

WESTMINSTER CALVARY





THINGS TO KNOW

BEFORE YOU GO

GETTING READY FOR YOUR TOUR

> TICKETS

Airline tickets are now electronic and all you need to check-in is your passport and flight confirmation number.

> LAND ONLY PASSENGERS

If you have arranged your own air transportation, the "Land Only" portion of your tour begins at the first hotel and ends on the last tour day. Expenses incurred in getting to and from the airport are the responsibility of the "Land Only" passenger.

> PASSPORT

- Make two copies of your passport picture page. Leave one copy with someone at home and keep one with you (separate from your passport). If you lose your passport, it is easier to obtain a new passport if you have this copy.
- It is extremely important that your passport has not expired. In the past, some travelers have arrived at the airport the day of departure only to find their passport has expired the day of the trip. Please make sure this does not happen to you. Your passport must be valid up to six months after your return date. For example, if your trip returns April 1st, you will need to make sure that your passport does not expire until after October 1st of that year.
- Normal processing for a new or renewal passport is usually six to eight weeks. Allow yourself plenty of time in case there is a delay.

› LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS

- CONFIRM LUGGAGE RULES on your airline's website.
- Most airlines will allow you to CHECK-IN ONE piece of luggage which cannot exceed 60 inches (height + width + length) and 50 pounds.
- You will be charged for each additional piece of checked luggage.
- The airline will charge you additional fees for overweight or oversized luggage and may force you to ship it as freight.
- Some airlines have a weight restriction on **CARRY-ON luggage**.
- Your ONE carry-on must not exceed 36 inches (height + width + length) and must fit in the overhead compartment or under the seat in front of you. Follow the 3-1-1 rule. Liquids, gels, aerosols, creams and pastes must be 3.4 ounces (100ml) or less per container; must be in 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in the screening bin. The bag limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring in their carry-on.
- Most airlines allow a personal item (purse/computer or camera bag) as an additional carry-on.
- Only one piece of luggage per person will be stored in the tour bus luggage compartment, as storage space is very limited.
- Onboard bus storage space is limited to the space under the seat in front of you and the shallow space above your head.
- ALWAYS pack fewer clothes and bring more money than you think you will need.
- It is always a good idea to "cross pack". If you are traveling as a single passenger, pack a change of clothing in your carry-on just in case your luggage is temporarily misplaced by the airlines. Husbands and wives should pack some of each other's clothing in their suitcases for the same reason. Delayed arrival of luggage can be inconvenient, but these precautions can lessen that effect.
- Always keep your written prescriptions medications packed in a different case from the one used to hold your supply of medication.

› LUGGAGE ETIQUETTE

- Neatly print your full name on all luggage tags. It is wise to use an office or friend's address on your tags.
- Extra tags/labels for your carry-on are available at the airport.
- Have your name and address on a card or paper INSIDE your luggage in the event that your luggage tags are removed or lost.
- Use a blue luggage strap to help identify your bag on the carousel.
- Always check carefully that a piece of luggage is yours before you take it from the carousel.
- If you take someone else's luggage, it can cause a significant delay for the group, as the person with the missing luggage must go through the "Lost Luggage" procedure.

> **LUGGAGE ETIQUETTE (CONTINUED)**

- Your tour cost includes tips to the hotel porters for ONE piece of luggage per person. This service begins when you bring your luggage to the bus outside the terminal and ends when the bus arrives at the airport for your departure for home.
- You will need to take your luggage from the carousel, through customs and to the bus. At departure, you will take your luggage from the bus through security to check-in. (It really helps to have wheels on your luggage!)
- CARRY-ON: Please remember that your carry-on luggage is always your responsibility to take with you to and from the bus to the hotel. Please do not leave your carry-on with your one checked luggage to be handled by the porters.

> **ELECTRICAL ADAPTERS & CONVERTERS**

You will need an electrical converter, most foreign countries use 220 volts instead of 110 used in North America. You will also need an adapter to plug into the wall outlet. Most electronics, such as laptops and cell phones, are dual voltage. Please check the voltage requirements for all electronic devices.

> **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

- **NEVER leave electronic equipment unattended in your hotel room.**
- Remember that any laptops, tablets, phones, cameras, etc., should be kept with you at all times, or in the safe in your hotel room.
- For digital cameras, make sure you and a large enough storage card to accommodate all your photos and movies. Many people will take upwards of 500-1000 pictures.
- Don't forget your electrical chargers – bring an extra one just in case.
- It is also handy to have a portable external battery back for emergencies.

Some people may not want their picture taken. When in doubt, ask for permission. Please be courteous and cautious.

If you take pictures of locals, you may be asked for money.

A camera can become a barrier between you and your experience with the Lord, the land, and the people. Don't miss out!

> **CLIMATE**

Check international weather on **www.weather.com** about a week before your departure.

> MEDICATIONS

- Be sure to pack enough medication to last through the tour.
- Only life dependent or narcotic prescriptions need to be in their original bottles.
- Not all prescriptions are interchangeable. Have your doctor write a foreign-equivalent prescription for life dependent medications.
- If you are allergic to any medication, please keep a list of these with your passport.
- You may need a prescription for medications which are sold over the counter in the U.S.
- You should pack some aspirin, antacids, and other similar items you use at home if feel you might need them.
- If you suffer from motion sickness, bring along any medication you use to prevent this on the bus and plane.
- **Never allow prescription medication out of your possession. If the airline requires you to check-in your carry-on, take your medication with you.**

> PREPARE YOURSELF MENTALLY & PHYSICALLY

- START READING ABOUT THE SITES YOU WILL VISIT. Your Bible is the best reference for Biblical sites. Rather than bringing a large study Bible, you may want to pack a smaller, more compact version.
- Get into shape. START WALKING! You will do A LOT of walking (and standing) on the tour and it is wise to build up your stamina now!

GETTING READY FOR YOUR TOUR

> HELPFUL THINGS TO BRING

- A spot remover and sewing kit can be handy.
- Wrinkled clothing: Rather than trying to pack a travel iron, a Wrinkle Release spray is useful for eliminating wrinkles. Bring some in a smaller spray bottle for convenience.
- "Disposable" socks and underwear: Bring your old socks and underwear and dispose of them before departing Greece, making more room for souvenirs in your luggage.
- Mesh bags: for loose items, toiletries, dirty laundry, etc.
- Mailing tube: for posters and art.
- Cough drops and Vitamin C tablets.
- Zip-lock bags: always useful for small liquid toiletry bottles or gifts/souvenirs.
- Eyeglasses prescription or extra contact lenses.
- Journal for pictures and notes.
- Small travel sized Bible.

> **PACKING YOUR LUGGAGE**

- **Do not pack your passport or your itinerary in your luggage.** Your passport should be kept with you at all times. Place your itinerary in your carry-on bag. Pack appropriate clothes that you can mix and match. It is easy to over-pack for this sort of trip. We recommend that you pack just the essentials and be strategic about what you bring.
- To prepare for variations in weather, bring layers of clothing to add or remove as needed. Rather than packing a bulky or heavy coat, try a simple light-weight raincoat or windbreaker. It takes up less space, and worn over a few layers of clothing will keep you warm and dry.
- A hat and sunglasses (plus sunscreen) are also highly recommended.
- Don't forget to bring gloves and a scarf if you are traveling in the winter.
- Be sure to bring a good pair of walking shoes (tennis shoes or sport sandals work well) that you will not mind getting dirty. Break them in before the trip!
- Modest dress may be required at some of the locations we visit. In fact, some "Holy sites" will not allow you to enter if you are wearing shorts, short skirts, or off-the-shoulder attire.
- Bring a bathing suit just in case you want to take a dip in the hotel pool.

> **SUGESTED PACKING LIST**

- Bible, notebook, pen, highlighter
- Binoculars
- Small book light
- Baggies for souvenirs or snacks
- Prescription medicine in original container
- Earplugs for the plane (or snoring roommates)
- Monthly necessities for women
- Snacks
- Travel alarm clock
- Moistened towelettes, facial tissue
- Hand Sanitizer Gel
- Bathroom tissue in travel pack
- Detergent (for hand washables)
- Hand, body lotion, and lip balm (dry climate) Swimsuit, cover-up, small towel
- Small flashlight
- Sunglasses and sunscreen
- Shampoo and hand soap (usually available in hotels)
- Motion sickness medicine

MY CHECK LIST FOR THINGS I HAVE TO BRING

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AT THE AIRPORT

> AIRLINE CHECK-IN

- ELECTRONIC TICKETS: All you need to check-in is your passport and confirmation number. The ticket agent will print your boarding passes and tag your luggage.
- The airline may hold you responsible for the cost of replacing a missing boarding pass. Keep your boarding passes until you return home in case of lost luggage or mileage credits.
- Make sure the airline properly tags your luggage with the correct destination city.

> FREQUENT FLYER INFO

- When you check-in at the ticket counter, advise them of your frequent flyer account number.
- If you do not have an account with them and would like one, ask for an application and complete it before leaving the ticket counter. This may also be done in advance by contacting the airline's frequent flyer program personally.

> SECURITY CHECK POINTS

- You may be pulled aside to answer security questions before you actually check-in with the airline. Please just answer their questions and do not chat, make jokes or volunteer information unless you are asked for it.
- Have all travel documents and ID readily available at check-in. Place them in your carry-on or purse, NOT in your luggage.
- Be prepared to open all luggage and bags for inspection at check-in. All packages, including gifts, may be opened.
- Be prepared to submit yourself to a body check by metal detector, body scan, or by physical means if necessary.
- Put pens, keys, cell phones, badges, etc., in your carry-on before the security check to reduce the chance of setting off the alarm.
- Place all fluids (under 3 ounce bottles) in a quart sized plastic zip-top bag.
- Please do not say or do anything during security checks that may cause delay in departure.
- NEVER JOKE about hijacks or bombs. Airline and security personnel take these matters very seriously.
- Do not accept packages or gifts unless you have inspected the contents.
- Use the "buddy system" so someone knows if you get delayed!

ONCE YOU ARRIVE

> AIRPORT PROCEDURES

- ALWAYS wear your name tag when exiting baggage upon arrival.
- After landing, you will enter the terminal and follow signs to passport control. Here you will need present your passport.
- Luggage carts are readily available. Your one piece of luggage will be placed in the storage compartment under the bus. You will need to take your carry-on with you onto the bus. Once the entire group has boarded the bus, you will proceed to your hotel.
- Should you somehow be separated from the group while inside the airport terminal, or if you cannot locate our staff or your tour leader, exit through customs and the terminal (with your luggage) to the bus area. If you are lost, please ask an airport employee (wearing badges) for assistance.

> CHECKING INTO YOUR HOTEL

You will be given a key for your room at each hotel. Take your carry-on to the room with you and your luggage will be delivered by the hotel staff.

> CHECKING INTO YOUR HOTEL

- Services: Your hotels provide a variety of services. The tour pays for all taxes and tips, as well as all breakfasts served in the hotel dining rooms. **If you use any additional hotel services such as room service, laundry service, outside phone calls, or internet usage, you will be billed accordingly and must pay at the front desk upon check-out.** You are also responsible for any additional tips and taxes these services may incur.
- **Laundry:** Most hotels offer a professional laundry service. **Check the price with the front desk before you send it out and make sure it will be done before your group leaves the hotel.**
- Some hotels provide a clothesline that extends across the bathtub for drying laundry, should you wish to wash them in the sink or bathtub. However, you will need to provide your own detergent.

> TIME DIFFERENCE

Please check the corresponding time zone for the destination country of your trip. Websites, such as www.worldtimezone.com, can be a useful resource to calculate the time difference.

> CALLING HOME

- You can buy phone cards at the airport and at most hotel gift shops for use in pay phones to dial direct to anywhere in the world. (Phone cards purchased in the USA may work in some pay phones).
- Credit cards can be used at some pay phones.
- **A call from your room through the hotel** may cost as much as \$4 to \$10 per minute, even to a toll-free number.
- Check with your cell phone carrier and get the details! Most International Services are still very expensive. Roaming charges are even higher and WILL be applied if you are even near the border of another country.
- If you have a data plan/email/texting, you may be charged for all downloads and incoming data. **CHECK WITH YOUR CARRIER.**
- Wi-Fi cards can be rented in advance. Some hotels provide free Wi-Fi, or will have it available for purchase.
- A safe alternative is to switch your phone to Airplane Mode and turn Data Roaming off. That way you will still be able to use the hotel WiFi without additional charges.

> MONEY & SHOPPING

- Foreign currency: Please check the internet for the most current exchange rates. www.xe.com
- We suggest that you take enough money to pay for items that are not included such as: lunches, snacks, beverages, postcards, stamps, room service, laundry, taxi, souvenirs, and other items.
- Visa and MasterCard are usually accepted for larger purchases and allow you to dispute any incorrect charges. **IMPORTANT: ADVISE YOUR BANK OR CREDIT CARD COMPANY THAT YOU ARE TRAVELING INTERNATIONALLY OR THEY WILL DENY THE CHARGES.**
- Be aware that some credit card companies charge a foreign transaction fee to use a card in a foreign country.
- ATMs are available at the airport and in major cities, but may not always be easy to find. Remember that the ATM machines dispense money in LOCAL CURRENCY – NOT US DOLLARS.
- If you decide to change your money into a foreign currency, use only an official money-changer, or do it at your hotel, or at an ATM.
- If you intend to buy anything described as "antique," be sure to get a certificate of authenticity from the sales clerk or else do not buy it.

> MONEY & SHOPPING (CONTINUED)

- **VAT TAX: In many countries there is a value added tax**, known as a "VAT", on all merchandise purchased. This tax is refundable upon your departure from the airport. When you purchase an item over a set amount, you will be given a special receipt verifying that you paid the VAT tax on that item. As you are preparing to leave the country, go to the booth in the airport terminal designated for VAT refunds and fill out the paperwork. **You MUST present your VAT tax receipt and the items for inspection in order to receive your refund.** Please note that if your tour leaves the country where the merchandise was purchased, you may forfeit your eligibility to claim a VAT refund.
- If you make a major purchase, be sure to take note of the name of the salesperson, the store name, address, and phone number. It is best to purchase items that you can have shipped home or pay with a credit card so that you can dispute the charges if there is a problem.

> FOOD & BEVERAGES

- Be sure to bring local currency when dining out at smaller establishments.
- Please check the country's tipping policy if you plan to eat out at a restaurant.
- In some countries, the tap water is considered safe to drink. To be safe, bottled water is available everywhere. Most bus drivers stock bottled water on the bus which you can purchase.
- Coffee and juices are usually included with breakfast and dinner.
- Soft drinks are usually not included with any meals.
- **Be sure you drink plenty of water on the plane and on the buses during the touring to avoid dehydration. (This is the most frequent reason for hospitalization.)**

> USEFUL THINGS TO KNOW

- **TAXI SERVICE:** If you decide to take a taxi, make sure you agree in advance with the driver on the fare per person or for all passengers. You will need local currency for most taxis.
- **RESTROOMS/BATHROOMS/WC:** in some countries, toilets are typically identified as the "WC" and you may be expected to pay a small fee.

> THINGS TO REMEMBER

Sometimes tourists, in the excitement of being in a foreign country or as a result of "jet lag", temporarily fail to exercise the same caution they use at home.

Here are a few things to remember:

- Do not bring anything that you cannot afford to lose.
- No smoking on the bus or in your hotel rooms.
- Stay with the group and avoid straying off on your own.
- Some cultures are more conservative in their dress codes, especially for women. For this reason we ask that you dress modestly at all times.
- Do not leave possessions (backpacks, purses, etc.) unattended, as they may be considered by authorities as a potential danger and be disposed of.
- Avoid any object that does not seem to have an owner.
- Never accept gifts from strangers in or en-route to the airport.
- Beware of locals asking you to follow them to a store or an attraction.
- Avoid friendly embraces from strangers.
- Beware of pickpockets. In any crowded area, keep your backpacks and purses in front of you with your arms folded across them.
- Keep your wallet in your front pants pocket or zippered purse. It is wise to separate your cash so that it is not obvious to on-lookers.

> THINGS TO DO

- Keep your passport on your person **at all times**. Misplacing or losing your passport can result in serious delays and extra costs for you.
- Keep a copy of the photo page of your passport in your luggage.
- Never leave valuables (jewelry, cash, iPods, laptops, cameras, electronics, etc.) in your hotel room, even if they are locked in your luggage. It is better to leave significant valuables at home if you don't need them. Keep your journey simple.
- All hotels have a safe at the front desk where your important items may be stored when you are away from your room. Some hotels provide a personal safe in your own room.
- **Always check the safe before checking out of the hotel.**
- **While touring, always stay with your group.** Be aware of where they are going. Though you may discover something interesting to investigate, it could cause you to lag behind and become lost.
- **Tell someone in the group** (preferably one of the pastors) **if you are staying at the hotel instead of touring or leaving the tour for any reason.**
- If you decide to go out after hours, always tell someone else in your group where you are going and when you intend to return.

> **TIPPING/GRATUITIES**

We know that you are going to become very fond of your bus drivers and your tour guides. They are skilled professionals who enjoy working with tourists. Sometimes, tour members will try to take a collection on the bus to give to the drivers and guides, to show their appreciation. However, tips are already covered for the bus drivers and the tour guides near the top of the scale. We therefore ask that no one start or contribute to such a collection. If you personally want to bless them, feel free to do so.

> **THE LOCAL PEOPLE**

- A good "hello" and "thank you" in the local language goes a long way.
- Always be kind and courteous. Remember that you are an ambassador for your country.
- A firm handshake is obligatory upon meeting and departing. Never remain seated when shaking a standing person's hand.
- Avoid criticizing the country, the people, the food, or the customs.
- **If you have a problem, please talk to your tour leader or guide.**

> **PRAY**

Ask God to do a beautiful work in your heart and in the hearts of all who will be joining you on the tour. Pray that through this tour you and your fellow travelers would come to know Him more intimately and understand His Word more completely.

> **ADDITIONAL NOTES**
