



Guide to Enjoyable Travel

final preparation for your tour...

imagine
TOURS & TRAVEL

imagine Tours & Travel was founded on the idea and belief that we would be a different kind of company. We are a travel organization with international partnerships that provide you with all the necessary components to assure you have an exciting, educational, enjoyable, life-changing, and unforgettable journey.

Our ultimate purpose is to honor God in all that we do. Our goals are to be a blessing to all those we work with and to be a supporting cast to those interested in Christian Travel. In everything, we want the spotlight to remain and reflect on God, not us!

“And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father.”
Colossians 3:17 (NLT)

Our desire for this guidebook is to help you prepare yourself for the best tour possible. We hope that traveling on this spiritual tour will be a significant step in your walk with Christ.

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Preparing for Departure...

PASSPORT

Passports are required for all international travel. Each passenger should carry their passport on them at all times. **Do not put passports in checked luggage.** Passport numbers are needed to fill out customs forms during the return flight. It's also a good idea to keep a copy of your passport in your luggage. If a passport is lost, the nearest American Consul should be advised immediately and a replacement requested. For more passport information, go to www.travel.state.gov.

HEALTH

Good health is important on any trip. Many sites require walking moderate distances to fully explore them. A typical day of touring can expect walking distances of 3-5 miles. Some days may also include walking over uneven terrain. It is recommended to prepare for your trip by walking a couple miles several times a week.

Before traveling overseas, it is wise to consult your personal physician. Be sure to discuss suggested medications and any precautions you should be aware of. Some common medications to bring are: Tylenol/Ibuprofen, Dramamine/Bonine (for motion sickness), sleeping pills, laxatives, and anti-diarrhea medication. It is also recommended to pack some Band-Aids and sunscreen. Please pack all medications in original containers. All prescription drugs should be taken as carry-on luggage and not as checked luggage.

AIR CONNECTIONS

If you are held over in a city due to weather, mechanical issues, or flight cancellation, the airline is responsible to get you to your destination and will normally cover a hotel stay, if necessary. Be firm with the airlines if they are lax in accepting this responsibility. **Do not be afraid to ask for an airline supervisor** if you experience any delays.

Packing Tips...

Luggage is limited to one large suitcase per person, a carry-on bag that fits in the overhead compartment, and a personal bag that fits under the seat. Check with your airline for size and weight limits (usually 40-50 lbs), as airlines restrictions may vary.

Luggage can easily be lost or delayed. If you are traveling with a companion, it is a good idea to pack 1-2 outfits in each other's luggage as a precaution for a bag getting lost or delayed. It is also a good idea to pack at least one change of clothes, essential toiletries, and medication in your carry-on for the same reason. Any lost luggage should be reported immediately to the airline, your group organizer, and guide.

When at transfer locations (i.e. after Immigration and Customs, loading on the motor coach, and leaving a hotel or airport), make sure to locate your luggage. Passengers will be told when to place their luggage outside their room or cruise cabin when leaving for the next destination. Since many bags look alike, we suggest putting a distinctive identification on your luggage (i.e. eye-catching colored label or ribbon). Passengers' names and addresses should be on both the inside and outside of each bag.

CLOTHING

A recommended packing list would include:

- 3-5 pairs of pants, shorts, or capris
- 1 shirt per day
- Undergarments (including undershirts)
- Bathing suit
- Comfortable walking shoes (already broken-in) and possibly a pair of slippers/loafers for your room and on the airplane
- Accessories (light jacket, raincoat, umbrella, sunglasses, sunscreen, and hat)

Choose clothing based on comfort and packing space. Formal clothing is unnecessary while on a tour. Weather information can be found at www.wunderground.com. Be aware that some holy sites require men to cover their head (any hat is fine) and everyone to cover their shoulder and knees.

Packing Tips...

It is also a good idea to dress in layers. There is a lot of walking and sightseeing lasts most of the day. Make sure to pack a good pair of walking shoes that are already broken-in. When packing, **keep in mind that you will want to leave room for souvenirs.**

Please note: While most hotels do offer laundry services, it can be expensive. If needed, please discuss directly with your guide for alternative laundry options. You may also wish to pack a few travel packets of laundry detergent.

TOILETRIES

Liquids are only allowed in small quantities in your carry-on bag, so most toiletries should be in your checked luggage. Save space by bringing travel sized products. Since liquids have a tendency to expand at high altitudes, it is best to pack liquids in screw-top bottles and store them in plastic bags in case they spill. These bags will be useful later when packing wet bathing suits, washcloths, or dirty shoes. **Some hotels abroad do not furnish washcloths or facial soap.** If these are desired, please be sure to bring your own.

ELECTRICAL ITEMS

An adapter (which changes the shape of the plug) and/or a converter (to change the electric current) are necessary if you plan to use an electric appliance in a foreign country. Most European and Middle Eastern countries use 220 volts instead of the 120 used in the USA. Universal adapters and converters can be purchased at most retail stores selling electronics.

BAGS

We suggest ladies not bring a purse unless absolutely necessary. We do encourage everyone to bring a small bag for snacks, cameras, etc. while on the motor coach. Bags can usually be left on the coach while you visit sites, but please note that *imagine* cannot be responsible for items lost, stolen, or left behind.

CAMERAS

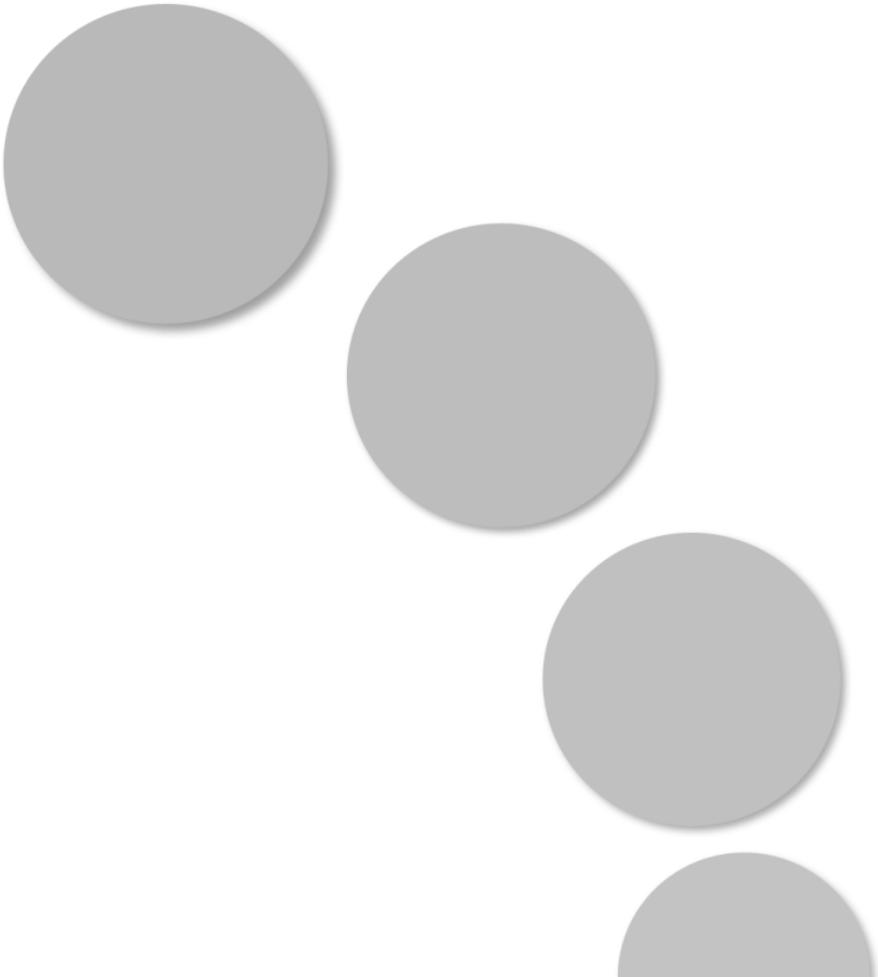
Cameras are welcome at most sites throughout the tour. Remember to bring a good supply of film, memory cards, and/or batteries since they can be hard to find.

Group Travel...

As you travel, have an open mind and enjoy the journey. Travel plans rarely go exactly as scheduled. Know this ahead of time and expect changes, delays, and weather issues. A smile and a sense of humor can be as important as comfortable shoes after hours of walking, maybe more. When traveling abroad, expect the unexpected and greet it with a smile.

Group travel is about enjoying people and shared experiences. This requires tolerance for differences and accepting others just as they are. Traveling with a group is very rewarding and many close friendships have developed on a tour.

So smile... laugh... and encourage those around you. Be as refreshing as comfortable shoes on tired feet.



On Your Way...

CUSTOMS AND SECURITY

It is suggested to arrive at the airport 3 hours prior to departure for international flights. **Keep your passport with you at all times.** DO NOT pack your passport into your checked luggage. You will need them for Customs before getting your luggage. Also, passport numbers are required on Declaration Forms given to you on the return flight. These forms require you to declare all foreign merchandise that you are bringing into the country (See “Duty Free Purchases” below).

If you plan to enter an Arab country (other than Jordan or Egypt) after a visit to Israel, it is a good idea to ask the Israel customs agent to **stamp a separate piece of paper instead of stamping your passport.** This is important since some Arab countries do not admit travelers who have Israeli stamps in their passports. The Israeli authorities know this and are willing to cooperate, but it is a wise precaution to remind them politely.

ARRIVAL

Upon arrival, an **imagine** representative will meet you in the airport after you clear Customs and security.

TIME ZONES

- 7 hours ahead of EST: Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Greece, Turkey
- 6 Hours ahead of EST: Germany, Italy
- 5 hours ahead of EST: Ireland, U.K.

(Time differences can change as a result of Daylight Savings Time)

EMERGENCIES

If a health emergency occurs while on tour please contact your guide or the **imagine** representative in the country you are visiting. Or you can call **imagine** if necessary. You may also choose to contact your travel insurance company depending on the severity of the health issue. Keep all receipts and information (i.e. accident reports, service receipts) to send to the insurance company when you return. This would also apply for any non-health related incidences.

After Departure...

CURRENCY

Since most of your travel arrangements are prepaid, the need for large amounts of cash are minimal. Retailers in Israel, Jordan, and Egypt often take the US dollar and it is recommended to take several \$1, \$5, \$10 & \$20 bills with you. Foreign currency can be purchased at most international airports and most cities have ATM machines where you can withdraw currency in the country you are visiting.

Traveler's checks are not widely accepted overseas, however MasterCard and Visa are accepted. Be aware that many credit card companies levy surcharges on foreign purchases (typically 3%). Prior to departure, it is highly recommended that you inform your credit card company that you will be traveling overseas. Keep in mind when using a credit card overseas to exercise the same caution as you would at home.

Foreign currency is as follows:

- Israel: **Shekel** (U.S. Dollar widely accepted)
- Jordan: **Dinar** (U.S. Dollar widely accepted)
- Egypt: **Egyptian Pound** (U.S. Dollar widely accepted)
- Turkey: **Turkish Lira** (Euro widely accepted)
- Greece, Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Austria, Ireland: **Euro**
- United Kingdom: **British Pound**

HOTELS

Most hotels are 4 star or better, similar to a Marriott Courtyard in the US. Each room will have a private bath, TV, and a phone. Some, not all, will have irons and hair dryers. If they are not in the room, check with the front desk. Washcloths are not common in the Middle East. If you use a washcloth be sure to pack your own.

SERVICE CHARGES AND TIPS

All standard tip expenses are included in the price of the tour. This includes tips for your guides, drivers, maître'd, front desk, and hotel porters who deliver your bags to your room and back to the bus. The Tour Host should handle the distribution of these tips. If you utilize any special services, please tip generously.

After Departure...

MEALS

Breakfast and dinner are generally included in your tour cost. Lunches are not usually included, but will be available at additional cost (usually \$10-\$20 per day). In the Middle East, breakfast and dinner are usually buffet-style with many choices. In Europe, breakfast is usually smaller (Continental-style). Dinner will consist of a variety of local foods while also including items enjoyed by most travelers.

Coffee and tea are served at most meals. Other beverages, such as sodas, are available for a small charge. While tap water is safe in most of Europe and Israel we suggest drinking bottled water whenever possible. Some local coffees, especially in the Middle East, are strong, so use caution. It is safer to drink tea without cream. Do not overburden your system with unfamiliar food too quickly. Those with special diet problems should realize that the preparation of special foods is difficult. While they can be ordered, they certainly cannot be guaranteed. Those with special diets need to advise *imagine* in writing 30 days prior to departure, so we can send those requests overseas.

PHONE AND INTERNET

International phone calls can be very expensive. It may be wise to check with your carrier about adding short-term international service to your plan. Unless you have a good international plan on your cell phone, it is recommended that you purchase an international phone card *when you arrive at your destination*.

Free Internet service is available through Wi-Fi on many of the motor coaches. Hotels usually offer Wi-Fi, although sometimes they charge for this service in your room. A good suggestion is to download one of the many mobile apps available for free international calls and text messaging through a Wi-Fi internet connection.

After Departure...

SIGHTSEEING

All tour programs provide comprehensive sightseeing led by a licensed, English-speaking tour guide. These guides are highly trained and are passionate about sharing an “insiders” view of the sites you visit along with the differing customs and cultures. While the sightseeing schedule will vary, on most days you will leave the hotel between 8-9am and return back between 4-6pm.

While there will be a lot of walking to explore the sites, travel between sites will be in deluxe, air-conditioned motor coaches. Most motor coaches do not have bathrooms, but sufficient stops will be made for your comfort.

TOUR CHANGES

imagine and its representatives reserve the right to alter the sightseeing itinerary to accommodate changes in local conditions, weather, or holidays. While we do our very best at making sure all items listed in your itinerary are included, there are times when conditions beyond our control affect your program/itinerary. If possible, you will be notified of any changes that are made to your itinerary prior to departure. *imagine* reserves the right to make tour changes requested by your tour host (group organizer) and guide(s).

CULTURE DIFFERENCES

Travel is more enjoyable if you go with proper expectations. Prepare yourself to view the cultural differences you will encounter with tolerance and a spirit of adventure. Some of these differences include customs, living standards, philosophy, religion, cuisine, and service. As you experience these differences, be light-hearted and gracious with those you meet. As a traveler, you represent your country, the school or church you are traveling with, and God.

Shopping...

Each location has its own unique shopping experience. Here is a list of some things you might be interested in purchasing:

- ISRAEL -** Olive-wood articles, copper and brass ware, leather goods, rugs, embroidery, filigree jewelry, Dead-Sea lotions, Arab crafts, furs, olive oil, wine, spices, and natural diamonds
- JORDAN -** Madaba rugs, glassware, pottery, embroidery, olive-wood articles, silver jewelry, Arab crafts
- EGYPT -** Wooden objects inlaid with mother-of-pearl or ebony, copper and brass ware, hassocks, camel chairs, cotton, linen, leather goods, native jewelry
- GREECE -** Hand-woven fabrics, carved wooden articles, silver jewelry and ornaments, ceramics, brass and copperware, sponges, flokati rugs
- AUSTRIA -** Knitwear, leather goods, porcelain, hand-carved wood figures, wrought iron, music, antiques
- ENGLAND -** Fine china, books, woolen and cashmere sweaters, antiques, men's clothing
- FRANCE -** Clothing, perfume, chinaware, kitchen equipment, gloves, scarves, purses, ties, candy, books, antiques, printed cotton, glass and crystal
- GERMANY -** Cameras, binoculars, china, hand-carved cuckoo clocks, crystal, wood carvings, beer steins, toys, dolls
- HOLLAND -** Diamonds, Delftware porcelain, pewter, dolls, Indonesian crafts, batik, old prints, tiles, antiques
- ITALY -** Clothing, shoes, leather, silk, glass, gloves, china and ceramics, straw ware, antiques, books, prints

DUTY-FREE PURCHASES

Purchases and gifts can be brought into the U.S. duty-free up to a retail value of \$800 per person (as of 01/2013). Also, one liter of liquor/wine per adult is allowed duty-free. Most purchases in excess of this are subject to duty payments. If you ship purchases, you may be charged duty when the delivery is made. Be sure to declare all necessary goods purchased and keep in mind any restrictions on incoming products per government regulations. For more information, visit the US Dept. of Homeland Security's website.

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