



Know Before You Go...

Europe may appear overwhelming for a first-time visitor, or even a seasoned traveler. The following information will help prepare you for your vacation:

Passport/Documents

Your passport must be current and valid for at least six months past your return date. Passports required for US citizens traveling to Europe for stays of less than 90 days. A passport and Visa are necessary for travel to Russia (restricted to less than 30 days). A passport and onward/return ticket are necessary for travel to Croatia (less than 90 days).

Currency

The Euro is the currency for most European nations (major exceptions are the U.K., Switzerland and Scandinavia). ATM's are prevalent, and are usually your best source for cash at the most current exchange rate.

Adapters and Converters

European voltage is higher (220v vs 110v) than that in the United States. A continental plug adapter and voltage converter are necessary.

Phones and Calling Cards

Every country has a unique country code following a plus sign (i.e. +39 for Italy). Instead of area codes, all countries use city codes that begin with zero. Some U.S. phone cards offer international service in Europe. Low cost cell phones may be purchased in any European countries, and some US cell phone service providers offer overseas service for higher rates.

Temperature

Europe records its temperatures in Celsius. To convert to an approximate Fahrenheit temperature, double the Celsius and add 30.

Time and Date

- The 24-hour clock is used to denote timetables. To convert to U.S. time for 13:00 and over, subtract 12 and add "pm". For example, 18:00 is 6:00 pm.
- Dates are written with the day coming before the month. For example, Christmas is 25-12-08.
- Greenwich Mean Time (UK) is 5 hours, and Continental Europe is 6 hours ahead of Eastern-Standard Time.

Tipping

A customary European tip is 10-15%. However, many places include service charges in the bill, in which case no additional tip is expected.

Packing for Your Trip

Check with your airline for luggage weight restrictions, as many local European carriers have their own rules. Your primary bag should be relatively light and not exceed 25 inches.

Clothing

Temperatures can fluctuate, so be prepared to dress in layers. Be aware that some sites, such as the Vatican, enforce strict dress codes.

Travel Hints

Customer Care

Within Europe, Travel Impressions provides 24-hour service for all countries. Our European customer service can provide assistance: Amex + 44 (0) 20 7633 6240 Monday-Friday (9 am to 5 pm U.K. time), ER Travel + 44 (0) 20 8550 7174 (all other times).

Telephone Numbers

The phone numbers on your vouchers include a country code and the local number. You do not need to dial the country code while you are in that particular country.

Transfers

If your arrival is delayed or changed at the last minute, please call the local transfer company listed on your vouchers. Departure transfers should be confirmed 48 hours before traveling. Please note that in some cities, transfer companies are not available by telephone over the weekend.

Vouchers and Sightseeing

Dates on your vouchers are the start dates from which tours are valid. If you wish to take a tour on a Monday, please contact the local sightseeing company earlier, as they are often closed on weekends. If you are traveling over a weekend, contact them from the U.S. before your departure. All phone numbers are printed on your vouchers.

Rail Tickets

If you booked a rail ticket or pass with your package, make sure you have a separate ticket in your documents package. Vouchers alone are not valid for rail travel.

To-Do List

- Travel with credit cards and an ATM card.
- Keep a record of important numbers for credit cards, ATM cards and travelers checks in a separate location.
- Make two copies of your banks cards, credit cards, driver's license, passport and return airline ticket. Keep one at home, bring one with you.
- Leave an itinerary with a close family member or neighbor.
- If you are going to a warm destination, bring strong sunscreen and a hat. Excessive sun exposure has ruined many vacations.
- If traveling with young children, take along play activities for the airport and plane ride.
- Medications, jewelry and other valuables should be hand-carried, not placed in checked luggage.
- Place your airline tickets and other valuables in your hotel's safe deposit box.
- Make sure your luggage has identification both inside and out.
- Pack the following items: voltage converter and adapter plugs; calculator (for converting currency); camera with extra film, memory cards, battery and charger; pocket translation guide; walking shoes and rain gear.
- Check with your airline several days before your departure date to reconfirm your flight. Do the same before your return flight.
- Call your airline before leaving for the airport to check on any last minute delays.
- Due to increased security, arrive at the airport early.