

TIPS TO PREPARE FOR GROUP TOUR TRAVEL PRIOR TO LEAVING

- Arrange for a home sitter or a relative to be a key holder to your home.
- Arrange for scheduled checks of your home and collection of your mail.
- Place your home interior and exterior lights on an automatic timer.
- Ensure that all your home's doors and windows are locked.
- If applicable inform your security provider of your vacation plans and inform them of the dates you will be away. Have them set up a temporary access code for your house sitter.
- Turn off your water to avoid any unnecessary plumbing bills when you return.
- Setup Talk Mail and a password. This will allow you access your personal phone messages while you're away.
- Provide your home sitter or family member with a copy of your itinerary in case of emergencies.
- Store a copy of your credit card information along with 800 numbers required for cancelling stolen or lost cards in a secret place.
- Verify with your personal banking officer that your personal debit card can be used in the region you are travelling to. Some cards need to be activated for use in another country prior to leaving.
- Check with your cell phone provider about rates while travelling. Roaming fees are very expensive. Purchase a calling card that usually has an average rate of 5 cents a minute.
- Contact your insurance provider and ensure that you have valid travel insurance.
- NO SCENTS-- Makes Sense!!
- Bring a small travel alarm clock and batteries, sewing kit and first aid kit.
- Bring comfortable footwear and pack a small disposable poncho and umbrella in case of inclement weather.
- Bring a camera and ensure to bring adequate film, batteries, memory cards and usage cords.
- Ensure that all pieces of ID are current and valid.
- Scan passports, driver's licenses, and paper documents. Store them in your email account.

- When packing don't pack all valuables together! Split them up! Pack your valuables and credit cards in different bags, different pockets, and different wallets.
 - Ensure bags carried on the tour bus will fit in the overhead compartments or under the seats.
 - If you have a backpack, pack the lighter items at the bottom so the bag will feel lighter resting against your lower back. Place "Always Used" items near the top so you aren't constantly packing and unpacking.
 - Pack anything that will leak in plastic or zip lock bags.
 - Use clear bags to pack items within your suitcase, this way you can always see what you are looking for and find the item you want right way.
 - Pack the clothing items you will need.
 - When traveling with a companion, split some of your clothes and personal hygiene items between both your bags. This way if a bag is mislaid, lost or doesn't arrive when you do (it does happen), you will have clothing to change into until your own can be located.
 - Don't wrap or seal anything if you anticipate going through security checks or border crossings.
 - Carry a flashlight with you! Put the batteries in backwards until you need it.
 - Provide your tour guide with a list of all your current medications. Keep all medications and important papers in a carry on bag so that they can be easily accessed in an emergency.
 - Carry a sweater or jacket on the tour bus to use as a pillow; knee pad/warmer; or put it on if you're chilly.
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Packing

- Bring contact phone numbers and addresses.
- Something to write on; something to write with.
- Cash, credit card, ATM card, traveler's checks, and money belt (if you carry large sums of cash).
- Valid identification.
- Dress for the season and be prepared for possible inclement weather. (Avoid the temptation of packing too much).

Hotel Hints

- Bring along an electric extension cord.... even some of the finest hotels do not have electric outlets which are easily accessible!
- Bring along an extra pair of prescription eyeglasses if available..... In case of a mishap, we don't want you to miss seeing any of the many marvels you haven't seen before!
- Tag your luggage inside and out.
- A fully stocked mini fridge or a mini bar may be tempting, but beware; most often the contained items are highly over priced and can add a substantial amount to your hotel bill.
- Don't store anything of value (cash, cameras, cell phones, credit cards, ID) in your hotel room while enjoying outside activities.
- Familiarize yourself with the hotel address, room number, phone number, any surrounding buildings.
- Familiarize yourself with any of the hotel's emergency exits and/or procedures in case of emergencies.