

# Euro Adventure 2016

## What to Pack (Just my humble thoughts)

~Wyatt Bingham

- **Money belt/lanyard.** It's **essential** for the peace of mind it brings. You could lose everything except your money belt, and the trip could still go on. Lightweight and low-profile beige is best.
- **Electrical plug adaptors.** On this trip, you just need the 2 prong, D/C continental type. They're cheap; bring an extra to make your roommate think you're a savvy traveler!
- **Shirts.** Bring up to five short-sleeved or long-sleeved shirts in a cotton/polyester blend. Arrange mix for cool weather. Coordinate with your pant selection. Every shirt should match every pair of pants (& your shoes).
- **Pants.** Bring two pairs: one lightweight cotton and another heavier for cold/rainy days or big cities and churches with modest dress codes. Jeans are great for this trip. Many like pants/shorts with zip-off legs. Button-down wallet pockets are safest (though still not as thief-proof as a money belt, described below).
- **Shorts.** Optional, most Europeans don't wear them, but if you do, take a pair with pockets — doubles as a swimsuit for guys.
- **Underwear and socks.** Bring five sets (lighter dries quicker).
- **Two pairs of shoes.** Take a well-used, light, and cool pair, with Vibram-type soles and good traction. Sturdy, low-profile tennis shoes with a good tread are fine, too. □ **Jacket.** Bring a medium and water-resistant jacket that has a hood. Gore-Tex is good as we expect rain. □ **Scarf.** For instant respectability, bring anything lightweight that can break the monotony and make you look snazzy.
- **Money.** Bring your preferred mix of a credit card, debit card, an emergency stash of hard cash, and a couple of personal checks. I rely on a debit card for ATM withdrawals, a credit card, and \$100 in cash as a backup.
- **Documents and photocopies.** Bring your passport, airline ticket, tour documents or, driver's license, student ID, and so on. Photocopies and a couple of passport-type photos can help you get replacements more quickly if the originals are lost or stolen. Carry photocopies separately in your luggage and keep the originals in your money belt.
- **Small daypack or messenger bag.** This is great for carrying your spare shirt, camera, literature/ereader, and picnic goodies while you leave your large bag at the

hotel or under the bus. Fanny packs (small bags with thief-friendly zippers on a belt) are a popular alternative, but are magnets for pickpockets and should never be used as money belts.

- **Camera.** A digital camera and a high-capacity memory card mean no more bulky bags of film. Nowadays, I just use my phone.
- **Water bottle.** The plastic half-liter mineral water bottles sold throughout Europe are reusable and work great. If you bring one from home, make sure it's empty before you go through airport security.
- **Wristwatch.** A built-in alarm is handy. Otherwise, pack a small travel alarm clock. Hotel wake-up calls are particularly unreliable.
- **Earplugs.** If night noises bother you, you'll love a good set of expandable foam plugs.
- **Medicine and vitamins.** Keep medicine in original containers, if possible, with legible prescriptions.
- **Extra eyeglasses, contact lenses, and prescriptions.** Contact solutions are widely available in Europe. Because of dust and smog, many travelers find their contacts aren't as comfortable in Europe. Bring your glasses just in case.
- **Sunscreen and sunglasses.** Depending on the your skin tone & preferences for coolness.
- **Toiletries kit.** Sinks in cheap hotels come with meager countertop space and anonymous hairs. If you have a nylon toiletries kit that can hang on a hook or a towel bar, this is no problem. Put all squeeze bottles in sealable plastic baggies, since pressure changes in flight can cause even good bottles to leak. (If you plan to carry on your bag, all liquids, gels, and aerosols must be in three-ounce or smaller containers, and all of these items must fit within a single, quart-size sealable plastic baggie.) Consider a vacation from cosmetics. Bring a little toilet paper or tissue packets (sold at all newsstands in Europe).
- **Sealable plastic baggies.** Get a variety of sizes. In addition to holding your carry-on liquids, they're ideal for packing leftover picnic food, containing wetness, and bagging potential leaks before they happen. The two-gallon jumbo size is handy for packing clothing. Bring extras for the flight home, as they can be hard to find in Europe.
- **Soap.** Not all hotels provide soap. A plastic squeeze bottle of concentrated, multipurpose, biodegradable liquid soap is handy for laundry and more. In the interest of traveling friendlier to our environment, I never use the hotel bathroom "itsy-bitsies," preferring my own bar of soap or bottle of shampoo.
- **Clothesline.** Hang it up in your hotel room to dry your clothes. The handy

twisted-rubber type needs no clothespins.

- **Small towel.** I bring a thin hand towel for the occasional need. Washcloths are rare in Europe. While I don't use them, many travelers recommend quick-drying synthetic towels.
- **Sewing kit.** Clothes age rapidly while traveling. Take along a few safety pins and buttons.
- **Travel information.** Rip out appropriate chapters from guidebooks and staple them together. When you're done, give them away.
- **Map.** Get a map best suited to your trip's overall needs, then pick up maps for specific local areas as you go.
- **Address list.** A list of email and mailing addresses will help you keep in touch. You can send mass emails as you go (bring a shrunk-down print-out of your email address book in case you can't access it online). Or if you prefer to send postcards, consider printing your mail list onto a sheet of adhesive address labels before you leave. You'll know exactly who you've written to, and the labels will be perfectly legible.
- **Postcards from home and photos of your family.** A small collection of show-and-tell pictures is always a great conversation piece with Europeans you meet
- **Small notepad and pen.** A tiny notepad in your back pocket is a great organizer, reminder, and communication aid (for sale in European stationery stores).
- **Journal.** An empty book to be filled with the experiences of your trip will be your most treasured souvenir. Attach a photocopied calendar page of your itinerary. Use a hardbound type designed to last a lifetime, rather than a spiral notebook. The rugged, black, and simple Moleskine notebooks have a cult following among travel writers.

### ***Optional Bring-Alongs***

- **Picnic supplies.** Bring or buy salt and pepper, a cup, a spoon, a washcloth (to dampen and store in a baggie for cleaning up), and a Swiss Army-type knife with a corkscrew and can opener (or buy the knife in Europe if you want to carry your luggage on the plane). A plastic plate is handy for picnic dinners in your hotel room.
- **Packing cubes.** These see-through, zip-up mesh containers keep your clothes tightly packed and well-organized.
- **Clothes compressor.** This handy invention — I like the one by Pack-Mate — allows you to pack bulky clothes (such as sweaters and jackets) without taking up too much space or creating wrinkles. Simply put the item in the bag, roll it up to force the air out through the one-way nozzles, and pack it away.

- **Light warm-up suit.** Use for pajamas, evening lounge outfit, instant modest street wear, smuggling things, and "going" down the hall.
- **Spot remover.** Bring Shout wipes, Tide-to-Go or a dab of Goop grease remover in a small plastic container.
- **Sandals or flip-flops.**
- **Inflatable pillow** (or "neck rest"). For snoozing in planes, trains, and automobiles. Many travelers also swear by an **eye mask** for blocking out early-rising or late-setting sun. Plus, it makes you look like a movie star.
- **Hair drier.** People with long or thick hair appreciate a travel hair drier in the off-season, when hair takes a long time to dry and it's cold outside. These may be provided by the hotel so you could risk it and buy one there. Make sure it can handle 220 volts
- **Tiny lock.** Use it to lock your backpack zippers shut. Note that if you check your bag on a flight, the lock may be broken to allow the bag to be inspected. You can improve the odds of your lock's survival by buying one approved by the TSA (Transportation Security Administration, the agency responsible for airport security). While you'll unlock the TSA-approved lock with a combination, security agents will be able to open the lock without damaging it by using a special master key.
- **Small flashlight.** Handy for reading under the sheets after "lights out" in the hotel, late-night trips down the hall, exploring castle dungeons, and hypnotizing street thieves. Tiny-but-powerful LED flashlights — about the size of your little finger — are extremely bright, compact, and lightweight.
- **MP3/video player, smart phone, or radio.** Partners can bring a Y-jack for two sets of earphones. Some travelers use digital recorders to capture pipe organs, tours, or journal entries. A small, portable radio adds a new dimension to your experience.
- **Office supplies.** Bring paper, an envelope of envelopes, and some sticky notes (such as Post-Its) to keep your place in your guidebook.
- **Mailing tube.** Great for art lovers, this protects the posters and prints you buy along your trip. You can trim it to fit inside your backpack (though this obviously limits the dimensions of the posters you can carry)
- **A good paperback.** There's plenty of empty time on a trip to either be bored or enjoy some good reading. If you're desperate, popular English-language paperbacks are often available in European airports and major train stations (usually for far more than their North American price).
- **Collapsible umbrella.** I like one that's small and compact, but still sturdy and well-constructed enough to withstand strong winds.

- Gifts.** Local hosts appreciate small souvenirs from your hometown (gourmet candy or crafts). Local kids love T-shirts and small toys.

## Packing List for Women

### **Clothing**

- 1 pair of walking/comfortable shoes
- 1 pair of heavier shoes/boots
- 1 rainproof jacket
- 2-3 pairs of shorts/capris/skorts
- 2 pairs of pants (one dressy, one casual), 1 belt
- 1 swimsuit (packed in a plastic bag)
- 5 pairs of socks (cotton blend)
- 5 pairs of underwear (silk, lace, or micro-fiber dries quickest)
- 1 extra bra
- 4-6 shirts (long/short-sleeved, various colors)
- 1 light cardigans for layering
- 1-2 skirts (wrinkle-resistant)
- 1 dress (optional)
- 1 hat
- scarf (to wear with clothing or hat)
- 1 pair of pajamas (or long shirt to get you to the bathroom down the hall if necessary)

### **Toiletries/Medicine**

- Body soap/puff (washcloth); most European hotels do not supply washcloths
- Toothbrush/toothpaste/floss
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Brush/comb
- Lotion
- Vaseline (for feet)
- Razor (non-electric)/shaving cream or soap
- Sunscreen, insect repellent
- Prescription drugs (in original container with your name and your doctor's name, write down generic name)
- First aid kit/moleskin/blister kit
- Feminine hygiene products
- Deodorant
- Spare glasses and/or prescription, mini-eyeglass repair kit, or contact lenses and

### supplies

- Hand sanitizer
- Vitamins
- OTC remedies (whatever works for you): Pepto, decongestants, etc.
- Clothesline, sink stopper, soap
- Baby powder (dry shampoo for hair)

### **Money and Security - NOT Optional!**

- Money-belt: Passport, plane ticket, debit card, credit card, hotel business card.
- Security: Bury copies of your passport, plane ticket, and prescriptions in the bottom of your luggage.