

## **Budgeting... the Key to Enjoying a Great European Vacation**

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Preparing a budget is one of the first and most important steps to ensuring a great trip to Europe. Nothing can kill a great vacation more than running out of money or spending (or charging) more than you anticipated. By taking some time, you can prepare a trip that will meet your budget needs.

### **Some budget things to remember...**

Planning and preparing will make a great difference in your trip, but it is impossible to think of everything that could happen. You don't want to spend too much time going round and round with, "what if's". Anything can happen, just be prepared as best you can. Be light hearted and remember... this is a vacation.

When looking at your budget, remember, it is better to go for less time and have money to enjoy yourself than to plan a long trip on a shoestring budget. You don't want to get to Europe and not have the ability to do anything. You will want to take a tour, rent a moped, enjoy the food, and see the sites. Make sure to leave room to for these things.

The exchange rate. Make sure to keep a careful eye on what the current rates are. This is important. They are constantly fluctuating and this will also determine how much you can afford. My family has gone to Italy the last three years. Each time the exchange rate was different (and each time it was more expensive to go). Airports are the worst place to exchange money. Either get some money before you leave, or get funds when you arrive at your destination. Also note, if going to an exchange place, venture off the tourist path and you will get a better rate.

### **Other money matters to keep in mind...**

ATM's are plentiful around Europe, especially in major cities. Most of the time you will get the best rates from your bank. Check with your bank before departure to see what kind of rates they offer. If you have a check card that can access your checking account, make sure you have a 4 digit pin #. This is the easiest way to get the local currency and receive the best rates. (Compare the rate with the local exchange place first)

Traveler's Checks are a good idea to have in case of an emergency. Keep it in a safe place away from where you are carrying your money and/or credit and bank cards. American Express would be the way to go. They also offer a new Traveler's Check Card. It is refillable and can be used wherever they accept American Express.

Make sure to get a money belt. It is worn under your clothes in a safe place. It can hold your valuables, such as rail passes, passports, plane tickets, money, or visas. You want to make sure to leave some money in your pocket or bag. The money belt is not a purse; you don't want to be accessing it during the day.

The Euro. The Euro is the currency of twelve European Union countries: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Finland. Other countries within the EU use their own monetary currencies.

### **Instructions ::**

Enter in the cost of each item. Certain items are negotiable and are not essential. Make sure to plan for activities and allow yourself some room to breath. At the bottom, enter in your ideal budget. As you find your totals, compare them with your ideal budget to see where you may need to adjust some things. Happy planning. Together we will truly experience Europe!

| Very Important Items ::                               | Cost |
|---|------|
| Travel Insurance                                      |      |
| Passport  |      |
| Visas   |      |
| Hostel Membership/International Student Identity Card |      |
| Backpack/Luggage and Locks                            |      |
| Guidebooks  |      |
| Phone Cards   |      |
| <b>SUB-TOTAL ::</b>                                   |      |

| Transportation ::   | Cost |
|---|------|
| Plane Ticket(s)   |      |
| Airport Parking (if you have to leave your vehicle there) |      |
| Rail Pass(es)   |      |
| Car Rental  |      |
| Bus Ticket(s)   |      |
| Taxi  |      |
| Other Transportation (subway, ferry, moped)               |      |
| <b>SUB-TOTAL ::</b>                                       |      |

*\*\* plug in the cost per night and the number of days at each location. The total cost will automatically be figured \*\**

| Accommodations ::   | Cost Per Night | # of Days | Total Cost |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Hotels              |                |           |            |
| Hostels             |                |           |            |
| Other               |                |           |            |
| <b>SUB-TOTAL ::</b> |                |           |            |

*\*\* plug in the cost per meal and the number of meals. The total cost will automatically be figured \*\**

| Food and Meals ::   | Cost per Meal | # of Meals | Total Cost |
|---------------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| Breakfast           |               |            |            |
| Lunch               |               |            |            |
| Dinner              |               |            |            |
| Snacks              |               |            |            |
| <b>SUB-TOTAL ::</b> |               |            |            |

| Other Items ::   | Cost |
|--|------|
| Camera and Film  |      |
| Travel Accessories   |      |
| Clothing (bathing suit, shoes, weather specific clothes, etc.) |      |
| Medication/Vitamins  |      |
| Other  |      |
| <b>SUB-TOTAL ::</b>  |      |

| Things to Remember ::                          | Cost |
|--|------|
| Souvenirs/Gifts/Postcards                      |      |
| Internet Use (at internet café, hostel, hotel) |      |
| Other  |      |
| <b>SUB-TOTAL ::</b>                            |      |

| Things to Do ::   | Cost |
|---|------|
| Excursions/Tours  |      |
| Entertainment (shows, nightclubs, pubs, fairs, other admission) |      |
| Activity fees (golf, horseback riding, spa services)            |      |
| Gambling  |      |
| Other   |      |
| <b>SUB-TOTAL ::</b>   |      |

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>BUDGET GRAND TOTAL:</b> |  |
|----------------------------|--|

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Ideal Budget |  |
|--------------|--|

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Difference |  |
|------------|--|