

Travel Tips

Luggage:

- You are allowed one large suitcase as a free checked item. A 26" or 28" tall suitcase will be enough for your needs.
 - The maximum weight for checked bags on flights to Europe is 50 lbs. The maximum dimension of your bag must not exceed 62" (add the length + width + height). Try to stay under 50 lbs., since you'll want to bring back souvenirs!
 - Any excess luggage weight will incur a charge to be paid at the airport at check in.
 - Place luggage tags on the handle of your luggage. Place a luggage tag *inside* your checked bag (in case the outside tag is lost in transfer) that includes your name, address, telephone number, and email address.
 - **We recommend luggage tracking tags for iOS or Android devices.**
- **You are also allowed to take along one carry-on bag and a personal item.** This carry-on must be small enough to either fit under your seat or in the overhead compartment.
- **You may carry limited quantities of liquids, gels and aerosols in your carry-on bag when going through security checkpoints.** Each container must be 3 oz or smaller and be enclosed in only one, quart-size, Ziploc-type, clear plastic bag. **The rest of your toiletries etc. go in your checked bag.** See "Packing Checklist" below for recommendation on meds.
- We recommend taking trial size toiletry articles, cosmetics, medicine, slippers, jacket/sweater, camera, and **a change of clothes** in your carry-on bag so you can be prepared if your large bag is delayed. It is also beneficial to pack an extra change of underwear, socks, and an outfit in your roommate's checked luggage as well, if possible.
- **For more information on the Transportation Security Administration's regulations, visit:** <http://www.tsa.gov/travel/travel-tips>.

Clothing:

- The temperatures in February/March range between 40-70 degrees F, depending on location. Lows may dip into the 30s at night/early morning. A light jacket/hoodie, ball cap, hat, scarf, and gloves should be enough to keep you comfortable; **we recommend layering** to account for temperature variations. Bring along a small portable umbrella.
- Most people prefer casual and comfortable clothing for touring. You may want a nicer outfit for a special dinner or evening out but try to keep your wardrobe casual.
- Pack light by choosing clothing that is comfortable, *interchangeable*, and color coordinated.
- **Give special attention to your SHOES.** We will be walking on uneven, unpaved ground at times and will need broken-in, comfortable shoes/hiking shoes. **No flip flops, no high heels.** Students, dress as if you were at MVNU.
- Women need to dress modestly in churches and basilicas. If wearing a sleeveless top, take a scarf or shawl to cover your shoulders. Short shorts or spaghetti straps or bare-midriff tops are not allowed. Bermuda/cargo type shorts or capri-length pants are acceptable. Women should carry a scarf with you to cover your head in places of worship.
- Don't wear U.S. flag colors, political statements, or flags on your clothing or backpacks.

Electrical Current:

- The current in Europe is 220 volts, 50 Hz. Check to see if your razor, curler, etc. is dual-voltage (110v-220v). American-made appliances (razors, hair dryers, curlers, flat-irons, etc.) that are only 110v will burn out if used without a transformer.
- Carry a small electrical converter/adaptor, which can be purchased in the luggage or travel department of most major retail department stores. We recommend the [Travel Smart](#) by Conair.

Calling Home / Wi-Fi:

- All hotels have Wi-Fi; however, it may be restricted to the lobby and/or it may cost extra.
- Some U.S. phone service providers offer special international packages. Check with your provider.

Packing Checklist:

- See clothing above.
- Pack heavy items, such as shoes and toiletry kits before the more delicate ones. Place them along the suitcase's spine to balance weight at the bottom.
- Roll t-shirts and polos rather than fold them. It saves room and reduces wrinkling.
- Hang clothing in the bathroom while showering to steam out wrinkles. Stash a couple hangers in your suitcase.
- Stuff socks and rolled-up belts into shoes and boots to save space.
- Take along plastic bags for dirty laundry.
- Fold an empty soft bag on the bottom of your suitcase for delicate souvenirs.
- Take an ample supply of toiletry articles, cosmetics, a washcloth (these aren't supplied in hotels) and other personal items you use.
- **Carry any prescription and OTC medication you need for the duration of the trip in your carry-on.**
- Keep in mind liquids tend to expand at higher altitudes, so make sure your bottles are only three-quarters full and have twist down caps. If unsure place them in small Ziploc bags during flights.
- Place all your liquid and cream containers into plastic bags inside your luggage.
- You may want to bring a small amount of detergent for hand washing small articles of clothing if you need to.
- Ziploc bags and snack foods are good items to remember to bring.
- A small bottle of Febreze works well in areas where people might have smoked, helps freshen up your clothes and works well as a bathroom deodorizer.
- A small spray bottle of saline solution can help you breathe better and keep your nostrils from drying out too much.
- Camera, charger, flash drives, memory cards, laptop/tablet, cables, or whatever you use.
- A small flashlight might come in handy.
- A small sewing kit (share one with your roommate).
- A spare pair of glasses, just in case, and/or extra contact lenses
- Earphones, headphones, earbuds
- **A refillable water bottle you can carry along while touring.**
- If you're a student, bring your ID card. Sometimes you can get discounts.

Health-Related Issues:

- There are no specific required immunizations but check if yours are up to date. These include measles, mumps, rubella (MMR vaccine), diphtheria, tetanus, and polio. Please check with your physician for further details.
- The busy touring schedule, dietary changes, jet lag, and fatigue place heavy demands on your body. Leisure time is built into the tour, and we suggest using it as a resting period.
- We recommend a small supply of decongestants or antibiotics in case you catch a virus or cold.
- A sleeping pill may be beneficial during the long overseas flight as you adjust to the time change.
- You may want to bring along some *Imodium A-D* if you are prone to an upset stomach from changes in water, irregular sleep, etc. A laxative might come in handy in case of constipation.
- **Drink plenty of water** to help adjust your sleeping rhythms right away and to keep your body hydrated.

Passport / Customs:

- **Your passport must always be with you. Never in your luggage or backpack! That is your most important document.** A money belt/neck pouch can be worn around your waist or neck under your shirt for cash/passport.
- Make sure your passport is valid at least 6 months beyond your travel dates. *If your passport expires prior to September 7, 2025, you need to get it renewed before the trip.*
- Give your roommate a copy of your passport.
- No visas are required for this trip.
- United States' residents are required to declare the full retail price of all articles purchased abroad.
- After landing back in the U.S. port of entry, you'll scan your passport and answer a few questions at an airport kiosk as part of customs protocol.

Money:

- **Euro**
 - Banknotes come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 Euros.
 - Coins come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, & 50 cents, and 1 and 2 Euros.
- Call your local bank if you want to purchase euros in advance.
- We don't recommend that you carry bills larger than 20 Euro. Most places won't be able to make change for larger bills.
- **Credit/Debit cards:** ATMs are available to obtain local currency. Larger shops will accept major credit cards such as Visa or MasterCard (but usually **not** American Express or Discover). Check with your bank concerning their charges for overseas transactions. **For security reasons, prior to the trip you should also inform your credit/debit card companies that you are traveling overseas and give them the dates and countries you will visit.** Some credit/debit card companies will automatically decline purchases made overseas unless you have alerted them about your travel plans.
- If you're thinking about getting a credit card, we recommend the **Capital One Venture One** card since it doesn't charge you foreign transaction fees and it doesn't have an annual fee.
- Debit cards with a PIN number are widely accepted **but not gift cards (a VISA or MasterCard gift card won't work).**

Miscellaneous:

- **Tipping** is not necessary or expected in restaurants. The cost of your meal is just that. You can leave a couple of Euros in recognition of good service. Unlike the U.S., European waiters are paid a good salary. Some restaurants in Italy charge service (servizio), or cover charge (coperto). If 'servizio' is included, you don't leave a tip. For example, if you enter a coffeehouse and sit down, most places will charge you a 'coperto.' If you just do as the locals and go to the bar, order your drink and pastries, and eat them at the bar, there's no cover charge. [Here's a site](#) with some info on tipping. It's an art not a science.

If a porter takes your luggage to the hotel room, a tip of at least 2€ is recommended. For two bags a 5€ bill is recommended. However, you should be able to handle the luggage yourselves and pocket that money.

- **Autogrill:** In Italy there's a roadside convenience store/gas station brand called [Autogrill](#). We will stop at several of them for the bus to gas up, snacks, coffee, very clean restrooms and so much more. One tip: whatever you want to buy, be it a cup of coffee, chocolates, a sandwich, etc. you must pay for it in advance. They all speak (or at least understand) English, so you tell them what you want, pay in advance, and then wait for your coffee, croissant, pizza slices etc. at the bar. You've never seen a roadside convenience store like this.