

2024 US EXPAT TAX RETURN CHECKLIST



To help you kick off this tax-filing adventure, we've put together a handy checklist of the documents you'll need.

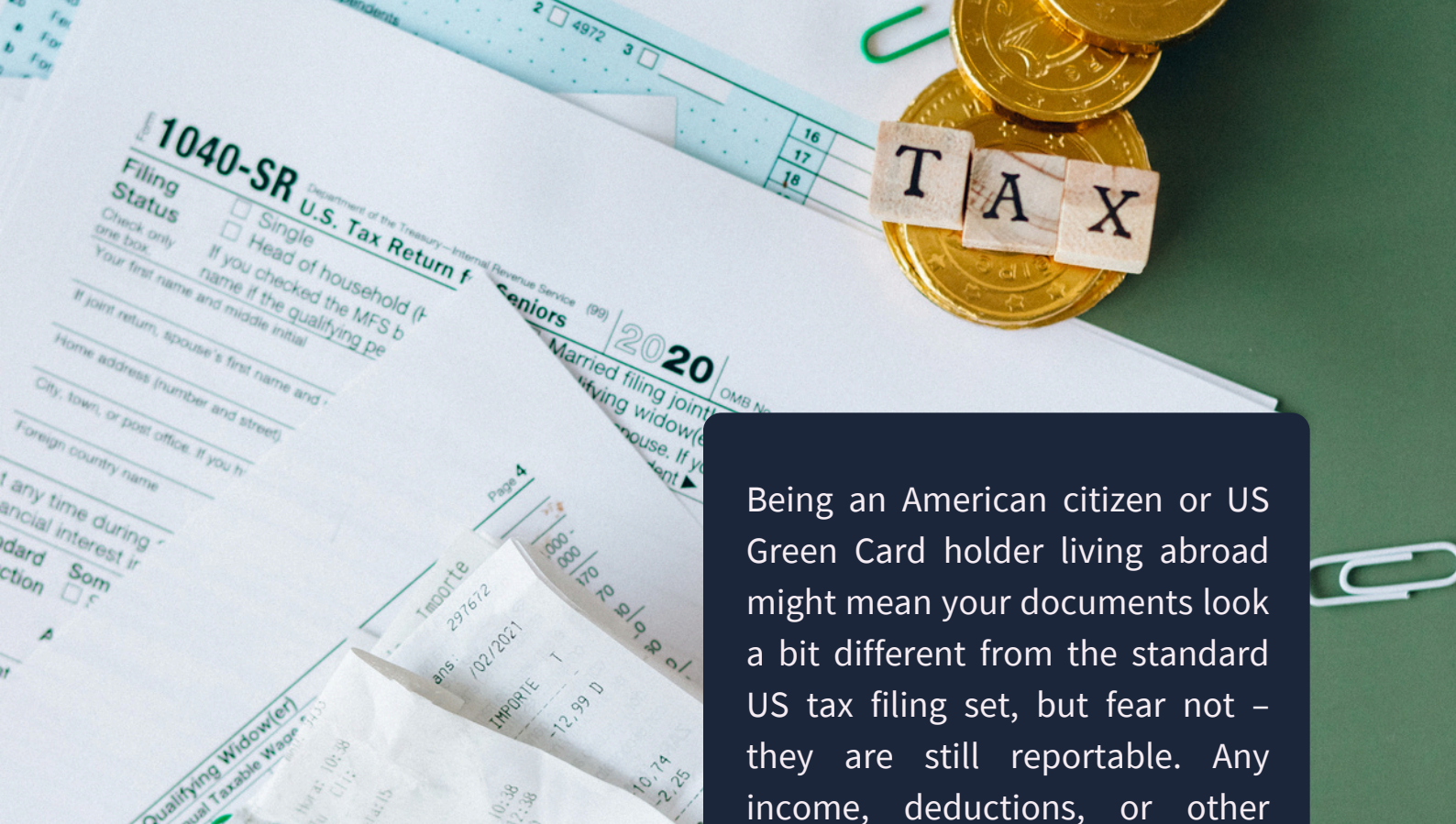


Navigating the ins and outs of US tax filing while living abroad may seem like a daunting task, but fear not – we've got your back! As an American citizen or US Green Card holder, it's essential to stay in the IRS's good graces by filing a US federal tax return annually, even if you've spread your wings across the globe.

Living the expat life comes with its unique set of tax responsibilities, including reporting global income and any foreign financial adventures you've embarked on – from businesses to bank accounts. Despite international tax treaties and foreign filings, the IRS still wants to hear from us.

Now, let's talk about turning that potential tax headache into a breeze! When you sit down to file, think of it as your passport to exclusions and credits that could significantly slash your US tax bill – we're talking Foreign Earned Income Exclusion, Foreign Tax Credit, and even the Child Tax Credit.

To help you kick off this tax-filing adventure, we've put together a handy checklist of the documents you'll need. From last year's tax return to proof of current income, we've got it covered. Take a deep breath, and let's make this tax season a breeze!



Being an American citizen or US Green Card holder living abroad might mean your documents look a bit different from the standard US tax filing set, but fear not – they are still reportable. Any income, deductions, or other reportable information expressed in foreign currency should be converted into US dollars, following IRS guidelines.

Expatriate Document Considerations

Below is a list of common documents to consider.

- Foreign bank account statements showing the highest account balance in 2023
- Statements from foreign investment accounts
- Proof of income earned abroad
- Taxable foreign employer benefits, including retirement contributions, car allowance, housing allowance, and/or relocation allowance
- Documents supporting Foreign Earned Income Exclusion eligibility

- Records of foreign housing expenses (if applicable)
- Proof of foreign taxes paid
- W-2 and 1099 forms from both US and foreign employers
- Health insurance-related documents
- Mortgage interest statements for US or foreign properties
- Social security statements
- Educational expense documentation
- Dependents' information
- Business income and expense records
- Any other relevant income sources or deductions
- Records of estimated tax payments
- Bankruptcy-related documents
- Copy of your previous foreign tax return and current year tax return, we generally recommend filing your foreign tax return before filing your US tax return, be sure to speak with your tax advisor regarding your specific situation

2024 - What Documents Do I Need To Collect For Filing My 2023 Tax Return-Comprehensive Checklist

	INCOME	YES	NO
1.	<p>Did you earn wages as an employee?</p> <p>If so, collect Form(s) W-2, including all copies (i.e., showing all boxes, states, localities, etc.)</p>		
2.	<p>Did you receive or recognize equity compensation (including Section 83(b) elections)?</p> <p>If so, collect Form(s) 3921 and/or 3922, and be mindful of any adjustments that may be needed (e.g., cost basis, employee discounts, holding period requirements, etc).</p>		
3.	<p>Did you earn income as a self-employed individual?</p> <p>If so, collect Form(s) 1099-NEC, 1099-MISC, 1099-K, etc., and gather documentation of all income and expenses.</p>		
4.	<p>Did you have taxable investment accounts and/or interest-bearing accounts?</p> <p>If so, collect Form(s) 1099-B, 1099-DIV, 1099-INT, 1099 Consolidated or Composite, “Corrected 1099s”, etc. Verify that your cost basis and holding period details for investment sales are shown correctly on your tax forms.</p>		
5.	<p>Did you receive any sources of retirement income (e.g., pension, annuity, Social Security, Railroad Retirement Board, etc.)?</p> <p>If so, collect Form(s) 1099-R, SSA-1099, RRB-1099, etc.</p>		

	INCOME (CONTINUED)	YES	NO
6.	<p>Did you make any withdrawals from a retirement plan or insurance policy (including rollovers, Roth conversions, etc.)?</p> <p>If so, collect Form(s) 1099-R and ensure your tax preparer is aware of any special circumstances (e.g., after-tax basis, rollovers, penalty exceptions for early withdrawals, charitable donations, insurance policy exchanges, etc.).</p>		
7.	<p>Did you sell your home (or other real estate)?</p> <p>If so, gather Form(s) 1099-S (if applicable) and documentation of your cost basis (e.g., purchase and sale statements, previous improvements, depreciation previously claimed or allowed, etc.) and be mindful of any exclusions that may apply based on your ownership and usage of the property.</p>		
8.	<p>Did you receive alimony (excluding child support, property settlements, etc.) from a divorce finalized before 01/01/2019?</p> <p>If so, gather any relevant details (e.g., alimony received, date of agreement, etc.) and provide the alimony payer with your Social Security number. (continue on next column)</p>		
9.	<p>Did you receive alimony (excluding child support, property settlements, etc.) from a divorce finalized before 01/01/2019?</p> <p>If so, gather any tax forms and/or other details that may apply.</p>		

DEDUCTIONS		YES	NO
1.	<p>Are you self-employed?</p> <p>If so, gather documentation of all deductible business expenses (including home office use, vehicle use, health insurance premiums, long-term care premiums, etc.) relating to your business income and potential eligibility for the QBI deduction.</p>		
2.	<p>Did you contribute to any retirement plans or other tax-advantaged accounts (e.g., 401(k), IRA, Roth IRA, HSA, 529, etc.)?</p> <p>If so, gather documentation of any contributions you've made. Be mindful of any deadlines to remove excess contributions (if applicable) in order to avoid penalties.</p>		
3.	<p>Did you make any donations to a qualifying charity (including cash, non-cash property, stock, etc.)?</p> <p>If so, gather details regarding any donations, including valuation details. (for gifts of non-cash property)</p>		
4.	<p>Did you pay a significant amount of medical expenses?</p> <p>If so, gather any relevant details (e.g., amounts paid, insurance or HSA/FSA reimbursements, etc), but be mindful of limitations (i.e., 7.5% AGI floor) on claiming these deductions.</p>		

DEDUCTIONS (CONTINUED)		YES	NO
5.	<p>Did you pay state and/or local taxes (e.g., income, sales, property, etc.)?</p> <p>If so, gather details on the amounts paid, but be mindful of the SALT limitations (i.e., up to \$10,000) on claiming these deductions.</p>		
6.	<p>Did you pay interest on a mortgage, home equity loan, or home equity line of credit?</p> <p>If so, gather Form(s) 1098 and any other relevant documentation (e.g., interest paid, points paid, origination dates, balances, etc.). Be mindful of any deduction limitations (i.e., funds must be used to buy, build, or substantially improve your home) that may apply. (continue on next page)</p>		
7.	<p>Did you pay any interest on qualified student loans?</p> <p>If so, collect Form(s) 1098-E or other statements showing the amount of interest paid.</p>		
8.	<p>Did you pay alimony (excluding child support, property settlements, etc.) from a divorce finalized before 01/01/2019?</p> <p>If so, gather any relevant details (e.g., alimony paid, date of agreement, etc.) and make sure you have the alimony recipient's Social Security number.</p>		

	DEDUCTIONS (CONTINUED)	YES	NO
9.	<p>Are there any other deductions that may apply to you (e.g., deductions from IRS Schedule 1 Part 2)?</p> <p>If so, gather relevant details to substantiate your deductions</p>		
	CREDITS	YES	NO
1.	<p>Do you have any children (including adopted) or other dependents?</p> <p>If so, gather documentation to establish dependency status (e.g., age, relationship, support, custody agreements, Form(s) 8332, etc.) and substantiate costs paid (e.g., childcare, education, adoption expenses, etc.).</p>		
2.	<p>Did you, your spouse, or your dependents incur any qualifying education expenses?</p> <p>If so, gather Form(s) 1098-T, Form(s) 1099-Q (for 529 distributions), receipts, etc.</p>		
3.	<p>Did you buy an electric vehicle and/or make an energy-efficient home improvement?</p> <p>If so, collect any relevant documentation (e.g., receipts, manufacturer certifications, etc.).</p>		
4.	<p>Are there any other tax credits that may apply to your situation (e.g., foreign earned income, AMT carryforward, etc.)?</p> <p>If so, gather relevant details to substantiate your credits.</p>		

CREDITS (CONTINUED)		YES	NO
5.	<p>Did you, your spouse, or your children obtain health insurance through the Marketplace?</p> <p>If so, gather Form(s) 1095-A. Be mindful of any premium tax credits you may owe back (if your income was higher than what you reported to the marketplace initially), and consider strategies that may reduce your MAGI (e.g., deductible IRA contributions, etc.)</p>		
6.	<p>Did you make any estimated tax payments, or did you apply a tax overpayment from last year toward this year's tax liability?</p> <p>If so, gather documentation of all payments (e.g., amounts, dates paid, whose name payments were made in, etc.). (continue on next column)</p>		
OTHER		YES	NO
1.	<p>Did you make a gift in excess of the annual gift exclusion amount (\$17,000 in 2023)?</p> <p>If so, be mindful of any gift tax reporting requirements that may apply (e.g., Form 709), as well as any elections that may reduce your gift tax liability (e.g., gift-splitting, 529 5-year averaging, etc.).</p>		
2.	<p>Did you make Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from your IRA?</p> <p>If so, be mindful that these donations should not be reported on Form(s) 1099-R, and may be excluded from taxable income (if eligible).</p>		

OTHER (CONTINUED)		YES	NO
3.	<p>Did you make any non-deductible Traditional IRA contributions (i.e., for Backdoor Roth purposes) this year?</p> <p>If so, ensure that all contributions (i.e., your basis) are properly reported (for current and previous tax years), and document the value of any Traditional IRAs as of the end of the year.</p>		
4.	<p>Do you own a rental property?</p> <p>If so, review your property value (as compared to land value) to determine any depreciation deductions you may be able to claim. Gather details of your time spent on rental activities (e.g., personal vs. rental usage) as well as details regarding any income and/or expenses related to your rental property.</p>		
5.	<p>Do you co-own a business (or solely own a business taxed as an S-Corporation)?</p> <p>If so, be mindful of any additional business tax returns (e.g., Form(s) 1120-S, 1065, etc.) that may need to be finalized before you can finalize your personal tax filings, and be prepared to request a tax filing extension if necessary.</p>		
6.	<p>Do you have a Solo 401(k), and was the balance more than \$250,000 as of 12/31/2023?</p> <p>If so, you may be required to file Form 5500-EZ by 07/31/2024 (for calendar year plans).</p>		
7.	<p>Do you have any state-specific tax issues to consider?</p>		