

A nighttime photograph of the London skyline as seen from the London Eye. The Houses of Parliament and Big Ben are illuminated with warm yellow lights, while the London Eye's structure is lit with blue lights. The River Thames is in the foreground, reflecting the lights. The sky is a deep twilight blue.

UK connection

Before you go...

## **Welcome to the start of your tour!**

We strongly recommend that you read this leaflet before you leave, and carry it with you during your outward and homeward journeys. It contains important information that is designed to prepare you and your group for your tour and to make your journey more enjoyable.

### **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY**

#### **1. Your Emergency Contact Details**

Please ensure that we are in possession of the following telephone contacts with out of hour numbers before your departure from the UK.

- (a) The coach company which is transferring you to your UK airport (if you are making your own arrangements).
- (b) Two responsible contacts in the UK i.e. the Head Teacher, who can be contacted 24 hours whilst your party is away. This person should also have a passenger names list with contact telephone numbers of all parents of students participating in the tour. Should an emergency occur, it is essential that we can make contact.

#### **2. Our Emergency Contact Numbers**

Our normal office hours are 09.00-17.15 Monday to Friday. In cases of emergency outside of office hours, the following telephone number can be used:-

24 hour Emergency Service: 01273 648 231

Message Service: 0870 241 4499 (Please note that messages left will be retrieved within office hours.)

Please bear in mind that the member of our team will be contacted at home or by mobile telephone and therefore this line should only be used in real emergencies. Under no circumstances is the emergency telephone number to be given to parents. Excessive calls to this line will mean that we are unable to respond efficiently.

#### **3. Emergency procedure**

In the event of a serious illness or accident involving hospitalisation during your tour, you should immediately contact your insurance company.

They will require the following information:

- Your policy reference number
- A contact telephone number
- Location of the hospital and the treating doctor's telephone number
- Name, address, usual GP and age of patient
- Details of the booked travel arrangements
- The medical problem
- Please remember that it is the duty of a supervisory adult within your party to stay with a sick or injured student who may have to remain in hospital after the group has departed.

Following your call, the Medical Assistance Company will undertake the following:

- Contact treating doctor/medical centre for details of illness/injury.
- Guarantee hospital/medical costs where necessary.

- Establish the necessity for repatriation. This will be on the recommendation of the treating doctor, not the patient or their family.
- Arrange repatriation as specified by the doctor. The Medical Assistance Company will arrange ambulances/flights/nurses etc., as necessary.
- Where repatriation has been organised, the group leader will be contacted by The Medical Assistance Company for him/her to pass any relevant details on to the rest of the group. Occasionally, the ambulance company may contact the group leader for directions or the location of the hospital or accommodation.
- In the event of a fatality, the Medical Assistance Company will require the contact details of the next of kin and the cause.

## INSURANCE

Injury or illness is something that we all dread and it can be especially disconcerting to suffer abroad, as medical treatment generally has to be paid for. It is imperative, therefore, that you have adequate Travel Insurance. At the time of booking, we will offer you our nominated insurance policy. It is a condition of booking that you must have an insurance policy which offers the same level of cover as ours, if not better. If you did not opt into insurance at the time of booking, please contact us immediately for a quotation and to arrange cover.

Please note that musical instruments are not insured under our nominated insurance policy. Please obtain separate cover for these items.

### Making a claim

- Keep receipts and appropriate documentation, such as doctor's fees and prescription charges, because claims cannot be made without them.
- Police reports must be obtained to claim for lost or stolen property\*\*
- Notify the insurance company as soon as possible
- If you have our nominated insurance policy, you must notify them of a claim no later than 31 days after your return which is the date the policy expired with your confirmation booking invoice from us. If you have sourced your own insurance policy, you should check you policy for this information as it may be different. Regrettably we cannot make claims on your behalf, they must be submitted by the Party Leader.

\*\* If articles are lost or stolen whilst in care of airline, a claim must be made direct with the carrier or handling agent at the airport on landing. You will need to complete a PIR form at the airport. Please ensure that you do not leave the airport before completing this form and handing it to an official responsible for baggage claims.

Please ensure that you read your policy fully.

## MEDICAL NOTES

At time of booking, we should have been notified of any medical conditions which may need special attention. We need to know well in advance, so that our suppliers can be notified in good time and any necessary preparations made. You should also re-confirm any details to the hotelier on arrival and to the relevant instructor/guide(s) before embarking on any strenuous activity.

Please read the disclosure of material facts and pre-existing Health Conditions section of your insurance policy. If you opted for our nominated insurance cover, disclosure of material facts and pre-existing medical conditions can be made to Travellers Health Check on: 08456 582 999. As a general rule conditions must be declared for those over 16 years of age travelling anywhere or those under 16 years of age travelling outside Europe. An individual document is available for each party member summarising the cover available on the policy.

### **European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)**

For European trips, each group member should obtain the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which replaced the E111 on the 1st January 2006. An application form for the EHIC can be obtained from the Post Office or by downloading the form from the following link [www.dh.gov.uk/travellers](http://www.dh.gov.uk/travellers). Once completed, in black ink, they need to be taken to the Post office for approval. If your group members have previously obtained an EHIC, please ask them to check the expiry date. The EHIC card entitles the holder to medical attention in state run hospitals only.

## **PASSPORTS & VISAS**

It is the Party Leaders responsibility that all group members have the correct documentation to travel, both passport and visa.

If you or any member of your party is not a British citizen or holds a non British passport, you must check passport and visa requirements with the Embassy or Consulate of the country(ies) to or through which you are intending to travel.

All members of your party must hold a valid passport. Some countries require a passport to remain valid for a period after the date of entry to that country (typically 6 months). You are advised to check the requirements of the destination at time of booking.

### **Useful contacts**

For all up to date passport information, we recommend that you:

- Visit [www.direct.gov.uk/passports](http://www.direct.gov.uk/passports).
- Contact the Passport Advice Line: 0300 222 0000
- Or for Visa Enquiries Line: British Council (for European Tours) 0161 957 7755.

We cannot accept responsibility for any cost or fines incurred due to non-compliance with the above nor can we accept any liability if you are refused entry into any country due to failure on your part to carry the correct documentation.

### **Collective passports (for groups under the age of 18 only)**

A collective passport can be used for the majority of European countries for group members under the age of 18 whilst travelling. An application form can be obtained from the Passport Office or on-line at [www.direct.gov.uk/passports](http://www.direct.gov.uk/passports). The collective passport should be completed at least 12 weeks prior to departure. Please be aware that there is a cost for the collective passport and it is not included in the tour price.



If you are using a collective passport, we advise that you take a number of copies. In an emergency if a member of your party has to return back to the UK separately from your group they will require a copy of the collective passport signed in resort by a professional i.e. a doctor, solicitor or preferably if you are in a city by the British Consulate. If this is not done you may encounter problems with immigration.

We advise all groups using a collective passport to put the return date one day later than planned in case of any unforeseeable delay. Please note that the collective passport would become invalid if the group leader were unable to travel, for example, due to illness and a Deputy Leader had not been appointed and named on the collective passport.

## **YOUR JOURNEY**

Although we, as your tour operator, aim to ensure that your tour runs as smoothly as possible, there are certain events which are beyond our control. They may be due to weather, industrial action, air traffic control, etc., but we would like to reassure you that, behind the scenes, our Brighton Operations Department, our overseas management, our airline staff and our coach companies will be working together to get things back on track as quickly as possible.

In the unlikely event of a problem we would urge you to obey the following golden rules:-

- a) Please inform us of the situation immediately
- b) Please stay calm and patient – we will keep you informed
- c) Please stay where you are and keep your students within range to enable an efficient move at the earliest possibility.

May we also bring to your attention that all reservations made by us are booked and paid for in advance. Service suppliers will not give refunds in the event of a party arriving late in the resort due to weather/sailing delays and thereby missing part of a pre-booked service. This applies to items such as meals, excursions, etc.

## **COACH TOURS**

### **1. Facilities**

The coach provided will depend upon the size of your party and the tour you have booked. All the coaches we use are modern and conform to safety regulations.

If your coach is fitted with a DVD player, we recommend that you bring your own DVDs. If your vehicle is fitted with a drinks dispenser, it is standard practice for the driver to charge for drinks. Please note that the toilet on board is for emergency use only. This does not mean it cannot be used but it must not be a substitute for normal comfort stops.

Air conditioning is not a standard feature of a full specification coach. Air conditioned vehicles are strictly subject to availability and generally carry a supplement. Your quotation letter will detail the type of vehicle to be provided for your tour and any applicable supplement.

Please remind your group members to be responsible for any litter they may produce such as cans and rubbish from packed lunches. Rubbish should be kept under control for the benefit of all.

## 2. Your Itinerary

The timings that we indicate on your itinerary act merely as a guideline and have been estimated assuming normal and reasonable road conditions. These may be subject to variation should you encounter slow traffic or poor weather conditions.

## 3. Baggage allowance

Luggage space is limited and we therefore suggest the following guidelines: group members should take only one soft holdall type bag containing items which will not be required until arrival at the hotel, since access to luggage stored in the hold will not be possible during the journey.

## 4. Your driver

Your driver is employed to follow the itinerary and carry out the agreed programme of excursions. Drivers are usually selected for their suitability and continental driving experience. The variety of tours that we offer may mean that your driver is unfamiliar with some areas; we would recommend that if you are familiar with an area that you work with the driver to get the best out of your tour.

## 5. Driver's hours

Coach drivers must operate strictly according to EU Regulations governing their working hours. Such regulations are in the interests of everyone's safety and are strictly enforced. The guidelines below will give you a basic understanding when considering your excursion programme:

- a) Rest period of 11 hours after arrival in resort.
- b) Rest period of 11 hours before departure from resort.
- c) Rest period of 11 hours between days work.
- d) Drivers can drive for 9 hours per day over a duty period of 13 hours but must have a 45 minute break (which can be split into two - 15 mins and 30 mins) from the vehicle every 4.5 hours.

On long distance continental tours where there are two tour drivers, they do not have to take their rest periods on the same day. However, where overnight travel is involved, both drivers must have an 11 hour rest period on arrival (usually day 2) and prior to departure (usually penultimate day).

- e) Coach drivers weekly rest period. One driver cannot operate a tour of more than 6 days (which includes positioning to and from the point of pick up point) without taking a full weekly rest period (Standard: 2 days).

The itinerary and excursion programme you submit to us will be carefully vetted and you will be advised if this is not practical or will incur extra costs. We recommend that you discuss your itinerary with your driver at an early stage on your tour.

## 6. Coach Breakdowns

In the event of the breakdown of your vehicle your driver will contact his company in the UK for instruction. Where a repair can be actioned quickly, a replacement vehicle will not be provided. If there is to be a prolonged delay a replacement coach will be subcontracted to carry out your itinerary. Please advise us of your situation via our office number or our emergency contact number (outside office hours) so we can monitor the delay and assist where necessary.

## 7. Requested Coach Companies.

We cannot guarantee to provide specially requested coach companies. When this is possible a supplement may apply.

## 8. Channel Crossings

Your driver will be familiar with procedures at the port of embarkation. Ferry companies and ports have different times for check in: most will recommend that you are through passport control and ready to check in at least one hour before sailing and in peak periods 2 hours before however, each operator is different and you should confirm this with your tour co-ordinator. Ferry companies request that you keep your party together in one area whilst aboard ship. It is required you keep control of the group and that they behave in a quiet and orderly manner throughout the crossing. Please ensure that passports are accessible at all times.

Due to demand for peak crossings, your first choice of crossing may not always be available, despite our having requested it well in advance. In such cases, we will endeavour to secure the nearest alternative crossing available.

## AIR TOURS

Please note that most flights will be 'ticketless' therefore you must present your flight reference(s) shown on your itinerary together with your passport at the check-in desk.

### Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS)

A number of countries introduced legislation in 2006, stipulating that full passport details must be provided in advance for all passengers travelling by air. This legislation is now applicable in the USA and many European countries, including the UK. Please therefore ensure that these details are provided for every passenger travelling by air, in addition to the other requested information on the on-line passenger list.

## 1. Check-in Times

Security measures at all airports have been significantly increased. Airline staff need ample time for the necessary checks therefore you must check-in at your departure airport no later than 3 hours prior to the scheduled time of departure for your flight. We are unable to accept responsibility for any additional costs should your party members miss the flight because of their late arrival.

Group check-in can be facilitated at some UK airports. You are advised to check with us whether this is an option at time of confirmation.

## 2. Baggage Allowance and Restrictions

Full details of your baggage allowance will be printed on your ticket/itinerary. Group members must pack their own luggage. They must not carry packages or items for anyone else and must not leave their luggage unattended at any time.

Since hand luggage is currently severely restricted, all members of the party should be asked to carry necessities only. Please note that sharp objects, e.g. scissors, nail files and 100ml liquids, etc., will be confiscated if found in hand luggage, and may delay the departure of the aircraft.

Customers who require the use of hypodermic syringes for medical reasons will be asked for proof of medical need.

We advise you to check the website of your airline for the restrictions closer to your departure date as this information is subject to change.

### **3. In-Flight Catering**

On some flights a light meal or snack will be served. However in-flight catering is not always provided although you can purchase refreshments from the cabin crew. Please check with us before departure.

If you require a special meal i.e. vegetarian or special diet, this can be arranged only if you inform our administration department at least one month before travel. We will request this but please note that they cannot be guaranteed.

### **4. Coach Transfers to your UK airport**

We can arrange a return coach transfer to your UK departure airport. Please ask for a competitive quotation.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

### **1. Rooming**

Your rooming arrangements will vary depending on the age of your group and your chosen destination so please refer to your travel documentation for the rooming arrangements of your group.

Generally, pupils will be accommodated in multi bedded rooms (3-5) unless we are otherwise advised and accompanying staff in twin or triple rooms. Single rooms (strictly subject to availability) carry a minimum supplement. Please be aware of the following points that may apply to your group:

- Certain hotels still have rooms with double beds but the majority of our groups are accommodated in single beds.
- In Austria (and sometimes Germany) "continental twins" are frequently used. This is a double bed base frame with two mattresses - individual bed linen and duvets are used.
- For USA, hotels are strictly based on 4 student occupancy or 2 adult occupancy of a room with 2 double beds. Supplements are payable for under occupancy at all times, which will vary according to the hotel selected. Single rollaway beds are available in some hotels which will allow you to increase the capacity of these rooms to minimise the supplementary charge. Please note that occupancy numbers for suites and condominiums vary and you will be advised accordingly.
- Party Leaders travelling with members of their family must share a family room.
- Cots are not always readily available and Party Leaders should provide their own travel cots if required and possible.

### **2. Towels**

Many hotels and centres do not provide towels and therefore all students should be advised to take a towel with them. Students intending to participate in activities or swimming should take a spare towel with them. In certain centres, beds will need to be made up by groups on arrival.

### 3. Vacation of rooms

On your date of departure, you may be required to vacate your rooms in the morning even if you are not scheduled to leave until much later that day. If your group is not departing until the evening, the hotel will normally do their best to ensure that one or two rooms are provided for washing and changing and an area provided for luggage storage (a supplement may apply). Rooms should be left clean and tidy and in certain centres students are expected to strip beds.

### 4. Meals

If we have made your meal arrangements with your hotel and you have specific requests, please advise us: Some hotels will try to provide food that we are used to in order to prevent food wastage where others will try to offer dishes that are typical of the country without being too elaborate or sophisticated. Students should be aware of this and we hope they will enjoy the food prepared by our hoteliers.

Full board is usually based on a packed lunch. Hot lunches if requested will normally carry a supplementary charge. Drinks with meals other than breakfast are not included. Whilst many hotels will provide water on the table this cannot be guaranteed. Some hotels will expect clients to purchase soft drinks and mineral water at meal times. Please do not consume drinks in the hotel which have been purchased from outside your accommodation.

Dietary Requirements: We will advise relevant suppliers of your requirements and allergies. It is the responsibility of the Party Leader and accompanying staff to ensure that the provision is correctly fulfilled. You must re-confirm and discuss these requests with your hotelier on arrival.

In our experience, foreign hoteliers do not always understand special diets, so it may be advisable in exceptional cases to take certain food items with you. Please advise us of specific requirements at the earliest possibility so that we can explain your needs to the hotel. No refund can be offered for a lack of suitable food provision for those travelling with special dietary requirements. If dietary alternatives are not satisfactory, please make suitable suggestions to the hotel/centre.

### 5. Damages and breakages

In an increasing number of accommodations the Party Leader will be expected to leave a deposit against possible damages with the Centre/Hotel Manager. Your Tour Co-ordinator will advise the exact amount required and method of payment possible.

Any damage caused to property belonging to the hotel/centre, whether caused wilfully or accidentally, will be the responsibility of the Party Leader. Groups will be expected to pay for any breakages or damages caused by a member of the group directly to the Proprietor. We will be obliged to pass on any invoices received from the hotel/centre representing damages and will not be responsible for compensation for items or property damage.

Enclosed with your Final Travel documentation you will find a "Room Check List" sheet. As Party Leader, you should complete and sign the Check List after inspecting all the rooms which your group will be occupying, on your arrival, and before departure. This should be done in conjunction with the Hotel Owner/Manager who should accompany you on inspection of the rooms and counter-sign the Check List after agreeing on the condition of each individual room.

By doing this, both Party Leader and Hotel Owner can establish what damage, if any, may have been caused by a previous group and thus justify any “new” problems which may have occurred since the arrival of your group. The deposit will be returned to the Party Leader on the day of departure after a full inspection of the accommodation has been made.

The above procedure allows the Party Leader to discuss any particular incidents with the Hotel Owner whilst in resort, should for any reason, your deposit be retained.

In the event of any damages being caused by a member of your group, payment must be made before your departure directly to the hotel. Your deposit will only be returned to you once full payment has been made. Students should also be advised that rooms should be left clean and tidy. Some hotels reserve the right to make a charge if the accommodation is left in a particularly poor state where extra and heavier-duty cleaning is required

## **IN RESORT**

### **1. Valuables and money matters**

Please remind your party members to keep valuables such as jewellery and expensive cameras to an absolute minimum.

We strongly advise Party Leaders and students to take with them a reasonable amount of local currency for use on the first few days of their holiday. In some destinations, banks are not open on a regular basis (particularly over Bank Holiday periods) and the use of prepaid cards or exchange of Travellers Cheques can sometimes prove difficult. If travelling by coach, ensure you take the currency of any countries in which stops, e.g. breakfast, may be made.

We suggest a reasonable float should be taken by all Party Leaders and that you have access to a credit or debit card with emergency funds to cover any medical expenses or the purchase of small items of medicine, taxi fares, etc. Amounts paid out for medical expenses can usually be claimed from the Insurance Company on your return to the UK (minus the excess).

### **2. Excursions**

We are happy to plan and book any excursions or visits you may require. Please remember, however, that additional costs incurred on excursions such as entrance fees, are not included in the tour price and you will therefore have to pay these on site or be invoiced prior to departure.

Invoices received at our offices for visits which have not been paid for on entrance will automatically be forwarded to the Party Leader for settlement. You should indicate details of any excursions or visits you wish us to book on your behalf on the excursion list provided.

Please advise any booked places of interest as early as possible if your party decides to cancel their visit, as cancellations fees may apply.



### 3. Dress Code

Proper dress is advised at all religious sites and many museums. Entry may be refused if group members have bare arms, shorts or short skirts.

### 4. Tipping

Coach driver's gratuity: If you travel by coach, it is customary to tip coach driver/s for good service.

North America: Please note that tipping is mandatory in North America, as opposed to the UK where we tip for good service. Often 15% will be added to your bill by waiting staff so make sure you check before paying. Please also don't forget your coach drivers (on arrival, departure and evening entertainment shuttles) your guides and your maids at the end of your stay.

### 5. European City Taxes

Please be aware that many European cities are introducing a city tax that is payable on arrival to your hotel. These taxes have been introduced by local governments to improve tourist infrastructure within the cities. Please ask your tour co-ordinator for up to date information on city tax.

## COMPLAINTS & INCIDENTS

If something does not go to plan, please advise us in the first instance so that we can do everything in our power to rectify the situation. Some groups will have a rep or a guide who should always be advised in the first instance. If you do not have a rep of guide, you should contact either our out of hour emergency line or our UK office: please find these contacts on the first page of this booklet.

## YOUR FEEDBACK

Finally, we hope you enjoy your tour with us and that we will have the pleasure of organising tours for you for many years to come. To help us to continually improve our service, we would be grateful if you could complete our questionnaire and return to us. Your comments and feedback are considered a valuable source of monitoring the quality of our tours and we are always keen to receive any positive and constructive suggestions.

This leaflet is issued for you and your party's guidance only and must be read in conjunction with our terms and conditions and other general information as set out in our Fair Trading Agreement, main brochures and price list. We have done our utmost to ensure that this leaflet provides honest and accurate information. Unfortunately it is inevitable that some of the details contained within this booklet may have changed since it was printed and we can accept no responsibility for changes which occur beyond our control.



# Educational Tours for Colleges & Universities



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