

Travelling MUST-Dos

- Passport – carry your passport on your person, not in your checked luggage.
- Verify passport expiration date. Many countries require validity for at least 6 months after you exit their country.
- Make backup copies of important travel documents, including your itinerary, both paper and digital.
- Enroll in the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program to get safety updates about your destination and to help loved ones get in touch with you in case of emergency. <https://step.state.gov/>
- Check the Transportation Security Administration's website has an up-to-date list of what you can bring on the plane with you...and what you must check.
 - <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/whatcanibring/all>
- Check airline website for carry-on and checked baggage restrictions.
 - Have luggage tags with your name, address, and contact information, both the outside and inside your luggage.
- When traveling internationally, look up the US Consulate address and emergency phone/text/email in your destination.
- If you use prescription drugs, stock up before your trip, and pack along the prescription, plus one for contact lenses or glasses if you wear them. Bring COVID self-tests, and over-the-counter medicine that works for you.
- Make sure your health insurance will cover your costs outside the US.
- Watch the weather and news for your destinations for several weeks prior to your trip.

Currency and Bank Information

- Call your Bank, alert them that you'll be using your debit and credit cards in Europe.
 - Ask about transaction fees and get the PIN for your credit card. In most cases you don't need to bring European currency for your trip; you can withdraw local cash at ATMs in Europe. Note your bank's emergency phone number in the US (but not its 800 number) to call collect if you have a problem.
 - Make sure your credit cards are enabled for contactless payments or chip and pin payments. Most EU terminals don't take swipe cards anymore.

- When you're at the ATM, be sure to opt to have the transaction go through in the currency you're receiving (i.e., Euros), not your home currency (i.e., USD).
- Remember to inform your bank that you will be travelling abroad. If you neglect to do so, they may block your cards and accounts when you try to use them overseas.
- Exchange currencies once you arrive in most European countries, although it's always convenient to have a moderate sum of the local currency at hand when you arrive in a foreign country. You can order foreign currency at most banks, order early as it takes time.
- Decide how you will keep your valuables safe while you walk around town. It is not recommended to carry wallets in your pockets, use a money belt which you wear underneath your clothing.
 - Pickpockets are a problem around the world in places where there are crowds, and that includes major European cities.

Cell Phones & Electronics

- **Using your Cell Phone:**
 - The easiest option to be able to use your phone while overseas is to use your carrier's international plan. Make sure you understand how you will be charged for using your phone abroad. What is your data roaming plan, do you get free EU roaming, or charged a daily fee, or must pay per megabyte? Paying per megabyte is almost always crazy expensive. Of course, you can choose to only use your phone when you have Wi-Fi and keep the cellular function turned off.
- Download any apps you'll use on the road (maps, translators, transit schedules, currency converter)
- Bring Plug adaptor, you may need a voltage Converter although most appliances now are dual voltage and can be used without a convertor.

Things To Consider

- Travel insurance can help you out in several big – and small – ways. From compensation for delayed flights or lost luggage to covering doctor or hospital expenses if you get injured and covering the cost of flights home in the event of an emergency.
- Get a Guidebook at a bookstore or library.
- Discover the tipping customs of the places you plan to travel to and do as the locals do.
- Bring a daypack or small backpack to carry your belongings. If you are using a backpack don't leave your phone or anything valuable in the exterior pockets.
- If you leave any valuables in your room, leave it in a hotel room safe if you can.