



Share the Experience

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

EUROCAMPING

Hi, thank you for choosing to holiday with Topdeck! We certainly appreciate your decision to travel with us and rest assured that everyone at Topdeck will be doing their utmost to ensure you have the holiday of a lifetime.

We have prepared the following pre-departure information which we trust will assist you in planning your trip. Some points should be taken as a *guide only* - after all, everyone is different! For instance information such as daily spending money and clothing lists can vary greatly from one person to the next, so please bear this in mind. However, we are sure you will find the information in general to be very useful.

Get ready for a fantastic holiday!

From all the crew at Topdeck Travel

BAGGAGE

We recommend soft bags, suitcases or frameless backpacks, plus a small day pack or carry bag. **No external framed bags** please, as they damage other bags on the coach.

Please limit your luggage to a **maximum of 20kgs**. Maximum allowable size for all backpacks must not exceed 70cm x 50cm x 25cm. Please note that due to space and weight restrictions on our coaches, passengers with too much luggage on departure morning in London may be told that they cannot take their entire luggage with them. Luggage storage facilities are available at the Clink hostel. Any luggage left behind will be at your own risk and you will be required to pay any cost that is incurred. If you are joining a Topdeck trip in any city other than London, you may be asked to leave excess luggage behind and will have to make your own arrangements to have it stored.

SUGGESTED CLOTHING LIST

As a general rule, **pack light!** People invariably bring more than they need, and you will have to transport it around before and after the trip, as well as in and out of the accommodation during the trip!

Remember also that during your trip you are bound to find items that you may wish to buy, so leave room in your luggage for additional purchases. A full coach of passengers with heavy bags may render it overweight, which will result in severe disruption to our schedules and potentially affect our itinerary, so please pack so that your baggage will be less than 20kg by the end of the trip, not just at the start!

The following clothing list is suggested, based on our experience:

- 1 pair of walking shoes
- 1 pair of smart casual shoes
- 1 pair thongs / jandals / flip-flops
- 2 pairs jeans / trousers

- 2 pairs shorts / skirts
- 4 shirts / t-shirts
- 2 sweaters / jumpers
- Smart casual evening wear
- 1 rainproof jacket
- 1 warm jacket
- Underwear and socks!

General things to pack:

- Sleeping bag
- Swimming costume
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Washing powder
- Toilet roll / pack of tissues
- Basic medical kit (inc. plasters, aspirin etc)
- Insect repellent
- Conversion plug
- Torch

Optional:

- Sewing kit
- Travel pillow

Please be aware that most things you might want to bring, for instance toilet roll, washing powder, insect repellent etc. are easily purchased in Europe or in London before your trip starts. Entry into some religious sights, such as Cathedrals, requires clothing to cover knees, chest and shoulders.

SLEEPING BAGS

On EuroCamping trips we mainly stay in twin-share dome tents in European campsites. Even in the height of the European summer, nights can be cold, so **a sleeping bag is essential**.

INSURANCE

It is **compulsory** for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance before the trip departs covering cancellation, medical expenses including repatriation, loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and public liability. Topdeck can issue travel insurance, please refer to our website www.topdeck.travel, click on 'Travelling with Topdeck' and then 'Travel Advice' for more information. You must bring a copy of your travel insurance policy with you on the trip.

Your Trip Leader will make a record of your basic travel insurance details at the start of your trip, e.g. the name of the insurance company, the 24 hour emergency telephone number, and your policy number. These will be faxed back to our London office to ensure that if you lose your policy details, they can be easily retrieved.

VISAS AND PASSPORT INFORMATION

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least 6 months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if there is not at least 6 months validity on your passport after your departure date from their country. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries. **It is your responsibility to obtain these prior to the departure of the trip.** Consult your agent to determine which visas you will require.

We also have a visa chart on our website listing the visas required by some nationalities travelling on our trips. To check go to our website www.topdeck.travel, click on 'Travelling with Topdeck' and then 'Visa Information'.

Remember that some visas can take up to six weeks to obtain, so do not leave it until the last minute. Also bear in mind that the validity of the visa often runs from the date of issue rather than date of entry

into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassies prior to departure as requirements do change periodically.

SCHENGEN AGREEMENT

France, Italy, Austria, Germany, The Netherlands, Portugal, Luxembourg, Greece, Spain, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden are all part of the Schengen Agreement, which means that one visa can be used to cover all of these countries. If you need a visa for any of these countries that your trip visits, **you will require a multi-entry Schengen visa**. The country you will be spending the most time in usually issues the Schengen visa.

Note that all trips departing and returning to London; under normal circumstances, **enter and exit continental Europe and the Schengen area through Calais in France**. Please check your itinerary for the correct port of entry / exit for your trip.

HEALTH AND VACCINATIONS

If you suffer from any kind of medical condition you must advise Topdeck at the time of booking, or at least six weeks prior to the departure of your trip. No vaccinations are currently compulsory for entry into European countries. Please reconfirm this before you leave as conditions could change.

If you require regular medication, you must have an ample supply of medication before your trip departs, as it can be difficult to obtain in some countries. You must be able to administer your own medication, as Topdeck Road Crew will not be able to administer it, and there are no guarantees that there will be anyone with first aid training on board.

SPENDING MONEY

Automatic Teller Machines (**ATMs**) are available all over Europe and are the safest and easiest way to have access to cash. Travellers' cheques are also accepted in Europe and are an alternative to using ATMs.

Most well known **credit cards** are accepted in Europe. We recommend that you bring yours along in case you see something special, which you haven't budgeted for. Credit cards **CANNOT** be used for optional excursions.

Based on past experience, we recommend at least €50-€60 Euros per day to cover your normal expenses including sightseeing, small souvenir shopping and non-included meals. If you wish to purchase expensive souvenirs, you will need to budget for more, or use your credit cards for these purchases. Remember, this is a *guideline* figure and can vary greatly between individuals according to your overall personal budget and spending habits!

CURRENCIES

The main currency in Western Europe is the Euro (€). Euros may also be accepted as payment in some countries outside of the 'Eurozone' area, otherwise you will need to use local currency or credit/debit cards for purchases. It is generally always possible to exchange money in to local currency after arriving in the country, and the easiest way is to make a withdrawal from a local ATM. Countries that our EuroCamping trips visit and the currencies they currently use are listed below:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------|
| • Albania: | Lek (ALL) | • France: | Euro |
| • Andorra: | Euro | • Germany: | Euro |
| • Austria: | Euro | • Greece: | Euro |
| • Belgium: | Euro | • Hungary: | Forint (FOR) |
| • Croatia: | Kuna (HRK) | • Italy: | Euro |
| • Cz. Republic: | Koruny (Crown) (CZK) | • Monaco: | Euro |

- Netherlands: Euro
- Slovenia: Euro
- Slovakia: Euro
- Spain: Euro
- Switzerland: **Franc** (CHF)

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

On all trips we have arranged extra activities that we think will enhance your travel experience, but you have a choice as to whether or not you will participate. These are called Optional Excursions and are not included in the cost of your trip. They are usually organised on a group participation basis and should be taken into consideration when budgeting your spending money. See the section called **Optional Excursions on your trip itinerary** to help you assess any extra personal expenses you may incur.

None of the optional excursions on your trip are operated by Topdeck, and nor do they form part of your contract with Topdeck for your trip. Topdeck arranges optional excursions as an Agent of the local supplier. Should you participate in any optional excursions your contract will be with the local supplier of the excursion, and their conditions will apply. We have selected all of these operators based on recommendations from past passengers and Topdeck Road Crew.

ACCOMMODATION

Your EuroCamping trip will mainly stay in campsites. Topdeck provides comfortable twin-share dome tents to sleep in, and every passenger will have a comfortable inflatable air mattress to sleep on. The tents have ventilation windows, zipped up fronts and sewn-in ground sheets. The tents are light and easy to erect, and you will be given a demonstration at the start of the trip. You and your tent partner will be responsible for pitching your own tent, and you will generally have the same tent for the entire trip. Our camping trips encourage passenger participation in all activities – social and otherwise!

On occasion our EuroCamping trips feature included accommodation upgrades. These may be in bungalows, guesthouses, hostels or hotels. On such occasions, the number of people in a room varies depending on the type of accommodation. For example, bungalows are usually 2-4 bedded, whilst rooms in hostels are usually 4-6 bedded. There may be limited occasions where rooms of up to 10 beds are used. When staying in such accommodations, our EuroCamping trips **operate a single sex policy** and therefore **couples should not expect to share together**. The 'What's Included' section for each trip in our brochure details what type of accommodation is used for our overnight stops.

CAMPSITES

Some European camping grounds are like small cities with supermarkets, bars, restaurants, swimming pools, hot showers and newsagents. Others, mainly in Eastern and Southern Europe, are of a more basic standard. Clothes washing facilities are usually adequate but don't expect machines and dryers in all campsites. Hot showers are sometimes free and sometimes not – where not, you will have to pay a small amount to use them.

On rare occasions some campsites do not supply toilet paper in the toilet blocks, so it is useful to carry a small toilet roll or pack of tissues with you, which can be easily purchased throughout Europe.

MEALS

All of our EuroCamping trips have a cook tent, fitted out with tables and gas burners, which will be erected upon our arrival in campsite accommodations. You will have a Topdeck "On Road Chef" travelling with you who is responsible for organising the catering of your meals, and who will provide some freshly cooked evening meals and lunches as per your Trip Itinerary. All cutlery and eating utensils are supplied. Occasionally, some of the included meals may be in local restaurants or accommodation places.

If you have special dietary requirements e.g. vegetarian or wheat intolerance, we will make every endeavour to cater to your specific needs as long as you advise your agent or reservations when you book. Please be aware that in some countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, it is more difficult to cater for dietary requirements, but we will always try our best to arrange it. However, we cannot cater for tastes or dislikes.

ROSTERS

On any camping trip, there is a certain amount of preparation to be done when staying in campsites. The cook tent has to be erected on arrival and dismantled on departure, food has to be prepared, and cooking equipment has to be cleaned after use. Whilst our Topdeck Road Crew will always be working hard and will be in charge of the main tasks, we use a roster system to ensure that they have some help and to make the process of setting up camp and cooking dinner go a bit faster! A roster system ensures that everybody pitches in at some point, whilst nobody is required to help out every evening - it also fosters a social atmosphere!

TOILETS

In most European countries you will have to pay a small amount to use public toilets at service stations and in city centres. It is a common practice in Europe and should be regarded as a form of 'tipping', as the money goes to the people who clean and/or maintain the facilities.

CLAIM YOUR FREE TOPDECK GLOBAL SIM CARD BEFORE YOU LEAVE FOR YOUR TRIP

All our travellers are entitled to claim a free TopDeck global SIM card to use while on their Topdeck trip! Just follow this link to claim yours: www.topdeck.ekit.com/freesim - use your Topdeck "Booking Reference" and purchase a minimum of \$20 calling credit.

The Topdeck SIM is a "roaming free" SIM card just drop it into your mobile and enjoy savings of up to 90% on calls while travelling throughout Europe.

Every SIM card includes the ekit Travel Journal. The Travel Journal automatically updates your location to Google maps on a daily basis. This allows you to keep track of where you've been, and with the option to publish this on facebook and twitter you can easily show-off your travels to friends and family. Not only does this provide a hassle free way of keeping in contact, but you can text in your own journal updates or photos for an even more detailed record of your holiday!

- Free Global SIM card and US \$5 bonus call credit, when you purchase \$20 of call credit
- Coverage in 150 countries including all TopDeck destinations

* Fast low-cost 1st class shipping to Australia, UK, Europe, USA and Canada

* You can upgrade your SIM card's calling plan for even better international rates:

- Passport Plus – International rates from just USD \$0.29 per minute
- Passport SIM / Home & Roam SIM – Free to receive calls in over 60 countries

To redeem your FREE SIM card and \$5 credit before you travel visit: www.topdeck.ekit.com/freesim - and use your Topdeck "Booking Reference". For more information visit the above URL or phone our dedicated 24/7 Customer Service on: **(AUS)** 1800-795-252, **(UK)** 0800-376-2370, **(USA)** 1-888-513-8804, **(CAN)** 1888-513-8804

The Global Phonocard with more:



When you're on a trip with Topdeck you can also receive a complimentary Global Phonocard on the coach. Your phonocard comes with a FREE 5-minute phone call and is a great way to stay connected and let your family and friends know how your trip is going. Please ask your Trip Leader if you wish to have one.

It's fully rechargeable; you'll receive a \$5 bonus on your first recharge and it can be used in over 150 countries – so all of Europe is covered. An essential part of your European adventure, your Topdeck Global phonocard comes with easy to use voicemail and a free email account! Visit www.topdeck.ekit.com for more.

SECURITY

Use eKit's travel vault and avoid hassles along the way. You can securely store all your important documents online, passport number, insurance and visa information and travellers cheques details. Refer to the eKit brochure or visit www.topdeck.ekit.com

DEPARTING ON YOUR TRIP

Our London departure point for all EuroCamping trips is:

<p style="text-align: center;">Clink 78 Hostel, 78 Kings Cross Road, London, WC1X 9QG.</p>

Here are a few directions to help you on your arrival. From London Airports:

Heathrow Airport is connected to the entire Greater London area by the capital's underground railway network. From passport control and baggage reclaim follow the "Underground" signs to the underground station. Take the Piccadilly Line (colour coded dark blue) to Kings Cross station. When leaving the station take any exit and ensure that Euston Road is in front of you and that the King's Cross and St. Pancras stations are behind you. Turn left and walk down Euston Road, Euston Road then turns into Pentonville Road. Walk down this road and the 2nd street on your right is King's Cross Road. Take this road and as it curves around to the right you will see a big Travelodge hotel on your left. The Clink is a former courthouse located directly after this hotel. Walking time is 10 minutes.

Gatwick Airport is not connected to the underground system. By overland rail, First Capital Connect trains take you directly to St. Pancras station. Once at St. Pancras station follow the directions above.

If you are going to be in London for a few days, it will be cheaper for you to buy an **Oyster Card** on arrival. This will give you savings on all London's public transport for the length of your stay.

DEPARTURE TIMES OF EUROPEAN TRIPS FROM LONDON:

Check-in time at the Clink Hostel:	6.00 - 6.30am
Departure time by:	7.00am

For trips starting in cities other than London, please see the check-in details on your Trip Itinerary.

IF YOU MISS THE DEPARTURE IN LONDON – WHAT TO DO!

Firstly ring our **emergency number** +44 77 9277 5415 and our staff can advise you what to do next.

If you happen to miss your coach, trips leaving from London travel to Dover where they catch a ferry to Calais, and then drive to the first overnight stop in Paris. For EuroCamping trips going to Paris:

- You can catch the Eurostar train direct from St Pancras Station to Gare du Nord station in Paris.
- At the Gare du Nord station, you must transfer on to the METRO (Underground). The line you catch is No.4 (direction Port D'Orleans).
- At Chatelet les Halles, transfer to RER Line A2 (direction Boissy-St.Leger) and get off at Joinville le Pont.
- From here catch bus 101 or a quick taxi to the campsite. During the summer months, a shuttle bus operates between the station and the camp.
- The name and address of the campsite is **Camping Du Tremblay**, Camping de Paris-Est, Boulevard des Allies, 94507, Champigny sur Marne, ph: +33 1 43974397.

IF YOU MISS THE TRIP FROM OTHER START POINTS - WHAT TO DO!

You should contact Topdeck in London on +44 20 8987 3300 to check details. Our staff can advise you and also provide you with the mobile phone number of your Trip Leader.

FINISHING YOUR TRIP

All EuroCamping trips ending in London finish at the Clink Hostel, Kings Cross. Trips should finish at approximately 9.00pm. Please be aware that delays often occur in summer either on the motorways coming towards Calais or at UK Immigration. If this happens and we miss our normal ferry from Calais to Dover, your arrival time back in London could be delayed up to several hours. Therefore we strongly recommend that you do not book flights out of London on the night your trip finishes.

Trips that end in locations other than London generally finish after breakfast on the final day. You will have stayed in that destination the night before, making it easier to arrange onward travel plans for that day. Further information can be found in your detailed Trip Itinerary.

GREAT DEALS ON OUR FESTIVALS AND SHORT BREAK PACKAGES!

Did you know Topdeck also run a great range of festival and short break packages all year round? These include:

- Oktoberfest
- Pamplona – Running of the Bulls
- Las Fallas
- Edinburgh Fringe Festival
- Christmas and New Years Trips
- St. Patrick's Day
- Easter Trips
- Anzac Day
- Venice Carnival
- Ski packages and MORE

For further details, dates and prices, or to book, please visit our website www.topdeck.travel

PAST PASSENGER DISCOUNT

Thinking about booking another trip, festival or short break with us? As a thank you for being a loyal Topdeck customer, you can claim the following discounts on your next trip!

- 5% off any Topdeck trip departing in 2011.

****Terms & Conditions apply – please see the website for full details****

FINAL CHECKLIST

- Passport
- Airline tickets (Where applicable)
- Insurance Policy (You must bring this with you)
- Visas if required
- Camera, Batteries
- Conversion plug
- Topdeck eKit global phone card, sim card or phone
- Sense of excitement!

We trust you have found this information useful, and we sincerely hope that you have a fantastic holiday with Topdeck! Thanks again for choosing to travel with us.

From all the crew at Topdeck Travel