

TRAVELER'S  
HANDBOOK



A GUIDE TO HELP YOU PREPARE FOR  
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

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*For information specific to your tour, such as itinerary, payment schedule and cancellation policy, please refer to your tour brochure.*



**Willkommen!**

*¡Hola!*

BONJOUR!

BENVENUTO!

Dear Traveler,

Thanks for making plans to travel abroad with CETA! Your journey begins now, in the months leading up to your trip. This handbook has been compiled to serve as a guide to help prepare you for the experiences that lie ahead.

Please take a thorough look at the information and checklists contained in this handbook and keep it handy throughout the coming months. Our goal is to make sure you are well prepared for your tour abroad. Proper preparation will bring you peace of mind and help ensure that you have an enjoyable tour experience. If you have any questions along the way, please contact us at 715-232-8541 or [info@cetatours.com](mailto:info@cetatours.com).

The staff at CETA Tours wishes you a

*¡Buen Viaje!*

**Gute Fahrt!**

BUON VIAGGIO!

BON VOYAGE!

# Suggested Packing List

## What to Pack:

- PASSPORT** - This is the one item you must not forget, secured in a **passport pouch or money belt**
- ATM and/or credit cards** - see *Money* section for more information
- Travel insurance policy information** if purchased
- Personal care items** (shampoo, lotion, toothpaste, etc.)
- Washcloth** (not provided at hotels) - not optional!
- Masks\*** -
- Hand sanitizer** (maximum 3 oz. bottle for carry-on) & disinfecting wipes
- Smartphone** - check with your carrier for international fees, turn off cellular data and use on WiFi only
- Travel alarm clock** (if not using cell phone or smart watch for alarm)
- Wired ear buds/headphones** - use with in-flight entertainment system and/or personal audio guides, if applicable
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, aloe vera and insect repellent**, if applicable
- Small backpack** - best used as your carry-on!
- Pre-packaged healthy snacks\*** - no produce
- Camera\*** marked with your name & extra memory cards, or plan to use your smartphone for all pictures
- Charging cord** for electronics
- Converter and/or adapter plug** for anything electric (most hotels have hair dryers in the room)
- Zip-close bags** (handy for wet clothes & towels, shampoo bottles, etc.)
- Laundry detergent\*** - small amount for hand washing clothes; some shampoos work well too
- Prescription and/or over-the-counter medications** you may need (pain relievers, antacids, Dramamine, etc.) All medication should be in its original container, if possible. If using a pill organizer, bring a list of medications, including dosage amounts, in case this information is needed when seeking medical care abroad.
- Pens and/or pencils and a journal**
- Playing cards, travel games, 1 or 2 books, magazines\***
- Swimsuit\*** - there may be limited opportunities to swim either during free time or if your hotel has a pool
- Socks & underwear** - enough for each day of the tour, unless you plan on hand washing
- 2-3 pairs of pants/jeans and/or shorts** - no holes or tears, plan to wear each pair several times
- 4-5 shirts** - plan on wearing each more than once
- 1 lightweight sweatshirt, sweater, jacket or coat**, depending on the climate of your destination
- Umbrella** (travel size) **or rain jacket**
- 2 pairs of (broken-in) shoes** suitable for walking (at least 1 pair should be closed-toe)

\* = optional



# Traveler's To-Do List

There are some items that travelers must complete on their own to prepare for the tour. We have provided a rough timeline for when each of the following should be completed.

- Purchase Trip Cancellation/Interruption Insurance** (*highly recommended*)  
Must be purchased within 15 days of trip deposit for pre-existing condition and/or "Cancel for Any Reason" coverage; otherwise plan to purchase at least 48 hours prior to departure.
- Apply for a passport**  
Should be done as soon as possible. Passports must be valid for 6 months beyond the return date of the tour. Upon receipt of your passport, verify immediately that there are no errors and sign on the signature page.
- Apply for travel visas** *if applicable, only for non-US citizens only*  
As soon as possible - processing may take several weeks.
- Apply for credit card and/or ATM cards**  
2-3 months prior to departure
- Call health insurance provider to confirm coverage**  
No later than 4 weeks prior to departure
- Submit copy of passport (picture page only) to CETA**  
No later than final payment deadline
- Test ATM and credit cards**  
1-2 weeks prior to departure
- Call credit card companies and banks**  
1-2 weeks prior to departure; notify them of all countries visited on your tour, including any flight connections. If your bank doesn't have a travel plan option, make sure your contact information is up to date so that you can respond quickly if they contact you about an international charge.
- Pack**  
3-5 days prior to departure

# Applying for a Passport

 [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)



## Plan Ahead!

It may take time to obtain all of the required documentation to apply for a passport. Processing takes at least an additional 4-6 weeks plus shipping, or longer if there are errors. Passport information is required by airlines for ticketing and must be on file with CETA Tours well before your departure date in order to ticket your group's flight. **Begin applying for or renewing your passport as soon as possible, as processing times can change without warning.**

Visit the PASSPORT section at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) as soon as possible for detailed information on what you will need to apply, including but not limited to:

- Location of nearest Acceptance Facility
- Application Form (available online)
- Evidence of US citizenship (usually an official, certified birth certificate)
- Government issued photo ID
- Application Fees and Execution Fees to be paid separately
- Passport photos - many acceptance facilities offer photos for an additional charge. Photos must adhere to the specific standards outlined on the application.

If you already have a passport, it must be valid for 6 months beyond the scheduled return date of your trip, as required by law for entrance into most countries. If your passport expires within 6 months of your return date, you must renew your passport. Routine renewals also take 6-9 weeks for processing. For more information on how to renew your passport, visit [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).



**A photocopy of the picture page of your passport must be turned in CETA Tours no later than the final payment deadline. Your passport data is required for airline ticketing, hotel registration, and selected timed admission tickets for activities included on your tour.**

## Why is your passport so important?

A passport is a means for foreign governments to identify visitors' nationalities for control purposes. Your passport is the only government issued ID that is recognized outside of the US. Airline officials will request to see your passport before issuing your boarding passes and TSA will look at it during security screening. As you enter a foreign country, an immigration agent might stamp your passport and ask the nature of your visit. Your response, that you are visiting that country as a tourist, will allow you to pass through.

A United States passport is a valuable document, as it proves you are a US citizen. There is a demand for US passports on the international black market, which makes them a target for pickpockets and other petty criminals. It is essential that you keep your passport with you at all times.

If you are a dual citizen of the United States and another country, it is illegal to leave the United States without your US Passport.

# Luggage and Packing Tips

When packing for a trip to a new destination, it's easy to overpack. The following are some things to keep in mind regarding checked and carry-on luggage. Bear in mind that all locations visited on tour will have stores where you can purchase forgotten toiletry items.



**All carry-on and checked luggage is subject to restrictions imposed by the airline, as well as any TSA requirements in effect. Current TSA and/or airline regulations can be found online. 🖱️ [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)**

Each airline has its own size and weight restrictions for both carry-on and checked luggage. You will receive a copy of your flight schedule with the luggage requirements printed on the reverse side. Luggage that exceeds the airline's size and/or weight limitations will be subject to additional charges.

## Checked Luggage

Each participant is allowed to bring only one suitcase or duffel bag due to the space limitations of the storage compartments on the bus. Checked luggage is subject to fees as imposed by the airline.



**Just remember that the smaller the suitcase, the happier you'll be. European elevators and hotel rooms are frequently smaller than their American counterparts.**

## Carry-on Luggage

Most airlines limit passengers to 1 carry-on item, plus a "personal item" such as a purse, camera bag or items purchased at the airport. Due to space limitations on buses, carry-on bags should be small, and must fit under your seat or in the small overhead space on the bus (usually no more than 6-8 inches tall). **Backpacks or CETA Tours carry-on bags are ideal!**



**Rolling carry-on suitcases do NOT fit in overhead compartments on buses and therefore are NOT allowed as carry-on bags on tours operated by CETA. They may, however, be used as the checked luggage piece.**



# Luggage and Packing Tips cont'd

## What NOT to bring:

- X **Anything you would be devastated to lose**
- X **Jewelry**, including expensive watches
- X **Sweets or soda** - can attract insects and other unwanted pests.
- X **Overly patriotic clothing**
- X **Offensive clothing**
- X **Bulky sweatshirts** - bring a lightweight jacket unless you are traveling during cooler seasons
- X **Selfie Stick** - many museums don't allow them and it may make you a target for pickpockets

## Notes about Packing for the Return Flight

- Seeds, plants and produce may not be brought back into the United States. If a US Customs agent finds them, they will be confiscated.
- If you have purchased a pocket knife, Swisscard, sword, letter opener or any other sharp object, it must be packed in your checked luggage.
- Liquids, gels and aerosols in containers larger than 3 ounces must be packed in your checked luggage.





# Pre-Flight Information

## Name Information



For ticketing purposes it is **imperative** that your first, middle and last names exactly match your passport. Notify CETA immediately if the name printed on your financial statement from us does not exactly match your passport.

Unless we are notified otherwise, we assume that the name printed on your financial statement is correct and use this information for ticketing. Any name changes received after the group has been ticketed (any time after the final payment deadline) will incur an airline-imposed name change fee, for which you will be billed. It is your responsibility to verify the spelling of your name on your financial statement and correct any errors by contacting CETA Tours.

## Special Meals

If you listed a dietary restriction (gluten free, vegetarian, etc.) on your tour application or notified CETA Tours about it prior to the final payment deadline, CETA Tours will forward that information on to the airlines for flight segments that include complimentary meals. These participants also should pack appropriate food/snacks for flights in case the airline is unable to provide the requested meal.

## TSA PreCheck or Global Entry

Notify CETA Tours no later than the final payment due date if you are enrolled in the TSA's PreCheck or Global Entry program. Your member number will be submitted to the airlines when your group is ticketed. It is still advisable to bring your membership number or card with you to the airport, as this data sometimes does not get added to the e-tickets for group bookings. Check your boarding pass before you leave the check-in counter on departure day. If the TSA PreCheck logo is not on your boarding pass, ask the airline agent to add your member number to your e-ticket record and reissue your boarding pass. You may be asked to show proof of enrollment in PreCheck or Global Entry.

## Frequent Flyer Miles

You will receive the flight schedule for your tour approximately 4-6 weeks prior to departure. You may be eligible to earn some mileage if you are a member of the frequent flyer program of the airline you are flying on. You may be able to provide your frequent flyer membership number at the time of check-in at the airport, but this is not always possible. Save all boarding passes in case you need to apply for mileage credit retroactively upon your return. CETA does not submit frequent flyer membership numbers to airlines.

## Seating Assignments

CETA Tours asks the airline to seat couples together but these requests are not always honored. Other seating requests are not accepted except for a valid medical reason (and even then cannot be guaranteed). Groups are often seated together and travelers may be able to switch seats after take-off. Passengers with special meal requests will need to remain in their assigned seat, those meals are served based on seat assignments. Seat upgrades (Comfort Class, etc.) are not available in advance through the group contract, but may be available for purchase on departure day at the check-in desk.

# Health Information

 [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)



Below are a some guidelines for staying healthy on tour. This information cannot be substituted for the advice of a trained medical professional. Please consult with your physician about your specific health needs prior to traveling. You may also wish to visit the *Travelers' Health* section of the CDC website for more information.

## Food & Water

- Always wash fruits and vegetables well.
- Use common sense when purchasing food from a street vendor. If you have doubts about how the food was prepared or stored, don't purchase it.
- Tap water is safe to drink in the areas where you will be traveling. In some countries, bottled mineral water is a cultural norm, even if tap water is safe to drink.
- Stay hydrated and carry a water bottle with you. Refill your bottle often. It's very easy to become dehydrated on tour. Consider bringing electrolyte tablets (such as Nuun) to prevent or help with dehydration.
- Eat breakfast, even if you typically don't at home.
- **If you have a dietary restriction, this information should have been included on your tour application. If not, please notify CETA Tours immediately.** Learn how to state your restriction in the native language(s) of the countries you will be visiting and be proactive about questioning wait staff while dining on tour.

## Staying Healthy on Tour

- Dehydration: know the signs (dizziness/light-headedness, headache, tiredness, dry mouth/lips/eyes, infrequent urination) and notify a chaperone/teacher immediately.
- Heat exhaustion: know the signs (headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, thirst, heavy sweating, elevated body temperature) and notify a chaperone/teacher immediately.
- Digestive Health: travel can negatively affect digestive health. Good hydration and balanced meals including fruits & vegetables are ways to keep the digestive tract working properly. Notify a chaperone/teacher if constipation or diarrhea is experienced for more than 1-2 days.
- Environmental Allergens: participants with environmental allergies may notice new or different reactions to known environmental allergens. Some participants may experience allergy symptoms for the first time.
- Respiratory infections: enclosed spaces such as airplanes, busses, etc. make respiratory infections such as cold, flu, etc. easier to spread. If you are susceptible, consider wearing a mask during long-haul flights or other times when you feel you might be more easily exposed.



# Health Information

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## **Immunizations**

- See your physician 4-6 weeks before traveling so any immunizations have time to take effect.
- Bring your itinerary to your appointment so your physician can recommend any additional immunizations you may need for the locations you will be visiting.
- Your physician should also make sure you are up to date with all routine immunizations.
- If you are unsure of where to go for immunizations or do not have a family physician, contact your local clinic or hospital.

## **Special Medical Needs**

- If you have a medical condition, talk to your physician about the planned activities on tour and if you will be able to participate.
- Bring an adequate supply of any medication you require for the length of the tour. Medication should be in its original container and packed in your carry-on luggage. Consider carrying a copy of any prescriptions you are on somewhere separate from the medication supply. Include the Latin/common name and not just the brand name of the medication.
- Any special needs or medical conditions should have been reported to CETA with your application. If not, or if this information has changed, please notify us in writing as soon as possible. If you are concerned about your medical condition, consider bringing along a copy of your medical records.

# Travel Insurance



Each participant will receive information about travel insurance when their application is processed by CETA Tours. CETA Tours has partnered with Travel Guard to offer travel insurance, however participants are free to purchase travel insurance from a vendor of their choice. Most travel insurance policies typically provide coverage for the following:

- Trip Cancellation/Interruption for sickness, injury or death of a traveler or a close relative; inclement weather, military service (refer to Travel Guard materials for more details)
- Trip Delay
- Lost/Delayed Baggage
- Accident/Sickness Medical Expense (required for the duration of your tour)
- Emergency Evacuation

Additional benefits are available at additional cost and/or when purchased within 15 days of enrollment in the tour.

Coverage limits depend on the plan purchased. Some benefits are only available when the policy is purchased within 15 days of enrollment in the tour.

## Note

- CETA Tours requires all travelers to be covered by health insurance for the duration of the tour. Private insurance carriers may cover members while they are traveling abroad, however **Medicare and Medicaid do not offer coverage for international travel**. Those without valid coverage must purchase temporary coverage for the duration of the tour.
- To include primary medical insurance coverage and coverage for pre-existing conditions, participants must purchase travel insurance within 15 days of the date of enrollment.
- While a policy provides coverage if a traveler contracts COVID-19, it does not provide coverage for cancellation due to fear of and/or changes in travel regulations associated with COVID-19.
- The only policy currently available that that will provide some coverage to the insured for cancellation due fear and/or changes in travel regulations associated with COVID-19 is a “Cancel For Any Reason” add-on, which is an optional upgrade to certain policies, only if purchased within 15 days of the date of enrollment.

We encourage travelers to purchase coverage sooner, rather than later, to maximize the benefits purchased. Refer to the PDF on your tour's page on our website for policy options. Please contact CETA Tours and we will gladly email you a quote for one of Travel Guard's products.



**Travelers should bring a copy of their travel insurance policy with them on tour and also leave a copy at home with a spouse, family member or friend who could assist if a claim needs to be filed on the traveler's behalf.**

# Contingency Plan

The overriding concern of CETA staff, tour leaders and tour escorts is the safety and well-being of all tour participants. To help ensure everyone's safety, CETA will monitor all U.S. State Department, FAA and Centers for Disease Control bulletins, advisories and warnings pertaining to foreign travel and follow these procedures. This policy takes precedence over any other concerns.

## I. Pre-departure

- A. In the event that the U.S. State Department should issue a Level 4 Alert due to Terrorism and/or Civil Unrest, specifically recommending no travel to a country listed on an itinerary or a destination country specifically bans all US citizens from tourist travel, any tours to the affected areas will be cancelled. Every attempt will be made to recover and refund committed funds from suppliers.
- B. Should a Level 4 Alert be issued due to Health Concerns (i.e. COVID-19), additional factors will be taken into consideration before determining operational status of the tour. These include, but are not limited to guidance from local health departments and tourist offices in each destination, as well as current public health guidelines and regulations regarding vaccination and prevention protocols. The group organizer will also be consulted.
- C. In the event that a Level 2 or 3 Alert is issued for a specific city, region and/or country on your group's itinerary, CETA Tours will contact the group organizer to discuss necessary changes and contingency plans. Your group's organizer(s) will then communicate any necessary changes to tour participants.
- D. Each tour will be enrolled by CETA Tours in the US Department of State S.T.E.P. (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program) prior to departure. In order to avoid possible duplication of information to the US Department of State, we respectfully ask participants to refrain from individually registering. More information about STEP can be found at: <https://step.state.gov/step/>
- E. All group organizers and tour leaders have online access to Successful Tours, our manual for group organizers and tour leaders that includes contingency plans, as well as CETA Tours' procedures regarding potential changes to daily activities and routing. In addition to the digital copy available several months prior to departure, all group organizers and tour leaders receive a printed copy for reference while on tour.

## II. General Safety During the Tour

- A. All group organizers and tour leaders are provided with emergency contact information for CETA Tours, including mobile phone numbers that are monitored 24/7 while groups are abroad. Additionally, CETA Tours has the mobile phone numbers of tour leaders and bus drivers so that we may reach the tour leader, bus driver and/or group organizer at any point during the tour, if necessary, to discuss possible vulnerable areas and/or changes in the group's itinerary.
- B. All tour leaders will be advised that all possible precautions must be taken to assure the safety of the group. This would include the omission of sightseeing activities if necessary. This is standard procedure regarding conditions involving demonstrations, weather problems, etc.
- C. Security checkpoints may be set up at any time by local, regional or national authorities. Participants should carry their passport on them as proof of identity at all times. Inside the passport, each participant will have a list of all accommodations, including address and phone numbers (provided by CETA Tours). Once in country, all travelers should write the name and mobile number of the tour leader, the bus company and the bus driver's mobile number on the passport list.

# Contingency Plan

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## III. Procedures if a “Shelter in Place” order is issued

- A. If a “shelter in place” type order is issued during free time, all participants should follow the directions of local authorities, even if it means that they are separated from the rest of the group.
- B. If participants are separated from the rest of the group during a “shelter in place” order, they should contact the tour leader, bus driver and/or hotel to notify them of their location. Tour leaders will stay in communication with bus driver and/or hotels for updates on participant locations. The participants will be marked as accounted for and plans will be made for reunification once the order has been lifted.
- C. Tour leaders should contact CETA Tours with information about how many participants are separated from the group and what the plans are for reunification once the order has been lifted.
- D. If the “shelter in place” order is issued during a group activity, the tour leader should notify CETA Tours that all participants are together and accounted for. Tour leaders and, when applicable, bus drivers will modify tour plans accordingly. Participants should also be kept updated as to changes in the planned activities for the day.

## IV. Procedures if a group is ordered to quarantine

- A. If a governmental quarantine order is issued to the group, all participants must follow the directions of local authorities.
- B. Tour leaders should advocate with local authorities to have their group quarantined in the same location, however final decision about who is quarantined where is at the discretion of the local authorities ordering the quarantine. If the group must be separated between different quarantine facilities, the tour leader should keep accurate records of where each participant is quarantined. Plans to reunify the group will be made once the quarantine order has expired.
- C. Tour leaders must contact CETA Tours with information about where the group is quarantined and whether the group has been separated. Whenever possible, tour leaders should keep CETA Tours updated on the status of group.
- D. Any costs associated with a quarantine order are the responsibility of the individual traveler. Depending on the plan and date of purchase, some travel insurance policies may provide benefit coverage for costs associated. Travelers should refer to their policy's "Description of Coverage" for more information.

## V. Possible Delays upon Return

- A. In the event of possible flight delay, cancellation, or airport closure, CETA will remain in contact with leaders until the situation is resolved and travelers are returned home safely.
- B. Reimbursement of costs to travelers for additional hotel nights and meals due to flight delay or cancellation are subject to the responsibility assumed by the airline involved.
- C. Participants with travel insurance coverage should contact the travel insurance provider for information about flight delay benefits and/or to open a claim.

# Money



While it may be unfamiliar at first, you will find that using a foreign currency is relatively easy if you are prepared in advance. For many travelers, the lesson of budgeting and self-discipline is one of the hardest adjustments of travel. Don't be tempted to buy everything on the first few days of the tour! Have an idea of what you'll want to buy on your trip before you go, and stick to a budget once you're there.

## British Pound sterling

Scotland, England, Wales, and Northern Ireland all use the British pound sterling (£ or GBP). Each pound has 100 smaller units, called pence.

## Euro

Nineteen members of the European Union use a common currency called the euro (€ or EUR). Each euro has 100 smaller units, called cents.

## Swiss Franc

Switzerland and Liechtenstein use the Swiss Franc (CHF, Sfr.) Each Swiss Franc has 100 smaller units, called *rappen*. You may be able to use euro cash in Switzerland, but you will be given change back in Swiss francs and the exchange rate will be worse than withdrawing funds from an ATM or using a credit card.

## Exchange Rates

Any foreign currency has a price at which you can exchange US dollars for it. Each currency has a different exchange rate and the exchange rates change daily. The lower the amount you have to pay for the currency the better, and the more they give you for your dollar the better. Exchange rates in February 2025 were:

British Pound (GBP): £1.00 = \$1.29 (which means \$1.00 = £0.78)

Euro (EUR): €1.00 = \$1.07 (which means that \$1.00 = €0.93)

Swiss Franc (CHF): Sfr. 1.00 = \$1.14 (which means that \$1.00 = Sfr. 0.88)

## Shopping with Foreign Currency

It helps to keep certain "benchmarks" in mind while shopping. For instance, if you remember that £20.00 ≈ \$25.80 and £30.00 ≈ \$38.70, then you'll be able to figure out approximately how much something that costs £25.00 will cost you in US dollars.

## ATM Cards

The best/recommended way to get local currency is to use an ATM card. You will be able to access directions in English and will need the PIN to use the card. Some banks charge their US customers a fee of 3-5% of the amount withdrawn, calling it a "foreign currency conversion fee." Depending on your account, you may also be charged for using an "out of network" ATM.

One of the best features about an ATM card is that you are not constrained by banking hours, which are much more limited in Europe than in the United States. Be wary of using "standalone" ATMs at the airport - some offer very unfavorable exchange rates and the machines are much easier to tamper with than one inside a bank or built into the wall of a bank or other building.



## Credit Cards

Visa and Mastercard are most widely accepted. Discover is not accepted anywhere and American Express is not typically not accepted. Set a PIN for the credit card, in case you are asked to input it when making a purchase, although you most likely will not be asked to do this. Do not withdraw cash from an ATM with a credit card - it is like taking out a very high interest loan that starts accruing interest the day you withdraw the money. Be sure to bring along the international phone number for cancelling the card, in the event that it is lost or stolen.

It's always a wise to ask before you are in line to make a purchase if you can use a credit card - some of the smaller stores will not to let you pay for your small purchase with a credit card. **If asked if you want to charge in local currency or US dollars, always pick the local currency for a more favorable exchange rate.** Depending on the terms of your credit card, you may be charged a 2-3% currency conversion fee on each purchase. Generally speaking, paying with a credit card, when permitted, will give you a better exchange rate than getting cash out of an ATM.



**A week or so prior to departure, be sure to contact your bank or credit card company for each credit/ATM card you may use on the trip to put a travel alert on your card. If you don't, they may freeze your card for 'suspicious activity'. Some banks don't have a travel alert option, but need to know how to text or email you if they need verification of a questionable charge.**

## US Dollars - Cash

There is no reason to bring US cash to spend in Europe. Any store that will accept payment in US dollars will not give you a good exchange rate. It is also not recommended to directly exchange US dollars cash for local currency. Again, you will not receive as good of an exchange rate as with an ATM or credit card, and you will also be dependent on finding an open bank to obtain currency. In the meantime you are putting yourself in a very vulnerable position by carrying around large amounts of cash. Do not plan on exchanging money at the US airport currency exchange, as the exchange rates here are even worse than exchanging US cash in Europe.



**The most important bit of advice with regards to obtaining foreign currency is to have at least two ways to obtain money while abroad in case one method doesn't work.**

## Tipping

Gratuities for hotels, city guides and included meals were included in the tour price and will be take care of by your tour leader. End-of-tour gratuities to the tour leader and/or bus driver(s) may or may not have been included in the tour price. Please check your tour brochure for details. If these gratuities were not included in the tour price, the recommended amount is \$5-7 per person, per day for the driver and \$5-7 per person, per day for the tour leader. You may also refer to the *Tipping Guidelines* for your group, which are uploaded to your tour's page on CETA's website approximately 6 weeks prior to departure.

When dining out at a restaurant, the gratuity may already be included in the check. Please ask your tour leader to familiarize yourself with the unique customs of each country visited. When ordering beverages it may be customary to leave a tip. Again, ask your tour leader to familiarize yourself with the local norm.



# Visiting Sensitive Memorial Sites

If your tour includes a visit to a concentration camp memorial site, American military cemetery, or other sensitive memorial or remembrance site, there are several things to keep in mind during your visit.

## **Concentration Camp Memorial Sites**

To many Germans and Austrians, the Holocaust, Nazi terror regime, and World War II are sensitive, but important topics that must be addressed and acknowledged.

Everyone reacts differently to the concentration camp memorial visit. When visiting a memorial like this, keep the feelings and reactions of others in mind. This is certainly not the place to be rowdy, loud, boisterous, or overly jovial.

**It is against German law to deny the Holocaust and/or glorify the Nazi regime and its leaders, including hand gestures, salutes, symbols, etc.**

## **American Cemeteries**

Many countries in Europe are home to American cemeteries that are the final resting place for soldiers from World War I and II, including unidentified/unknown soldiers. Families still come to honor their loved ones, so it is important to be respectful when visiting these cemeteries.

## **Other Sensitive Remembrance Sites**

Depending on your tour itinerary, you may visit a remembrance site not addressed above, such as a war memorial, museum, or ruins. Your tour leader will prepare you with information about the history of the site, as well as what to expect during your visit.

**If you find yourself having a powerful emotional reaction to a visit to a memorial or remembrance site, talk to your tour leader about what you are feeling. They will help you deal with the emotions of this visit in a constructive way.**

*“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”*

-George Santayana

# Cultural Differences



Americans have become accustomed to and at times expect certain conveniences and cultural practices that are not common in other parts of the world. This section is intended to help prepare you for differences you may encounter during your tour.

- Air Conditioning** In the United States, air conditioning is generally considered to be a standard feature rather than a luxury. In other countries, air conditioning is more limited. You should not expect the level of cooling enjoyed at home.
- Bathroom Linens** Although hotels usually provide towels, most do not provide washcloths. Most hotels provide hair dryers in the bathrooms or are available to borrow from the front desk.
- "Herd Mentality"** Remember that you will be doing many things together as a group. Tour participants will eat breakfast and dinner together and sit in pairs on the bus. You may be asked to give up some of your personal space during a walking tour so that your guide doesn't have to shout and disturb others in the area.
- Higher Prices** In other parts of the world, one beverage can cost 2-3 times the amount you are used to paying in the US, depending on the restaurant or cafe. Keep in mind that: 1) in general, often due to taxes, beverages are more expensive in some places, 2) the rent the owner is paying for the location is usually very expensive, and 3) guests are often paying for the privilege of enjoying the table at that quaint outdoor cafe. Remember the table is yours for as long as you care to enjoy it.
- Hotels** Hotels abroad are very often charming and reflect the culture of the country being visited. However the standard room size is usually significantly smaller than a typical hotel room in the United States. .
- Politics** Be prepared for questions about politics in the United States. It's not uncommon to be asked your personal opinion on a variety of political issues. It's okay if you're not comfortable discussing this and to simply say that you're not interested in talking about it. Many people enjoy political discussions and are simply curious to hear a native opinion. In the end, they are able to separate the politics and policies of your native country from you, the individual citizen.
- Rest Rooms** Many European rest rooms, both at restaurants and highway rest areas, charge a small fee for use. Keep some coins handy to pay these fees, although some rest areas also take credit cards. These fees cover the cost of water usage and often an attendant to ensure that the rest rooms are clean and well stocked. Take advantage of any time you encounter a free public rest room in Europe!





- Smoking** For many years, the US has been ahead of Europe in limiting smoking. In recent years, many European countries have passed laws limiting smoking in public areas. While most hotels now offer non-smoking rooms, they sometimes cannot guarantee enough of them for an entire group. There is no way to completely avoid tobacco smoke in Europe.
- Stores & Banks** Many banks and some stores close for an hour or two during the middle of the day. During free time, you may want to check and see what's open and when before making plans.
- Time Differences** During the summer, Europe's slightly more northern latitude lends itself to more daylight in the evening. In late June, it may be light outside as late as 10:30 PM. Lunch and dinner times may also be later than what you are used to.
- Travel Days** There are a few travel days on every tour. On these days few activities are planned, as the group will spend most of the day getting to their next destination. CETA tries to minimize these travel days, but they are sometimes unavoidable. Take advantage of rest stops to stretch your legs.
- Wait Staff** Keep in mind that wait staff in Europe are not dependent on tips for their income like American waiters are. Therefore, don't be surprised if your waiter is not constantly hovering over your table as you enjoy your meal.
- Waiting** Group travel is not as spontaneous as individual or family travel. Tour participants should expect to wait often, whether it be for a local city guide, for entrance into a museum, or when checking in to a hotel or for the flight home. CETA Tours and your tour leader strive to keep wait times to a minimum as much as possible. Your punctuality helps keep the tour on schedule.
- Walking** You should be prepared to walk at least 5 miles ( at least 15,000 steps) over the course of each day. The walking will be broken up into shorter segments, but door-to-door service is not possible, especially in congested cities. It is essential that you wear comfortable, broken-in walking shoes for safety reasons. Flip-flops are great for the shower and the beach, but not for walking all day.
- Water & Ice** When eating in a European restaurant, don't expect a glass of ice cold water when sitting down at a table. Although it is safe to drink, Europeans as a rule do not drink tap water. They prefer to drink bottled water or mineral water with a meal, for which there is a charge. If tap water is available, the restaurant may charge a cover charge.
- Many other countries generally do not use any ice cubes in their beverages. Some restaurants that cater to tourists may include a couple of cubes in your beverage because they assume you are an American who expects it.





# Contacting Home

## Internet

Virtually all hotels have WiFi, although not necessarily always free of charge. Even if you pay for WiFi/internet access, this is the most economical way to keep in contact with the US. While we don't encourage spending all of your free time online, email, and social media, it is the easiest way to get a message to family or friends. Some larger cities offer free WiFi access on an unsecured, public network. As always, use all WiFi networks at your own risk.

## Cell Phones

Check with your service provider for applicable rates on calls and text messages placed from the areas where you will be traveling. Also ask what the capabilities and limitations of your cell phone model will be. Calls placed from an American cell phone may not be possible or economical while traveling abroad. Text messaging may still be possible and is often a more cost effective way to keep in touch. If you take a smart phone with WiFi, learn how to switch to WiFi only mode if you plan on accessing the internet from your phone, otherwise you may be liable for high data fees and/or roaming charges.



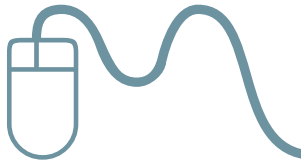
**Remember to keep the time change in mind when calling, texting or messaging between the US and Europe!**

## Landline Phone Calls

Due to the expense, even with a calling card, we do not recommend contacting home on a land line phone.



**Regardless of which method you utilize to contact home, any charges accrued for internet or phone use at hotels will be your responsibility. We strongly recommend investigating the hotel's policy in advance. Charges may still apply when calling collect or with a phone card, and even if the call does not connect.**



# Online Resources

## Transportation Security Administration

 [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)

Learn about what can be packed in your carry-on and checked luggage.

## US Department of State

 [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

Passport applications, tracking your passport, and information about entry requirements for each destination on your itinerary

## Centers for Disease Control

 [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

CDC guidance for international travel

## Destination Specific Research

- Familiarize yourself with each of the cities on your tour itinerary. They will all have an official tourism website. Most have a verified Instagram account.
- Use your preferred weather app to look ahead for the weather forecast for each city on your itinerary. Weather conditions and forecasts can change without warning; refresh the app daily for the most up to date information
- Visit the websites of the museums your group will be visiting or have been suggested by your tour leader as an option during free time.

## Helpful Apps

Transportation      Airline-specific apps, city-specific public transit apps

Navigation            CityMapper, Google Maps

Communication      WhatsApp, Skype,

Currency converter    Oanda, XE

Museum guides      Palacio Real, Buchenwald Concentration Camp Memorial, Château de Versailles, and more - search the app store for museums included in your tour



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