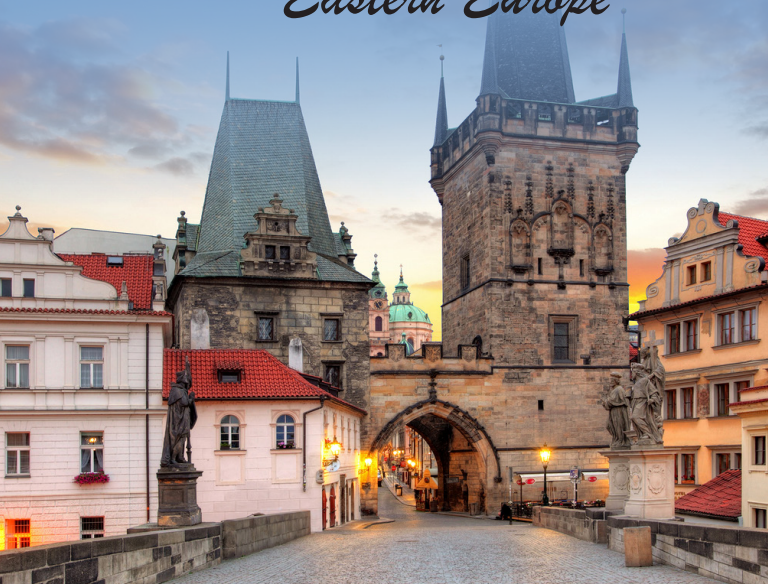


Travel Tips

Eastern Europe



Making the journey yours.

Ayelet *Tours, Ltd.*

www.ayelet.com

800-237-1517

Travel Tips - E. Europe

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BEFORE YOU LEAVE...



PASSPORT/ VISA

Beginning on
January 1, 2024, the

European Union will

require electronic travel authorization
called ETIAS. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY
as the traveler to complete the required
forms and pay the nominal fee IN

ADVANCE of travel at: <https://etias.com/>.

Every visitor must have a valid passport
to travel to Europe. Failure to do so may
result in being denied boarding. Please
be aware that it usually takes several
weeks to obtain a passport and may take
time to receive your electronic travel
authorization, so apply well ahead of
time. It should be noted that current US
government regulations stipulate that
passports must be valid for at least six (6)
months after your return travel date or
you may not be permitted to depart the
United States. Prior to departure, fill in
the emergency information page of your
passport! help speed the process of
replacing your passport if it's lost or
stolen. Some countries may also require a
visa for entry.

In certain circumstances a passport
may be renewed on an expedited basis,
but it is an expensive process. It is
recommended to make two copies of
the first two pages of your passport.
Keep one copy at home and put the
other with your travel materials
separate from your passport. This will
help speed the process of replacing your
passport if it's lost or stolen. Some
countries may also require a visa for
entry. You are responsible to secure
any needed visas. For up to date
information check: [http://
travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)

SECURE YOUR MAIL AND HOME

Arrange for a friendly neighbor to
collect your mail, or arrange for your
local post office to hold your deliveries
for the duration of your stay abroad.
It is also a good idea to have someone
reliable check on your home from
time to time while you are away.

WEATHER

The temperature in Eastern Europe in the spring and summer will generally range from 60 to 83 degrees. The temperatures in the fall and winter will range between 30 and 55 degrees. If traveling in the late fall or winter, please bring boots, gloves and a warm jacket.

While we hope to have many sunny days, we suggest that you bring a travel umbrella. It is always better to be prepared. Dressing in layers is recommended and checking the weather on the internet a day or two before your departure is always a good idea.



LUGGAGE ALLOWANCE

Luggage allowance varies depending upon the airline. Since luggage restrictions change often, please check directly with your airline to be certain of specific regulations. Links to various airline websites and a baggage allowance website can be found on www.ayelet.com. If the group is

traveling between European cities on an inter-European flight, please note that the luggage restrictions may be more strict and the weight limitations different than your international over-the-water flights. While we certainly expect all luggage to arrive with you at your destination, we strongly advise putting any medication, glasses, and an extra change of clothing in your carry-on.

PACKING

How much you pack depends on how long you plan to stay, and on the purpose of your trip. Clothing requirements vary depending on whether your trip is designed for business or solely as a vacation. On your tour, you will probably be moving around a lot and you won't want to pack and unpack completely. Generally, it's a good idea to "travel light" and expect that you will need more room in your bags when you go home than when you left to accommodate gifts. Dressing in layers is recommended.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SIMPLIFYING

- » Build your travel wardrobe around no more than two colors, one of which is black, navy, gray, or brown. Plan to wear every item more than once.
- » Bring more tops, fewer bottoms. A combination of T-shirts, shirts and sweaters will work in most climates and let you change your look from day to day. Fleece works well in cooler weather.
- » Use old plastic dry cleaning bags between suits and dresses to eliminate wrinkles.
- » If you're bringing more than one coat or pair of shoes, wear the heaviest ones on the plane.

» Even during summer months, it is a good idea to bring a light jacket, shawl, or wrap with you for cooler evenings and on air-conditioned buses.

» Make certain to bring appropriate clothes for your visits to synagogues, cathedrals, and places of other religious significance. Plan to dress respectfully - skirts and headscarves are recommended for women and kippahs (yarmulkes) and slacks are recommended for men.

» We recommend that you do not bring jewelry of high monetary or sentimental value with you on your travels. If you do choose to bring valuable jewelry, make certain to pack it in your carry-on luggage to help make certain it will not be lost en-route. Store your valuables in your hotel room safe or the hotel safe deposit box if necessary.

» Bring an adapter and charger for any electronic devices you plan to use on your trip. If you carry a digital camera, cell phone, or laptop computer, you will want to be able to charge it. American plugs will not work in European outlets, so make certain you have a converter or adapter which will reduce the 220 volts to 110 volts.

» Make a list of everything in your suitcase. You'll have something to refer to if your luggage is lost and you have to describe the contents. Refer to it to make sure you don't forget anything.

» Don't bring more than you can manage yourself. Most able-bodied travelers should be able to hoist their own bags. The more experienced the traveler, the less luggage he will bring!

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is available and highly recommended. In order to be fully covered for pre-existing conditions, insurance must be purchased within 15 days of receipt of your initial deposit by Ayelet Tours. Acting immediately will avoid problems with refunds or medical coverage in the future.

Please go to:

www.ayelet.com and click the Travel Information link at the top of the site. Then click the **Travel Insurance** link for detailed information.

MONEY

In major cities, credit cards are an easy and safe bet, but not usable in some smaller bars and restaurants. When paying with a credit card outside larger cities, be warned that machines are sometimes unavailable or broken, and you may be asked to pay in cash. ATMs often offer good exchange rates and are readily available in large cities but are rare in villages. Carrying cash to smaller destinations is unavoidable, but costs are still relatively low outside the popular spots, so a little goes a long way.

Most businesses accept credit cards, though a few refuse to accept American Express. Check with your bank and credit card company for international charges. Some credit cards offer better exchange rate or no international fees. Please note some European vendors will only accept credit cards with newer “Chip” security. Always notify your bank and credit card company before departure to let them know you will be traveling abroad. It is a good idea to bring dollar bills; some things cost \$1.00 USD or 1 EURO. Money may be changed at hotels, banks or city exchange offices. We suggest obtaining a small supply of coins for each country upon arrival, as use of restrooms often requires a gratuity.

Your tour escort can assist you with questions regarding money exchange. Not everything in Eastern Europe is a bargain, and doing a bit of research can help you avoid overpaying.

Foreign currencies (check current exchange rates at www.xe.com): Poland: Zloty
Hungary: Forint
Czech Republic: Koruna

WHILE IN EUROPE...

SAFETY

In spite of what you might read in the newspapers or see on television, remember that Europe is a very safe place to visit. Take the same precautions you would normally use in any city or country. Be careful going out at night and travel in groups when possible. Do not wear conspicuous clothing, expensive jewelry, or carry excessive amounts of money or unnecessary credit cards. Travelers have different opinions regarding carrying wallets and purses. Some people believe it is safer to put valuables in a pouch or to conceal them. Pouches and backpacks worn outside clothing make you stand out as a tourist and do not necessarily protect you from thieves. Valuable items are best left in a safe deposit box in a hotel. Important phone numbers should be kept on your person at all times for emergencies.

GETTING AROUND

Since the hotels that we choose in Europe will generally be centrally located, it is possible to walk most places.

Excellent walking shoes are strongly recommended. You will see a lot more and have more opportunities to interact with people while walking. Getting a map from a hotel or tourist office is a good idea.

It is possible to rent a car, but driving in a foreign country is not for the faint of heart. Taxis are a common mode of transportation and ride share services are slowly gaining acceptance. Sample taxi fares can often be found on-line. Always ask how much the fare will be or insist a meter is used before getting into a cab. The one exception is for longer trips, such as to and from the airports, where the fares are usually set before leaving.

BY TRAIN:

Europe has a well-developed, modern, and convenient passenger rail system. It is possible to travel to many parts of Europe using this convenient and efficient mode of transportation. Fares and schedules can be found online:

www.raileurope.com



PRIVATE TRANSFERS:

The most convenient way to get from one point to the next, such as from the airport to your hotel, and vice versa, is the private car transfer. Ayelet Tours can make these arrangements for you.

ELECTRICITY

The power supply in Europe is 220 volt AC-50 cycles. Most high standard hotels have US 110 electrical ports in the bathroom, for use with electric razors. Make sure your electrical items can operate on those specifications and that the appliances you are operating have the appropriate two prong plug head adapter. If you are not sure an electrical appliance is able to operate on the referenced voltage/cycle level, it is better to secure a universal converter kit. These are readily available at luggage stores, specialty electronics chain shops at your local mall, larger office supply chain shops, etc. Sometimes hotels can spare adapters, but these should not be confused with converters. Adapters can be used with electrical appliances that already have the capability to work at

the outlined voltage/cycle levels, but for which you do not have an appropriate electrical plug head. However, take caution when using any adapter. There is risk of short-circuiting your appliance or causing injury by using an electrical appliance that is not properly converted and adapted for use as required.



STAYING IN TOUCH/PHONES

CNN or other news service cable channels are available on television in most hotels.

Programs in English may be found on a number of other channels. Virtually all hotels offer Wi-Fi and in recent years more and more hotels are offering this complimentary, either in your room or in the lobby.

GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) phone service works throughout Eastern Europe, but requires a particular type of international cell phone and a SIM card. You can check with your phone company for availability and rates for an international phone plan. GSM phones and travel Wi-Fi (Mi-Fi) are now readily available to

tourists through a variety of services. Many rental services will deliver the equipment to your home in advance of your departure. To find more information on recommended options, please visit www.ayelet.com. You may consider using Whatsapp, Skype or FaceTime via Wi-Fi networks for inexpensive or free calls worldwide. Your smart phone may also be eligible for a global calling plan – contact your wireless provider for options. Long-distance phone calls can be very costly, especially if made from a hotel room, where substantial service charges are added. Some phones may also benefit from the use of a SIM card.

Reminder: The FBI warns travelers to avoid using free, public phone charging stations - Hackers may introduce malware and monitoring software through these stations. Bring your own cables and plug directly into an electrical outlet. The FCC also recommends travelers use charging-only cables that do not transfer data when using a USB port.

TIME

Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary are all in the Central European Time Zone (GMT +1). Summertime (GMT +2) is in effect between the last Sunday in March and the last Sunday in October. This means that you will be 5-6 hours ahead of Eastern Time and 8-9 hours ahead of Pacific Time, depending upon the time of year.



YOUR HEALTH

Getting sick while you are away from home can be, well, a bummer. Several of our recommendations are meant to keep you healthy and insure

you have the basic remedies for common maladies, such as headaches or upset stomach. Although people do drink the water while traveling in Eastern Europe, it is our recommendation that you buy bottled water, which will be available on the bus. But just in case, bring medication to relieve the symptoms of stomach ailments. Allergy sufferers should have their preferred medication on hand. Bring only medications that you have previously taken. If possible to avoid, do not try new medications, even over the

counter ones that have never been taken before, or with which you are not familiar. If you take prescription medications, you might find it valuable to have your physician make duplicate copies of your prescriptions for you to take with you in case you need an emergency refill or for reference purposes in the event of emergency. The same holds true if you are allergic to specific medications. Always carry a list of these specific medications that should not be administered due to an allergy. Prescription drugs may be taken onto airplanes. Declare at the security checkpoint any medications that come in a gel or liquid form in a container larger than the allowed 100 ml/3 ounces. Be aware that many tourists unknowingly put themselves at risk by not drinking enough water. Bottled water is readily available in most hotels and restaurants. When traveling on a tour bus, the driver may have bottled water and other soft drinks available for sale as a convenient way for passengers to stay hydrated. The cost is usually \$1.00 – \$2.00 per bottle. If traveling on your own, be sure to stop often for bottled water throughout your day.

Before departure please check with a local travel doctor/clinic for the latest recommendations on travel vaccinations. It may also be helpful to have a copy of your immunizations record in case of illness, or travel to another nearby country.

The quality and availability of medical assistance varies greatly throughout Eastern Europe. In Westernized cities, like Prague and Budapest, there are generally English-speaking medical centers or hospitals for foreigners, and the care tends to be better than elsewhere in the area. In the countryside and in less traveled countries, English-speaking facilities are virtually impossible to find. In the event of an emergency, when not with a group, please go to your embassy for aid and recommendations. Should you have a medical emergency, you will need to tender a credit card for payment. You will receive a bill marked paid, detailing the services you received. You may then send this bill to your insurance provider for reimbursement. Travel Insurance can be extremely helpful if you become sick abroad, and it is strongly recommended.

Even if you do not normally Blog or keep a journal, we highly recommend you choose some way to record feelings and experiences. When you return, and for



years later, you'll be glad you did. Bring a camera and/or video recorder and try to take pictures of people

rather than just buildings. The photos will be more memorable

SHOPPING

Eastern Europe is a great place to buy gifts and souvenirs, but it is always good to keep the following points in mind when you're shopping:

» Consider what you can afford and don't let yourself be talked into paying more.

» You may see the same items in more than one store, so if you have time to comparison shop then do so. But if you are on a tour, shopping time may be limited and it may be worth buying an item you really like, rather than miss the opportunity altogether.

» Be clear on the exchange rate before you travel, so that you are well aware of what you are spending on your purchases.

» Some stores may ask you to check your larger belongings at a coat and bag check. For this reason it is a good idea to pack your important documents and expensive belongings in something smaller that you can carry with you at all times.

» Never exchange more currency in Eastern Europe than you will need for the next few days - unused exchanged currency will just have to be changed back to dollars, and will be exchanged at a lower rate.

TIPPING

Tipping customs vary from country to country. In many countries in Europe, a tip is only expected for outstanding service, or a 10% tip is standard. Please check on-line for suggested tipping in each country, or read more here:

<https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/money/tipping-in-europe>

TOP TIPS for an enjoyable journey:

» **Clocks/Wake Up.** Many hotel rooms in Europe do not have clocks (or they are unreliable as an alarm). Wake up calls are generally available by calling the front desk, or just use your Smartphone as an alarm.

» **Water.** During the summer in Europe, dehydration is a concern. Bring electrolyte powder packs or pills to add to bottled water to restore electrolytes and remember to always drink before feeling thirsty!

» **Taxis.** Taxis usually have meters, but some drivers will attempt not to use them, creating the possibility of overcharging. Always insist on the meter, or set the price in advance when entering the taxi.

» **Get in Shape.** While most of the walking involved on a tour is moderate, many people are not used to walking this much on a regular basis. Try walking 20 – 30 minutes a day, 3 times per week for a few weeks before departure; this will ensure a more pleasant trip. To prevent blisters, walk in the shoes you plan to bring — never start breaking in a new pair during the tour.

» **Sanitizer.** While many hotels and others now provide them, please plan to bring your own hand sanitizer as well as sanitizing wipes (travel packs) for your health and safety. We suggest wiping down your seat area and tray table when you board any flight (trust us, it has been a while since it has been thoroughly cleaned!)

» **Ask.** If there is something that could be done to make your experience more pleasant, let your guide know. While it helps to get feedback afterwards, we would rather make it right for you during your tour.

» **Get to the airport early.** If there are any issues (such as flight cancellation or delay, issues with your ticket or seating), an early arrival means more time to address any possible problems.

» **Bring USD singles.** They come in handy!

» **Stay flexible.** Travel is about experiencing the world and stepping out of your comfort zone.

PACKING CHECKLIST

Ayelet Emergency Number 001-646-207-3937

DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Airline Tickets
- ☐ Copy of travel insurance policy details
- ☐ Itinerary
- ☐ Passport and photocopy
- ☐ Cash (not too much)
- ☐ Credit cards/ATM
- ☐ Phone numbers including the Ayelet emergency number

SUPPLIES

- ☐ Wallet/handbag
- ☐ (Sun)glasses
- ☐ Hat
- ☐ Travel Umbrella
- ☐ Backpack/day pack
- ☐ First Aid supplies
- ☐ Sewing kit
- ☐ Jewelry (not expensive)
- ☐ Safety pins
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Plastic bags

CLOTHING

- ☐ Bathing suit/towel
- ☐ Flip flops
- ☐ Kipah/yarmulke
- ☐ Shirts (casual/dress)
- ☐ Comfortable walking shoes
- ☐ Sandals
- ☐ Socks/hose
- ☐ Dresses/skirts
- ☐ Belts/shawls/scarves
- ☐ Underwear
- ☐ Pajamas/sleepwear
- ☐ Sweater/sweatshirt
- ☐ Raincoat with zip-out lining
- ☐ Gloves/scarf/hat (in winter)

TOILETRIES

- ☐ Toothbrush/paste
- ☐ Mouthwash
- ☐ Deodorant
- ☐ Prescriptions
- ☐ Hand sanitizer/wipes
- ☐ Razor & shaving cream
- ☐ Comb/brush
- ☐ Shampoo & soap
- ☐ Wash cloth
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Moisturizer
- ☐ Medication
- ☐ Cosmetics



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