

Guide to

**EUROPEAN  
TRAVEL**



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## INTRODUCTION

Before you can enjoy the view from the Eiffel Tower, experience authentic Spanish tapas or traipse through the famous Black Forest, there are many things you need to know about planning European travel. The logistics that are involved in planning European travel can sometimes seem overwhelming and tedious, but the more prepared you are, the better your chances will be of enjoying a successful trip.

This is why it is imperative to take the planning for your upcoming travel very seriously by creating an itinerary, arranging transportation and accommodations and knowing what to expect before you jet off to the Continent.

In this guide we will cover all of the basics involved in European travel, including what you should pack, how to create an itinerary for your trip and what to expect so that you can spend time enjoying your trip rather than worrying about your travel arrangements.

Let's get started!



## CHAPTER 1

# Getting Everything in Order

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There are many steps you will need to take and tasks you will need to handle when planning a trip to Europe. The earlier you begin, the better chances you will have of ensuring everything is completed in an orderly and timely fashion, instead of feeling rushed at the last moment.

### Preparing your Documents

One of the first things you will need to take care of is getting your passport, if you do not already have a passport. It can take four to six weeks at a minimum from the time you apply to receive your passport. Expedited services can reduce that timeframe down to two to three weeks, but you will need to pay an additional \$60.

If you already have a passport, make sure you check the expiration date and make sure it is still valid. You certainly do not want to find out that it has expired when you are already in line to board the plane for your trip.

Be sure that your passport is valid for at least six months beyond your return date. This is required by many countries.

In addition, you need to check the expiration date for your driver license. You may well wish to rent a car while in Europe and if so you will need to provide your license to the car rental company. You should be aware that some car rental companies also require an international driving permit in regards to rentals in Europe along with a valid U.S. driver license. You can obtain an international driving permit through the American Auto Association.

If you are traveling to Russia you will need to have a valid visa along with a passport. This can be a rather complicated process that can take as long as 20 days to process once you have been approved.

Be sure to make two copies of your driver license, passport and credit cards. Maintain one copy at home and bring one copy with you. Carry the copy separate from the originals. You might also find it helpful to use a file folder for organizing all of your documents for each booking.

### Establishing a Budget for your Trip

It is important to take the time to establish a budget for your trip as early as possible. Even before

you know where you will travel, your itinerary or travel dates, you should establish a budget. Some destinations in Europe will be less expensive than others and there are ways where you can save elsewhere, such as travelling in the off-season, choosing budget accommodations, planning a shorter trip, etc.

By establishing your budget early you will be able to avoid any possible disappointment that might stem from planning a great itinerary and then finding out that you really cannot afford it.

## **Choosing a Destination**

Once you know how much you can realistically afford to spend on your trip, it is time to start looking at where in Europe you want to go. It is quite likely that there are numerous places you would like to visit, but keep in mind that trying to plan too much, especially if this is your first trip to Europe can be difficult.

Try to choose a destination that is on your must-see list and then plan the rest of your trip around that. It is also a good idea to choose a destination where you can travel when it is timely. There are many places that have wonderful festivals or are great for experiencing during local holidays. Regardless of when you plan to travel, keep in mind it is a good idea to check the weather before you actually decide on a final destination.

## **Creating an Itinerary**

Before you proceed any further in your travel plans, it is a good idea to plan out a rough itinerary before booking anything. Research cities and sights that you have a strong interest in exploring and then determine which ones you have the budget and time to actually see.

If you are on a tight budget or timeframe and there are multiple cities or countries you want to see, you might consider alternative methods for travelling to Europe. Options include adventure tours, camping, bike tours, walking tours, cruises, etc.

Ideally, your itinerary should include the addresses, directions and contact numbers you will need for each place you travel. This will help to ensure you have all of the information you need in a single place. Carry this with you at all times and do not place it in your checked luggage in case it is lost.

It is also a good idea to provide a copy of your itinerary to every person travelling with you as well as providing a copy with someone at home.