

Best Tax Software for Expatriates

How to pay your U.S. taxes

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BY [MEGAN HANNA](#) | Updated February 16, 2021

If you're a U.S. citizen or resident alien living abroad, you're generally required to file a U.S. tax return. You may not end up paying taxes because of special exclusions like the Federal Earned Income Exclusion (FEIE), but you need to file your federal tax return to take advantage of those potential exclusions. If you have a complicated tax situation (e.g., you have complex holdings in foreign companies), you may want to work with an accountant.

However, for expatriates who earn regular employment income or are self-employed, it can be easy to file your taxes while living abroad using tax software. We considered a dozen providers to find the best tax software for expatriates. In our search, we looked for the tax forms supported by each program, the support you can receive from a tax expert, and how much it costs. Read on to learn about your options.

Best Tax Software for Expatriates in 2021

Best Overall: [TaxAct](#)

Best for Self-Employed: [H&R Block Expat Tax Services](#)

Best for Business Owners: [MyExpatTaxes](#)

Best Free Option: [TaxAct IRS Free File Edition](#)

Best for Extra Features: [TurboTax by Intuit](#)

Best for Simple Returns: [TaxSlayer](#)

Best Tax Software for Expatriates

BEST OVERALL TaxAct

TaxAct

H&R Block Expat Tax Services

MyExpatTaxes

TaxAct IRS Free File Edition

TurboTax By Intuit

TaxSlayer

Final Verdict

Compare Providers

Impact Of Coronavirus On Expatriate Taxes

FAQs

Methodology

TaxAct

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Why We Chose It: You get the most features for the price including access to five of the most common tax forms expatriates need.



What We Like

- Offers three plans good for expats with a variety of circumstances
- Federal return costs of \$24.95 to \$64.95 are reasonable
- Paid plans include most of the basic tax forms expatriates need (Forms 1116, 2555, 8621, 8833, and 8938)
- Support from a tax expert is available for an additional fee
- Pattern of reviews from various



What We Don't Like

- Schedule C is only available with the self-employed plan
- Standard free version doesn't include the common forms expats need
- FBAR Form 114 must be e-filed separately by the expatriate with FinCEN

sources suggests the company has a good reputation

TaxAct is a tax software company founded in 1998 and headquartered in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. TaxAct offers three different tax software plans good for expatriates, ranging from \$24.95 to \$64.95 for each federal tax return. You'll get access to five of the most common tax forms expatriates need ([Forms 1116](#), [2555](#), 8621, 8833, and [8938](#)). Plus, for an additional fee, you can get support from a tax expert.

Not only is the cost amongst the best of the [tax software for expatriates](#) that we reviewed, but it's also available to people with a wide variety of tax needs. This includes those with basic employment income as well as self-employed individuals. It also includes people who are prepared to do their taxes themselves, as well as those who need some expert support.

If you choose TaxAct, you can start filing your taxes using its cloud-based program online for free. If you aren't satisfied with TaxAct, you can stop using the online software before completing the billing steps. Also, TaxAct offers a \$100,000 accuracy guarantee that its calculations are correct.

If you're an expatriate, here are some potential software options from TaxAct:

	DELUXE	PREMIER	SELF-EMPLOYED
Who It's Best For	Expats who earn employment income with basic filing needs	Expats with supplemental income and losses from rental real estate or royalties	Expats who earn income from self-employment
Federal Return Cost (per return)	\$24.95 ; or \$74.95 with support from a tax expert	\$34.95 ; or \$94.95 with support from a tax expert	\$64.95 ; or \$139.95 with support from a tax expert
State Return Cost (per return)	\$44.95	\$44.95	\$44.95
Form 114 - Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR)*			
Form 2555 - Foreign Earned Income Exclusion	✓	✓	✓
Form 1116 - Foreign Tax Credit	✓	✓	✓
Form 8938 - Statement of Specified Foreign Assets	✓	✓	✓
Form 8833 - Treaty-Based Return Position Disclosure	✓	✓	✓
Form 8621 - Information Return by a Shareholder of a Passive Foreign Investment Company or Qualified Electing Fund	✓	✓	✓
Schedule C - Profit or Loss from Business (Self-Employment Income)			✓
Schedule E - Supplemental Income & Loss		✓	✓
Schedule K-1 - Partnership Trust, or Estate Income			

***Note:** You can create [Form 114 \(FBAR\)](#) via TaxAct. However, you can't submit it via e-filing using the TaxAct software. Instead, you can use TaxAct to put together the general information required for the filing and then fill in and submit the form directly

to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) using the [Bank Secrecy Act \(BSA\) e-filing system](#).

It's important to note that the standard free version doesn't include access to the forms most expatriates need to file their taxes. However, if you meet IRS qualifications, the TaxAct IRS Free File Edition might work for you.

Read the full [TaxAct](#) review.

BEST FOR SELF-EMPLOYED

H&R Block Expat Tax Services



H&R BLOCK

[SIGN UP NOW](#)

Why We Chose It: Self-employed expatriates can file Schedule C and Schedule K-1 as well as two of the most commonly required tax forms (1116 and 2555) on their own. Plus, for an additional fee, H&R Block will file Form 114 (the Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts) for them, a service that's not always provided.



What We Like

- Includes two of the most common tax forms expats need (Forms 1116 and 2555)
- Includes filing of Form 114 (FBAR) for an additional fee
- Investor and self-employed plan includes Schedule C
- Reviews from a variety of sources suggest H&R Block has a good reputation



What We Don't Like

- Doesn't include Forms 8833 and 8938
- Form 8621 is available but at a fee of \$99 per form
- Schedule K-1 is available, but for a fee of \$99 per form

[H&R Block](#) is a tax preparation company founded in 1955 and headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri. Besides offering expat tax services from a tax advisor, individuals who prefer to do their own taxes can use the H&R Block Expat Tax Services software program to file their U.S. taxes online. This is particularly good for self-employed expats as the top plan includes [Schedule C](#). Plus, for an additional fee, expatriates earning partnership, estate, or trust income can access Form K-1.

The H&R Block Expat Tax Services software is a cloud-based program that's completely online. You can get started online for free and won't pay until you're ready to review and approve your tax return. Once you've paid and approved your return, H&R Block will e-file it for you. Additionally, the company offers a 100% guarantee that your return will be prepared accurately.

One of the things we particularly like about the H&R Block Expat Tax Services software program is that it provides optional FBAR filing (the Form 114 Report of Non-U.S. Bank and Financial Accounts) for an additional fee. The software helps expatriates who have money in non-U.S. bank accounts understand, complete, and submit the FBAR filing requirements.

The tax software options for expatriates from H&R Block Expat Tax Services are as follows:

	EMPLOYMENT INCOME	INVESTORS & SELF-EMPLOYED
Who It's Best For	Expats with basic filing needs who want support with FBAR filing and don't	Expats who are self-employed or business owners engaged in U.S.

WHO IT'S BEST FOR	with FBAR filing and don't need support from a tax expert	trade or business activity and don't need support from a tax expert
Federal Return Cost (per return)	\$99	\$149
State Return Cost (per return)	\$99	\$99
Form 114 - Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR)	\$49 per FBAR	\$49 per FBAR
Form 2555 - Foreign Earned Income Exclusion	✓	✓
Form 1116 - Foreign Tax Credit	✓	✓
Form 8938 - Statement of Specified Foreign Assets		
Form 8833 - Treaty-Based Return Position Disclosure		
Form 8621 - Information Return by a Shareholder of a Passive Foreign Investment Company or Qualified Electing Fund	\$99 for each form	\$99 for each form
Schedule C - Profit or Loss from Business (Self-Employment Income)		✓
Schedule K-1 - Partnership Trust, or Estate Income	\$99 for each K-1	\$99 for each K-1

BEST FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

MyExpatTaxes



[SIGN UP NOW](#)

Why We Chose It: The two higher-cost plans include support from a certified tax professional or tax accountant and K-1s. Plus, there's even a plan for expatriates who own foreign businesses.



What We Like

- All plans include the basic tax forms most expats need (Forms 1116, 2555, 8833, and 8938)
- Form 114 (FBAR) filing is included with all plans
- Two higher-cost plans include support from a certified tax expert or tax accountant
- Review from a variety of sources suggest the company has a good reputation



What We Don't Like

- Form 8621 is available, but an additional fee is required for each form
- Starting federal return costs of \$178 are high compared to other expatriate tax software
- Limited number of K-1s are included with the two higher-cost plans (three to six)
- Company is relatively new, as it was founded in 2018

MyExpatTaxes is a tax software company that focuses specifically on U.S. expatriates. The company was founded in 2018 and is headquartered in Vienna, Austria. Although it's a newer company, the top two plans include support from a certified tax professional for self-employed expatriates and from a tax accountant

for those who own foreign businesses.

The costs for the MyExpatriates program are more expensive than any of the other plans we reviewed, at a cost of approximately \$178 to \$597 for each federal tax return. However, it includes many of the most common tax forms expats need. Plus, business owners can get help from a tax accountant with corporate forms that might be required, such as [Form 8858](#) and [Form 5471](#).

As with the other expat tax software programs we reviewed, MyExpatriates is a cloud-based program. You can get started preparing your tax returns online for free. If you need support while working on your taxes, you can use the company's chat feature to ask questions. Plus, if you purchase the professional plan, a tax professional will review your tax return before it's submitted. With the premium plan, you'll also get a 30-minute online conference to discuss your tax situation. This can be helpful for business owners with more complicated taxes.

Details about the software options for expatriates from MyExpatriates are as follows:

	STANDARD	PROFESSIONAL	PREMIUM
Who It's Best For	Expats with employment income who don't need help from a tax expert	Expats who are self-employed and want support from a certified tax expert	Expats who own a foreign business and want expert help from a tax accountant
Federal Return Cost (per return)	€149 (approx. \$178 USD*)	€249 (approx. \$298 USD*)	€499 (approx. \$597 USD*)
State Return Cost (per return)	€99 (approx. \$118 USD*)	€49 (approx. \$59 USD*)	One included; €49 per additional return (approx. \$59 USD*)
Form 114 - Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR)	✓	✓	✓
Form 2555 - Foreign Earned Income Exclusion	✓	✓	✓
Form 1116 - Foreign Tax Credit	✓	✓	✓
Form 8938 - Statement of Specified Foreign Assets	✓	✓	✓
Form 8833 - Treaty-Based Return Position Disclosure	✓	✓	✓
Form 8621 - Information Return by a Shareholder of a Passive Foreign Investment Company or Qualified Electing Fund	€99 for each form (approx. \$118 USD*)	€49 for each form (approx. \$59 USD*)	One included; €49 per additional form (approx. \$59 USD*)
Schedule C - Profit or Loss from Business (Self-Employment Income)	✓	✓	✓
Schedule K-1 - Partnership Trust, or Estate Income		Up to 3	Up to 6
Other Corporate Forms (e.g., Form 8858, 5471)			✓ Additional fees may apply depending on the complexity.

***Note:** Based on Euro to USD exchange rates in February 2021.

TaxAct IRS Free File Edition

TaxAct

Free File Edition

SIGN UP NOW

Why We Chose It: Federal and state returns can be filed for free by expats who meet the IRS qualifications, and they can receive access to the most common tax forms expatriates require.



What We Like

- Expats who qualify for the software get free federal and state filing
- Expats get access to the most common tax forms they'll need
- Schedule C is available to report material participation in business activities
- Allows for people who don't qualify to use the software for a federal return cost of \$64.95



What We Don't Like

- Only available for free to people who meet income and other qualifications
- Doesn't include FBAR Form 114
- Schedule C can't be used to report passive business activities

If you're an expatriate with an adjusted gross income (AGI) of \$72,000 or less, then you may be able to file your federal taxes online for free.^[1] While there are various IRS free file online options, we chose the TaxAct Free File Edition as the best free tax software for expatriates because you'll get access to the five most common expat tax forms (1116, 2555, 8621, 8833, and 8938).

It's important to note that the specific qualifications differ for each IRS Free File Online tool. The TaxAct Free File edition is available to people (expats and non-expats alike) whose AGI isn't more than \$63,000 and who are:^[2]

- 56 years of age and younger; **or**
- Eligible for the earned income tax credit (EITC); **or**
- Active members of the military in 2020 with an AGI of \$72,000 or less

If you don't meet the criteria to use the TaxAct Free File Edition for free, you can still use the software as a non-qualifier for a fee of \$64.95 per federal return and \$44.95 per state return.

As with the other tax software for expatriates we reviewed, the TaxAct Free File Edition is a cloud-based online program. This program doesn't come with support from a tax advisor. Plus, it doesn't include FBAR Form 114 filing. If these things are important to you, then you'll need to choose a different tax software.

Details about the TaxAct IRS Free File program for expatriates are as follows:

	TAXACT FREE FILE EDITION
Who It's Best For	Expats with basic filing needs who qualify for free filing and don't need support from an expert
Federal Return Cost (per return)	Free; \$64.95 for non-qualifiers
State Return Cost (per return)	Free; \$44.95 for non-qualifiers
Form 114 - Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR)	

Form 2555 - Foreign Earned Income Exclusion	✓
Form 1116 - Foreign Tax Credit	✓
Form 8938 - Statement of Specified Foreign Assets	✓
Form 8833 - Treaty-Based Return Position Disclosure	✓
Form 8621 - Information Return by a Shareholder of a Passive Foreign Investment Company or Qualified Electing Fund	✓
Schedule C - Profit or Loss from Business (Self-Employment Income)*	✓
Schedule K-1 - Partnership Trust, or Estate Income	

***Note:** TaxAct only supports Schedule C for material participants listed on Line G (i.e., not available for passive activity).^[3]

Read the full [TaxAct](#) review.

BEST FOR EXTRA FEATURES

TurboTax by Intuit



SIGN UP NOW

Why We Chose It: Expats can get access to three commonly required tax forms (1116, 2555, and 8938) at a competitive cost of \$40 to \$90 per federal return. Plus, they can access live support from a tax expert for an additional fee, an extra feature that isn't always available.

✓ What We Like

- Includes access to three of the most common forms expats need (Forms 1116, 2555, and 8938)
- Schedule C is available with all plans
- Tax support from a tax expert is available with all plans for an additional fee
- Federal return costs of \$40 to \$90 are competitive
- Intuit is a well-known publicly-traded company with a good reputation

✗ What We Don't Like

- Doesn't include Forms 8621, 8833, or 114
- Lowest level plans allow for the recording of Schedule C income and not expenses
- Standard free version doesn't include the forms expats need
- Federal return costs are higher than TaxAct and TaxSlayer

TurboTax is a popular tax software program offered by Intuit, Inc., a well-known publicly-traded company founded in 1983 and headquartered in Mountain View, California. While TurboTax only includes three of the most common forms expats commonly need (Forms 1116, 2555, and 8938), its costs of \$40 to \$90 are competitive. Plus, you can get access to live support from a tax expert for an additional fee as an extra feature. This helps make it stand out.

If you choose to go with TurboTax, then you can get started with this cloud-based software online for free. You'll pay once you're ready to review and file your tax return. TurboTax is especially user-friendly since it allows you to easily import data from various sources (e.g., financial institutions, employers, accounting software programs like QuickBooks). Plus, TurboTax provides a 100% guarantee that its calculations are accurate.

If you have a complicated tax situation (e.g., you need to file taxes for a foreign

If you have a complicated tax situation (e.g., you need to file taxes for a foreign business), you'll probably need to choose a different option. This is because the forms that are available to expatriates via TurboTax are limited. Even so, it's a good option for expats with relatively simple tax situations, including those who are self-employed.

If you're an expatriate, you might want to consider one of the following TurboTax tax software options:

	DELUXE	PREMIER	SELF-EMPLOYED
Who It's Best For	Expats with basic tax filing needs	Expats who need to report income from self-employment but not expenses	Expats who need to report all of their self-employment income and expenses
Federal Return Cost (per return)	\$40; or \$90 with support from a tax expert	\$70; or \$140 support from a tax expert	\$90; or \$170 support from a tax expert
State Return Cost (per return)	\$40; or \$50 with support from a tax expert	\$40; or \$50 with support from a tax expert	\$40; or \$50 with support from a tax expert
Form 114 - Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR)			
Form 2555 - Foreign Earned Income Exclusion	✓	✓	✓
Form 1116 - Foreign Tax Credit	✓	✓	✓
Form 8938 - Statement of Specified Foreign Assets	✓	✓	✓
Form 8833 - Treaty-Based Return Position Disclosure			
Form 8621 - Information Return by a Shareholder of a Passive Foreign Investment Company or Qualified Electing Fund			
Schedule C - Profit or Loss from Business (Self-Employment Income)	✓*	✓*	✓
Schedule K-1 - Partnership Trust, or Estate Income		✓	✓

***Note:** Schedule C with the Deluxe and Premier plans allows you to report self-employment income. If you also want to report expenses related to your self-employment, you'll need to upgrade to the Self-Employed plan.

As with TaxAct, it's important to note that the standard free version offered by TurboTax doesn't include access to the forms most expatriates need to file their taxes. However, the IRS Free File Program delivered by TurboTax is a potential option for people who qualify, as access to many of the common expat tax forms is included.

To qualify for the IRS Free File Program delivered by TurboTax, people (expats and non-expats alike) must have an AGI of \$39,000 or less, have served as an activity duty military member in 2020 with an AGI of \$72,000 or less, or qualify for the earned income tax credit.

BEST FOR SIMPLE RETURNS

TaxSlayer



SIGN UP NOW

Why We Chose It: People with simple returns can get access to two of the most common tax forms required by expatriates (Forms 1116 and 2555) for a low cost of \$17 to \$47 per federal return. Plus, the two highest-cost plans include complimentary access to a tax expert.



What We Like

- Federal return costs of \$17 to \$47 are the lowest of the software programs we reviewed
- Support from tax experts is included with the two highest cost plans
- Access to two of the most common expat tax forms (1116 and 2555) is included
- Patterns of reviews from various sources suggest TaxSlayer has a good reputation



What We Don't Like

- Standard free option doesn't include access to the common tax forms expats need
- None of the plans include access to Forms 114, 8621, 8833, or 8938

TaxSlayer is a tax software company that was founded in 1992 and is headquartered in Evans, Georgia. It's an affordable option for simple returns, with the cost of a federal tax return with TaxSlayer ranging from \$17 to \$47.

Although you'll only get access to two of the most common expat tax forms (1116 and 2555), the level of support that's included is amongst the best we reviewed. This is because two of the three fee-based options include support from a tax expert at a cost that's more affordable than any of the other fee-based programs on our list.

You can get started online for free with TaxSlayer using its cloud-based system and you'll only be required to pay when you're ready to review and approve your return. Plus, you'll have the option to deduct the cost of its services from your federal tax return. You also don't have to worry about the calculations as TaxSlayer provides a 100% guarantee that they'll be accurate.

The following TaxSlayer tax software options can be a good choice for expatriates:

	CLASSIC	PREMIUM	SELF-EMPLOYED
Who It's Best For	Expats with basic tax filing needs who don't need support from a tax expert	Expats with basic tax filing needs who want support from a tax expert	Expats who want to get tax advice from an expert on their self-employment
Federal Return Cost (per return)	\$17	\$37; includes live chat and help from a tax expert	\$47; includes access to a tax expert with self-employment expertise
State Return Cost (per return)	\$32	\$32	\$32
Form 114 - Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts			

Financial Accounts (FBAR)			
Form 2555 - Foreign Earned Income Exclusion	✓	✓	✓
Form 1116 - Foreign Tax Credit	✓	✓	✓
Form 8938 - Statement of Specified Foreign Assets			
Form 8833 - Treaty-Based Return Position Disclosure			
Form 8621 - Information Return by a Shareholder of a Passive Foreign Investment Company or Qualified Electing Fund			
Schedule C - Profit or Loss from Business (Self-Employment Income)	✓	✓	✓
Schedule K-1 - Partnership Trust, or Estate Income	✓	✓	✓

As with TurboTax and TaxAct, it's important to note that the standard free version offered by TaxSlayer doesn't include access to the forms most expatriates need to file their taxes. However, for people who qualify, the IRS Free File Program delivered by TaxSlayer is a potential option as you'll get access to some of the most common expat tax forms.

To qualify for the IRS Free File Program delivered by TaxSlayer, people (expats and non-expats alike) must have an AGI of \$72,000 or less and be 51 years of age or younger, have served as an activity duty military member in 2020, and have an AGI of \$72,000 or less, or qualify for the earned income tax credit.

Read the full [TaxSlayer](#) review.

Final Verdict

All of the options on our list allow expatriates to file their taxes online. However, it's important to determine how much support you'll need and how complex your tax situation is before deciding to do it yourself. Several of the options we reviewed offer support from a tax expert, but this usually comes for an added fee. Plus, not all of the tax forms commonly required for expats are included in some software programs.

If your taxes are complicated, you might be better off working with a tax advisor. However, an online tax software program can be a great option for expatriates who earn regular employment income and even those who are self-employed and report business income via Form K-1.

Out of the companies we reviewed, we think TaxAct offers the overall best tax software for expatriates. This is because the TaxAct software includes access to five of the most common tax forms expatriates need (Forms 1116, 2555, 8621, 8833, and 8938). Plus, expert tax help is available for an additional fee, and there are even filing options for self-employed expats.

Compare Providers

COMPANY NAME	WHY WE PICKED IT	STANDARD COST PER FEDERAL RETURN
TaxAct	You'll get access to five of the most common forms expats need and can get support from a tax expert for an additional fee.	\$24.95 to \$64.95
H&R Block Expat Tax Services	You can get access to Schedule C and Form K-1, which can help self-employed expats.	\$99 to \$149
MyExpatTaxes	You can access the most common expat tax forms, plus additional tax support is available for expats who own foreign businesses.	\$178 to \$597 (approx.)
TaxAct IRS Free File Edition	You can file your taxes for free and access the most common expat tax forms if you qualify for the program.	Free
TurboTax	You'll be able to take advantage of a user-friendly system and get access to support live tax support for an added fee.	\$40 to \$90
TaxSlayer	You'll benefit from the lowest fees for simple returns of the paid plans we reviewed, with tax support included in the most costly plans.	\$17 to \$47

Impact of Coronavirus on Expatriate Taxes

If you're an expatriate whose life abroad was affected by COVID-19 in 2020, you still might be able to take advantage of the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion (FEIE). This program allows U.S. citizens or resident aliens who live outside of the states to exclude foreign earnings up to \$107,600 for 2020 and \$108,700 for 2021.^[4]^[5]

While you normally need to meet a bona fide residence or physical residence test showing you resided in the country a full year to qualify for the FEIE, you may be eligible for a waiver of these tests if emergency factors due to COVID-19 required you to leave:

- China (excluding certain regions of Macau and Hong Kong) between December 1, 2019, and July 15, 2020 (inclusive of the start and end dates); or
- Other foreign countries between February 1, 2020, and July 15, 2020 (also inclusive of the start and end dates).^[5]

If you left the People's Republic of China or other foreign countries during the timeframes noted above as a result of the COVID-19 emergency, then you [may still meet the bona fide residence or physical residence tests](#) even though your stay was cut short.

In addition to the FEIE waivers, there are other tax benefits self-employed expatriates may be able to receive that are related to the COVID-19 crisis such as:

- **CARES Act:** Self-employed people can defer payment on 50% of social security taxes on net earnings related to self-employment from March 27, 2020, to December 31, 2020.
- **Tax credits:** Some self-employed people impacted by COVID-19 can take advantage of refundable income tax credits related to sick and family leave. They're available to self-employed people who couldn't work between April 1, 2020, and December 31, 2020, because of factors related to the coronavirus (e.g., you were sick or you had to care for a child who was sick).^[6]

Furthermore, the CARES Act included stimulus payments to provide relief to U.S. citizens affected by COVID-19, including expats. Payments were issued to people who had recently filed their taxes. If you aren't normally required to file taxes and haven't received a stimulus payment, it's not too late.^[6] You can simply file a 2020 tax return and claim the Recovery Rebate Credit.^[7]

If you're unsure if any of these situations related to the coronavirus crisis apply to you, then you might find it helpful to [contact an accountant or tax advisor](#).

FAQs

Do I Need to File U.S. Taxes if I'm an Expatriate?

You might think that you're exempt from filing a tax return because you're living abroad, but that's not necessarily the case. As an expatriate, you're still a U.S. citizen. This means you'll generally be required to file a tax return just like you would if you lived stateside. Like people who live stateside, your age, income level, and filing status typically determine if you need to file tax returns. It's important to file your tax returns so you don't face [tax penalties](#).

As of 2020 and per the IRS, you must generally file a tax return if your gross income from sources throughout the world is at least as follows (additional rules for dependents may apply):^[5]

FILING STATUS AND/OR AGE	AMOUNT
Single, 64 or Younger	\$12,400
Single, 65 or Older	\$14,050
Head of Household, 64 or Younger	\$18,650
Head of Household, 65 or Older	\$20,300
Qualifying Widow(er), 64 or Younger	\$24,800
Qualifying Widow(er), 65 or Older	\$26,100
Married Filing Jointly, 64 or Younger	\$24,800
Married Filing Jointly, Not Living With Spouse at Year-End	\$5
Married Filing Jointly, One Spouse 65 or Older	\$26,100
Married Filing Jointly, Both Spouses 65 or Older	\$27,400
Married Filing Separately	\$5

If you're a self-employed person, you'll need to file a return if you have \$400 or more of net self-employment earnings, even if your gross income is less than the limits noted above.^[5]

Keep in mind, even if you're required to file a tax return, it doesn't mean that you'll be required to pay taxes. Many expats qualify for exclusions, but you need to claim them on your tax return. For example, the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion (FEIE) allows U.S. citizens or resident aliens who live outside of the states to exclude foreign earnings up to \$107,600 for 2020 and \$108,700 for 2021.^[4]

Even if you're not normally required to file a tax return, you'll want to do so in 2020 so you can take advantage of the CARES Act stimulus payments. The purpose of these payments was to provide relief to U.S. citizens who were affected by COVID-19. If you haven't been required to file taxes recently, it's not too late to receive the CARES Act stimulus payments.^[6] You'll simply need to file a 2020 tax return and claim the Recovery Rebate Credit.^[7]

How Do I File U.S. Taxes as an Expatriate?

If you have adjusted gross income (AGI) of \$72,000 or less, you may be able to use the IRS Free File program to file your taxes for free using popular tax software programs. You could also use fee-based expatriate tax software or work with an accountant or tax professional.^[8]

If you complete your federal tax returns on paper, you can mail them to:

Department of the Treasury

Internal Revenue Service Center

Austin, TX 73301-0215

USA^[8]

You'll mail your estimated tax payments with form 1040-ES to:

Internal Revenue Service

P.O. Box 1300

Charlotte, NC 28201-1300

USA^[8]

What Are the Special Rules for Taxes for Expatriates?

Expatriates living abroad are generally required to file U.S. taxes as they would stateside. However, you'll get an extra two months to file and pay your federal taxes. Also, you may be able to qualify for different exclusions as an expatriate.^[9] For example, the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion (FEIE) allows U.S. citizens or resident aliens who live outside of the states to exclude foreign earnings up to \$107,600 for 2020 and \$108,700 for 2021.^[4]

Do I Still Need To Pay Taxes in the Country Where I Reside?

You may still need to [pay taxes in the country where you reside](#), even if you're not a resident. It will depend on the country's tax laws in which you're living and any agreements it has made with your home country. For example, the U.S. has tax treaties with various countries that allow their residents to pay less or receive exceptions for some types of U.S. income taxes.^[10]

If you're unsure whether you're required to pay taxes in the country you reside in, make sure to get advice from a tax professional.

What Is the Deadline for Filing My Taxes as an Expatriate?

If you're an individual taxpayer living abroad, you'll be given an automatic two-month filing extension each year. This means you'll need to file your tax returns and pay any taxes owed by June 15th rather than April 15th.^[8]

How We Chose the Best Tax Software for Expatriates

We reviewed a dozen providers to find the best tax software for expatriates. We looked for the tax forms supported by each program, the level of support you can receive from a tax expert, and how much each program costs. The reputations of each provider were also considered.

All of our picks offered an affordable tax software solution good for a variety of expatriate filing needs and situations.

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