

NOVEMBER 2024



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REAL ID ALERT

THE KEY TO SEAMLESS TRAVEL IN 2025 AND BEYOND

If you're anything like me and my family, you love to plan trips well in advance. We enjoy mapping out our next travel adventure, whether it's visiting MLB ballparks, cities we've never been to, or just a fun weekend away. With that said, there's something super important coming up that you need to keep on your radar if you plan to travel by air within the United States after May 7, 2025: the New York REAL ID.

Let me explain why it's crucial to get your REAL ID before that deadline and how you can easily obtain one if you haven't already.

What Is the REAL ID?

The REAL ID is an enhanced identification card or driver's license that meets specific federal security standards established by the REAL ID Act. Congress passed the act in 2005 as part of the post-9/11 response to tighten security measures, particularly in relation to air travel. The original deadline for compliance was October 2020, but it was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Starting May 7, 2025, anyone 18 or older will need a REAL ID to board domestic flights (or a valid passport, but who wants to carry that around for a simple flight to Florida?). A passport will still be required for international travel. To avoid issues, plan to upgrade your current license to a REAL ID at the DMV before the deadline.

Why You Need It Now More Than Ever

We all know what it's like to scramble at the last minute before a trip, right? Trying to remember where you packed the kids' snacks, double-checking the hotel reservations, and hoping you didn't forget anything important. Adding a last-minute trip to the DMV for an ID upgrade sounds like stress we just don't need. Getting your REAL ID early is essential for several reasons.

First, as the May 2025 deadline nears, more people will rush to the DMV, increasing wait times. Taking care of this now ensures shorter lines. Second, if you plan to fly domestically after the deadline and don't have a REAL ID, you'll need a passport. Most people prefer to keep passports for international travel, making the REAL ID a more convenient option for U.S. flights. Lastly, having your REAL ID in advance provides peace of mind. With one less thing to worry about, your travel plans will go more smoothly and stress-free.

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How to Get Your REAL ID in New York

Obtaining a REAL ID in New York is simple but requires an in-person DMV visit. The DMV's online document guide shows you exactly what documents you need to apply for a REAL ID, including proof of identity, Social Security number, New York residency, and proof of lawful U.S. status. Check ahead for DMV appointments to avoid longer wait times. Use the DMV's online guide to pre-screen your application and schedule your visit conveniently. Once you've submitted your documents and paid any necessary fees, you'll get your new REAL ID-compliant license in the mail.

Don't Wait!

If you're like us and you love to travel, don't wait until the last minute to get your REAL ID. With three kids, we have to stay on top of things, and having the right travel documents is essential to making our trips go smoothly. We already got ours because, as you know, planning ahead is key when you have a busy family life.

So, whether you're dreaming of your next vacation or just flying to see family, the last thing you want is to be caught off guard by the new ID requirements. Make sure to get your REAL ID well before May 7, 2025, so you can keep your travel plans running smoothly without a hitch!

Let me know if you have any questions!

Safe travels,

-Brian O'Connor



THE \$93,750 SPUD

UNCOVER FABERGÉ'S UNEXPECTED MASTERPIECE

When you think of the name Fabergé, you probably imagine opulent, jewel-encrusted eggs that epitomize luxury and elegance. But did you know the famous Russian jeweler Peter Carl Fabergé, the mastermind behind the glittering eggs, also created a humble potato? And not just any potato, but one that fetched an astounding \$93,750 at a Christie's auction in 2016.

Fabergé's Glorious Spud

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Peter Carl Fabergé was the go-to jeweler for Russian royalty. His intricate and lavish creations, particularly the famous Fabergé eggs, were commissioned by Tsars Alexander III and Nicholas II as Easter gifts for their wives and mothers. Each egg was a masterpiece, often containing hidden surprises like miniature portraits, mechanical wonders, expensive jewels, or even tiny replicas of royal palaces.

But amidst these exquisite creations, Fabergé had a sense of humor and a knack for the unexpected. Enter the Fabergé potato — a far cry from the shimmering eggs but equally fascinating in its own right. This potato, crafted from pink agate, was a whimsical departure from his usual opulent fare.

The Humble Potato's Journey

Fast-forward to 2016, and this extraordinary potato was again in the spotlight. When Christie's auction house announced the sale of

a Fabergé potato, the world did a collective double-take. After all, who would have thought a potato — albeit one crafted by a master jeweler — would garner such attention and a hefty price tag to match?

The bidding war was intense, with collectors and Fabergé enthusiasts eager to own this unique piece of history. When the gavel finally came down, the potato had sold for a staggering \$93,750. Not bad for a root vegetable!

Why a Potato?

You might wonder why Fabergé, a jeweler known for his elaborate and luxurious designs, chose to make a potato. Perhaps it was his way of showing artistry could be found in the simplest of things. Or maybe it was a playful nod to the significance of potatoes in Russian culture — a staple food that sustained many through tough times. Whatever the reason, Fabergé's potato reminds us that even the most mundane objects can be transformed into something extraordinary with a bit of creativity and a touch of humor.



ROMAN RULES

PECULIAR LAWS OF THE ANCIENT EMPIRE

While ancient Rome may be known for gladiators, grand conquests, and fashionable togas, a surprisingly intricate legal system kept their civilization in line. They had many laws — some familiar, others bizarre — that dictated the everyday lives of millions of Roman citizens, enslaved people, and soldiers across a vast empire. Here are three of the most outrageous and interesting laws Romans enacted as a republic and an empire.



Dress Codes and Party Fouls

Beginning in around 215 BC, the Roman Republic began instituting what was known as sumptuary laws, which restricted the clothes people could wear, foods they could eat, and the maximum number of attendees at parties. They created these, in part, to reduce the costs of banquets, festivals, and other Roman ragers. Some examples were enacted in 213 BC when it became illegal for women to wear colorful dresses — unless they were celebrating a ritual sacrifice — to wear more than a half ounce of gold or even to ride around in carriages. However, they soon repealed these laws because they considered them *antiquated*.

Shocking Statute

Tough luck for those who like hanging out on tall metal poles — if a lightning strike killed someone in Rome, the law forbade families from burying them! This is because Romans believed lightning strikes were

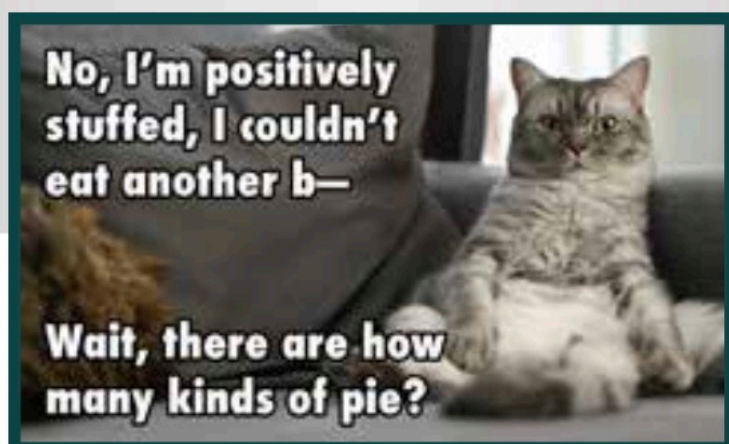
divine retribution from the king of the Roman pantheon, Jupiter.

See Ya Later, Gladiator!

Romans "borrowed" the idea of gladiatorial games from their (conquered) neighbors, wherein people would fight — sometimes to the death — for the public's amusement and began holding them back in 264 BC. However, because only 3 of every 5 people made it to their 20s at the time, only about 10% of those bouts involved actual fatalities. Many slaves, prisoners of war, and Christian martyrs fought as gladiators in the arena, but if they were already sentenced to execution, they had no hope of survival. One peculiar law involving gladiators was that they would fight until an injured combatant put down his shield and lifted his index finger to ask for mercy. At that point, it would come to an abrupt halt — though the emperor, if in attendance, would make the final decision.



TAKE A *BREAK*



GREEK CHICKEN AND RICE

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1 (14-oz) can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup uncooked long-grain white rice
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1/2 cup feta cheese
- Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large skillet over medium heat, add olive oil and sauté onion and garlic until softened.
2. Add chicken, oregano, and thyme and cook until the chicken is no longer pink, about 3–4 minutes.
3. Pour in chicken broth, diced tomatoes, and rice. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and cover. Simmer for 15 minutes or until the rice is cooked through.
4. Stir in the lemon juice and feta cheese, then season with salt and pepper.

HELPING KIDS WITH ADHD THRIVE

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT

It's common for parents of children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) to sometimes feel frustrated and overwhelmed — and more than a little guilty for having these emotions. First and foremost, it's perfectly understandable for any parent to experience hurdles as they work to help their child live a happy, healthy life. Although there are unique challenges to raising a youngster with ADHD, every day is an opportunity to take positive steps to help your child learn and grow. Here are four quick tips to help make the rough times a little smoother.

Build a balanced routine.

Helping your child stay on task with daily routines is critical to managing their ADHD journey. Are they hydrating regularly? Do they follow consistent meal and sleep schedules? Sometimes, staying consistent with the smallest things makes the biggest impact on your child's well-being.

Plan a digital detox.

With everything so tech-based these days, there's a good chance your child spends a lot of time in front of a screen. Set aside time throughout the week to interact with them in a digital-free environment — even if it's just to chat about their day. This time is meant to help you build a stronger relationship with your child, so try to avoid discussing anything that may cause conflict or a distraction.

Find a community of support.

Participating in a support group is a fantastic way to connect with other parents, share concerns, and learn new ways to encourage your child's growth and success. As a bonus, connecting with parents whose experiences are similar to yours could lead to their children interacting with yours — which may go a long way in helping your child relate to other people and develop their social skills.

Tailor your tools.

Every child with ADHD is a unique individual with specific needs. A specialized mental health professional can help you craft a solid framework to address obstacles as they arise. Whether you need guidance on stress management or tips on sharpening your communication skills, utilizing the services of an empathetic therapist could provide you with the fresh perspective and game plan you need to help your young one thrive.



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HOLLYWOOD ENDING

Alec Baldwin Walks Free After Case Dismissed

About three years ago, on Oct. 21, 2021, cinematographer Halyna Hutchins was shot and killed by a live round fired by actor Alec Baldwin on the set of the movie "Rust." You might believe this would be an open-and-shut manslaughter case. However, just like the scenes Hutchins brilliantly captured on film, this scene was more complex and layered than you may expect. Baldwin's trial was dismissed just three days after it began, on July 13, 2024. Ironically, but perhaps fittingly, Baldwin's criminal case came to a dramatic, Hollywood-esque conclusion.

Is the armorer to blame?

Previously, in May, Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, the armorer for the film, was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter for her role in the fatal shooting of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins. The jury deliberated for just three hours before passing judgment; evidence revealing Gutierrez-Reed loaded the gun that killed Hutchins likely

contributed to the swift decision. She was sentenced to 18 months in prison but has appealed, and what happened in July in Alec Baldwin's trial may affect the outcome of that appeal.

Hollywood Ending

When the third day of Alec Baldwin's involuntary manslaughter trial in New Mexico began, it became apparent that something was amiss. The defense attorneys had something important to bring to the court's attention. Assistant District Attorney Erlinda Johnson was absent. As it turned out, she had resigned from the case after allegations that Santa Fe police, in conjunction with Special Prosecutor Kari Morrisey, had conspired to hide evidence from the defense. The evidence in question was a case of ammunition matching those retrieved from the set of "Rust." The ammunition was given to Santa Fe police before the trial, but it was filed under a separate case number — even though



the witness who handed in the evidence claimed it was relevant to the "Rust" trial. In light of these revelations, Santa Fe County District Court Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer dismissed the case with prejudice.

Throughout the day, as the camera centered on Hollywood star-turned-defendant Alec Baldwin, viewers were treated to his wide range of emotions: first, annoyance, then sadness, and, finally, tearful exultation. This was his Hollywood ending.