

YOUTH MUSIC ABROAD 2024

Travel tips

MONEY

- The easiest form of payment while traveling is a credit card or debit card. Currency exchange rates are usually automatic. Some banks may charge a transaction fee. Check with your bank to understand the exchange rate and fees.
- It's a good idea to have some cash on hand. Some small vendors may not take cards, but most places will. But don't take a lot if you also have a debit card. You can take out cash at ATM's as needed once you are there.
- The Euro is the currency in France, Germany, and Austria. Although the Euro is not the national currency in Czechia, it is widely accepted most places and not worth taking any Czech Koruna.
- You can buy Euro at AAA. Also check with your bank - they may have competitive rates for members or account holders.
- IMPORTANT - make sure to notify your bank and/or credit card company which countries you are traveling to so they can turn on your card for use in those countries.
- Pre-paid cards (e.g. VISA) will work, but you need to get an international one from someplace like AAA. The ones from Walmart, Target, etc. will not work. If you do use a pre-paid card, make sure to set up your pin and know how it works before we leave.

COMMUNICATION

- For safety purposes we highly recommend every person on the trip have an international plan through your cell provider while on the trip. Cell providers can add an international data/text/call plan for a period of time to cover your trip.
- The ability to text and to use the Remind app is critical, as this is how we will communicate throughout the tour.
- It is also nice to have the ability call home once in a while.

ELECTRICITY

- In USA, current is 110 volts. In EUROPE, current is 220 volts.
- There are two types of plugs to go from US to EU - adaptor and converter. Converters are more expensive but may not be needed, depending on what items you are taking
- Most electronics - phone chargers, laptops - are Universal - the charger will read "100v-240v". These items will only need an adaptor.
- Appliances - hair dryers, curling irons - will need a converter.

CLOTHING

- First of all, refer to the Dress Code in the Code of Conduct.
- Europeans tend to dress a little more modestly than American styles
- Shorts? This is always the question. Shorts are not considered fashionable, especially in European cities, although that culture is changing somewhat. Most Europeans, if they wear shorts at all, will wear shorts that come down to the knee. Baggy shorts and cutoffs are considered sloppy. I guess it all depends on whether or not you want to look like a tourist.
- Sweat pants, warm-up pants - generally a no, no when going out in public. Avoid dressing like that - save it for travel days.
- NOTE: Many churches/cathedrals have dress-codes. Shorts above the knee are not permitted. Shoulders must be covered.
- You will want a decent pair of walking shoes (like sneakers) for days that involve a lot of walking touring.
- T-shirts, especially with logos and sayings are not as common in Europe as they are in America.
- It is to your advantage to try to blend in and NOT stand out as a tourist or even an American. The experience can be much more authentic that way and can help avoid being targeted by con-artists and pick-pockets in the bigger cities.

PACKING

- You are permitted ONE suitcase that may not exceed airline measurement requirements AND may not be over 50 lbs.
- Plan outfits with pieces that can mixed and matched for variety but plan to wear items more than once.
- Most people take too many clothes and end up coming home with clothes they never wore.
- You should have a carry-on bag, such as a small back pack. When you pack for flying. Make sure to pack any medications and your passport in your carry on. When flying, there is always the chance for lost luggage, so it may be a good idea to have a change of under clothes in your carryon in case you were without your luggage for a day.
- Your bag must be under 50 lbs when you return as well, so anticipate leaving a little extra room (and weight) for souvenirs, etc.
- We will stay in the same hotel in Germany for three nights, so it would be possible to wash some items and hang up to dry during that stay, if needed.
- Wrinkle-free sprays like Fabreeze or Downy spray can be helpful.
- Any electronics with a battery need to be in your carry on - batteries are not allowed in checked luggage.

PASSPORT

- You will need your passport at the airport to get through security and to be admitted back into the United States.
- It's OK to leave your passport at the hotel, but be sure to hide it well in your suitcase or lock it in the room safe, if there is one.
- You do not need to carry it with you. The more you move around with it, the more chance of losing it.
- Make sure to give your director a COLOR photo copy of your passport.
- Your passport should not have an expiration date prior to January 10, 2025. If it expires before that date, you should get it renewed before the tour.
- We will not be collecting passports - you will be responsible for keeping track of your passport. Always know where it is. Check every morning so you know. We will have passport checks when boarding the buses any time we check out of a hotel.

FOOD

- Try new things. Culture is tied to cuisine.
- Dietary restrictions? - make sure this is indicated on your medical form. If you indicate a dietary restriction, you need to let the wait staff know - e.g. if you indicate vegetarian, you need to tell the wait staff you need a vegetarian meal. They will have them prepared but do not know who they go to.
- Drink water - it is much cheaper. Refill your water bottle at the hotel and save even more money.
- Eat at Breakfast, buy a light lunch, and eat at dinner. Breakfast and Dinner are typically provided, so take advantage and make sure you eat these meals. Lunches may not always be convenient. You may have a short time to visit a store or vendor to grab a bite. Lunch will not be a sit-down service meal.
- Meals in Europe take more time than U.S. That is why sit-down service for lunch is not an option, as we typically don't have a lot of time. Similarly, when we are at a restaurant for dinner, with table service, the meal will likely take longer than you are accustomed to. Enjoy it. Meals are often served one course at a time - starter, followed by main course, followed by dessert. This is a good time to just relax and enjoy the company you are with.
- Some notes on types of meals:
 - BREAKFAST
 - Will typically be buffet-style AND all-you-can eat, usually at the hotel. European breakfast may not resemble American breakfast completely. Often consists on meats, cheeses, breads, croissants, hard-boiled eggs, fresh fruit, muslix (cereal), coffee or espresso. Sometimes we find typical American fare such as pancakes, scrambled eggs, potatoes, but not always.
 - LUNCH
 - For us, lunch will often just be an opportunity to buy something take-away or counter-service. Or possibly just buy something at a convenience-type store, like we find at rest areas when traveling.
 - For us, lunch will not be a sit-down table-service meal on most days
 - Travel days, we will stop at rest areas which typically have a convenience-type store and/or a cafeteria-type area where you can buy something quick.
 - Touring days, you may get 30 minutes to find something in a shop or a cafe (don't go to a sit-down restaurant, as you will not have time).

- **DINNER**
 - Many of our dinners will be sit-down/table-service meals. While the menus are prepared ahead of time, you may be given a choice. Each course will be served and cleared before the next course is served. Be patient. Enjoy the atmosphere and the company of your friends. Dining in Europe is a much more relaxed and uncrushed experience than in the U.S. Expect it to last at least an hour and a half.
 - Buffet Style - if dinner is a buffet, it is NOT all-you-can-eat. Most meals are prepared in quantity for our group, so take only ONE serving of each course so there is enough for everyone
- **SNACKS**
 - Have some snacks for travel days and evenings at the hotel. You will have opportunities to purchase snacks at various points throughout the trip.

LANGAUGE

- Most places you will find people who speak English. However, it is good to know a few words in the native language. Even if they do speak English, the attempt to communicate in the country's native language is often appreciated, even if you butcher it.

ENGLISH	CZECH	PRONUNCIATION
Please.	prosím	
Thank you.	Děkuji	
Hello	Ahoj	
Goodbye.	Ahoj	
Yes	Ano	
No	Ne	

ENGLISH	FRENCH	PRONUNCIATION
Please.	S'il vous plaît	see-voo-play
Thank you.	Merci	mair-see
Hello	Bonjour	bon-zhour
Goodbye.	Au revoir.	oh-reu-vwar
Yes	Oui	Whee
No	non	no

ENGLISH	GERMAN	PRONUNCIATION
Please.	Bitte	BIT-tuh
Thank you.	Danke	Dan-keh
Hello (any time of day)	Hallo	Ha-low
Goodbye.	Auf Wiedersehen	owf-VEE-der-say-en
Yes	Ja	Yah

No	Nein	Nine
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