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NEW YORK STUDENT SEMINARS



JANUARY – MARCH 2011

PARTY LEADER INFORMATION FILE

Your questions answered...

Will my students need a Visa for the trip?

At the present time, all British and most EU Passport Holders do NOT need a Visa to enter the United States, providing they have a machine-readable Passport. They are covered by the Visa Waiver Program. Students holding non-British or non EU Passports MUST check with the US Embassy in London before confirming their place on the Convention. www.usembassy.org.uk.

Electronic Travel Authorization

If you or your students are eligible nationals of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and as such do not require a visa to enter the USA, you will NOW need to obtain an electronic travel authorization prior to departure.

From 12 January 2009, all qualified VWP travelers will be required to obtain electronic travel authorization prior to boarding an air or sea carrier to the United States. Travelers who do not receive travel authorization prior to their departure may be denied boarding, experience delays or be denied admission into the United States. Applications may be submitted at any time prior to travel, but no less than 72 hours prior to departure.

Travel Authorization is obtained through an online registration system known as the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. While not compulsory, travelers may obtain travel authorization from August 1, 2008 onwards. If you are planning on traveling to the United States anytime after August 1, you may wish to consider registering with ESTA before your departure. If your registration is successful, it will be valid for multiple applications for two years or until the date on which your passport expires, whichever comes first.

Before going on line to register, you should ensure that you are qualified to travel under the Visa Waiver Program; otherwise your registration will be rejected. ESTA only authorizes a traveler to board an air or sea carrier for travel to the United States. It also does not guarantee entry into the United States; that decision rests with the immigration official at the Port of Entry in the same way that travelers currently

entering the U.S. under the Visa Waiver Program or with a visa are subject to inspection.

ESTA is not a visa / ESTA does not guarantee entry into the USA ESTA application is free (at the time of writing).

Further information can be found on

http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visas/esta/esta_faq.xml

(The section on FAQ's is particularly useful.)

Airport & Documentation

Final itinerary, luggage labels, tickets and local contact details will be sent to you approximately 7 days prior to departure, however, delays can occur if rooming/names lists are late, if payment is delayed or there are late changes to your group or itinerary.

Airport check-in times, flight times and terminal information are detailed on your itinerary. NB. The New York airports may differ on the outbound and inbound journeys – please check, especially if you are arranging your UK transfers independently.

Airline terminals:

- a) Heathrow: British Airways Terminal 5 / Virgin Terminal 3.
- b) Manchester: British Airways Terminal 3 / Continental Terminal 2
- c) NYC JFK: British Airways Arrive/Depart Terminal 7 / Virgin Arrive JFK Terminal 4.
- d) NYC Newark: British Airways & Virgin Terminal B / Continental Terminal B and C.

NB For groups flying from other local airports, details are provided on your Final Tour Itinerary.

Passengers can no longer take 2 pieces of free hold luggage on trans-Atlantic flights. It is now restricted to one piece weighing no more than 23kgs. Please visit airline websites for up to date charges for taking either a 2nd bag or sports equipment

Passports & Tickets

Remember to keep all passports and tickets in hand luggage

Airlines now issue E-tickets – 1 per person. These will be provided in your final travel pack

We recommend that a photocopy of the relevant page of all Passports is taken and carried by the group leader to assist in case of loss or damage.

Tickets should match the name as per Passport (not necessarily as per the school/college register). Any changes to the ticket will incur a name change or re-ticketing charge of £50 minimum per person.

Any lost tickets will need to be re-issued and there is a charge for this made by the airline. In most cases this will equate to the price of a new ticket which would be refunded by the airline once proof of the original ticket is provided. The airline will also make an administrative charge for the re-issue.

With whom will we fly?

The vast majority of our groups will fly with British Airways, Virgin Atlantic or Continental on one of their scheduled flights to J.F.K. or Newark Airports from London Heathrow. Convention groups will enjoy a dedicated group check-in at Heathrow (in order to request a group check-in full passport details are required in advance) and your group will normally be seated together in a block although this cannot be guaranteed. On board groups will enjoy a full in-flight service with all meals and drinks (non-alcoholic for all under 18's), seat back TV's with first-run feature films, cartoon and music channels, and on Virgin only at present, Sony playstations!

When capacity on all of these services is reached we reserve the right to use other IATA international airlines such as Icelandair, Kuwaiti Airlines, Air India etc.

PLEASE NOTE: Provisional flight times may change nearer to departure. Please consult UK Connection BEFORE you confirm your own coach transfer times.

I notice the programme is based on flights from London Heathrow. Can we fly from our local airport?

You can....but it will involve a supplement. The low cost of the Convention has been achieved by utilising surplus capacity on one of the many flights which leave Heathrow every day. Although it is possible to fly to New York from Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester or Glasgow, there are only one or two flights a day and prices therefore are higher.

For groups from Northern Ireland, we can provide connecting flights from Belfast to London and occasionally direct from Dublin to New York but again these will involve a supplement.

Early booking is essential in order for us to obtain the best availability and the most competitive price on direct flights from regional airports for your group. By all means ask us for a quote from any of the UK's regional airports via London but even for the smallest group it is often more cost-effective to travel to London by coach or rail.

How will we get from the airport to the hotel in New York?

Your tour price includes airport transfers in New York. Whenever we have two or more groups on the same flight, there will be a Representative to meet you at your New York airport to call up your transfer coach. Your coach transfer will take up to one hour from either Newark or JFK.

For groups arriving individually, you will be given a telephone number to call up your transfer coach yourself, once all of your group are clear of Immigration..

Will there be someone to assist with the hotel check-in?

A UK Connection Representative will usually meet ALL groups on arrival at your hotel to assist with check in. The only exception to this is where we have a single group checking in where the procedure is handled by the hotel's own Reception staff.

NB Rooms at all hotels will NOT be available until after 3pm on the day of arrival. Bags will be stored free of charge until this time.

On Check-out day, rooms must be vacated by 11am. Arrangements will be made to store bags which will then be delivered to the coach immediately before departure. It MAY NOT be possible to get access to your bags until this time.

Is there a minimum group size to attend the Conventions?

NO. We have accepted as few as 3 students from a school!

Can I get a free place if my group is smaller than 20 (or a better ratio than 1:20)?

YES. Your tour can be re-costed to provide a free place ratio of 1:15 or even 1:10. Obviously the price to the students will rise according to the number of free places requested.

Where will we stay?

We offer a range of accommodations to suit all budgets from simple hostels to comfortable 3 and 4 star hotels. All the accommodations offered are located in Manhattan and all offer ONLY SINGLE BEDS FOR ALL GROUP MEMBERS. There is No Bed-Share with UK Connection.

What is the rooming for adults?

Adults will normally be roomed in twins. Single rooms are limited and only available at a supplement which varies with the accommodation.

Are there any "hidden" charges?

Because budget is all-important, we have endeavoured to reduce costs wherever possible without compromising too much on quality and comfort. However, there are

a few things which are either optional OR not applicable to all those participating and therefore cannot be included in the overall tour price. These are:

- Airport transfers within the UK. We would be pleased to quote
- Meals. See MEALS below
- Entrance Fees to additional Visits and Attractions. See below
- Subway passes. See TRAVELLING AROUND THE CITY below
- Fully comprehensive insurance cover Optional at £19 per student for the duration of your tour
- Tips to coach drivers, waiters etc. Please refer to tipping section for further details

What do meals cost?

Within a few blocks of all our hotels are typical New York Diners and fast food outlets providing cheap food 24 hours a day. Breakfast at a diner will cost you approximately \$8-12 and lunch or dinner between \$13-20. Often these meals can be pre-booked but generally speaking, groups find better value by 'paying-as-you-go.'

What about 'Special' meals?

UK Connection will be pleased to pre-book meals at any of New York's famous themed restaurants such as the Hard Rock Café, Planet Hollywood, Ellen's Stardust Diner or Mars 2112. We can also offer special deals at one of the city's BBQ restaurants, in a typical diner, or at an authentic Chinatown Chinese restaurant. Allow around \$20-25 per person. Full details supplied.

Explain the 'Rolling Seminar' concept to me

It became apparent that for disciplines such as Art, Travel & Tourism and even RS, the 3-4 hour "Classroom-Based" Seminar was not an approach which was effective for most British students. It also seemed rather incongruous to bring students to New York from Britain and then put them in a classroom for a half day. Thus the concept of the Rolling Seminar was born. This is based around a 4 hour Guided Sightseeing Tour of the city, providing not only an effective orientation and introduction to the city, but also an opportunity to focus on those aspects of city's provision which support the students' own area of study. Thus Tourism students focus on the city's major tourist attractions; for example RS students visit Cathedrals and Mosques, etc etc.

The Rolling Seminar has proved a great success and we think adds a relevance and immediacy which enhances the students' experience.

Do we have a choice in the technical/'backstage' visits offered?

YES. Outside of the Seminars, your time is your own to explore the city as you wish and decide on the balance between work and play. UK Connection staff will of course be pleased to advise.

In addition, we have arranged discounted entry to many of the city's major attractions, including:

The Empire State Building

Top of the Rock Observatory at the Rockefeller Centre

Circle Line Boat trips

Skating in Central Park

And many more – please see our excursion guide and Booking Form and Destination Guide for visit ideas and prices.

Full details and a Booking Form are provided with your Booking Confirmation.

Can we take in a Broadway Show?

Absolutely! We would be pleased to pre-book discounted seats for groups of at least 20 at most Broadway and Off-Broadway Shows. Full details will be provided.

What about a major sporting event?

At the time of your visit, there is no American Football or Baseball being played. It is sometimes possible to obtain discounted tickets for a major league basketball or ice hockey match at Madison Square Gardens. Ask us for details.

How will we travel around the city?

Your airport transfers and Rolling Seminar, if applicable, will of course be by coach. On other days, as groups will be following their own programme, you will be travelling around Manhattan on foot or by Subway or on public buses.

By far the most cost effective method is by pre-purchasing the One Day Metro Pass which provides unlimited travel on the subway and buses for 24 hours. You are well advised to pre-book and pre-purchase these Passes. Please speak to a member of the UK Connection staff for subway ticket prices.

Can we extend our stay in New York?

Yes but as the Conventions are running 'back-to-back', rooms in your Convention hotel MAY NOT be available for an extension of stay and we may have to offer you an alternative accommodation for the extension. For groups of less than 40, there will also be a supplement for a return airport transfers, quoted on request.

What if we like the Convention concept but cannot travel on the actual

Convention dates?

UK Connection is the leading British operator for student group tours to New York and we would be delighted to organise a longer, 'tailor-made' tour for you. Although it may not be possible to organise the lecture programme on an ad-hoc basis, we can usually organise the specific background and technical visits for you at any time of the year.

Booking Excursions

UK Connection has discounted entry to many of the city's most famous tourist attractions. Please speak to a member of the UK Connection staff for a full list of excursions

We want to come – what do we do next?

If it is your intention to promote the Convention with your students, we recommend that you call UK Connection NOW so that we can record your interest and advise on availability. You will also be able to download a booking form and party leader information leaflets together with a poster to help promote the tour from our website www.ukconnection.co.uk

Once you have established definite interest in the Convention there are two options.

- 1) To register your interest and for us to allocate your group against the relevant convention date please forward us a holding deposit of £500 together with our Registration Form. You can then confirm your exact numbers at the end of September and pay the remaining deposits of £50 per student. This will then guarantee your flights and accommodation. At our discretion we will refund this holding deposit (less an administration fee of £50) if for any unforeseen reason you are unable to proceed with your plans.
- 2) To confirm your flights and place on the relevant convention please forward £50 per student together with the UK Connection Booking Form – this will guarantee your flights and accommodation. The remaining £50 deposit can be paid when your students return after the Summer break. This is non-refundable deposit, although in certain cases and for those groups who to take our optional insurance cover, it may be reclaimable for illness or parent redundancy.

Forms and Information documents available to download from our website www.ukconnection.co.uk

- Registration Form (when forwarded a holding deposit of £500)
- Booking Form (when forwarding full deposits of £50 per student)
- Step by Step Booking Guide
- New York Destination Guide
- Excursion Guide and Booking Form
- Poster to help you promote the trip
- Party leader information document) these assist with parent evenings

- Briefing document)
- Seminar subject information leaflets

Please note that In the event of an over-subscription to the Conventions we operate a 'first-come-first-served' system.

If you have any queries relating to the Conventions or if you would like a tailor-made quotation for an independent tour to New York, please call UK Connection on 01273 810740.

UK CONNECTION . . . the New York Specialists and Leaders in Student Group Travel

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