
**Romantic Villages of Alpine
Europe**

LAND TOUR

Plus, two optional extensions:
**Lake Como & Milan, Italy;
Munich, Germany & Salzburg, Austria**

AVS/AVP 2014

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1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport Required

U.S. citizens need a passport for this itinerary. Please take a moment to check if your passport meets all of these requirements. If not, you could be refused entry into a country. And if that happens, you might be required by that country to return to the U.S. immediately, **which would be at your own expense.**

Your passport should meet these requirements for this itinerary:

- It should be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- It should have the recommended number of blank pages (see below for details).
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable.

Recommended number of blank pages:

This recommendation is based on a “worst case” scenario. When you are on this adventure, you might use fewer pages, depending on the whims of the Immigration official on duty that day. Since the consequence of having too few pages can be severe—you could be denied entry into a country—we feel that it’s better to be safe than sorry, and we strongly recommend that you follow these guidelines.

- **Main trip only:** 2 blank “Visa” pages.
- **Optional pre-trip extension to Lake Como & Milan:** No additional pages needed.
- **Optional post-trip extension to Munich:** No additional pages needed.
- **Both a pre- and a post-trip extension:** A total of 2 pages.

If you need to renew your passport or get extra pages:

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit their website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport, renewing your existing passport, or for additional pages. You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

NOTE: When updating your passport, it is worthwhile to check the prices on all the different services that might apply to you. For example, it might be less expensive to renew your passport than to have pages added, depending on the number of pages you need.

Visas not Required

U.S. citizens don’t need a visa for this itinerary.

No U.S. Passport?

Non-U.S. citizens or non-U.S. passport holders: If you are **not** a U.S. citizen or if you possess a passport from a country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate or embassy about possible visa requirements. Or, you may contact PVS International who can also assist non-U.S. citizens:

PVS International
Passport & Visa Services
1700 N Moore Street
Rosslyn Center, suite 310
Arlington, VA 22209
Telephone: 1-800-556-9990

Backup Photocopies

The smartest security precaution you can take is to make photocopies of your passport's personal information pages, your air tickets, your traveler's check serial numbers (if you're using them), and your credit cards. Also, bring extra passport-sized photos. Make a list of the phone and fax numbers for reporting lost credit cards, your travel protection plan company (if you have an optional travel protection plan) and medical emergency network. Keep these documents separate from the originals, and they can save you immeasurable time, money, and trouble if your originals are lost or stolen as you travel. In addition, scan these photocopies and email them to your email address; you can then print out replacement copies if necessary.

2. YOUR HEALTH

Keep Your Abilities In Mind

We've worked closely with our local Program Directors and regional associates to identify the aspects of this adventure that you should be aware of, from physical requirements to cultural factors. **Please carefully review the information below prior to departing on this trip.**

Pacing

- 4 locations in 15 days, including 1 single-night stay

Physical Requirements

- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters
- Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them throughout the trip
- You must be able to walk 3 miles unassisted and participate in 3-5 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs

Altitude

- Several days between 3,000-6,000 feet

Climate

- Daytime temperatures range from 43-82°F during touring season with high humidity in Lake Maggiore during July-August
- June-August are the warmest months
- April and October weather can be unpredictable and change quickly within a short period of time
- Temperatures in the Alps can drop suddenly with cold wind, rain, or snow throughout the year

Terrain

- Travel over uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestone

Transportation

- Travel by 45-seat motorcoach, public trains, and 50- to 200-seat boats

Cuisine

- Meals will be based on the local cuisine

Health Check and Inoculations

If you have any ongoing medical conditions or concerns about your health, we highly recommend that you schedule a checkup with your personal physician at least six weeks in advance of your departure date. Discuss with your doctor any aspects of your international itinerary that may affect your health and be guided by his or her advice. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling. You may want to have a dental exam before your trip.

If you have a condition that requires special equipment or treatment, you must bring and be responsible for all necessary items related to your condition. If you take medications regularly, be sure to pack an ample supply that will last your entire trip, as obtaining refills of your medication can be difficult during your trip. Pack these medications in your carry-on bag, and keep them in their original, labeled containers. To be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications, you should also bring copies of the prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name.

Vaccinations

Check with the CDC: To ensure you receive any needed vaccinations we suggest that you check the current recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for your destination. Here are two ways to contact them:

On-line — if you have access to the Internet, we suggest you visit the CDC's website at **www.cdc.gov/travel**, where you will find comprehensive information about preventing illness while traveling.

By phone—you can call the CDC's Hotline toll-free at **1-800-232-4636** 24 hours a day. Please note that automated information may be arranged topically by disease, rather than by country or region.

Consult your doctor: After checking the CDC's recommendations we strongly suggest that you consult your family physician (at least 6 weeks prior to departure) concerning any vaccinations or medications that you may need on this trip. At the time of print there were no specific vaccinations required for entry into any of the countries on your itinerary.

3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS

Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags .
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (<i>length+width+depth</i>). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches .
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
Both the pre and post extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.	
REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS	
<p>One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airline luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights.</p> <p>Note: Enforcement of published restrictions by countries and airlines is a matter of governmental and corporate policy. Enforcement may include spot checks and may be inconsistently applied. Expect penalties and fines to be imposed immediately, however, when and if enforced. Before you choose to ignore the published restrictions you should ask: <i>Do I feel lucky?</i> And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.</p>	

Should I confirm luggage restrictions with my U.S./international airline(s) before departure?

Absolutely, confirm current restrictions about a week or so before your departure. You should take this step no matter if your vacation has a lower limit than the average international flight or not, because there may be recent changes, such as new security regulations, or an update to the standard weight/size allowances. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our webpage in the *FAQ* section.

You should also check with the airlines on luggage fees—many airlines charge to check luggage, even on international flights. Others may charge a fee if you bring a second carry-on item, like a purse or a laptop. **These fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines. If you are making a connecting flight, you should also confirm if your luggage can be checked through to your final destination. For more information about air travel, see the “Air Travel” section of your *Important Information* booklet.

Luggage Suggestions

Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase for your checked luggage. Due to space limitations on our motor coaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.

Consider a daypack or small backpack as your carry-on bag. It will do double duty during excursions and walking trips. A daypack leaves your hands free and distributes its weight onto your back. Packed with daily travel needs (sweater, camera, rain/wind jacket, water bottle, etc.), it will compress to fit the storage space of foreign motor coaches, and yet still have room for an impulse buy at a local street market.

***Tip:** Bring a second, empty lockable bag folded into your main suitcase, with a luggage tag and small lock. Use this to carry souvenirs home – but remember that you may incur extra luggage fees. If you're traveling with a companion we recommend "cross-packing," i.e., pack 2 outfits of your clothing in your companion's luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.*

Airport Security/TSA

Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage may change. Consult the Transportation Security Administration website: www.tsa.gov/public, which keeps a current list of restricted items. From the main website click on *Our Travelers*, then *Air Travel*, and then you will see a link for *Prohibited Items*.

Liquids and your carry on: Follow the TSA's **3-1-1 rule**. (Note that this rule is often enforced in Europe.)

Locking your luggage:

To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, *either* do not lock your bags when checking in for flights that originate in the U.S. *or* use TSA-approved locks. (These are locks that TSA screeners can open and relock with a special tool, avoiding damage to your luggage or lock if a physical inspection is required. Look for the words "TSA" or "TSA-approved" on the lock's packaging.) Outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend that you lock your luggage as a preventative measure against theft.

4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE

Your GCT Program Director

During your Grand Circle Land Tour, your group of up to 42 travelers will have reliable assistance available at all times from an on-site Grand Circle Travel Program Director. Your Program Director is fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. Your Program Director is supported along the way by local tour guides, who guide you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Grand Circle Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable. Your Program Director offers both a deep knowledge of the region and a commitment to make this a very pleasant, informative, and rewarding travel experience for you.

Your Program Director will provide sightseeing tips, handle all travel details, reserve optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need. You will be in the company of the Program Director throughout your Land Tour. During the optional extensions (if you've chosen to take them), you'll enjoy the services of Grand Circle Hospitality Desk Representatives.

GCT Air Travelers

U.S. Departure: If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have a GCT Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. The Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.

Overseas Arrival: At the beginning of your base program or your optional pre-trip extension, a GCT Representative will meet you at the airport after you exit customs and assist you with your transfer to the hotel. If you are not met upon arrival, we ask that you immediately call our emergency contact listed in your final documents.

Important note: *Airport porters are NOT allowed in the customs hall area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a cart (in Italian airports you'll need a one- or two-euro coin for the cart), which you will then move through customs. When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your motor coach. Your motor coach driver will load your luggage onto your motor coach.*

U.S. Return: At the end of your base trip or optional post-trip extension, you'll be transferred by motor coach to the airport for your return flight to the U.S. If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, a GCT Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our GCT Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

Please note: *If you plan on booking your own international flights or arranging with our air department to arrive/depart on an earlier/later date than standard for your program, airport transfers will NOT be included in your program price. Transfers must be purchased separately, as an optional add-on, and are subject to availability. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Traveler Support team at 1-800-321-2835. For more information, please see the "Air Travel" section of your Important Information booklet.*

Grand Circle Travel is not responsible for flight delays or cancellations. In the unfortunate circumstance that your flight is delayed or changed, please try to reach the GCT local contact in order to make new arrangements for your transfer. Due to airline regulations our staff is not notified of flight rerouting, and our airport representative won't necessarily be aware of your new arrival time. In these cases you will need to arrange your transfer by taxi to your hotel.

5. MONEY MATTERS

How to Carry Your Money

The European financial infrastructure is as developed and modern as America's – sometimes even better developed. Currencies vary and banks have different names, but most are allied with global institutions and offer the same services you use daily. You can expect to have ready access to ATMs (to get local currency from your account), to have major credit cards accepted at most popular tourist sites, restaurants, and major stores, and to exchange US dollars for local currencies. There will be localized exceptions and perhaps some limitations on availability and amounts, and don't forget the fees. However a little forethought can make juggling currencies a fairly painless process.

While there is no need to obtain local currency before your trip, many travelers do exchange \$50 to \$100 or so into the currency of their first destination. This can smooth your arrival should you run into closed banks/exchanges or broken ATMs. Otherwise, rely on a mix of credit/debit cards (for large purchases,) and ATM use (for access to ready cash) as the best way to manage your money as you travel. U.S. cash should be mixed into the blend, but it's wise to minimize how much you carry. Just as at home, carrying large amounts of cash can be risky. It's generally wise to have spending money in the local currency rather than to rely on American dollars.

You can exchange money at banks, some hotels, and money exchange offices (to do so, you'll likely need your passport). Be aware, however, that torn, dirty, or taped U.S. bills will *not* be accepted for exchange. **New** (in terms of use *and* issue date – post 2004) and large bills (\$100) will *usually* be accepted by banks and onboard ships; **old** \$100 bills (again, in terms of age and condition) will *not* be accepted. Money in smaller denominations is much more universally accepted, but even there, new bills are preferred.

Generally speaking, carrying a mix of different payment methods is the best option—some cash for exchange, a couple of credit/debit cards, and *maybe* a few traveler's checks as a last resort—so that you'll be prepared for any situation. In this section, we offer some tips on each type of payment method.

Traveler's checks are not recommended. We urge you not to rely on traveler's checks for your personal expenses. They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It's most practical to view any traveler's checks you might bring as a last "cash" resort in the event of a special situation.

U.S. dollars have an advantage over traveler's checks. Current bank regulations are very restrictive, and most banks will only change currency for regular clients. The best way to get local currency is to withdraw from a local ATM. Some hotels may not change dollars, or if they do they will apply higher rates to cover the commission they must pay to their banks. If you are arriving on a weekend we suggest you get Euros from your U.S. bank prior to leaving to cover initial expenses.

Debit cards give you a relatively reliable payment method and ready access to local currency at ATMs. However they may not *always* be accepted in shops across Italy, Switzerland, Austria and Germany. Please remember to memorize the actual digits of your PIN (Personal Identification Number), as many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their numeric keys, they only display digits.

ATMs

When traveling, typically PLUS, Cirrus, and other bank networks are available throughout large cities and small towns. Always notify your bank before you leave home that you are going abroad so that they may remove any blocks on your account and also ask them about the number of withdrawals you may make abroad.

Note on ATM use: Many banks have begun imposing a fee ranging from \$1 to \$5 every time you use an ATM in a foreign city. You may want to limit the number of withdrawals that you make. Your Program Director/Hospitality Desk Representative can advise you on locations, but when to exchange money is left to your discretion.

Credit Cards

Though major American credit cards (American Express, Visa, and MasterCard) are accepted abroad, not every shop will take every card. Always ask if your type of credit card is accepted, and several different cards can be useful. Notify your credit card company that you will be using your cards abroad to avoid a security block. When using a major credit card you may receive a different exchange rate than if you pay with cash; inquire about the rate first. Please be aware that credit cards might not be accepted for small purchases or in the markets. Note that the Discover credit card is not widely accepted outside the U.S. Keep your receipts in case you have questions about the conversion or exchange rate. Also, keep your receipts as proof of purchase for items to be shipped home.

IMPORTANT NOTE: European countries have been phasing in a new type of credit card technology, called a “smartcard” or a “chip-and-PIN” card. These cards have an embedded computer chip instead of a magnetized strip, and the card owner authorizes a purchase by entering a PIN (Personal Identification Number) instead of signing a slip. Some businesses in Europe have already switched to the new system completely; some can process both smartcards and regular cards; and some haven’t switched at all.

This new technology is not common in the U.S., so occasionally there may be machines that can’t read U.S. cards. Or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. While you can ask your credit card company if your cards have a PIN on file, this is not common for U.S. cards, so most likely the answer will be “no”. But even so, there’s no need to worry. In many shops you will still be able to sign a slip as usual. And if the shop in question requires a smartcard, you can always try a different form of payment, like a debit card or cash. (U.S. debit cards usually have a PIN, so sometimes they work when credit cards don’t.)

Since there is no way to predict in advance what each shop will do, we recommend that you bring more than one type of payment when you go shopping. For example, a mix of a couple different credit cards, a debit or ATM card, and some cash is ideal—you’ll be prepared for anything.

Please note: Optional tour payments made by credit card may take up to 3 months to process. For this reason we ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months following your trip.

Currency

The euro is the official currency in the countries you visit during the course of your trip, with the exception of Switzerland and Liechtenstein (see below). Euro banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents; 1 and 2 euro

There is no need to obtain local currency before your trip, though it would be wise to get some Euros from your U.S. bank if you are arriving on a weekend when exchange services are limited. Please note that torn, dirty, or taped bills may not be accepted.

Currency exchange rates fluctuate daily. Your Program Director will advise you of the exchange rate upon your arrival. For current exchange rates, please refer to our website, or the financial section of your newspaper. On our website, select the region and then click on the country you'll be visiting. A link to the currency converter is included in the menu on the page of each individual country.

In Switzerland and Liechtenstein

Switzerland is not adopting the euro. The Swiss monetary unit is the Swiss *franc* (Fr.), divided into 100 *rappen* (known as *centimes* in French-speaking areas). The Swiss Franc is also used in Liechtenstein. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 1,000, *francs*
- Coins: 5, 10, 20, and 50 *rappens*; and 1, 2, and 5 *francs*

Banking Hours

Italy

Bank hours are usually Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 1:30 pm and 3 to 4 pm; banks are closed on Saturdays and Sundays. To exchange cash and traveler's checks you will need to have your passport with you. Many banks exchange money only in the morning. In Italy, money can be changed not only at banks, but also at CAMBIOs (Exchange Offices), some travel agencies, and many hotels. Exchange rates will be most favorable at banks, although banks always charge a commission for the transaction.

Switzerland

Swiss banks are generally open Monday - Friday, 8am to noon and 2pm to 5pm. Currency exchange offices do business from around 6:30am to 9pm daily.

Austria

Generally, banks are open 8am to noon and 2:30pm to 5:30pm, Monday through Friday.

Germany

Bank hours are usually Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 5 pm; banks are closed on Saturdays. To exchange cash and traveler's checks you will need to have your passport with you.

Shopping

There is **no** requirement to make a purchase during stops at local shops or markets, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. **Grand Circle Travel cannot be responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.**

If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or gold dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price. We recommend that wherever possible you carry your purchases home with you, especially if they are valuable or fragile. (Remember to leave some extra space in your luggage when you are packing for your trip, so you can fit in your vacation purchases.)

Italy

Best buys: Whether it refers to high fashion or Maserati automobiles, "Made in Italy" has become synonymous with style and quality craftsmanship. Among the most popular buys are leather goods, silk ties, knitwear, gold jewelry, ceramics, straw goods and other handicrafts, small cabinets, and jewelry boxes. Each region in Italy has its specialties.

In general, the idea that bargaining is the rule in Italy is mistaken. There is no universal policy, but for the most part, prices are fixed in the better shops. Where you see the sign *prezzi fissi* (price fixed) you can be sure that there is no bargaining to be done.

Local shop hours: Shops are generally open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 9am to 1pm; they close for lunch and re-open from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Individual stores might vary these hours. Some shops are closed on Sundays and on Monday mornings.

Value Added Tax: In Italy, a Value Added Tax is levied on most articles, services, and meals, and ranges from 17% to 33%. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods in specially marked *Tax Free Shopping* stores, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper, salesperson, or your Program Director for details. Be sure to save all receipts and the special *Global Tax Refund* forms for Customs, as receipts alone are not enough.

Switzerland

Best buys: Popular Swiss souvenirs include chocolate, cheese, clocks and watches, embroidery, and Swiss Army knives. Switzerland's bargains are to be discovered during sales in July and August. The sales tax (or VAT) is already included in the price. The amount on the price tag is the one you pay.

Local shop hours: Most shops in Switzerland are open 9 am to 12:30 pm and 3 pm to 6pm (except on public holidays, when they are closed all day). Supermarkets and department stores are usually open 9 am to 6 pm Monday through Thursday, 9 am-8 pm on Fridays and 9 am to noon on Saturdays.

Austria

Best buys: Popular buys include glassware, crystal, porcelain, petit point, musical instruments and scores, fur hats, ski wear, and, of course, lederhosen (leather pants), loden-cloth coats, and *sachertorte* (chocolate cake). But be forewarned: the quality of Austrian wares is exceptionally high, and so are the prices!

Local shop hours: Major department stores do business from 8am to 6pm, Monday through Saturday. Small shops and boutiques often close on Saturday afternoon.

Value Added Tax: In Austria, a Value Added Tax is levied on most articles, services, and meals, and ranges from 10% to 30%. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods in specially marked *Tax Free Shopping* stores, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper, salesperson, or your Program Director for details. Be sure to save all receipts and the special *Global Tax Refund* forms for Customs, as receipts alone are not enough.

Germany

Best buys: Popular German buys include Nymphenburg porcelain, cutlery, high-quality cameras and binoculars, *loden* clothing, goose-down comforters, Rosenthal china and glassware, and chocolate. Munich is Germany's fashion capital—there are plenty of chic boutiques, especially on Theatinerstrasse, Maximilianstrasse, and Schwabing's Leopoldstrasse.

Local shop hours: Standard hours for department stores and stores in the major shopping areas are Monday through Saturday 9 am to 8 pm. Smaller neighborhood shops may close on Saturday at noon or 2pm.

Value Added Tax: Depending on how much you spend on certain goods, you may be eligible for a partial refund of Germany's 16% Value Added Tax (VAT). You must obtain a special form for VAT from the store. Ask the shopkeeper, salesperson, or your Program Director for details, and be sure to save all receipts for Customs.

U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, www.cbp.gov has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the *export* duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the *import* duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

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Problem with a Purchase?

Don't forget to examine merchandise before paying for it, check contracts or agreements before signing, and review your receipt before leaving the shop. For major purchases, don't hesitate to ask in advance about the return policy—local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up.

But what if you do discover an issue with an item later on? In that case, your best recourse is to contact the vendor directly. For this reason we recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. due to delays in communication, the complexities of international shipping/customs duties, and even cultural differences in how business is conducted.

To Tip or Not to Tip

Sometimes *that* is the question. Tipping, and how much to tip is *always* a personal decision. Tipping is a common practice both at home and abroad and we offer these guidelines to answer requests for appropriate tipping amounts. It can be useful to have this information on site – when the question *must* be answered – and ahead of time for travel budgeting purposes. Tips below are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency (usually preferred) or in U.S. dollars (personal/traveler's checks should *never* be used for tips).

GCT Program Director: It is customary at the end of your trip to express a personal “Thank You” to the Grand Circle Program Director or the hotel Hospitality Desk Representative, especially if he or she has provided you with individual assistance. We recommend \$4-\$6 per person, per day. Please note that tips for our Program Directors can only be in the form of cash, and local currency is appreciated.

Airport/Hotel/Pier Portage & Transfers: While using GCT transfer services, tips to hotel, airport, and pier porters are included in the cost of your trip. Tips to the motor coach driver for your airport/hotel/pier transfers are also paid by GCT.

Included Group Meals: Your Program Director will tip waiters for the included meals when the group dines together.

Local tour guides and drivers: \$2 per person for each half-day tour; \$3 per person for each full-day tour.

Time at Leisure: During the times that you explore independently, you may dine in a local restaurant, take a taxi, or avail yourself of some other service where tipping is customary. Below are some guidelines for tipping during your leisure time.

In Italy restaurant checks sometimes include service charges; look for the words “*servizio incluso*” in the menu or bill. If tipping is not included, a tip of 5% to 10% is customary. In addition, you may see the word “*coperto*” on your bill. This is not a tip, but more of a cover charge for the use of the table, table cloth, napkins, etc. Taxi drivers expect about 10%. If the doorman calls a cab for you, the tip is generally about 50 euro cents.

In Switzerland, Austria and Germany a service charge is usually included in restaurant and bar bills, but it is customary to leave an additional tip of around 10% of the bill for your waiter or bartender. As for taxis, in many cities the tip is included in the fare, and will be announced on a sign inside the cab; otherwise a 10% tip is appropriate.

Public Restrooms: Most public restrooms in Italy are manned by a local staff that takes care of cleaning and supplies. It is customary to leave a small tip for the staff—about \$.65 per person (in local currencies). In Switzerland, Austria and Germany, most public restrooms charge a fee ranging from \$.065 to \$1.30 per person (in local currencies).

Lake Como & Milan, and Munich & Salzburg (Optional Extensions): Tips for your included meals are included in the cost of your tour, although it is always acceptable to give a little extra for exemplary service or if someone has performed a special service for you. During your free time, the suggestions above will also apply.

6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

In General

Travel light. A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. Eliminate all but the essentials and start packing a few days before you leave. That way, you'll have time to think—not fret—about what you might be forgetting. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.

Pack casual clothes. Comfortable, informal apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations. Basic pants, shirts, walking shorts, sportswear, everyday dresses and skirts, supportive shoes, and functional outdoor clothes that are relatively easy to care for are recommended. At dinner, you will not need to don "dressy" clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two "smart casual" outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you. Even at the opera, formal wear is definitely the exception rather than the rule. You would only need nicer dress if you plan to dine at a deluxe city restaurant on your own.

Please Remember: Regardless of the season you will be spending time at high altitudes amidst the Alpine mountains where swift weather changes are commonplace. On the Alpine peaks, weather can be cool even in summer and temperatures can go down to the low 40s and 30s even in the day time. It is strongly recommended to pack some warm clothing to protect yourself from cold weather no matter when you are traveling.

Winter: For travel during winter months, include clothes for moderate temperatures, but also take some cold weather gear—warm pants and socks, turtlenecks, fleece top or wool sweater, rainproof jacket (ideally with a zip-out insulation layer), gloves, and hat. The most practical travel wardrobe consists of items that you can wear in layers. Then you can easily add or remove a layer according to any fluctuations in temperatures. Your outer jacket should be roomy enough to comfortably fit over your sweater or fleece top.

Spring/Fall: For travel during the spring or fall, pack an assortment of seasonal garments: light pieces and cotton sweaters for daytime; and slacks, long-sleeve shirts, warmer dresses, and a heavy sweater or fleece jacket for evenings.

Summer: For travel during the summer months, pack an assortment of seasonal garments: short-sleeve shirts and comfortable slacks or shorts for daytime; the evenings, however, can be chilly, so bring along a cotton sweater and a fleece jacket.

Comfortable, supportive walking shoes: These are essential. The country's magnificent archaeological sites, churches, museums, markets, and shops truly invite exploration by foot. But negotiating the cobblestone streets and rather uneven sidewalks can be a challenge—even for the most surefooted traveler.

Rain gear: Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell. Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through.

Proper attire in churches: To satisfy dress codes for Catholic churches, men and women must cover their arms and legs. No shorts for men and no shorts or skirts above the knees or sleeveless garments for women. Women wearing sleeveless blouses can cover their bare arms with a scarf. It's no longer necessary for women to cover their heads. If you are traveling in cooler months, when it's unlikely that you'll want to put on shorts, the church dress code might not be an issue. However, if it's apt to be "shorts weather" when you travel, we suggest you pack a pair of light trousers to wear on days when church visits are featured. Women have the option of slipping on a skirt with an elastic waistband over their shorts.

Packing Your Carry-On

Using a daypack as a carry-on bag for your flights is a smart solution. We **strongly urge** you to pack your carry-on with at least one full change of clothes, your camera gear, medications, changes of socks and underwear, your important travel documents, and other irreplaceable items, in case your checked bags go astray. Store camera gear and important papers in plastic bags to protect them from dirt and moisture. With a daypack you can then remove these items on arrival and load your bag with the gear you'll need on walking tours and excursions.

NOTE: Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage change frequently. To avoid inadvertently packing any restricted items in your carry-on luggage, we strongly suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website, at www.tsa.gov which keeps a current list of restricted items. From the main website click on *Our Travelers*, then *Air Travel*, and then you will see a link for *Prohibited Items*.

Clothing Options

The luggage weight and size restrictions imposed by travel realities today have made traveling light an absolute necessity. With modern fabrics – Gore-Tex, Polarfleece, polypropylene, etc. – lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy. A visit to any on-line or local sporting goods/outdoor stores (L.L. Bean, REI, EMS, etc.) will yield a treasure trove of lightweight, specialized, and fashionable clothing and gear that is readily adaptable to your itinerary.

Travel Gear Suggestions

Though it's often fun to do things as the locals do, it can be frustrating when daily necessities or conveniences from home aren't available. To travel wisely these days you must juggle your personal needs and preferences against the physical constraints of your transportation—whether it's an international airplane, a transfer motor coach, a small ship or a day-long trek on a camel. You'll have to distinguish between what you **must** have, what you'd *like* to have, whether you can zip your suitcase closed, and what you can reasonably expect to wrestle through airport hallways and security checkpoints. Consult the following items to create your personal checklist – ignoring what you don't need and making the tough decisions over borderline cases. Remember that many airlines today will charge you extra for added luggage.

What not to pack: do not pack aerosol cans, as they tend to leak during air travel. Avoid packing glass bottles; use plastic containers instead. Leave at home checkbooks and any credit cards not essential for your trip, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose.

Medicines

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your own prescription medicines | <input type="checkbox"/> Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vitamins | <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-diarrheal: Imodium |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cold remedies: Sudafed, Dristan, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Band-Aids |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pain relief: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin | <input type="checkbox"/> Moleskin foot pads |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax | <input type="checkbox"/> Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin |

Consider These

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- Sunglasses with a neck strap
- Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger
- Insect repellent with DEET
- Travel money bag or money belt
- Moisturizer, lip balm
- Swimsuit
- Compact umbrella
- Wide-brim sun hat or visor (seasonal)
- Pocket-size tissues
- Moist towelettes (packets) and/or anti-bacterial "water-free" hand cleanser
- Flashlight, extra batteries/bulb
- Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- Extra passport-sized photos
- Written prescriptions for medications

Other Gear

- Travel alarm (or request wake-up calls)
- Compact binoculars
- Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- Hair dryer (this is provided in most hotels)
- Washcloth (not a standard amenity in Italian hotels)
- Basic sewing kit
- Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite) clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- Electrical transformer & plug adapters — see "Regional Electricity" below
- Travel journal/note pad
- Home address book/email address
- Photos, small gift for home-hosted visit
- Phrase book
- Collapsible walking staff
- Pocket calculator for exchange rates
- Earplugs
- Reading materials

7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION

We can't predict the weather you'll have on your travels – our local weathermen are lucky to get tomorrow right! So, as your departure nears, it's a great idea to visit the *My Account* feature of www.gct.com for a current 10-day forecast of temperatures and conditions at your destinations. Or check Internet weather sites (www.wunderground.com is very comprehensive) for those forecasts and tweak your wardrobe accordingly. You'll find historical averages and general information on local climates below – but, given recent weather extremes, it's even more important to consult up-to-the-minute resources.

Stresa: The climate in Stresa is semi-tropical, with year-round moderate weather. Spring and summer are generally sunny with temperatures averaging in the high 70s. Fall is cooler, but not cold. Night temperatures, however, usually drop in Stresa just as they do in Interlaken and Seefeld; be prepared for both warm weather and chilly temperatures that could dip below 50°.

Interlaken/Seefeld: These two towns have a climate that is comparable to that of New England. Spring and fall daytime temperatures are moderate, and summer days average a comfortable 70°; however, because of the shifting Alpine air currents, it can be unpredictably cool. Evening temperatures always drop, and can be as chilly as 40°.

Lake Como & Milan, Italy—optional extension: Lake Como has a relatively mild climate with tropical and sub-tropical plants growing all year round. Some people even compare its climate to that of the Mediterranean region. In January the average daily temperature is about 36° and in July the average is 86°. This region tends to experience unpredictable snowfall, but it is most common in the areas of higher elevation. Rainfall tends to be heaviest in May.

Milan is situated in the flat, low-lying region of the northern Italian plains. This area boasts rich agricultural fields and extends from Turin to Venice. Rain is well distributed throughout the year. Spring weather is unpredictable: it can be pleasantly warm and dry, or a stint of cool, rainy weather may prevail. Summers, however, are hot and almost as sunny as in southern Italy.

Munich, Germany & Salzburg, Austria—optional extension: Munich's climate can go to extremes—from bitter cold in the winter to hot and muggy in the summer. By late spring, the weather is typically sunny and pleasant, but days of cloudy, wet weather should not be ruled out. Summer is generally warm, though evenings can be cool. Light showers are a common occurrence. Autumn comes early: by mid September the weather has usually started to cool off and skies have become volatile, sometimes alternating from bright sun to a dark overcast several times a day.

The climate in Salzburg is subtropical. Autumn and winter typically exhibit fog but not too many thunderstorms. In summer the temperatures are moderate and in winter they are mild, though the winter winds tend to be quite strong. On average, the warmest month of the year is July (65.5°) and the coolest month is January (30.6°).

Spring/Fall departures: If you are traveling to Alpine Europe during the colder months, please be aware that the weather can be somewhat volatile, though it's still relatively mild compared to that of the rest of the world. Moreover, while “off-season” travel may involve stints of inclement weather, it rewards you with the chance to explore Italy's museums, piazzas, and ruin sites at a time when they are wonderfully free of the summer tourist crowds.

<http://www.weather.com> is a good Internet site for checking current weather conditions.

Here is the data from the weather observation stations closest to our destinations.

WHAT'S THE TEMPERATURE?												
<i>Average highs (taken at 2 pm) and lows (taken just before sunrise) in °F.</i>												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Stresa, Italy												
High	46	50	58	62	71	78	82	81	71	62	52	45
Low	26	27	34	40	50	56	59	59	52	46	35	28
Interlaken, Switzerland												
High	36	40	48	55	64	69	74	72	66	57	45	37
Low	25	26	31	37	44	50	53	53	48	40	32	26
Seefeld, Austria												
High	36	38	43	50	60	64	68	68	62	54	41	36
Low	20	20	25	31	39	44	48	48	43	36	26	21
Munich, Germany (optional extension)												
High	36	38	48	53	63	68	72	73	66	55	44	38
Low	24	25	32	36	44	50	54	54	48	40	32	27
Salzburg, Austria (optional extension)												
High	38	42	51	58	68	64	72	76	68	59	46	39
Low	25	27	33	39	47	53	56	56	50	42	33	28
Lake Como, Italy (optional extension)												
High	46	50	58	62	71	78	82	81	71	62	52	45
Low	26	27	34	40	50	56	59	59	52	46	35	28
Milan, Italy (optional extension)												
High	43	48	56	63	70	78	84	82	75	65	52	44
Low	24	28	33	40	48	55	60	59	53	44	33	26

Please note: The data cited here reflect *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions, and serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. A 60 degree *average* high temperature means that days may be as warm as 80 or as cool as 40 – but it's most likely you'll encounter temperatures in the 50 to 70 degree range.

8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY

In General

Smartphone, tablet, digital camera/camcorder, MP3 player: travel today can involve technology that didn't exist even five years ago. The usefulness of digital devices is enormous: smartphones can keep you connected and offer up-to-the-minute information via your cell plan or a local Wi-Fi connection. With a tablet (or smartphone) you can store multiple country guidebooks, access maps and connect to the internet in a small, lightweight device. (*Tip: you can download **this** document from the Grand Circle Travel website and import it into your tablet or e-reader, many of which can display PDF files.*)

Compact and lightweight, digital camcorders and cameras take high definition movies and still images of the people you meet and places you visit. For robust use a laptop may be effective; for occasional use it's wiser to rely on Internet cafes or a tablet and hotel Internet access rather than shoulder the heft and size of a laptop.

To use these devices you should first consider the services available at your destinations. You'll encounter a range of electrical standards, varied plug configurations to access the local current, erratic availability of electricity and internet access, and differing technological standards.

You'll need to assess your power and data storage needs, and the accessories required to recharge/connect/use these devices. Finally, it's smart to read the owner's manual *before* you depart. Pay particular attention to electrical, power and storage requirements to ensure that you understand exactly what you need. Thorough preparation is the best guarantee that your devices will work up to their potential.

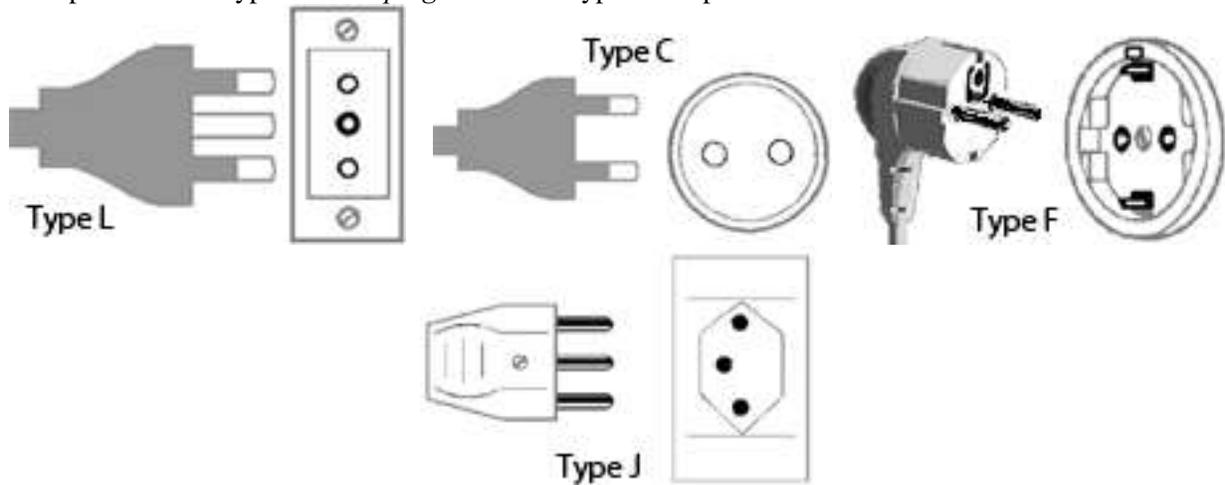
Regional Electricity

The standard U.S. electrical system — 110V/60Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system — is rare elsewhere. The overwhelming choice for the rest of the world is 220-240V and 50/60Hz current with a variety of plug shapes, sizes, and configurations. Some plugs will work with multiple receptacles, while others won't. Europe is largely standardized to the Type C "Europlug."

Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. We suggest that you bring *dual* voltage appliances (widely available) that work on both 110 and 220/240 voltage. Dual voltage appliances are inexpensive and need only plug adapters.

If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) in addition to plug adapters. Regional transformer/adaptor kits can often be found at hardware or online stores but transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave those larger items at home.

Italy operates on 230V/50 Hz and uses the Type C “Europlug” and the Type F & Type L receptacles that accommodate it. Switzerland operates on 220V/50 Hz and uses the Type J Plug. Austria and Germany both operate on the type C “Europlug” with the Type F receptacles that accommodate it.



It may be a good idea to invest in an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, this item will ensure that you are prepared for your current trip as well as future vacations. If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, and MP3 player for instance – it’s also handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressor and USB-style port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without the use of device-specific plugs.

Smartphones

It will require some effort to get the most out of your smartphone when you travel. Even with an international roaming plan, costs can add up quickly – those handy apps often pile up download fees. The simplest solution is to shut down all cell phone functions, automatic data feeds and roaming options, and take advantage of the apps via available Wi-Fi. With an Internet VOIP app (like Skype) you can make inexpensive calls. If necessary, turn international roaming back on and your phone will work as usual – albeit at some cost. If your phone doesn’t support international roaming (most smartphones do), some carriers offer loaners.

Cell Phones

If you want to use a standard cell phone while traveling overseas, be sure to check with your service provider (www.verizon.com, www.t-mobile.com etc.) to see if your phone will work outside the U.S. or whether you’re better off renting an international phone. The websites www.travelcell.com and www.globalcellularrental.com have good information on rentals. Or, consider buying an inexpensive local phone for your stay.

Phone Calling Cards

If you don't carry a phone, you can use a prepaid calling card to call the U.S. with minimal additional charges. Besides the prepaid long distance charges, you might have a local fee of a few cents and possibly a connection fee if you are using your card at a hotel. Check with the reception desk prior to using it to avoid unexpected charges.

Calling cards purchased locally are usually less expensive than those purchased in the U.S. and are more likely to work with the local system. Note that dialing a U.S. 1-800 number outside the continental United States will incur costly long distance fees, since 1-800 does not work outside the U.S.

Photo Gear

For many people, capturing the highlights of their travel experiences in photographs or movies and sharing them is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the journey. Remember, however: some individuals and cultures are less tolerant of photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs. And in some places you may be charged for photography at specific sites, or restricted from any photography at all.

Digital cameras and camcorders are excellent travel companions—and many do dual duty by recording movies *and* still images. Fist sized camcorders can capture HD movies and high quality still photos; cameras the size of a deck of cards are great for snapshots and casual movie clips. With an ample supply of high-capacity memory cards you can record your whole trip with a small, lightweight package.

But you must remember the batteries. Recharging batteries is sometimes impossible, cameras can drain batteries *very* quickly, and replacements may be unavailable. Whether you need standard or proprietary batteries, it's good to have spares. Be sure your charger will work with the local electrical system, and bring more than enough memory cards—they may be hard or impossible to find. Memory cards are small, thin and light: you can never have too much storage.

Compact cameras are impractical for distant subjects. Some models have a zoom lens of up to 120mm, which is good for middle distances. For distant subjects a *megazoom* (with a zoom lens of at least 300mm) or a single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with up to a 300mm telephoto lens are good choices. With a DSLR you can use multiple lenses, though your gear can quickly get complex, weighty and cumbersome. Cameras or lenses that need a tripod are impractical for travel photography. A single mid-range telephoto lens coupled with a small, fast prime lens (for low light/no flash situations) is an effective, flexible and compact kit. Consider mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras (MILC), which combine small bodies and multiple, small lenses with high quality for both still and HD movie images.

If you use a DSLR or MILC camera, protect the lenses with a UV filter and bring lens caps, covers, cleaning paper and a waterproof bag (a heavy duty Ziploc-style bag is good) to protect your gear. Be sure your camera has a flash that you can turn off, and if it's detachable, remember to pack it. (At many sites and museums, flashes are *not* permitted.)

Consider disposable cameras, as well. They are inexpensive and capable of acceptable photos as long as the light is not too dim *or* bright. X-rays do not damage the data of digital cameras (in any media format), and so pose no problems for travelers using digital cameras.

9. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

We're including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you'll visit on your Land Tour. If you expect to explore in depth on your own, we recommend that you consult one of the many available book-length guides to your destinations. If you have one or two specific sites, museums or features that you're interested in, an internet search is the ideal way to get up-to-date information and details. And of course your Grand Circle Travel Program Director or Hospitality Desk Representative will be able to assist you with suggestions and arrangements of activities you wish to participate in during your stay.

Stresa

Cuisine

A traditional Italian meal is very hearty, consisting of a first course (*primo piatto*), usually a pasta dish or soup; a second course (*secondo piatto*), meat, fish, or chicken; a vegetable side dish to go with the main course (*contorno*); and dessert (*dolce*). Pasta, of course, is the national specialty and regional differences are distinguishable mostly by the type of sauce and choice of ingredients used with a particular pasta, which comes in all shapes. After tomato, the most common sauce in the north of Italy is called *panna* and has a cream base. Since Italy has so much coastal area, its restaurants offer a lot of fresh fish. Fresh vegetables, too, are often the base for antipasto, or are served as a separate first course. Seasonal vegetables include yellow, red, and green sweet peppers; eggplant; mushrooms; green and broad beans; zucchini; asparagus; and artichokes. After a meal, Italians typically have fruit for dessert, or a sweet confection, such as *montebianco* (a rich chestnut puree) or *gelato* (ice cream).

Interlaken

Cuisine

Interlaken offers Italian and French restaurants, along with those serving traditional Swiss fare: cheese fondues, dried beef and pork, hearty soups, sausages, sweetmeats, buns and cakes, and delicious chocolate. Other international cuisines are represented, too. You will find dining out in Switzerland to be on the pricey side, with lunch or dinner costing more than you may be used to in the U.S.

Seefeld

Cuisine

The traditional Tyrol meal is healthy, robust fare of large proportions. In town, look for *Konditorei*—cafés—usually with open-air terraces. There you will find pastry in the grand Austrian tradition, as well as other snacks and coffee, tea, juices, and wine. Coffee is stronger than German or Anglo-American brews, but weaker than French or Italian. Decaffeinated coffee is readily available by asking for *coffee hag*.

Lake Como & Milan—Optional Extension

Local Transportation

When visiting Lake Como, the main methods of local transportation are taxis, buses, and a public ferry system. Taxis are a great way to get around, and hotels can usually arrange for pick up but in Como they tend to be a bit pricey. The good news is that buses run all along the shores of Lake Como, and ferries allow you to explore the lake area as well.

Milan's extensive public transit system consists of a railway, trams, trolleys, and buses—and it touches on virtually every part of the city. Timetables and routes are posted conveniently at every ATM (*Azienda Trasporti Milanese*—or Milan Transportation Authority) stop. A single ticket costs about one euro, and is valid for 75 minutes after initial use on trams, trolleys, and buses. On the railway, however, each ticket is valid for one trip only. You can purchase a book of ten tickets. Another option is a travel card (you can buy one for either 24 hours or 48 hours), which is valid on the entire transit system—including the railway.

Munich & Salzburg—Optional Extension

Local Transportation

Munich is served by an efficient network of buses, trams, and two railways: the U-Bahn (inter-city underground line) and the S-Bahn (suburban above-ground line). The U-Bahn runs north-south through the city; the S-Bahn crosses Munich on an east-west axis and goes out to the surrounding countryside in all directions. All forms of public transport operate from about 5 am to 1 am daily. Tickets are interchangeable between the U-Bahn, S-Bahn, buses, and trams. Free maps and information are available at the tourist offices.

In the center of Salzburg most attractions are heavily concentrated within walking distance. However, if you'd like to explore further, Salzburg offers affordable and efficient public transportation in the form of buses and trains. You could also enhance your knowledge of local history while on the go by riding in one of the horse-drawn cabs found throughout the city. The drivers have been known to give quite the history lesson while also providing a memorable way to travel.

10. DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Italy

Area: 116,345 square miles

Capital: Rome

Languages: In addition to Italian, many of Italy's natives speak French and English.

Location: Italy lies in southern Europe, bordering France in the northwest, the Ligurian Sea and the Tyrrhenian Sea in the west, the Ionian Sea in the south, the Adriatic Sea in the east, Slovenia in the northeast, and Austria and Switzerland in the north. The country includes the Mediterranean islands of Sicily and Sardinia and several other small islands.

Geography: Campania (the region of Naples, Sorrento, and the Amalfi coast) has 220 miles of coastline and is on the southwestern side of the Italian peninsula. Its two famous gulfs, the Bay of Naples and Gulf of Salerno, are enclosed by picturesque promontories, including the Sorrento Peninsula. The town of Sorrento, about 32 miles south of Naples, spreads out along the crest of its fabled cliffs, which offer spectacular views of the Bay of Naples.

The region of Tuscany is a blend of rugged hills, fertile valleys, and long stretches of sandy beaches that curve along the west coast of central Italy and fringe the pine-forested coastal plain of the Maremma. The cities and towns of Tuscany house the centuries-old heritage of culture and art that produced magnificent medieval cathedrals and the marvels of the Renaissance.

Population (2012 estimate): 59,685,227

Religion: Catholic 88%, Other 12%

Time zone: All of Italy is on Central European Time, one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (six hours ahead of Eastern Time). Summer hours operate from the last weekend in March until the last weekend in September.

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
01/06	Epiphany
04/20	Easter Day
04/21	Easter Monday
04/25	Liberation Day
05/01	Labor Day
06/02	Founding of the Republic
08/15	Assumption Day
11/01	All Saints
12/08	Feast of the Immaculate Conception
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	St. Stephen's Day

ITALY HAS A LONG AND COMPLICATED HISTORY. Its earliest recorded civilization dates back to around 2000 B.C., when the peninsula was settled by fair-complexioned Ligurians, ancestors of the Latins. Sometime near the 9th century B.C., boatloads of Greeks landed on Italian shores, and Italy became the site for the myth of Ulysses and other famous legends. The Greeks inhabited southern Italy and Sicily during the 8th century B.C., forming colonies of city-states called Magna Graecia. The Greek civilization prospered in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C., but waned in the 4th century B.C. While the Greeks were busy settling the south, the Etruscans, a highly artistic populace from Asia Minor, built strong communities in central Italy.

The Etruscans ruled until the Roman revolt around 510 B.C. By 250 B.C., the Romans had conquered Italy and established Rome as the seat of their empire. Julius Caesar reigned throughout the 1st century B.C., and his defeat of France made Rome the ruler of the entire Mediterranean world. Under Caesar, Roman culture flourished. Its unprecedented splendor was further enriched by Greek architectural and artistic influences. Caesar was assassinated in 44 B.C. and succeeded by his nephew Octavian, later known as Augustus, who instituted the Pax Romana, two centuries of peace during which the Roman Empire was as mighty as it would ever be. At the end of the 2nd century A.D., the Roman bishop was made head of the new Christian religion—a position that granted him enormous power in the political arena.

Rome's glory during the 200-year-long Pax Romana began to decline in the 3rd century A.D., when a succession of inept and corrupt emperors weakened the city. By the 4th century A.D., Rome had become very divided politically, and new administrative capitals were founded in such cities as Milan and Trier, Germany. In A.D. 395, Constantine moved the Roman capital to Constantinople (Istanbul), which left the city of Rome very vulnerable. During the 400s, it was repeatedly attacked by barbarians and in 475 completely fell to a barbarian chief, who soon after opened regions of Italy to Teutonic settlement.

Italy was briefly reunited in 800, when Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III. But over the next century, the country disintegrated into contentious kingdoms at constant battle for control of provincial lands. Italy's turmoil continued for an astounding length of time, as different city-states waged war after war up to the early 19th century, when Napoleon took over Italy.

Despite this internal dissension and strife, Italian society and culture reached its peak during the Renaissance in the 15th and 16th centuries. The independent city-states formed a delicate balance of power, and affluent patrons such as the Medici family of Florence greatly supported the arts. This golden age of human endeavor and artistic creation spawned some of the greatest painters, sculptors, and inventors of Western civilization—Leonardo da Vinci, a genius in many vocations, the epitome of the Renaissance man (1452-1519); Michelangelo (1475-1564); Raphael (1483-1564); and the architect Brunelleschi (1377-1466).

After Napoleon's series of invasions, the Italian people sought to squelch foreign domination, which gave birth to the movement for political unity in Italy, known as the *Risorgimento* (Resurrection). Italian nationalism gathered broad support under the popular leader Giuseppe Garibaldi, and Italy was finally united under King Victor Emmanuel II in 1870.

The country was ruled as a monarchy and joined the Allies in World War I. Benito Mussolini rose to power during the early 1920s and ushered in one of the darkest periods in Italy's history. Mussolini ("Il Duce") organized discontented Italians into the Fascist Party to "rescue Italy from Bolshevism,"—but what he actually delivered was a totalitarian state controlled by the militia. Mussolini formed an alliance with Hitler and fought against the Allies during World War II. The Italian Resistance Movement fought Mussolini and the Nazis, but their reprisals took a heavy toll: 400,000 people were killed, hundreds of thousands were left homeless, and the economy was sharply disrupted. In 1945, Mussolini was captured in Milan by Partisans and executed.

Italy was declared a republic in 1946, but during the postwar era it was seriously divided by extreme political differences. Dozens of governments rose and fell. The leading parties were the diametrically opposed Centrist Christian Democrats and the Italian Communist Party. In the 1970s, a prolonged outbreak of terrorist acts by the left-wing Red Brigades threatened domestic stability, but by the early 1980s, the terrorist groups had been suppressed.

In the early 1990s, public discontent with the government intensified due to a soaring inflation rate and disillusioning scandals that involved the Mafia and many government leaders. In 1996, Italians elected a new government dominated by a center-left coalition for the first time since the proclamation of the Italian Republic. Italy adopted the euro as its currency in January, 1999. The new bills and coins started circulating in 2002. Treasury secretary Carlo Ciampi, who is credited with the economic reforms that permitted Italy to enter the European Monetary Union, was elected president in May 1999.

Switzerland

Area: 15,940 square miles

Capital: Bern

Languages: German is the main language of Switzerland and is spoken in Interlaken. French and Italian also are widely spoken in certain areas. English is spoken widely in tourist and business circles.

Location: Switzerland, in central Europe, is the land of the Alps. About the size of New Jersey, it is surrounded by France, Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, and Italy. Interlaken, which is about 1,850 feet above sea level, is the gateway to the Bernese Oberland region.

Geography: Switzerland is a small country nestled amidst the Jura Mountains and the Alps. Situated between Germany, Austria, Italy, France, and Liechtenstein, it offers a combination of towering glaciers, crystalline lakes, rolling hills, fertile river valleys, and a broad central plateau.

Population (2012 estimate): 8,014,000

Religion: Roman Catholic 39%, Protestant 31%, None 20%, Other 6%, and Islam 4%

Time Zone: Swiss time is six hours later than Eastern Time; when it is 6 am in New York, it is noon in Switzerland.

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
01/02	Berchtold Day
01/06	Epiphany
04/20	Easter Day
04/21	Easter Monday
05/01	May Day
05/29	Ascension Day
06/08	Pentecost
06/09	Pentecost Monday
06/19	Corpus Christi
08/01	Swiss National Day
08/15	Assumption Day
09/21	Swiss Federal Fast
11/01	All Saints
12/08	Feast of the Immaculate Conception
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	St. Stephen's Day

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT SWITZERLAND'S HISTORY dates back to the Paleolithic period when hunter-gatherers began to settle in the lowlands north of the Alps. Swiss territory became integrated into the Roman Empire in the centuries following Julius Caesar's invasion of Gaul in 58 BC and the beginning of the Gallic wars. Under Roman rule, important cities including Geneva, Basel, and Zurich, developed and remained linked to Rome and the northern tribes by military roads and trade routes.

After the decline of the Western Roman Empire, Germanic tribes including the Burgundians and Alamanni invaded and settled into the region forcing the Celto-Roman inhabitants to retreat into the surrounding area. The Burgundians took over the western territory while the Alamanni settled in the north. Both Burgundy and the dukedom of the Alamans eventually came to be known as the kingdom of the Franks, and by the year 800 they fell under the rule of Charlemagne, the first of the Carolingian kings.

The land that would eventually become Switzerland was divided in the aftermath of the three year Carolingian Civil War. Charlemagne's son, Louis the Pious signed the Treaty of Verdun in 843, the first in a set of treaties that would ultimately divide the Swiss territories into three distinct kingdoms. These kingdoms would not be re-integrated until about half way through the tenth century when the power of the Carolingian lineage finally diminished and the territories fell under the rule of the Holy Roman emperors.

In centuries to come, the Swiss territories would become an area of great importance as north to south trade routes opened up through the Alps. After the death of the Holy Roman Emperor in the 13th century, the three regions finally came together and signed a charter on August 1, 1291 leading to the formation of the Old Swiss Confederacy. The confederation experienced substantial growth as more of the surrounding regions, known as cantons joined and Switzerland as we know it today began to take shape. It wouldn't be until 1648, however, when Switzerland finally gained legal independence from the Holy Roman Empire.

After 1798 during what became known as the Napoleonic Era, the French Revolutionary Wars led to the disintegration of the cantons and a period of severe economic decline. Napoleon's Act of Mediation eventually restored partial autonomy to the original cantons, but it was in 1815 when the Congress of Vienna completely reestablished independence to Switzerland and recognized it as a permanently neutral territory, a proclamation that has since been honored even throughout the major World Wars from 1914-1945.

Switzerland now consists of a total of twenty-six cantons and to this day, has maintained its long-standing neutrality. Switzerland has not been involved in warfare since 1815 and has always strived to promote pacifism in its international pursuits. The birthplace of many essential international organizations including the Red Cross, Switzerland has become one of the wealthiest countries in the world and continues to stand out as a distinctive travel destination.

Austria

Area: 32,382 square miles

Capital: Vienna

Languages: German is the official language. English is also spoken, particularly in all tourist areas and major cities.

Ethnicities: Austrians 91.1%, former Yugoslavs 4% (includes Croatians, Slovenes, Serbs, and Bosniaks), Turks 1.6%, German 0.9%, other or unspecified 2.4%

Location: Austria is bordered by Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein.

Geography: Landlocked in Central Europe, Austria features the mountainous Alps in the south and west, but also is home to flat plains and gentle slopes in the north and east.

Population (2013 estimate): 8,221,646

Religion: Roman Catholic 74%, Protestant 5%, Muslim 4%, none 12%, other 5%

Time Zone: Austria is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is noon in Vienna.

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
01/06	Epiphany
04/20	Easter Day
04/21	Easter Monday
05/01	May Day
05/29	Ascension Day
06/08	Whit Sunday
06/09	Whit Monday
06/19	Corpus Christi
08/15	Assumption Day
10/26	National Day
11/01	All Saints' Day
12/08	Feast of the Immaculate Conception
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	St. Stephen's Day

ONCE A POWERFUL EMPIRE AND LATER AN OCCUPIED LAND, Austria now sits at the heart of Central Europe as a neutral state that shares borders with the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Liechtenstein, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Switzerland.

Originally settled by Celts and later conquered by Romans and Charlemagne, Austria arrived on the world stage when its Habsburg family rose to power, a dynasty that ruled much of Europe for six centuries. Evidence of its proud Imperial past can still be seen in its capital, Vienna, a city showcasing the Old World charm that has for centuries helped it stand out—even in the company of other great European cities. This is a city of museums and music, art and architecture, and notable names from a storied past. Here, you can walk the same streets Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, and Freud strolled while conducting their daily business. Once the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Vienna came to symbolize the splendor of an age, and its Baroque palaces and avenues, lined with architectural standouts, still exude a sense of enduring Imperial elegance and dignity.

Following the events of World War I, however, the Austrian empire was reduced to a smaller republic. During World War II, it was annexed by Germany and later controlled by the Allies. The period of occupation ended in 1955, when the Austrian State Treaty recognized its independence and declared its permanent neutrality. Today, Austria is home to international organizations and continues to thrive as a meeting point between east and west.

Germany

Facts & Figures

Area: 137,846 square miles

Capital: Berlin

Languages: German is the official language; Turkish is also spoken in Berlin.

Ethnicities: German 91.5%, Turkish 2.4%, other 6.1% (made up largely of Greek, Italian, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish)

Location: Germany is bordered by Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, the North Sea, and the Baltic Sea.

Geography: Located in central Europe, Germany is bordered on the west by the Benelux countries and France, and on the east by Poland and the Czech Republic. Switzerland and Austria are to the south. Germany's northern coastline is met by the North Sea and the Baltic.

Population: 81,147,265

Religions: Protestant 38%, Roman Catholic 34%, unaffiliated or other 26.3%

Time Zone: Germany is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is noon in Berlin.

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
04/20	Easter Day
04/21	Easter Monday
05/01	May Day
05/29	Ascension Day
06/08	Whit Sunday
06/09	Whit Monday
10/03	Day of German Unity
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	Boxing Day

THOUGH THE STORY OF GERMANY INCLUDES CENTURIES-OLD TRIBAL SETTLEMENTS, the reign of Charlemagne, and the rise of imperialism, its more recent history—including the wars of the 20th century and the aftermath—has had the largest cultural and psychological influence on the country.

Germany's capital, Berlin, is a city completely transformed by the 20th century. Divided at the end of World War II, blockaded by the Soviets during the Cold War, driven apart by a cruel grey wall, Berlin was finally returned to its present, united form by the sledgehammers of freedom fighters. However, the city's divided history has led to a truly unique collection of architectural styles. The Reichstag, site of the final defense of the Third Reich, was rebuilt after World War II and now features an enormous glass sphere, emphasizing the transparency and openness of the new Germany.

Nearby Potsdam also played an important role in shaping the post-war world. Stalin, Truman, and Churchill met here to determine how to deal with a defeated Germany, and the city's Glienicke Bridge became known as the "Bridge of Spies" during the Cold War, as the superpowers used its midpoint as a place to exchange captured agents.

Germany's second largest city, Hamburg, was devastated by Allied bombings during the World War II. Today, however, this northern port is a thriving business and cultural center, hearkening back to its past as an important free trading center during the Middle Ages.

Another notable cultural center is Dresden, a mecca for Germany's artists, whose complete destruction was catalogued in Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five*. Following the war, Dresden was rebuilt from the ground up. Today, the Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady), whose ruins stood as a stark reminder of the war, has been totally reconstructed, incorporating the charred bricks of the original structure as a tribute to its past. Since reconstruction, Dresden has, for the most part, returned to its place as one of Europe's major cultural leaders.

Nuremberg has similarly been intrinsically connected to World War II in the minds of many visitors. While this city is now known for being the site of major Nazi activity during the war—and the high-profile trials that followed—this politically important city has actually been at the center of world politics for centuries, dating back to its position as the unofficial capital of the Holy Roman Empire. Though Allied bombing destroyed much of its medieval city center, the city has been largely rebuilt, once again a hub of trade and culture in Germany.

Meanwhile, Munich is a convenient location from which to explore scenic Bavaria, Germany. Its German name, München, derives from the German word for "monks," a nod to the Benedictine monks who founded this city. The third-largest city in Germany, after Hamburg and Berlin, Munich prides itself on being a *Weltdorf* (world village), where an international stream of visitors comes to explore its museums, shop its high-fashion boutiques, and revel in its seemingly contradictory *Gemütlichkeit* (coziness).

11. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books, Maps, and Movies

If your local store or library doesn't stock the books or movies below, the Internet offers a wide variety of options for finding older or rare stock – try AbeBooks (abebooks.com), Alibris (alibris.com), Amazon (amazon.com) or Barnes & Noble (bn.com) — or any of the smaller websites. Of course, this selection is not meant to be comprehensive, and is offered as a starting point for your research.

Books

Italy

Desiring Italy edited by Susan Neunzig Cahill (Travel Account)

A collection of writings penned by 31 renowned women authors, each inspired by her experiences in Italy. Edith Wharton writes on Rome, George Eliot on Florence, Shirley Hazzard on Naples.

History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire by Edward Gibbon (History)

A landmark scholarly work ever since it was written in the 18th century. Coverage extends from the 2nd century A.D. to the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

Italian Backgrounds by Edith Wharton (Travel Account)

Originally published in 1906, Wharton's travel diary still rings true in its depiction of the Italian people and culture.

The Italians by Luigi Barzini (Culture)

Barzini's classic book offers readers a refreshingly frank discussion of the history and culture of his homeland, past and present.

On Persephone's Island: A Sicilian Journal by Mary Taylor Simeti (Memoir)

The American wife of a Sicilian professor recounts her experiences while living in Palermo during 1983. Full of perceptive insights into the Sicilian people and social customs.

A Short History of Italy by H. Hearder (History)

A concise chronology of Italian history from the Ice Age to the present.

Switzerland

Why Switzerland by Jonathan Steinberg (History)

This book is based on the author's premise that Switzerland is a unique country from which the world can learn much about how democracy rests ultimately on the community level. The author has been a lecturer at Cambridge and is married to a Swiss-German woman.

Heidi by Johanna Spyri (Fiction)

One of the most popular works of Swiss literature, this best-selling book tells the story of a young girl living in the Swiss Alps with her grandfather.

Austria

The Austrians: A Thousand-Year Odyssey by Gordon Brook-Shepard (History)

The author, a noted historian, draws upon his long-standing associations with Austrian leaders and his special access to the private Habsburg family archives to trace the identity of Austria as it developed over a millennium.

The Habsburg Monarchy 1618-1815 by Charles W. Ingrao (History)

This comprehensive history of the Habsburg Empire reveals how the uniquely different personality traits of each Habsburg monarch often influenced the historical events of the time.

A Concise History of Austria by Steven Beller (History)

An accessible re-telling of Austria's rich and complex history.

Beethoven and the Construction of Genius: Musical Politics in Vienna, 1792-1803 by Tia Denora (Culture). Beethoven's life and work is examined in the context of late 18th-century Vienna, with special emphasis on the small circle of aristocratic patrons who paved the way for his enormous success, and the potent myths surrounding him during his lifetime and today.

Germany

A Mighty Fortress: A new history of the German People by Steven Ozment (History)

A thorough and refreshing account of Germany's history written by an award-winning historian.

Germany and the Germans by John Ardagh (History)

A noted British author and historian offers a contemporary study of the German culture.

In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin by Erik Larson (History) Acclaimed historian and author Larson follows the experiences of the American ambassador to Germany in 1933 as he and his family slowly come to realize the menace and danger that is Hitler's Third Reich.

March Violets by Philip Kerr (Mystery) The first of a series that also includes titles such as *The Pale Criminal* and *A German Requiem*. Set in 1930s Berlin, these dark mysteries follow Bernard Gunther, a former police officer now turned private detective who specializes in finding missing people and people who don't want to be found. The language is very much like a classic noir film from the 30s or 40s.

Movies

Here are a few of our favorite movies that are about, or set in, or from the region you'll be traveling. Most are available at movie rental stores and websites—or even your public library. Sometimes films produced outside of the US may be hard to find, but they are usually available online. Lists are highly subjective. If your favorites are missing, start a chat with fellow travelers and you'll likely find even more treasured movies to share.

Italy

La Dolce Vita, "The Sweet Life" (Federico Fellini, 1961) Starring: Marcello Mastroianni, Anita Ekberg
An engrossing social commentary, and one of Federico Fellini's masterpieces (though the competition is keen). It's a detailed panorama of Rome's modern decadence and sophisticated immorality, held tightly in focus by the detached, wandering protagonist through whom we see it all. (Other important Fellini films include *City of Women* and *8 1/2*.)

The Bicycle Thief (Vittorio De Sica, 1949) Starring: Lamberto Maggiorani, Enzo Staiola
As it follows a man desperate to retrieve the stolen bicycle that is crucial to his family's survival, De Sica's film subtly examines the human condition, society, family, justice, and anguish in the poverty of post World War II Italy. It won an Honorary Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film in 1949. (De Sica's other important films include *Umberto D.*, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, and *Two Women*.)

The Conformist (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1970) Starring Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli
The story of a weak man persuaded by Fascist secret police to assassinate his former university professor, a leading anti-Fascist. The film explores how a totalitarian state manipulates people and how people allow themselves to be manipulated. Technically, aesthetically, and visually, this is a rich film.

L'Avventura (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1960) Starring Gabriele Ferzetti, Monica Vitti
One of the early experimental films in modern Italian cinema, this is one of the first thrillers where what happens is never revealed: a woman disappears on a Mediterranean island and is never seen again. Antonioni uses this as metaphor to imply the absence/disappearance of meaning in the lives of the surrounding characters.

Life Is Beautiful (Roberto Benigni, 1997) Starring Roberto Benigni, Nicoletta Braschi
The Jewish country boy Guido, a romantic in Mussolini's Italy raises a son in the shadow of fascism. He is determined to shelter his son from the evils around them, maintaining a ruse with comic ingenuity, even as the horrors escalate. Despite being a bit over the top in many instances, this is a moving and poignant tale of a father's sacrifice to save not just his young son's life but his innocence in the face of evil acts.

Tea with Mussolini (Franco Zeffirelli, 1999) Starring Judi Dench, Maggie Smith, Cher
A semi-autobiographical account of Zeffirelli's life in World War II Italy. Luca, Zeffirelli's character, is raised in Florence by his absent father's secretary among a group of British and American women, who must deal with the rise of fascism, the dangers of resistance, and weather dictatorial custody and betrayal.

Switzerland

Bread and Chocolate starring Nino Manfredi and Anna Karina (1974, color) This comedy-drama follows the trials and tribulations of an Italian immigrant trying to pass as a local after relocating to Switzerland.

The Swiss Conspiracy starring David Janssen and Senta Berger (2003, color) This action film chronicles the investigation by a former U.S. Treasury official into the blackmailing of a Swiss bank.

Austria

Amadeus starring F. Murray Abraham and Tom Hulce (1984, color) A lavish, dark, and intense retelling of the life of Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart from the point of view of his obsessed fan/rival, the Italian composer Salieri.

The Sound of Music starring Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer (1965, color) The plot of this famous musical about the Von Trapp Family Singers isn't 100% accurate (for example, the real Von Trapps didn't cross the Alps on foot) but the songs are memorable and the scenery breathtaking. Filmed in and around Salzburg and the Austrian Alps.

The Third Man starring Joseph Cotton, Orson Welles, and Trevor Howard (1949, B&W) Vienna's shadowy underground—both figuratively and literally—is put front and center in this classic film noir with a famous chase scene in the Viennese sewers. The director insisted on filming on location, and used many places that you can still visit today, like the Prater's giant Ferris wheel and the “Third Man” doorway.

Germany

Das Boot starring Jurgen Prochnow and Herbert Gronemeyer (1981, color) One of the most authentic war films ever made *Das Boot* is a raw and compelling portrayal of a German Atlantic U-boat crew and captain as they struggle to survive during World War II. This 1981 gem from director Wolfgang Petersen revolves around the U-boat crew as battles break out, the submarine's claustrophobic interior comes to life, and the soldiers' ideals and professionalism are put to the test. In German with subtitles.

Goodbye Lenin! Directed by Wolfgang Becker (2003, color) A young German boy named Alex pulls off an elaborate scheme to prevent his fragile mother from experiencing fatal shock after waking from a long coma. Alex strives to keep the fall of the German Democratic Republic a secret from his socialist mother for as long as possible. This sophisticated satire offers a glimpse into a turbulent time of European history while revealing the great lengths one will go to when it comes to matters of the family.

Grand Hotel starring Greta Garbo, John Barrymore, Joan Crawford, and Lionel Barrymore (1932, B&W) As people come and go at Berlin's finest hotel, drama unfolds. Berlin is barely showcased—the drama is all indoors—but we couldn't resist adding this to the list because of the amazing cast.

Run Lola Run starring Franka Potente and Moritz Bleibtreu (1998, color) When her boyfriend Manny loses a lot of money that belongs to a crime boss, Lola has only 20 minutes to run and replace the cash before he robs a store in desperation. The film actually shows three different outcomes; each time the story changes depending on minor events that happen as Lola runs. A cult classic in Germany and the U.S.; in German with subtitles.

The Lives of Others directed by Florian Henckel (2006, color) A drama that marked the feature film debut of German filmmaker Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck. Set in East Berlin in 1984, an agent of the secret police conducts surveillance on a writer and his lover. As the story unfolds, he finds himself becoming increasingly absorbed by their lives. As intoxicating as it is chilling, this film quietly depicts the secret world of German espionage. In German with subtitles.

The Spy Who Came in From the Cold starring Richard Burton and Claire Bloom (1965, B&W) This classic spy thriller is all about the twists and turns of an undercover mission by a British agent in East Berlin. The standout performance by Richard Burton garnered him an Oscar nomination for Best Actor.

Guidebooks:

Your Program Director will be happy to provide recommendations and suggestions during the trip, so a guidebook is not a necessity. But a good one can be invaluable as a one-stop reference, so for those travelers who have asked for suggestions, we offer these guidelines. Since different guidebook series each have their own target audience and structure, it is well worth your time to browse your local library or bookstore to find the one(s) you like best. To get you started, here is some general information on the most popular series:

Culture Smart! – Focuses on local customs and etiquette instead of sights, dining, etc.

DK Eyewitness – Innovative visuals make these books easy to use and a nice souvenir once the trip is over. The focus is primarily on the sights and activities.

Fodor's – A classic guidebook with strong information on activities, shopping, and dining. Good mix of upscale recommendations and budget suggestions.

Frommer's – A comprehensive guide series that is known for its restaurant recommendations.

Insight – Offers more information on history and culture than usual, nice visuals, good maps.

Lonely Planet – Practical guides geared towards a more adventurous traveler on a budget.

National Geographic – From the same company that publishes the magazine. Excellent photographs, good information on history, nature, and culture.

Rough Guides –For the independent traveler on a budget. Particularly known for their maps.

Maps:

Most hotels will provide maps free of charge at the reception desk or in your room. These maps are usually sufficient for our travelers, but if you plan on any independent exploration, you may wish to consider purchasing a map before your departure. This can be especially useful in a country that doesn't use the Roman alphabet as the hotel maps may only be printed in the local language.

Some recommended map series include: Rand McNally international maps (especially the StreetWise series), Insight's FlexiMaps, and Rough Guide's destination maps. We suggest that you visit your local bookstore or library to get a better sense of which type of map is best for your needs before making a purchase.

Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites

If you have access to the Internet, the following sites offer a wealth of information:

Visit the Grand Circle Community website for a world of travel news and information:

www.gct.com/community

Government websites:

International health information: CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information

www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency responsible for screening luggage in U.S.

www.tsa.gov/public

National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information

www.travel.state.gov

General travel information websites:

Travel books

www.amazon.com

www.barnesandnoble.com

World weather

www.intellicast.com

www.weather.com

Foreign languages for travelers: basic terms in more than 80 languages

www.travlang.com/languages

Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.

www.travelite.org

Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe

www.cybercafes.com

Electric current and plug types

www.kropla.com/electric2.htm

Foreign exchange rates

www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM locators

www.mastercard.com/atm for **Cirrus ATMs**

www.visa.com/pd/atm for **PLUS ATMs**

Country information:

www.italiantourism.com **Italy**

www.austria-tourism.at **Austria**

www.germany-tourism.de **Germany**

<http://www.myswitzerland.com> **Switzerland**

www.visiteurope.com/ **Links to countries**

www.inyourpocket.com/free-instant-city-guides.html