

NORTHVIEW BAND EUROPE TOUR 2015
NOVEMBER 2014 MEETING AGENDA
ADDITIONAL TRAVEL TIPS

1) **TRAVEL INSURANCE** – Travel Insurance is included in the form of a non-refundable \$145 per person premium. A full description of this insurance coverage is outlined in the “Travel Protection Plan Certificate of Coverage”, which you can view at the following web links:

Adult Tour Travel Protection Plan: www.tripmate.com/wpF432i/home

Student Tour Travel Protection Plan: www.tripmate.com/wpF430S/home

Note: The student tour insurance will cover up to \$1500 per person for musical instruments. You may wish to take out additional insurance to cover the full value of your instrument.

2) **SPENDING MONEY** – It is always hard for us to advise on how much money to bring, because it such a personal decision. All sightseeing admissions for this itinerary are included in the price. The main amount of money you will need to bring is for lunches and drinks for 14 days. For lunch, plan about \$15 a day. For beverages, which are not always included with dinner, plan \$20 a day including the purchase of bottled water to stay hydrated during the day. \$500 should more than cover the necessities. You can save on beverages by bringing an empty water bottle and filling it up at your accommodations each morning. Keep in mind that ice will not be easy to come by in Europe.

3) **MONEY TO BRING** – Euro will be the cash currency used during all but two days of the tour. Switzerland still uses the Swiss Franc. You can get by with the Euro in Switzerland but any change will be returned in Swiss Francs. We strongly discourage carrying any more than Euro 75 at any one time because cash can not be insured. It’s best to use an ATM card to get an additional Euro 50 at a time, as needed.

4) **ATM/CREDIT CARDS** - ATM machines are readily available everywhere in Europe so ATM cards will work best to get cash. ATM cards usually provide the lowest exchange fees and best exchange rates. Most vendors will not take a credit card for purchases of less than Euro 25 and, since all but lunch and beverages are included in this tour, most of your daily purchases will be under that amount.

You should be sure to check with your bank that your PIN code for your credit card or ATM Card will work in Europe and if you are getting a new ATM card, you may have to use it one time while still in the States before it will work in Europe. Some banks will allow you to assign a card with a certain limit to a child. It is important you call your bank and discuss how to best set up an ATM and credit or debit card for your student. If your bank is unable to assist, check into www.visabuxx.com, a travel related ATM/debit card catering to traveling teens.

5) **MONEY BELT/POUCH** - We highly recommend using either a money belt or pouch to be worn under the clothing. Fanny packs are fine for a small camera, sun glasses and sun screen, but still wear a pouch or belt under the clothes with passport, cash, ATM card, and credit card.

6) **TELEPHONE** – If your student is bringing a cell phone, check with the cell phone provider about a temporary international calling and texting program. If your phone has this capability, you can usually turn it on for just the two weeks your student will be in Europe to keep the costs down. This should be reserved for emergencies only (not for keeping in touch with friends at home or on the tour as the rates will be higher than you expect.) Those with smart phones will want to sign up for “WhatsApp,” which allows you to send messages and even pictures for free. Wi-fi will be available in many locations, but not all of them. In the final documents, we will note which hotels have wi-fi available.

Calling cards do not tend to work well and hotels charge high rates for outgoing calls. If you do not have a smart phone, the best calling method is for parents to call students in the evening, at the hotel. Some accommodations will not have phones in the room, in which case the student can call from reception to quickly let the parent know they are available. The parent can then call them back at reception. This will keep the calling cost to the student under Euro 10.

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7) PACKING & BAGGAGE ALLOWANCES

Each participant on the tour may bring one (1) suitcase. The suitcase cannot exceed 62 total linear inches (length + height + width, excluding wheels and handles) and cannot exceed 50 lbs in weight. A few examples of sizes currently on the market that fit the luggage allowance are: 28" x 21" x 10.5" or 29" x 21" x 11".

Students need to take their instruments as their carry-on. Pack your instrument in a hard case. The instruments cannot be sealed before security but students with larger instruments, such as saxophones or trombones, need to have proper padding and bring duct tape to properly seal them in case the airline needs to put them on the conveyor at check-in or take the instrument at the gate because most likely the larger instruments will go through the baggage conveyor at some point. Those with flutes or clarinets may wish to pack them in their suitcase. Those who have larger instruments, such as drums or tubas, will definitely need to check them. Students not carrying an instrument may be asked to carry other carry-on sized equipment for the group.

Contrary to any other information, students may not bring a full-size carry-on because their instrument is their carry-on. In addition to carrying their instrument case, the students may bring a small personal item such as a purse, small backpack, pull string bag, fanny pack or similar tote.

Prescription medicine with proper label and extra prescription should be carried with passenger.

Note About Carry-On for Adult Tour: Those on the adult tour may bring a carry-on that fits in the space under your seat, which measures 17" x 14" x 8".)

Everyone must stick to these allowances as the airlines are charging very high fees if your luggage is outside the allowances and there will not be room on the bus for additional luggage. Students, keep in mind that you will be carrying your own bags for 15 days so pack light and bring a suitcase with wheels. Mix and match. A pair of jeans and jean shorts are a good staple.

8) **ELECTRICITY** – If you are bringing electrical appliances, you will need to bring plug adapters as the sockets are different than ours. You can buy these at luggage and hardware stores. The socket shapes vary in each of the countries within Europe. Therefore, unless you can find an adapter that specifically states it works in all countries throughout Europe, you will need to purchase a set of adapters. You may also need to buy a converter as the European voltage is different than ours. Some appliances, such as curling irons, are dual voltage in which case you will not need the converter but will still need the adapters. Please read the appliance instructions carefully, as some dual voltage appliances have a switch that you need to set to 220 voltage and some automatically work in either voltage). You might talk this over with someone who you put down as a roommate. One of you could get the adapters and one the converter...less cost and a little less to pack. You may even want to share blow dryers and curling irons in the same way.

9) **DOCUMENTS** – We plan to schedule a final documents meeting in June. Documents include passenger rosters, final itinerary, overnight schedules that you can leave with family including phone numbers of each of the hotels, exchange rates, flight schedule, luggage tags (two per person. Additional tags will be given to Mr. Wells to use for the instruments and equipment), final instructions, tax information, and customs information (what you may or may not bring on the flight). All air tickets will be e-tickets (electronic). Therefore, we do not have to worry about anyone losing their tickets. All you will need for airport check in is your passport.

10) **QUESTIONS** –

General questions about the student tour should be directed to Greg Wells at gwells@nvps.net.

Questions about payments for either tour or general questions about the Adult tour should be directed to Image Tours Inc. at nhs@imagetours.com or by calling 957-1000 (within 616 area code) or 1-800-964-3170.