The Henley Passport Index 2026

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Indices and Reports*

Why in News?

The Henley Passport Index 2026, 20th Anniversary Edition compares 199 passports across 227 travel destinations based on data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

- The Henley Passport Index is the ***original, authoritative ranking of all the world's passports*** according to the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa.
- **Metrics Counted -** Includes visa-free access, visa-on-arrival (VOA), and Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA).
- **Metrics Excluded -** Standard e-visas or visas requiring prior government approval before departure are not counted as visa-free.

Top 10 Most Powerful Passports (July 2026)

Rank	Country / Countries	Visa-Free Destinations
1st	Singapore	192
2nd	Japan, South Korea, UAE	188
6th	United Kingdom	—
10th	United States	180
Lowest	Afghanistan	25

- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) recorded one of the biggest gains over the past two decades, climbing to joint 2nd place alongside Japan and South Korea.

Key Takeaways from the 20th Anniversary Edition

- **Expansion of Global Mobility -** In 2006, the average passport allowed visa-free access to 58 destinations; today, that global average has nearly doubled to 108 destinations.

- **Shifting Dynamics**- Two decades ago, the US held the top rank. Today, the top spot is dominated by Asian nations like Singapore, Japan, and South Korea, alongside the UAE.

India's Standing

- **Current Rank** - 81st globally.
- **Visa-Free / VOA Destinations -** 55 countries (down from 56 following the removal of visa-on-arrival access by Cape Verde Islands).
- **2026 Trajectory-** India opened 2026 at 80th in January, rose to 75th in February, sat at 80th in June, and adjusted to 81st in July.
- **20-Year Trend (2006 vs. 2026)** –
  - 2006 - 71st rank
  - 2021 (Lowest Point): 90th / 91st rank
  - 2026 - 81st rank

Reference

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