

# International Travel Tips



Make sure your passport is valid for at least 6 months beyond your planned return date.

Hotel rooms are tiny in most places, and you should not expect air conditioning.

Contact your bank to get foreign currency, or plan to use an ATM when you get to Europe to be sure to have some local currency on hand when you arrive. When withdrawing local currency from an ATM in your destination, do NOT select USD for the exchange rate - always the local currency.

Make sure you contact your credit card companies and banks prior to inform of traveling.

In large cities, you may need Euros to use a public restroom, so have some handy.

To tour many churches or synagogues, shoulders and knees must be covered.

Google maps has a 'public transport button' which will show you how to get from Point A to Point B by public transport (it'll be helpful to tell you how to purchase tickets)

Water may only be served bottled (still) or gas (sparkling) and for some places charge for bread & butter service without telling you. Typically, you have to ask for ice in most drinks.

When you arrive on a red eye, try to push through the day as late as you can. It helps with jet lag. Also, if you take melatonin, bring it in on the plane with you.

Bring an extra (photo) copy of your passport and put it in your luggage separate from your actual passport.

Be aware of pick pockets - Keep your passport, credit cards, etc. in a place that is hard to get to when traveling through the airport, public transit areas, and public spaces.

Download What's App - Many tour operators prefer using this for communication and it's a good way to talk/text with loved ones back home. WhatsApp allows calls over WiFi when the number you are calling also has WhatsApp and is on WiFi.

Europe uses Military Time - so 6 PM would be 1800 HRS. They also write their dates with the DAY first and month second - so in the US, today is 09/15/2024. In Europe they write it 15/09/2024.

Know the difference between an adapter and a converter. An adapter just allows you to plug into a different outlet. A converter changes voltage. If a device is dual voltage an adapter is fine. If it's not, you need a converter otherwise the device will get damaged.

If you have food allergies, have this information translated into the languages of your destinations. Carry a 3x5 card for restaurants. Put this information plus any medical conditions on your ICE page on your cell phone too. Example: Diabetic.

Prepare for and expect strikes. Most are brief and noisy, but they can delay your trip.

Most European museums are closed on Mondays, but open late one other evening of the week.

## Restaurant Etiquette

The wait staff gives you a lot more time than what is typical in the U.S. You might have to call them over to order and to get random items throughout your meal. You will probably need to request your check. They're not in a rush to get you out and it may seem like they're inattentive but eating is not rushed.

In regard to restaurants, usually a service charge will be added to your bill and therefore there is no expectation to tip. Usually, the service charge will be clearly labeled at the bottom of your bill. If not included, then usually a 10% tip is expected. If the service is included and the meal exceeded your expectations, you can round the bill up to the nearest 10 Euros.

## Tipping Guide

Tipping is not expected everywhere and when you do, it's 10% not 20% like in the U.S.

In regard to the bars, when having a good coffee or cappuccino, it's considerate to leave the change or round up to the nearest Euro on the total bill.

If you are happy with the service you have enjoyed and would like to show your gratitude, these are the amounts we recommend per service (not per person).

- Tour Guide Half Day - 20 - 40 Euros
- Tour Guide Full Day - 30 - 50 Euros
- Transfer (Driver) - 15 Euros
- Driver Half Day - 20 - 40 Euros
- Driver Full Day - 30 - 50 Euros
- Housekeeping staff - 1.50 Euros/day
- Hotel Porter - 1.50 Euros per bag
- Taxi - Round up to the nearest Euro for a short trip & to the nearest 10 Euros for a longer trip

