



TRAVELING WITH A TOUR GROUP IN EUROPE

EUROPEAN HOTELS

Europe's hospitality industry is centuries old and its hotels often reflect the varied traditions and standards of their respective countries. While comfortable, be prepared for differences and do not expect European hotels to be the same as home. Single rooms in European hotels are often smaller than in USA hotels. Also, when booking a triple room, the third bed may be a rollaway cot.

HOTEL MEALS

Dinners that are included in your tour package are generally table d'hôte, or "fixed" menus. On occasion, there may be a choice. Tea, coffee and other beverages are usually not included. Nor is the custom to serve butter with bread, except at breakfast.

In most European countries, including a continental breakfast is the norm, consisting of tea/coffee, rolls and butter, jam/marmalade. Many times the breakfast included will be a full cooked breakfast buffet. Take advantage and eat a hearty breakfast. If lunch is not included in your tour I suggest purchasing local food, such as, cheese, fruit and delicatessen items, which can save approximately \$20.00 per day on the cost of a restaurant lunch.

Check out your itinerary to see the type of meal offered on any particular tour.

WAKE UP CALLS

The tour company usually arranges for wake up calls for all passengers depending on the agenda for the following day. Should the call not go through, or heavy sleepers not hear it, your own back up alarm clock is a good insurance. Bring one that is lightweight and simple to operate. It is important to be considerate of others on the tour and to be prompt at meeting times and places. Make sure you hear where and when to meet the group in the morning. It might be a good idea to ask the tour director for their room number in case needed for any reason.

HOTEL CHECK OUT

Each time you check out of a hotel, check your room prior to leaving. Open every drawer, look under the bed and door, including the bathroom. The return of items forgotten is nearly impossible.

GRATUITIES and SERVICE CHARGES

Tour companies often include gratuities and service charges as part of their tour package. Some of the charges that may be included would be baggage handling, meal service for all meals included on tour, hotel service for all normal service, but not room service. Service charges for

dining room waiters, for meals included on your tour, chambermaids and porters at hotels, airports, docks and stations should also be covered.

All transfers between airports, hotels and docks are taken care of as indicated in your tour itinerary.

OPTIONAL SIGHTSEEING AND MEALS

Be prepared to know what is optional. While most tour operators include comprehensive sightseeing and selected meals on all itineraries, it is likely that you will want to participate in optional meals and sightseeing tours. I suggest factoring in an additional \$30.00 to \$50.00 per day for optionals.

SUGGESTED TIPPING WHILE ON YOUR OWN IN EUROPE

TAXI FARE ON METER	10 - 15%
RESTAURANT - TOTAL BILL	10 - 15%
TOUR DIRECTOR/MOTORCOACH DRIVER	\$2.00 PER PER/PER DAY
LOCAL SIGHTSEEING GUIDE	\$1.00 PER PERSON

CURRENCY

The tour director can advise how much currency to change. If you buy too much local currency, you can lose on each transaction.

It is recommended that while in Europe you have an adequate supply of convertible traveler's checks. Make sure you have a separate record of all the numbers and denominations in case of loss or theft. Keep your record in a separate safe location. Carry some checks in small denominations, as it may be difficult to cash larger checks in hotels or shops. You may want to get a small amount of foreign currency for each country you are going to visit prior to leaving USA. Call your bank for their recommendation as where it would be best to obtain the currency. If you do this you will have enough to cover incidentals you may need when arriving, i.e. bottled water, etc.

Traveler's checks and currency can be changed at airports, hotels, local banks and at "Bureau de Change" locations throughout Europe. Be aware that most European banks have higher charges for currency exchange than in the U.S.

It is also highly suggested that you purchase a currency converter prior to arriving in Europe. You can find these at any store that carries travel supplies. They are simple to use and once programmed will give you the exact rate of exchange converted to US dollars.

CREDIT CARDS and ATMs

The majority of better restaurants, shops, hotels, theaters, etc. in Western Europe, and in many Eastern Europe countries, accept most major credit cards. The bill you sign will be in local currency. (The currency converter comes in handy here.) This will be converted to US dollars by the credit card company and invoiced the usual way. You can also use a major credit card to

obtain cash abroad. By using your credit card to obtain cash will also get you a favorable exchange rate.

ATMs are now accessible worldwide. Most ATMs with a "PLUS" or Cirrus on the back are accepted. Again, you will get a favorable exchange rate and don't have the worry of carrying excess cash.

PASSPORTS

Carry your passport with you at all times to ensure against loss or theft in hotels. For added protection, keep a photocopy of your passport in your suitcase. Also, please send me a copy of your current passport so that if you have a loss you can contact me and I will fax a copy to you. I will keep this on file for you so be sure to take my phone number and fax number with you.

Note: Don't be alarmed if the hotel asks for your passport. Hotels are sometimes required to hold your passport overnight to comply with local regulations. You should ask when you could expect it returned.

PHONE CALLS

Almost all hotels will add a service charge to the cost of any phone calls you make from your room. This charge can be high, especially for international calls. It is always cheaper to use public telephones, pay phones or an international calling service such as AT&T USA Direct. Your tour director will advise you how to use the telephone if you are unsure. Also, many countries now sell calling cards. I have found them to be very economical and easy to use. Your tour director can tell you how to use the phone and where to purchase phone cards. If you purchase your phone cards in the U.S. make sure you contact the phone company, before you leave, to find out what the dialing access codes are for each country you will be visiting.

ELECTRICAL VOLTAGE

Electrical currents vary in Europe. Some appliances have dual voltage, but if not, it is suggested that you carry a converter for electric shavers, traveling iron, hair appliances and other small appliances. Also, pins, holes and plugs differ everywhere, so it is best to have a universal electrical travel adapter before you go to prevent accidents and damage to your appliances.

LUGGAGE

Many tour operators limit passenger baggage to one suitcase and one carryon per person.

PACKING TIPS

Remember to pack warm clothing, particularly if you are traveling to alpine regions. Weather in Europe, especially in the mountains, can be colder than most people think. It is a good idea to check the weather channel or newspaper to check what conditions to expect.

Rather than bringing one umbrella to share it is better for everyone to have his or her own fold up umbrella. If the rain occurs with mild weather it will eliminate the need to carry a raincoat on a tour or stop.

Wear comfortable clothes, which are mixable with other pieces. Remember that your clothes are new to the other people on the tour who have never met you before. Mixing and matching helps to pack light. If you wear clothes that you are comfortable in you will be more relaxed. Men only need one tie and women one dress or skirt.

There is nothing worse than aching feet at the end of the day. Make sure to bring a pair of comfortable, broken-in shoes for daytime walking. In many cities in Europe, parking is restricted, and you may have to walk several blocks to see the major sites. Remember, when you visit museums and other sites of interest, you will be on your feet for long periods of time.

Costume jewelry travels beautifully. You should leave items of monetary and sentimental value at home. This will allow you to be a bit more carefree.

Washcloths are not standard in most hotels in Europe. Cut an old bath towel from home into squares to use as washcloths. When done with them you can just throw them away.

Pack the right attitude - try to forget about the stock market and other news at home; try to make your vacation the experience of a lifetime.

PACKING CHECKLIST

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> TICKETS | <input type="checkbox"/> PASSPORT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TRAVELER'S CHECKS | <input type="checkbox"/> LOCAL CURRENCY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CREDIT CARDS | <input type="checkbox"/> FOLD UP UMBRELLA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LOCKS FOR LUGGAGE | <input type="checkbox"/> RAINCOAT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NAME TAGS FOR LUGGAGE | <input type="checkbox"/> TRAVEL IRON&ALARM CLOCK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MONEY BELT OR SIMILAR | <input type="checkbox"/> \$CONVERTER/CALCULATOR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GUIDEBOOKS AND MAPS | <input type="checkbox"/> SUNGLASSES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LANGUAGE & PHRASE BOOKS | <input type="checkbox"/> ADDRESS BOOK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CAMERA AND FILM IN PLASTIC CONTAINERS (ZIPLOCK BAGS) | <input type="checkbox"/> EARPLUGS/SLEEPMASK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PHOTOCOPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS
PASSPORT, TICKETS, VOUCHERS, ETC. | <input type="checkbox"/> EXTRA PASSPORT
PHOTOS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRESCRIPTIONS AND MEDICINES
INCLUDING EYEGLASSES, MELATONIN | <input type="checkbox"/> TOWELETTES, SEWING KIT
& PLASTIC CLOTHESLINE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXTRA ZIP LOCK BAGS | <input type="checkbox"/> SMALL FLASH LIGHT&BATTERIES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DECK OF CARDS | <input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS CARDS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ONLY KEYS NEEDED ON RETURN | <input type="checkbox"/> PATIENCE AND HUMOR |

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