

Code EEBD **Balkans Discovered**

Tour Dossier Introduction

Dossier Last Updated: 24-11-2014

Tour Code: EEBD

Duration: 17 nights / 18 days

Joining City: Budapest

Departure City: Dubrovnik

Nearest Joining International Airport: Budapest Ferenc Liszt Intl Airport (BUD)

Nearest Departing International Airport: Dubrovnik Airport (DBV)

Please check this document just before departing in case of last minute changes to your tour.

Tour Documents

 PDF Document  Web Page

-  [Albania Dossier](#)
-  [Bosnia and Herzegovina Dossier](#)
-  [Bulgaria Dossier](#)
-  [Croatia Dossier](#)
-  [Hungary Dossier](#)
-  [Macedonia Dossier](#)
-  [Montenegro Dossier](#)
-  [Serbia Dossier](#)

What's Included

- > Entry to the KGB Museum
- > Free time at Lake Ohrid
- > Entry to Kruja
- > Entry to Ostrog Monastery
- > Entry to Kotor

- > 15 nights in hotels, hostels & guesthouses, 2 nights in apartments
- > 11 breakfasts
- > Travel by Public Bus, Private Vehicle, Train, Minibus, Taxi, Foot
- > Tucan Travel tour leader, English-speaking local guide(s) on included excursions

What's not Included

- International flights and departure taxes
- Domestic flight taxes if applicable
- Tips on included excursions, visas, travel insurance, personal items and single rooms.
- Airport transfers and pre and post tour accommodation
- Spending money – budget for meals, snacks, drinks, limited souvenirs, laundry, tips and any extras
- Optional excursions - Please see our optional excursions guide on the dossier page for a comprehensive list of optional activities and excursions available on this tour.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 to 1 - Arrive Budapest

The first day of your tour is simply an arrival day with no pre-organised activities. In order to allow time to relax and see some of the sights you may wish to add pre tour accommodation. On arrival please ask at the reception for information on when the pre departure meeting will be held.

Budapest, Hungary's stylish capital is known as the 'City of Spas' for its abundance of natural thermal springs.

Straddling the Danube River, the city is comprised of two very different historic cities, Buda on the west bank and Pest on the east bank. Highlights here include Castle Hill, Matthias Church, Fisherman's Bastion, the Liberation Monument, the fabulous St Stephen's Basilica and the much photographed Parliament Building.

Terror Haza (Terror House) is a popular museum recounting stories of espionage and atrocities committed during World War II and during the communist period. During your optional visit you can view very moving testimonial footage from survivors and visit old jail cells, torture chambers and interrogation rooms.

The Dohany Street Synagogue is the largest synagogue in Europe and features stunning decorations. You can also wander around Central Market Hall and enjoy the intoxicating sights and smells of 'Budapest's pantry' and get an idea of Hungary's food culture - you can even buy chocolates by the kilo!

The perfect place to relax after a day of sightseeing is in a traditional bath. The Széchenyi Medicinal Baths are one of the city's more famous Neo Baroque-style baths with indoor and outdoor pools, thermal pools, saunas and massages in a beautiful setting. After a nice soak you can visit numerous restaurants and bars to visit on Liszt Ferenc for an enjoyable evening's entertainment.

Optional Excursions: Danube Cruise – €16 (drinks only). You can expect to pay approx €30 for dinner aboard. • Hop on, Hop off bus – HUF 6000
Szechenyi baths – HUF 3600 • House of Terror – HUF 2000 • Basilica of St Stephen – free • Castle Hill – HUF 1700 • Hungarian National Museum – HUF1600

Day 2 to 2 - Novi Sad

Serbia's cultural centre, Novi Sad, is overlooked by the magnificent Petrovaradin fortress. Built between 1692 and 1780, the fortress was repeatedly attacked but never taken by an enemy. Although it has long since lost its strategic military value, since 1951 it has been an important cultural centre and one of the largest art colonies in the world with over 88 art studios. Visitors can buy art, talk with the artists and feel the atmosphere of studios while works of art are created. There are also three interesting restaurants, a museum, catacombs, great views of the Danube. Novi Sad is also known for its international music festivals, underground military galleries and above ground, such as the International Street Musicians' Festival in September offering diverse music genres, funny instruments, jugglers, street shows and acrobatics.

Optional Excursions: Petrovaradin Fortress – RSD 400

Day 3 to 4 - Belgrade

Located at the crossing point of the Sava and Danube rivers is Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, where you will have plenty of time to explore. In the course of its long history, Belgrade has been captured 60 times, burned down around 40 times, and has risen phoenix-like from the ashes every time.

Looming over the old city is the ancient Kalemegdan Citadel, which was built in stages from the 1st century BC and was finally finished in the 18th century. We will visit the well-preserved ruins and may even see graffiti made by bored medieval guardsmen, as well as numerous museums and galleries. The view of the city from the fortress is fantastic and not to be missed. If time allows it is definitely worth a visit to St Sava Church, one of the largest Orthodox churches in world. The city itself offers excellent shopping opportunities, from luxurious upscale boutiques through to an enormous bazaar and a Saturday farmer's market at Zeleni Venac selling an assortment of seasonal produce.

When you're ready for a break, you can relax on the beach at 'Belgrade Hawaii', Ada Ciganlija, an island in the middle of the Sava River. During the summer the island attracts hundreds of thousands of people looking for a place to cool down, so it can be crowded on hot days. Belgrade is very well known for its nightlife and is a major draw card for Europeans looking for a party. There are countless nightclubs, bars, and cafés that stay lively into the wee hours of the night, many of which are located on river barges.

Included Excursions: Kalemegdan Citadel

Optional Excursions: Ethnographical Museum – RSD 100 • Nikola Tesla Museum – RSD 300 • National Museum – RSD 200 • Sightseeing bus – RSD 500

Day 5 to 5 - Niš

After Belgrade we move on to Niš, one of the oldest cities in the Balkans. Niš is the birthplace of Constantine the Great, the first Christian Roman Emperor and founder of Constantinople, AD 306 to 337. If time allows we may have a chance to visit the Mediana ruins and see where Constantine the Great once lived. The most infamous attraction at Niš is the Ottoman skull-tower known as ?ele Kula. It dates from a time when ruling Ottoman soldiers were growing tired of Serb rebellions against occupation. After quelling an uprising in 1809, Ottoman troops decapitated 952 fallen Serbs and built a short, square tower out of the Serbs' heads. Within a few years the Serbs had managed to get rid of the Ottomans but kept the Skull Tower as a memorial to the sacrifice of the early Serb nationalists. There are about 58 skulls left - others were removed for burial or destroyed over time. Before our onward travel to Sofia in Bulgaria you have an opportunity to visit the Niš Concentration Camp and Museum, one of the few fully preserved fascist camps in Europe.

Optional Excursions: ?ele Kula (skull tower) – RSD 160 • Mediana, an archaeological site dating back to Constantine the Great – included in skull tower ticket • Archeological Museum – RSD 160 • Crveni Krst Concentration Camp – RSD 160

Day 6 to 7 - Sofia

Bulgaria's capital Sofia offers a wealth of cultural entertainment, including Byzantine churches, museums full of ancient archaeological treasures, towering monuments and numerous mineral baths adjacent to the magnificent Mount Vitoshka. Laid back and cosmopolitan, Sofia offers a thriving and diverse street life, including open-air cafés, busy markets such as the famous Ladies' Market, rattling trams and buskers all adding to the ambience. At the foothills of Mount Vitoshka about 8 kilometres from the city centre you can visit the 900 year-old Boyana Church, considered among the masterpieces of medieval European painting, which features murals and frescoes dating back to 1259 AD, medieval architecture and monumental art. Also at the base of Mt. Vitoshka is the splendid National History Museum, with antiques dating back to the Thracian period.

Sofia also offers many beautiful gardens to relax in, such as Boris Gardens and the South Park, which starts just behind the Palace of Culture.

Optional Excursions: Ethnographical Museum – BGN 3 • National Art Gallery – BGN 6 • Alexander Nevski Cathedral – free • St Alexander Nевski – BGN 4 • National Museum of History – BGN 10

Day 8 to 8 - Skopje

In Skopje, Macedonia's capital, you can enjoy 2,000 years of history spanning Oriental and Western cultures, neatly divided by the Vardar River through the centre of the city. Skopje has many historical monuments including the Kale Fortress dating back to the 6th century, the Daud Paša Amam, a 15th century bathhouse now converted into the city art gallery. You can also see the Mustafa-pasha's mosque, the 16th century Clock Tower and the Kamen Most (Stone Bridge) over the Vardar River.

Optional Excursions: Mother Teresa statue and memorial room – free • National Museum & Icon Gallery – MKD 50

Day 9 to 10 - Lake Ohrid

We travel on to the gorgeous lake side town of Ohrid, perching on the Macedonia/Albania border. This unassuming, picturesque settlement has been the setting of thousands of years of human history and the ancient churches, fortress walls, bazaars and old quarters are testimony to its past. Lake Ohrid itself is Europe's oldest lake having formed over three millions years ago. Wander the streets and squares of its compact centre before hiking up to the ancient walled fortress that overlooks the day to day life of the city and explore the famous old churches, monasteries and basilicas.

Included Excursions: Visit Lake Ohrid

Optional Excursions: Sveta Bogorodica Bolnicka, originally a hospital church where plague victims were quarantined – free of charge • Sveti Nikola Bolnicki – free of charge • National Museum – MKD 100 • Samoil's Fortress – MKD 50 • Sveta Bogorodica Perivlepta, a 13th century painted church – MKD 100 • St Pantelejmon monastery – free • Boat trip around Lake Ohrid - €15 per person (based on 6-8 people)

Day 11 to 11 - Tirana

We then head to Tirana, the trendy capital and largest city of Albania, which has transformed from a grey, dismal ex-communist city, isolated by the regime until the 1990s, to a colourful capital buzzing with life. While the city has a long history, you can enjoy its modern outlook, with fashionable bars, and wander boulevards lined with relics of the city's Ottoman, clubs and boutiques, Italian and communist past. Tirana's massive main square, Sheshi Skënderbej, is bordered by the National History Museum, the Palace of Culture, the National Bank, the Et'hem Bey Mosque and Skanderbeg's statue. A short bus ride from the centre city, the Martyr's Cemetery offers marvellous panoramic views over the city. If time allows we may have an opportunity for a morning trip to Kruja.

Included Excursions: Kruja

Optional Excursions:

Day 12 to 13 - Budva

Our next visit is to the seaside town of Budva in Montenegro. Budva (not to be confused with the Czech beer Budvar) is 2,500 years old, one of the oldest and most popular settlements on the Adriatic coast of Montenegro. This vibrant seaside town is well known for its sandy beaches, historic old town, diverse nightlife, and beautiful examples of Mediterranean architecture.

We will take a day trip to the picturesque Kotor, a walled city nestled at the bottom of Europe's deepest fjord. Stari Grad, the old town, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with a tricky labyrinth of cobbled alleys, squares and ancient churches, including St Tryphon's Cathedral built in 1166. The mountains provide a dramatic backdrop to this beautiful town as they come down steeply, almost to the waterfront. You could spend the day drinking espresso in the shade of the medieval walls watching people go by. You can climb the walls of the ancient fort of Sveti Ivan which spans some 4.5 kilometres above the city on almost vertical cliffs. Your efforts will be rewarded by an excellent view of Kotor and the bay.

We will visit Ostrog Monastery, clinging precariously to an almost vertical cliff face. Ostrog Monastery is a famous Serbian Orthodox Church built in the 17th century to honour one of the four Montenegrin saints, Vasilije Jovanovic, who fled here from the Turks in 1665. The greatest spiritual centre of Montenegro and the most visited Orthodox shrine in the Balkans, the sanctuary still attracts pilgrims who hope to cure their illnesses and other problems by praying over his remains. You may also have time to take in the Old Royal Capital of Cetinje, visiting the Monastery and many museums showcasing some of Montenegro's prosperous past.

Included Excursions: Kotor • Ostrog Monastery

Optional Excursions Budva Museum – €3 • Discover the picturesque old town – free • Boka Kotorska (Bay of Kotor), a full day trip of Mamuladska beach and Blue cave – price TBA

Day 14 to 15 - Sarajevo

Crossing the border into the 'heart-shaped land' of Bosnia and Herzegovina we visit the capital Sarajevo, a fascinating mixture of western and eastern cultures. Known as the 'Jerusalem of Europe', the city was once famous for its religious diversity, with people of Islamic, Orthodox Christian, Catholic and Jewish faiths coexisting relatively peacefully for centuries. The atmosphere of calm and tolerance changed dramatically when violence erupted in the mid 1990s and the city underwent the longest siege in modern military history during the Yugoslav War.

Today the city is largely recovered and is packed with fascinating museums bazaars, markets and bridges. During your time here you could explore the cobbled streets, mosques and Oriental style shops of the Old Town, visit the Bosnian Historical Museum to learn about the siege of Sarajevo and visit the Sarajevo Tunnel Museum, the tunnel which was used to ferry supplies into the besieged city during the conflict, next to the airport. For history buffs a must see is the "Latin Bridge" spanning the river in the down-town area. The bridge bears a plaque commemorating the assassination of Archduke of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Franz Ferdinand, the event that sparked the beginning of World War I. Today the city is largely recovered and is packed with fascinating museums

Optional Excursions: Tunnel Museum, the entrance to the tunnel used during the Bosnian War – BAM 30 • Jewish Museum – BAM 2 • Jewish Tour BAM 32 every day at 2pm • Communism Tour – BAM 38 (minimum 2 people) • Orthodox Church Museum – free but donations welcome • History Museum – B

Day 16 to 16 - Mostar

Widely felt to be the prettiest city in Bosnia and Herzegovina Mostar is situated on the Neretva river and is the fifth-largest city in the country. Mostar was named after the bridge keepers (natively: mostari) who kept the Stari Most (Old Bridge) over Neretva river. The city is particularly famous for this beautiful single span bridge, Stari Most, which collapsed into the Neretva River during the Yugoslav War in 1993. Built in 1556 by the Ottoman ruler Suleiman the Great, Stari Most had been a globally recognised landmark and a national symbol for Bosnia-Herzegovina. It had survived centuries of conflict including both world wars and proved that, whatever happened, the mainly Christian west bank and mainly Muslim east remained united. The destruction of the bridge was a huge blow to the local people, but in 2004 the bridge was rebuilt as a replica of the original using pieces of masonry salvaged from the riverbed. Its reopening represented the hope that Muslims, Croats and Serbs could once again live side by side and that Mostar would be healed after a decade of ethnic division.

Optional Excursions: Koski Mehmed Pasha Mosque - €2.5 (includes minaret) • Karad-zozbegova Mosque - €2.5 (includes minaret) • Turkish House BAM 2 • Memorial Museum of Herzegovina – BAM 1.5

Day 17 to 17 - Dubrovnik

Into the south of Croatia, we visit the 'Pearl of the Adriatic', the UNESCO World Heritage listed walled city of Dubrovnik.

With a paved town centre enclosed in fortress-like 13th century stone walls, the city is easy to explore on foot and is full of character. A great start to your

exploration of Dubrovnik could be with a walk around the city walls. Stretching almost 2 kilometres around the old town, the walls offer stunning rooftop and city views out to the turquoise blue Adriatic Sea. Founded in the 7th century, for a time in its glorious past the city was a serious rival for Venice in terms of maritime trade. It is hard to believe now but in 1991, two out of every three buildings were damaged during the bombardment of the Yugoslav War. Since then the buildings and walls have been painstakingly restored to pristine condition and represents one of the most beautiful and solid fortress systems on the Mediterranean. There are several other historic attractions worth a visit near the main street (Stradun), such as the 14th century Franciscan monastery which houses a treasury full of sacred art and artefacts, as well as one of the oldest continually working pharmacies in the world, dating back to 1317.

Included Excursions: Dubrovnik City Wall

Optional Excursions: Museum of the Orthodox Church – HRK 10 • Synagogue – HRK 10 • 14th century Dominican Monastery – HRK 15 • Republic of Ragusa – HRK 20 • Lokrum Island – ferry HRK 80 • Half day kayaking – €40 • Scuba diving – one boat dive €46, two dives €83, wreck dive €55 • Dubrovnik 24 hour City

Day 18 to 18 - Depart Dubrovnik

Your adventure of a lifetime comes to an end today. If you have a late flight or have lengthened your stay by adding post tour accommodation you will have more time to explore the sights.

Day by Day Itinerary

| Day | Activity | Country | Meals | Single Room |
|--------|------------|------------------------|-------|-------------|
| Day 1 | Budapest | Hungary | | ✓ |
| Day 2 | Novi Sad | Serbia | B | ✓ |
| Day 3 | Belgrade | | B | ✓ |
| Day 4 | Belgrade | | B | ✓ |
| Day 5 | Niš | | | ✓ |
| Day 6 | Sofia | Bulgaria | B | |
| Day 7 | Sofia | | B | |
| Day 8 | Skopje | Macedonia | B | ✓ |
| Day 9 | Lake Ohrid | | B | ✓ |
| Day 10 | Lake Ohrid | | B | ✓ |
| Day 11 | Tirana | Albania | B | ✓ |
| Day 12 | Budva | Montenegro | B | ✓ |
| Day 13 | Budva | | B | ✓ |
| Day 14 | Sarajevo | Bosnia and Herzegovina | | ✓ |
| Day 15 | Sarajevo | | | ✓ |
| Day 16 | Mostar | | | ✓ |
| Day 17 | Dubrovnik | Croatia | | |
| Day 18 | Dubrovnik | | | |

(B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner included)

For tours that include the option of a single supplement, a ? will indicate in which destinations single rooms are available. The detailed and day by day itineraries above are provided in good faith and it is our intention to adhere to the published route. Changes may be made before or during your tour for

operational or safety reasons or to incorporate improvements. Impromptu changes may also occur whilst you are travelling as a result of one-off circumstances such as an excursion being closed on a particular day, weather conditions or transport. Delays are rare but occur occasionally and for this reason and the reasons above this itinerary should be considered as a guide only. Published transport times are approximations and may vary depending on local conditions.

Travel Style

This is an Adventure Tour, we see a destination from the locals' perspective using a variety of transport and staying in small locally owned accommodation. There is a maximum of 16 travellers with an average group size of 8-12. All our Adventure Tours are priced per person on a shared room basis meaning there is no compulsory extra payment for those travelling on their own. Please read the Adventure Tour travel style dossier to ensure you understand the style of travel you are undertaking: <http://www.tucantravel.com/travel-styles/dossier/adventure-tours>

I'd like my own room

If you are a solo traveller, a single room is available on most occasions at an extra cost. Price information can be found on the price page of each tour. This must be booked in advance.

Joining your tour

Your joining location is:

Medosz Hotel
Jokai ter 9
H-1061
Budapest,
Hungary

Tel: (+36) 1 374 3001 or 353 1700
www.medoszhotel.hu

There are safe deposit boxes for your use (you will get an itemised receipt). Please leave all of your important documents, money and travellers cheques here when you go out but remember to carry some form of ID and a photocopy of your passport with you.

Arriving in Budapest

On arrival at Ferihegy International Airport in Budapest we recommend that you obtain some local currency, the Hungarian forint. There are international ATMs inside the airport, as well as money exchange offices offering a good rate. The rate will always vary slightly depending on where you go and it may be worth changing a small amount of money at the airport for your transport, then finding a bank or money exchange within the town centre.

Airport Transfers

Airport transfers are not included in the tour price and must be booked separately in advance through Tucan Travel. If you have booked an airport/hotel transfer with us, please look out for someone with a sign which has your name, Tucan Travel, or both after exiting the customs hall.

If you have booked an arrival transfer with us and you are going to be delayed by more than two hours, you must advise us of the delay at least six hours before arrival. If we are advised in time, we will make every effort to reschedule your transfer and your driver will be asked to wait for two hours after your new expected arrival time. However, if we are not made aware of any change, the driver will only wait for two hours after the original scheduled arrival time and after this point it will be up to you to arrange transport to your hotel at your own expense. Please contact us on the emergency contact address below if you are likely to be delayed.

Contact your arrival transfer:

Tel: 3613743000
info@medozshotel.hu
Contact: Medosz Hotel - Anita

Making your own way

If you would prefer to make your own way to and from your hotel, the Zona taxi company is the only one authorised to run taxis from the stand outside the airport. The fares are fixed by zone and a taxi to the hotel will cost €20-30.

the Airport Minibus service, a shared taxi operation that collects passengers going in the same direction, will take you to or from anywhere in Budapest for HUF 2990 (approximately €10 per person).

The state railway operates a service to the Nyugati Railway Station in central Budapest from a station outside Terminal 1. From Terminal 2 the The 200E

bus runs past the station at Terminal 1. This stop is called 'Ferihegy vasútállomás'. Tickets can be bought from the information desk or vending machines inside the terminal. Tickets cost 365 forints (€1.30)

The bus no. 200E connects to the metro system at Kőbánya-Kispest metro station. The journey takes approximately 30 minutes. Tickets can be bought at newspaper vendors inside the airport for 300-400 forints. A separate ticket will be needed for the metro and can be bought at the terminal.

The nearest metro station to hotel is Oktogon station on the Yellow line.

Pre-Departure Meeting

When you arrive on day one of your trip, you should find some local information at the hotel lobby. Your tour leader will be staying in the hotel and should have put up a welcome note to let you know what room they are in. A pre-departure meeting is usually held in the afternoon or early evening of day one. You will need to bring the following important items to the meeting with your tour leader:

- Your passport, including any necessary visas and at least one photocopy to give to your tour leader
- Vaccination certificates if relevant to any destinations on your tour
- Travel insurance policy and a photocopy to give to your tour leader
- Your travel voucher
- Your local payment in US\$ cash (Budget Expeditions only)

Missing the tour departure

If you miss the start of your tour, please ask at the reception of the hotel for a message from your tour leader which will give you instructions on how to catch up with the group. Any associated costs will be at your own expense (although, depending on the reason, you may be able to claim these from your travel insurance so ensure you keep all receipts).

If you know in advance that you are unlikely to arrive on time, please contact Tucan Travel immediately so we can inform the tour leader. Tucan Travel cannot be held responsible should your airline/boat/coach be delayed and we are unable to refund any unused portion of your tour.

Time Keeping

Punctuality is very important and throughout the tour your tour leader will give you the time to meet in reception. Tour leaders will often post notes at reception with meeting times, so remember to always look out for these.

Although rare, delays can occur and we therefore advise you not to arrange your onward travel too close to the end of the tour. We take no responsibility for any missed flights or additional expenses if the group arrives late into the departure city at the end of the tour.

Emergency Contact Details

In the case of an emergency before you meet your tour leader, please contact our Tucan Travel Europe Manager:

Tel:+44 (0)7775 53 2808

Please note that this number is a service for emergency calls only. We respectfully request that you consider the urgency of your enquiry. Non-urgent enquiries should be made during office hours. Visit [contact us page](#) for office hours.

Tucan Travel London office: +44 (0)208 896 1600

Keeping in Touch

Your tour leader will point out internet cafes in all major cities and towns and Wi-Fi may be available in some hotels. Hotel details, apart from the joining hotel, are not given in advance and are subject to change, so if someone needs to contact you urgently during your tour, the best method is to contact our office who can pass a message on to the tour leader.

If you intend to take your mobile phone you should find out in advance from your network provider if your phone is set up for international roaming and if there is coverage in your destination. You may also find it considerably more expensive to send texts and receive calls if you are on a non European or British Network. A much cheaper option would be to purchase a telephone card and use local pay phones.

Money

For personal spending money you should bring Euros alongside the local currency (where applicable). Generally the most convenient way of carrying your spending money is by having at least a couple of credit or debit cards. The majority of cards (Visa, Diners Club, MasterCard, American Express and Maestro, Plus and Cirrus for debit cards) are accepted in most large cities and tourist areas. ATMs (cash machines) are widespread. It is always best to carry a mix of cards and cash with you, including notes in small denominations.

Your spending money should cover some meals, optional excursions, souvenirs, drinks, laundry, border and airport taxes and any visas obtained locally. We provide guideline prices for optional excursions in the itinerary to help you budget, but ultimately the amount you will need to budget for your trip very much depends on your individual requirements. We recommend bringing extra money to cover emergencies or unexpected situations.

Tipping

Tipping is a part of the life in Europe, but you should not feel obliged or pressured to tip if you have not received good service. A gratuity of 10% of the total bill is recommended in restaurants. Gratuities are usually expected for local guides on included and optional excursions. Tips are also appreciated by Tucan Travel tour leaders at the end of your tour and we recommend an average of \$2-\$4 per person per day for the duration of your tour. This is only if you feel that their service was up to standard and is completely at your own discretion.

Packing List

The best advice when packing is to travel light and leave space for souvenirs in your bag.

Luggage

On our tours in Europe your luggage must be strictly limited to one reasonably-sized bag or backpack with a recommended maximum weight of no more than 20 kilograms/44 pounds plus one small day pack. You will have to carry your own luggage, sometimes down cobbled streets and up flights of stairs and cannot expect your tour leader to carry your bags.

We recommend a frameless backpack or a sports type shoulder bag which fits comfortably on your shoulders, as they are less bulky and easier to handle than rigid suitcases or framed backpacks. Suitcases are not suitable for our tours and are not recommended. Tucan Travel takes no responsibility for damage to your luggage while on tour.

In addition to your main bag, you will need a small daypack for your everyday excursions. Try to keep this bag as light as possible and make sure that all main sections of your bags can be padlocked. This daypack should have enough room to carry food and snacks, camera and personal items

Sleeping Sheet

Sleeping bags are not required on this tour, but a sleeping bag liner/sleep sheet is optional if you wish to bring one along. Some passengers like to use them on long bus journeys and overnight trains.

Clothing and Footwear

All clothes should be lightweight, durable and easily washable. Please do not bring any military or camouflage-style clothing as it can be dangerous to wear and occasionally illegal. Nights can be cold so it is a good idea to bring at least one pair of warm trousers or jeans plus several thinner sweaters / fleeces which you can layer.

Good, comfortable walking shoes are essential. These do not need to be expensive boots, but they should have good ankle support and grip, be worn in and ideally waterproof.

Essential items:

- A lightweight water/windproof jacket with hood
- Easy to pack wide-brimmed hat or cap
- Swimwear
- Sandals or thongs/jandals/flip flops

Suggested items:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money belt | <input type="checkbox"/> Small collapsible umbrella |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic bags for waterproofing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small calculator | <input type="checkbox"/> Inflatable pillow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Universal washbasin plug | <input type="checkbox"/> Towel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel alarm clock | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel plug adaptor with a USB port |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lip balm, sun block with high UV factor | <input type="checkbox"/> Small sewing kit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wet wipes | <input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent (DEET 35% min) and bite cream |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheap plastic watch | <input type="checkbox"/> Antibacterial hand clensing gel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plenty of spare memory cards for your camera | <input type="checkbox"/> Ear plugs and sleep mask |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spare rechargeable batteries for camera | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel sickness tablets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing materials, address book and diary | <input type="checkbox"/> Spare pair of spectacles or contact lenses and solution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel games, cards and a couple of paperbacks | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard drive or USB stick to back up your photos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small medical kit with diarrhoea remedy, rehydration salts, antiseptic cream, sterile dressings, plasters, bandages, pain-killers, safety pins etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Pocket size phrasebook |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pegless washing line & travel laundry detergent (bio-degradable preferable) |

Laundry

There are usually laundromats or laundry services in or near most of our hotels. Hotel services can be pretty costly however your tour leader will be able to recommend cheaper options. If you wash clothes yourself take care not to be too obvious where you hang them as most hotels do not like guests washing and drying their clothes in the hotel rooms.

Electricity Supply

If bringing electrical equipment, make sure that you bring a two-pin/pronged, round-pin adapter/plug adapter.

Health, Fitness & Safety

Pack a Medical Kit

A medical kit is handy for minor wounds and ailments. In areas with limited or dubious medical facilities, an emergency medical kit containing sterile syringes is also advisable. By law our staff are not allowed to administer first aid or give drugs to travellers, so please be prepared with your own supplies.

If you are taking medication, please ensure you bring an adequate supply and a letter from your doctor to avoid potential issues at border crossings.

Fitness & Suitability

This is a public transport-based tour so it is essential that you be able to carry your bags over distances between bus and train stations and hotels, generally for up to 20 minutes. Disruptions happen and while your tour leader will make every effort to ensure your trip runs smoothly, patience, a sense of humour and willingness to get involved and help your tour leader are essential ingredients for a successful and happy group.

If you have any pre-existing medical conditions please let us know at the time you book or as early before departure as possible. Depending on the severity of the condition, you may be asked to produce a medical certificate from your doctor approving your participation in this tour. While this would only happen in very exceptional circumstances, if we consider you incapable completing this tour or you have concealed an existing medical condition which is affecting your ability to participate in the tour of Tucan Travel reserve the right to turn you away without reimbursement.

Safety & Security

Europe is generally very safe, even more so in a group. Reasonable precaution is advised; do not bring valuable jewellery or watches (even fakes can catch the eye of a thief), do not bring your camera equipment in a flashy camera bag, be prudent and keep your valuables in a safe secure place whenever possible, wear a money belt and distribute your valuables throughout your luggage, heed your tour leader's advice and always keep an eye and a hand on your camera and bags in public places. Tucan Travel cannot accept responsibility for any valuables left in safe deposits in hotels or on public transport.

Travel Guides

If you would like to discover more about your destination, including history, geography, climate and language, please have a read of our country travel guides available here: <http://www.tucantravel.com/destination-travel-guides/europe-travel-guides>.

Documents

Passport

Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months after you have finished your tour with sufficient blank pages for visas and immigration stamps. Photocopy your passport, leaving one copy at home and taking one with you on tour. If you lose your passport while on tour, you will be responsible for any expenses incurred such as extra accommodation and transport while replacing your passport and will not be entitled to a refund of any unused portion of your tour.

Tour Documents

Before you depart you will be issued with a voucher for your tour and separate vouchers for any extra services such as airport transfers and pre/post tour accommodation. Please print these out and bring them with you. This dossier is updated regularly, so we recommend checking our website for the latest version just prior to the start of your tour.

Final Balance

The balance for your tour is due no later than 60 days prior to the start of your tour and no tour vouchers will be issued until this is received. In addition please send the following details at least 60 days before you depart:

- Passport number, date of issue, date of expiry, nationality and place of issue
- Your full name and date of birth
- Flight arrival details in your starting city
- Special requirements, e.g. special dietary requirements or allergies

Please let us know if you are travelling with another person on the tour but have made separate bookings and we will endeavour to make suitable rooming arrangements.

Visas

All countries have visa requirements that are subject to change at short notice. A general guideline for visa requirements is available here: <http://www.tucantravel.com/before-you-go/visa-guide>, but you must check with your local embassy or consulate for the very latest visa requirement information based on your nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have all necessary visas for your tour. If you would like help applying for visas, we have recommended visa agencies on our visa page that we work with regularly.

Important things to check when applying for visas:

- Does the validity of the visa cover the duration of your time spent in the country?
- Do you require a single or multiple entry visa(s) for your tour?
- Are you required to show additional documentation when you arrive in a country? (Examples include proof of onward travel and travel itinerary)

Some visas are only valid for entry within three months of the date of issue which means on some of our longer tours the visa would expire before you are scheduled to enter the country. In these cases you must obtain the relevant visa during your tour. If it is necessary for you to obtain any visas en-route, please contact Tucan Travel or your travel consultant and inform your tour leader at the start of the tour. If you do not have the appropriate visas, Tucan Travel will not reimburse any expenses incurred in acquiring visas or any unused portion of the tour.

It is best to apply for visas in your home country if possible. If applying for visas by post, please allow plenty of time before departure and send your application by registered mail. Postal applications tend to be given a lower priority than in person applications and can take longer to process.

Special Note: If you have dual nationality it is advised not to obtain different visas in different passports. Although this may sometimes be cheaper, you may encounter problems at border crossings if your exit stamps from one country are not the same as your visa for the next.

Travel Insurance Policy

Travel insurance is compulsory for all tours. You must be adequately insured for medical, hospital, baggage and personal expenses, any necessary extra travel (rejoining tour or repatriation) as well as curtailment and cancellation.

We strongly recommend that all clients carry a copy of their full policy document with them at all times, together with any certificate showing the policy number and emergency contact details. Your tour leader will also ask for a photocopy of your insurance document, so please take this to the pre-departure meeting at the start of your tour. You will not be able to commence your tour unless you can provide proof of insurance to your tour leader.

Document Checklist

- Tour Voucher & Vouchers for extra services

- Passport (with photocopies of information pages and visas)
- Tour Dossier
- Cash & credit/debit cards (best to take a mixture and more than one card in case one does not work)
- Travel Insurance Certificate and photocopy for tour leader
- Travel consultant's phone number and email address
- Proof of onward travel, ie airline ticket

Optional Excursions

Optional excursions are not operated by Tucan Travel and while every effort is made prices may not be up-to-date and are intended as a general guide to help you budget for your trip. Prices for vehicle-based excursions such as game drives are approximate based on the optimum number of participants and the actual price may vary depending on group size.

Sufficient safety equipment such as helmets and life jackets are sometimes not available and Tucan Travel is unable to provide this equipment. If you intend to participate in an optional excursion you may like to consider bringing your own safety gear.

Excursions are run by a local operator or third party with both Tucan Travel and the Tour Leader acting as a booking agent only. Optional activities are not part of the tour and Tucan Travel's booking conditions do not apply to them. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct travel insurance for the excursions you intend to take part in and Tucan Travel is not liable for any injuries incurred.

Responsible Travel

We work hard to ensure our tours are sustainably and ethically run. You can read our responsible travel policy and advice on how you can travel responsibly here: <http://www.tucantravel.com/about-us/responsible-travel>.

Meet Up

Our free Meet Up app, available on Facebook, on iTunes and Google Play is an opportunity to chat with others passengers before you depart or keep in touch when you arrive back from tour. Information on the app is available here: <http://www.tucantravel.com/before-you-go/meet-up>

Add-ons & Extras

On many of our Group Tours, we spend one night in our arrival and departure cities. If you want to explore these cities more we can book pre and post tour accommodation, city tours and airport transfers for you. Price information can be found on the price page of each tour. We also have **Add-ons** - short packages that can be booked alongside a tour or on their own and have been carefully designed to ensure you don't miss out on popular highlights.

Illegal Drugs

The possession or use of illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our tours. When overseas you are subject to local laws and the penalties for breaking these laws can be harsh. In order to safeguard the interests of the group as a whole, our tour leaders have been instructed to insist that any person found with illegal drugs leave the tour immediately – without refund. The tour leader's decision on this matter is final. If you need to carry certain drugs with your purposes of medication, please inform your tour leader and ensure that you carry a copy of your prescription or letter from your doctor.