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LANDFALL GUIDE · VISAS & ARRIVING

How do I get settled status and British citizenship?

THE SHORT ANSWER

Most people first get indefinite leave to remain (ILR, also called settlement) after a qualifying period on their visa route, then can apply for British citizenship, usually after a further 12 months. The US allows dual citizenship. The UK government has been changing settlement rules, so check the current qualifying period for your route.

For US citizens and green card holders moving to the UK. Build your free, personal move plan at **yourlandfall.com/plan**.

General information, not personal tax, financial, legal or immigration advice.

This is general information, not immigration advice. A regulated adviser can check your own timeline.

Step 1: Indefinite leave to remain (ILR)

ILR means you can live and work in the UK without time limits. It's often called **settlement**.

- On many routes, such as Skilled Worker and family routes, the qualifying period has been **five years**. Some talent routes have been shorter.
- **The government has proposed longer qualifying periods** for many routes, with ways to qualify sooner. Check what applies to you before relying on a date.
- You'll usually need to pass the **Life in the UK test**. As a US national, you normally meet the **English language** requirement through your nationality.
- **Time spent outside the UK** counts against you if you exceed the limits, so keep a record of every trip.

Step 2: British citizenship

Once you have ILR, you can usually apply to **naturalize** as a British citizen:

- usually after holding ILR for **12 months**, or straight away if you're married to a British citizen
- with limits on time spent outside the UK in the qualifying years
- followed by a **citizenship ceremony**

Dual citizenship

The UK and US both allow **dual citizenship**. Becoming British doesn't mean giving up US citizenship. But:

- **US tax filing continues** as long as you're a US citizen.
- You must **enter and leave the US on your US passport**.
- Giving up US citizenship is a separate, serious step with its own tax rules.

Keep a paper trail from day one

- every entry and exit date
- your visa decisions and eVisa records
- payslips, tenancy agreements and council tax bills

These make later applications much simpler.

What to do next

See which visa routes are open to Americans, or build your move plan.

See every step for your move. Answer five questions and get a free plan in the right order: yourlandfall.com/plan