	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●
France								●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Germany								●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Spain								●		●	●	●	●			
Portugal								●		●	●	●	●		●	
Argentina / Chile		●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●	●			

EU citizens may live and work anywhere in the EU and EEA without a visa; the European destinations here matter for non-EU passports. Programme names, partner lists and ages are as generally reported for 2026; confirm on the destination's official immigration page before planning around a mark.

02 Per-destination conditions

DESTINATION	PROGRAMME	AGE	LENGTH	CONDITIONS AND TRAPS
Australia	Working Holiday (417) / Work and Holiday (462)	18–30; 35 for UK, Canada, Ireland, France, Denmark, Italy	12 months; up to 3 years with specified work (regional agriculture, hospitality, construction) in the first and second year	Six-month cap per employer (waived in some sectors); 462 nationalities need a tertiary qualification and English; annual caps for many 462 countries
New Zealand	Working Holiday Visa	18–30; 35 for UK, Canada	12 months; 23 months for UK; 36 months for UK from 2023; Canada 23 months; extensions with seasonal work for some	Three-month cap per employer for some nationalities (removed for many in 2023); proof of funds; annual quotas for many countries
Canada	International Experience Canada (IEC): Working Holiday	18–30 or 35 depending on country (35 for UK, Australia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, and others)	12–24 months depending on country (UK, Australia, France 24; many EU 12; Ireland 24)	Pool and invitation system with annual quotas; you need an invitation before applying; health insurance for the full period required on entry
United Kingdom	Youth Mobility Scheme	18–30; 35 for Australia, NZ, Canada, South Korea (since 2024)	2 years; 3 years for Australia, NZ, Canada	Proof of funds; Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, India (Young Professionals) run ballots; cannot extend or switch to most other visas
Ireland	Working Holiday Authorisation	18–30 (varies); 35 for Canada, Australia	12 months; 24 for Canada; 12 for Australia	Some agreements (US) require enrolment in or recent graduation from higher education; quotas
Japan	Working Holiday Visa	18–30 (25 for some countries at their option)	12 months (6 for some)	Apply from your home country; intent must be primarily holiday; bars and clubs off-limits under the visa
South Korea	Working Holiday (H-1)	18–30 (35 for some)	12 months (18 for some)	Apply in your home country; some job types excluded
France	Visa vacances-travail	18–30 (35 for Canada, Australia, Argentina)	12 months; 24 for Canada	Apply at the French consulate in your country; funds and insurance; no extension
Germany	Working Holiday Visa	18–30 (35 for Canada)	12 months	Health insurance and funds; some agreements allow only certain job types
Spain	Working Holiday Visa	18–30 (35 for Canada)	12 months	Limited partner list; apply in home country
Portugal	Working Holiday Visa	18–30 (35 for some)	12 months	Limited partner list; funds and insurance
Argentina / Chile	Working Holiday	18–30 (35 for some)	12 months	Reciprocal with a shorter list; ski season in the Andes runs June to October

THE THREE THINGS THAT CATCH PEOPLE

Quotas and ballots: several agreements (Canada's IEC pools, the UK's ballots for Japan and South Korea, Ireland's US allocation) fill early or draw at random; apply the day the window opens. **Employer caps:** Australia's six-month rule per employer shapes a whole season; know it before you promise a full winter. **Insurance:** Canada and several others check cover for the full visa period at the border and shorten the visa to match a shorter policy.

Planning a two-visa year

Opposite hemispheres, two agreements, one passport.

PASSPORT	NORTHERN WINTER	SOUTHERN WINTER OR NORTHERN SUMMER	NOTE
UK	Canada IEC (to 35, 24 months) for the Rockies; Japan WHV for powder	Australia 417 (to 35) or NZ WHV (to 35, up to 36 months) for the southern ski season	The most agreements of any passport; sequence by age limit (Japan closes at 30).
Australia / NZ	Canada IEC (to 35), UK YMS (to 35), Japan WHV, France, Germany, Spain	Home season	Europe's Alps are open via France, Germany, Austria (via agreement) or Switzerland with an employer permit.
Canada	Japan WHV; UK YMS (to 35); France (to 35, 24 months); Germany (to 35)	Australia 417 (to 35), NZ (to 35, 23 months), Chile/Argentina for the Andes	Long durations from most partners; Canadians can chain three or four.
US	Limited: Ireland (students), South Korea (WEST), Australia 462 (with qualification)	Australia 462; NZ WHV	US citizens have the fewest agreements; J-1 covers inbound, not outbound. Working holidays in Europe are largely closed.
Germany / France / Netherlands	Home continent freely; Japan WHV; Canada IEC	Australia 417; NZ WHV; Argentina/Chile	EU citizens need no visa for the Alps; the agreements are for the other hemisphere.
Japan / South Korea / Taiwan	Canada IEC; UK YMS; France; Germany; Australia 417 (Japan, Korea) or 462	Australia; NZ	Strong coverage; UK ballots for Japan and Korea fill within days.

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My eligibility sheet

Passport(s)

Age at the time of applying

Years before I age out of most schemes

DESTINATION	AGREEMENT EXISTS?	AGE OK?	QUOTA / BALLOT?	WINDOW OPENS	SEASON I WOULD WORK

- ☐ Proof of funds at the level the destination requires (typically \$2,500–\$5,000 equivalent)
- ☐ Health insurance for the entire visa period, with a printed certificate
- ☐ A passport valid well beyond the visa end date
- ☐ Police certificate and medical, where required (Australia and Canada sometimes)
- ☐ Applied from the right place (several require application from your home country)
- ☐ The season's hiring window in the calendar: the visa is the first application, the job the second

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