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# **The Great Rivers of Europe**

RIVER CRUISE

*Plus optional extensions in*

**Vienna; Brussels; Prague**

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**SGE/SGB/SGV/SGX/FGE 2012**

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# The Great Rivers of Europe

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# INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

We've gathered some introductory information that may prove helpful for this Grand Circle Cruise Line itinerary. If you expect to embark on personal exploration, or wish to discover more about the countries you visit, we suggest that you consult your choice of the many in-depth travel guidebooks devoted to your destinations. For detailed and timely information, it's wise to visit appropriate websites and confirm luggage regulations, weather conditions and other variable elements of your trip. Refer to our recommended reading list (at the end of the handbook) for alternate sources of insight.

## ABOUT GRAND CIRCLE TRAVEL

Grand Circle Travel, founded in 1958 to serve the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), is the leader in international travel, adventure and discovery for Americans aged 50 and over. Grand Circle vacations have been recommended by *The New York Times*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Travel+Leisure*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel*, among other publications. But our most impressive reviews come from the more than one million people who have traveled with us and from readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* who placed Grand Circle Cruise Lines, the cruise branch of Grand Circle, in the Top 10 of the World's Best Cruise Lines for seven years. Grand Circle has earned a spot on the prestigious *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List for seven consecutive years as well. For 2011 *Condé Nast Traveler* named seven Grand Circle Cruise Line river ships among the 20 best river ships in the world; for 2012 the Grand Circle Cruise Lines was named to their Platinum Circle of top cruise lines.

## YOUR GCCL PROGRAM DIRECTORS

During your exclusive Grand Circle Cruise Line CruiseTour, you'll have reliable assistance available at all times from three onsite Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Directors. Your Program Directors are fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. They are supported along the way by local tour guides, who guide you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle Cruise Line, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable.

Your Program Directors will provide sightseeing trips, 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 a Program Director throughout your cruise (and during the optional Vienna, Brussels or Prague land extensions if you take them).

## WEATHER CONDITIONS AND RIVER DEPTHS

Throughout the river cruise season, weather conditions affect river depths, and water levels may require adjustments to your itinerary. When river depths rise or fall during your River Cruise, Grand Circle Cruise Line will be required to adjust your itinerary for your safety and to adhere to the current governmental and nautical requirements. Though we strive to adhere to our planned itinerary, we may not always be able to follow it exactly as planned. Therefore the sequence of ports visited and the days on which included features and optional tours occur may vary.

# 1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS



## Passport Required

You need a passport for this itinerary.

### *Note*

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#### **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:**

Since the consequence of having too few pages can be severe—you could be denied entry into a country—we opt for a *better safe than sorry* policy. We recommend these guidelines.

- **Main trip and extensions:** Under the terms of the Schengen Treaty, the countries on this tour no longer require border guards to stamp your passport when traveling from one country to another. The entry stamp you receive at the airport when you first land serves for all the countries on this itinerary. However, because the U.S. authorities may stamp your passport when you re-enter the United States, and because they may refuse to do so on a page that already has a stamp on it, you should have at least 2 blank passport pages available.

Please take moment to check if your passport meets all of these requirements. If it you are refused entry, you may be required by that country to return to the U.S. immediately, **which would be at your own expense.**

#### **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](http://www.travel.state.gov) for information on obtaining a new passport, renewing your existing passport, or for additional pages. You can renew your passport by mail if it is not damaged, you obtained it within the last fifteen years, and it's in the name you want on your new passport. Many local post offices carry forms for renewing by mail or obtaining extra pages. Allow several weeks for processing your passport. 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.

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## Visas Not Required

For U.S. citizens, visas are not required for entry into any of the countries on your 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. You can also contact PVS International directly, as they 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

## Requirements for travel to the Czech Republic

**You will need to bring along very specific documentation, so please read carefully.**

The Czech Republic requires that all travelers be able to provide proof of medical coverage, *if asked*. Not all travelers will be asked—in fact, the practice is becoming less common. If you are asked, however, you must be able to show proof of coverage that meets these requirements:

- Be for a minimum of 30,000 Euros (about \$40,000 US dollars).
- Cover possible medical expenses and hospitalization charges as a result of accidents or unexpected illness while traveling.
- Be valid while traveling in Schengen countries like the Czech Republic. Schengen countries are the European Union countries that have signed the Schengen Agreement—for example, Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, etc.
- Include repatriation to the country of your legal residence or the country that issued your passport. In other words, it must cover the cost of getting you back home if you need to return for medical reasons.

**If you purchased Grand Circle Cruise Line's comprehensive Travel Protection Plan, all you'll need to bring is a copy of the plan's *Terms and Conditions* and your *paid Grand Circle Cruise Line invoice*.** To make this as convenient as possible, we will enclose a copy of the plan's *Terms and Conditions* with your Final Documents. If you are asked to provide proof of medical coverage—which may only happen if you enter the Czech Republic by air, or if you become ill—these are the documents you need to present.

If you did ***not*** purchase Travel Protection with Grand Circle Cruise Line you will need to bring some other form of proof of coverage. If your own health insurance meets the requirements above, contact your insurer for a letter stating that you are covered. A certificate of coverage and proof of purchase from a private insurer or another Travel Protection Plan will also suffice, as long as the requirements listed above are met. *Please note that Medicare cards are not acceptable, since Medicare does not cover medical expenses abroad.*

Please disregard this notice if your itinerary does not travel to the Czech Republic.

## **Backup Photocopies**

The smartest and easiest security precaution you can take is to carry photocopies of the personal information pages of your passport, your air ticket, your traveler's check serial numbers, and your credit cards. Bring along extra passport-sized photos. Bring the phone and fax numbers for reporting lost credit cards, and for your travel protection plan company (if you have purchased one) and your medical emergency network. Store the copies in your duffel bag, separate from the originals. This can save you immeasurable time, money, and bother if your documents are lost or stolen during your trip. In addition, you can scan these photocopies and email them to your personal email address so that a replacement can be printed out if needed.

## 2. YOUR HEALTH



### Keep Your Abilities In Mind

Journeys sometimes present the traveler with unaccustomed challenges—river cruises, for instance, mean adapting to life aboard ship, with the potential for rocky moments, awkward docking sites and wet, slippery terrain. At some docks you may have to step from ship to ship before reaching shore. In addition, terrain onshore can be uneven, rocky or precarious; both included and optional tours can require extended walking to guarantee a truly rewarding experience. Some of the places you'll visit have not been improved with elevators, escalators, ramps, railings or other aids. If you have difficulty walking in terms of balance or stamina, or are generally inactive in your daily life consider an exercise program to tone up for your cruise. If in doubt, consult your physician describing the length and type of rigors you'll encounter. *Please note that this trip is not wheelchair, walker, or rollator accessible; nor can Grand Circle Cruise Line accommodate motorized scooters of any kind.*



### Health Check and Inoculations

Feeling healthy and confident of your mobility is essential if you want to fully enjoy your trip abroad. Please be aware that this program features a fair amount of walking up and down inclines in towns with uneven or cobblestone streets and at river ports with old-style wooden piers without modern ramps. For your comfort and safety, we recommend this program only to individuals in good physical condition. If you have any doubts, please discuss them with your doctor, and follow 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 difficulty walking or are wheelchair-bound, please consider a different Grand Circle Cruise Line vacation.

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 cruise. 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.

### Basic Illness Prevention

It's common for people traveling in contained spaces to be more susceptible to easily transmitted viral and bacterial illnesses such as flu, stomach and respiratory bugs, and colds. The single most effective way to prevent this is frequent hand-washing. We ask all travelers to be extra diligent in their normal hand-washing hygiene, and to drink plenty of fluids for proper hydration. Simple steps like these will help ensure that everyone enjoys the comfortable, carefree vacation they looked forward to.

### 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. You can contact them at:

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

**By phone**—at 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 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.



## Jet Lag Relief

You will feel better on the first days of your trip if, shortly before you leave home, you start to adjust to the different time zone of your destination. Since you will cross several time zones to reach your destination, you may lose many hours of regular sleep. On arrival, your body then will have to suddenly adjust to new sleeping and eating patterns. The result is jet lag. Its symptoms are fatigue—often compounded by insomnia and general restlessness—irritability, and vague disorientation. You cannot totally avoid jet lag, but you can minimize it. Here’s how:

- Start your trip well rested. Try to begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave.
- Switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane. Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Try to sleep on overnight flights.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying.
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane, and make an effort to get up and walk about the cabin a few times to keep your blood circulation normal.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don’t push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.



### 3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS

#### Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

It may seem early to discuss luggage and packing, but if you know current industry standards for international flights you can start to plan what type of luggage you'll use, how much clothing to bring, etc. The following information can help you in your trip preparations. We'll remind you to confirm your U.S./international luggage limits (and update regional limits, if applicable) in your final documents (arriving about two weeks before your departure).

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
<b>Pieces per person</b>	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person
<b>Weight restrictions</b>	Varies by airline. The current <b>standard</b> is <b>50lbs for checked bags</b> and <b>15 lbs for carry-on bags</b> .
<b>Size restrictions</b>	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches ( <i>length+width+depth</i> ). Generally, <b>62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches</b> .
<b>Luggage Type</b>	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
Both extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.	
REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS	
<p><b>One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person:</b> Due to the space limitations on bus transfers and your river ship, 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 on bus transfers and that you have enough room for luggage in your cabin. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines 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><b>Note:</b> 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 using a daypack or small backpack as your carry-on bag for flights.** It can do double duty during excursions and walking trips. A daypack leaves your hands free and distributes the weight of whatever you carry onto your back or hips. Packed with your daily travel needs (sweater, camera, rain/wind jacket, water bottle, etc.), it can compress to fit the snug storage space of foreign motorcoaches, and yet still have space for that impulse buy at a local street market.

**Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase for your main luggage.** Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags. Packing is easier if you use inner bags to help organize your gear. Plastic shopping bags, nylon stuff sacks, small zipper duffels, or special mesh bags can separate clothing, gear and dirty laundry inside your suitcase. Isolate liquid toiletries in heavy-duty Ziploc style bags – which are generally quite handy to have when traveling.

*Optional:* 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 added luggage fees.)

## TSA locks

### **For flights that originate in the U.S.:**

To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, please do not lock your bags when checking in for flights that originate in the U.S. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has the responsibility for screening every piece of checked luggage at commercial airports throughout the U.S. According to the TSA, baggage-handling agents may require access to the contents of your luggage and will break locks as required. There are some locks available from retailers that are “accepted and recognized” by TSA. TSA screeners have tools for opening and re-locking bags using those locks, thus avoiding damage to the lock or bag if a physical inspection is required. For a list of TSA-accepted locks, visit their website at [www.tsa.gov/public](http://www.tsa.gov/public).

### **For flights outside the U.S.:**

On all flights outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend you lock your luggage.

For more suggestions from the TSA, visit [www.tsa.gov/public](http://www.tsa.gov/public).

## 4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE



### GCCL Air Travelers

**U.S. Departure:** If you are among a group of ten or more GCCL travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, a GCCL Airport Representative will 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 and at the gate one hour before your departure time (security permitting).

*Please note: If you are arriving at your international gateway city via a connecting domestic flight, the Grand Circle Cruise Line Representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.*

**Arrival:** A GCCL Representative will meet you at the airport after you exit Customs and escort you to a private motorcoach for your transfer to the pier or hotel.

**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 complimentary cart, which you then will move through customs. When you exit the airport building, your motorcoach driver will load your luggage onto your motorcoach

**U.S. Return:** At the end of your cruise or post-cruise extension, you'll be transferred to the airport for your return flight to the U.S. If you are among a group of ten or more GCCL travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, a GCCL Airport Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights.

**Important Note:** Please remember to wear your Grand Circle Cruise Line name tag when you exit Customs, upon arrival and when you return to the U.S., so that you are readily identifiable as a GCCL traveler.

### Flying with a Travel Companion

If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.

## 5. MONEY MATTERS



### How to Carry Your Money

**Traveler's checks—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. Cash is more readily exchanged and accepted than traveler's checks, and sometimes commands a better exchange rate. You might also consider using a debit card, another reliable payment method.

You do not need to obtain local currency before your trip (although you can, if you'd like). You can change money at banks, most hotels, and money exchange offices (to exchange cash you may be asked to show your passport). Be aware, however, that torn, dirty, or taped U.S. bills will *not* be accepted for exchange. **New** large bills (\$100) will *usually* be accepted by banks and onboard ships; **old** \$100 bills will *not* be accepted. Money in smaller denominations is much more universally accepted, particularly if new.

### Credit Cards

Though major American credit cards (American Express, Visa, and MasterCard) are accepted abroad, always inquire if your type of credit card is accepted before deciding on your purchase. It is also wise to notify the credit card company that you will be using your cards abroad so that they may remove any 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. Discover credit card does not operate 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.

In many parts of Europe a new credit card called a chip-and-PIN (a personal identification number) card has been introduced. This new card is more secure than the standard swipe-and-sign card, but it needs a PIN to work. In *some* cases you may find that a shop has already switched to the new system and, if so, they will ask you for a PIN to complete your transaction. For this reason we suggest checking if your credit card already has a PIN on file for it. Don't be surprised if it doesn't—this new technology is not used in the U.S. yet, so many U.S. credit cards won't have a PIN.

**Debit cards:** Debit cards are very popular in Europe, and are widely accepted, but will *almost always* require a PIN. Many U.S. banks offer a combined ATM and debit card. Check your ATM card, and if it has a Visa or a MasterCard logo, ask your bank if can used as a debit card in Europe. (If there's no logo, then you probably can't use it as a debit card, but your bank will know for certain). If it can be used as a debit card, all you'll need is the same PIN you use at the ATM.

### PIN Numbers

When you are *off ship* a PIN will be required for most debit card transactions and *some* credit card transactions, as well as for some purchases onboard. However, a PIN number will **not** be required for the payment of optional tours.

**If your credit card doesn't have a PIN:** Many shops in Europe will still take the swipe-and-sign cards. And if the shop absolutely requires a PIN, you can simply use another form of payment.

### **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. For cash withdrawals, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's 4-digit PIN (Personal Identification Number), as many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their numeric keys, they only display digits.

**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.

### **Currency**

The euro is the official currency of the countries you visit during your cruise. 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

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.

Austria's cost of living is higher than that of the other countries you'll visit on this program. If you're taking this optional Vienna extension, expect to pay a hefty amount for your personal expenses.

## **Onboard Ship**

### **Two separate bills will be issued:**

- 1) **Shipboard account:** This bill is for onboard purchases (drinks at the bar, gift shop purchases, laundry, etc) and is calculated in Euros.

#### **Payment Options:**

**Cash:** Euros or U.S. dollars are accepted

**Credit card:** American Express, MasterCard, or Visa are accepted

**Debit card:** Cards with Visa or MasterCard logos are accepted

**If you pay with a credit or debit card:** You will need to sign a receipt and/or supply a PIN number, depending on the card account requirements (onboard sales terminals accept both.)

**NOT accepted:** *Personal checks or the Discover card.*

2) **Optional tour account:** This bill is for optional tours taken during the trip; it is calculated in U.S. dollars.

**Payment Options:**

**Credit card:** American Express, MasterCard, or Visa cards are accepted

**Debit card:** Cards with Visa or MasterCard logos are accepted. The card must allow you to *sign* for purchases — you will *not* be able to enter a PIN. You will need to sign an optional tour form as proof of payment.

**NOT accepted:** *Personal checks, cash, the Discover card, or PIN-only debit cards.*

**Please note:** Shipboard and optional tour account payments made by credit card may take up to 3 months to process. We ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months after your trip ends. Because our headquarters are in Boston, charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as "OPT Boston" (depending on your credit card company).

**Exchange services:** Onboard ship we will break down or change larger U.S. bills into smaller ones (for example, one U.S. \$50 bill into U.S. \$20, \$10, \$5, and \$1 bills), and change U.S. currency into Euros (for example U.S. \$20 into Euro €XX — depending on exchange rate). This service is available only for the Euro & U.S. dollar currencies. The daily exchange is **limited to a maximum of U.S. \$50 per person**. You can exchange larger amounts at local banks in port towns.

## By Destination

### Brussels

Banking hours vary from bank to bank. In general, hours are 9 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday. Some banks close for lunch between 12 noon and 1:30 pm. On Saturday, certain branches are also open 9 am to 12 noon (except during July and August).

**Bureaux de change:** There are many *bureaux de change* offices in Brussels where you can exchange money.

### Prague

The monetary unit in the Czech Republic is the crown or koruna (Kc.) divided into 100 hellers or haler. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 50, 100, 200, 500, 1,000, 2,000, and 5,000 Kc.
- Coins: 50 hellers; and 1, 2, 5, 10, and 20 Kc.

**Banking Hours:** In the Czech Republic, banks are typically open 9 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday. It is more economical to change your money at a bank rather than at your hotel, as the bank's exchange rate is better.

### Vienna

Generally banks are open 8 am to 12 noon and 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday.



## Shopping

It is Grand Circle Cruise Line's goal to identify and provide you with shopping opportunities that highlight unique, locally produced products with good value from reliable vendors. For this reason there may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is **no** requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. **Grand Circle Cruise Line 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.

## By Destination

### Brussels

**Best Buys:** Brussels is not a city for bargain shopping, but you will get top quality for the price you pay. Lace, of both antique and recent manufacture, is the product of choice. Excellent European antiques may be found in shops and street markets. Leather goods are of very high quality, and edibles like chocolates, pralines, and the thin, spicy biscuits called *speculoos* are very popular Belgian souvenirs.

**Hours:** Shopping hours are generally 10 am to 6 pm, Monday through Saturday; some stores observe these same hours on Sunday. Department stores stay open later on Friday, until 8 or 9 pm.

**Tip on a Shopper's Guide:** An excellent magazine devoted almost entirely to Belgian shopping, *Belgian Promenade*, is published by the Chamber of Commerce for Art, Quality Goods, and Services. Your hotel may provide free copies; if not, look for it at newsstands.

### Prague

Antiques are a lure, and the small shops in Prague delight the collector and window-shopper alike. Basically all antiquities are available for sale except for religious items and items protected by the state (legally listed as cultural monuments). The shop should provide you with accurate information concerning those specific items.

Many shops sell a wide range of crafts and tourist goods, such as Bohemian glass, porcelain, fine quality records, crystal, peasant pottery, wooden toys, and folk carvings; as well as imported goods from the West, including liquor, cigarettes, and everything from tools to transistor radios. Modern arts and crafts are sold at private art galleries.

Long store hours facilitate shopping. Shops are open Monday through Friday, from 8 or 9 am to 6 pm; Saturdays, from 9 am to 1 pm. Shopping malls, shopping centers, and galleries are open Monday through Sunday from 9 am to 8 pm. The majority of supermarkets are also open seven days a week, from 7 am to 7 pm. TESCO stores are open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

## Vienna

**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! The main shopping area in Vienna is around Kaernter Strasse, Graben, and Kohlmarkt; most department stores are on Mariahilferstrasse.

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

**VAT:** 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.

## U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges

### Exemption Amounts

Articles totaling \$800, at fair retail value where they were acquired, may be imported free of charge if you bring them with you. A flat rate of duty—usually a percentage—will be applied to the next \$1,000 worth (fair retail value) of merchandise. The U.S. Customs Inspector determines the value of your items when you enter, and is not bound by your bill of sale. In almost every case, however, a genuine bill of sale will be honored.

### Fees on Items Shipped Home

Items shipped home are *always* subject to duty when received in the U.S. There will also be charges for shipping. Although some shops abroad may offer to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the customs facility closest to you and payment of the *export* duties (the fee to remove an item from its country of origin) not door-to-door shipping or *import* duties (the fee the U.S. government charges to bring an item into the U.S.). All additional duties or shipping charges would be the responsibility of the purchaser—you.

Therefore unless the item is small enough to mail or to be sent by a global parcel service (like FedEx) you should be prepared to pay customs duties and for shipping or pick-up from the nearest customs facility. This is why the U.S. Customs & Border Protection service states: “The most cost-effective thing to do is to take your purchases with you if at all possible.”

### Illegal Items

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. For more information on what you may or may not bring back into the United States, you can obtain the publication “Know Before You Go” from the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection by phone, mail or from their website:

U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20229  
Tel. 1-877-272-5511  
[www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/)

## Problem with a Purchase?

The best way to address a problem with a purchase is to not have one in the first place! So 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 ...

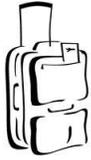
Sometimes *that* is the question. The good news is twofold: we're fresh out of Shakespearean soliloquies, so no thesauri will get hurt here; and the answer to the question "**to tip or not to tip** (and how much to tip if you so choose)" is *always* a personal decision. Tipping is a common practice both 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).

**Shipboard:** Shipboard gratuities to the cruise personnel are not included in the cost of your CruiseTour. The ships' tipping guidelines recommend a flat tip of \$10-\$12 U.S. per person, per day, which will be pooled among all cruise staff. For your convenience, tips for the crew can be paid with a credit card.

**GCCL Program Director:** It is customary at the end of your trip to express a personal "Thank You" to the Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Director assigned to your group, especially if he/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.

**Port Stops & Land Stays:** During your port stops and land stays, you may dine in a local restaurant, take a taxi, or avail yourself of some other service where tipping is customary. 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.

## 6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP



### In General

**Travel light.** It's a good practice to gather together everything you want to bring and then take just 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 pants and shirts, skirts and blouses, or pantsuits that can be mixed to create different outfits.

**Pack casual clothes.** Comfortable, low-key apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations and aboard ship. Basic pants, shirts, walking shorts, sportswear, everyday dresses and skirts, supportive shoes, and functional outdoor clothes are recommended. At dinner, you will not need to don “dressy” clothing; men do not need a tie or jacket. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you.

**Plan to dress in layers on shore excursions.** Be prepared for a variety of weather conditions: warm days with sun, chilly temperatures with showers, and evenings that could dip into the 40s or 50s, depending on your travel season. In March or November, evenings may even fall into the 30s. For warmer conditions, a mixture of cotton sweaters, sweatshirts, long-sleeved shirts, summery tops, pants, skirts, and walking shorts is recommended. Evenings call for a warm outfit and a heavy sweater or jacket.

A sturdy windproof shell over a heavy sweatshirt, sweater, or fleece top is ideal for being out on deck at night. On land excursions, dress in layers. You can then easily adjust to any temperature shifts by removing or adding a layer. For possible showers, take a folding travel umbrella and/or rain hat. A waterproof jacket with a hood is ideal.

**Good walking shoes are critical.** This program features many included tours that follow steep, unpaved or cobbled routes; and even an average day of light sightseeing or shopping can put great demands on your feet. Supportive, waterproof sports shoes are ideal for daytime shore excursions. If you prefer more ankle support, take light hiking boots. Bring five to seven pairs of socks. In case you get caught in the rain, we suggest you bring an extra pair of walking shoes, and rain boots or galoshes. Aboard ship, you'll want non-slip shoes with rubber soles.



### Packing Your Carry-On Bag

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](http://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 Suggestions

We've included information below on the weather you can expect for the regions you'll be visiting on your travels. Taking into account the climate you'll encounter and the general suggestions we offer above will enable you to create a flexible wardrobe that's light enough for sophisticated travel and will guarantee comfort in all the conditions you can expect to encounter. 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 motorcoach, 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. Also 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. For more packing and luggage tips, you might want to visit [www.travelite.org](http://www.travelite.org).

**Cabin amenities include:** shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer, liquid soap, body lotion, shower cap, washcloth, and towels. We have still mentioned some of these items in the checklists below, in case you have preferred brands you want to bring with you on your cruise.

### Consider ...

- 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
- Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- Compact umbrella
- Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- Extra passport-sized photos
- Insect repellent with DEET
- Travel money bag or money belt

## Medicines

- Your own prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads
- Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin

## Other Gear

- Travel alarm
- Compact binoculars
- Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- Washcloth
- Handkerchiefs
- Basic sewing kit
- Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite), clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- Electrical transformer and plug adapter—see “Regional Electricity” below.
- Sunscreen
- Reading materials
- Travel journal/note pad
- Swimsuit, if your ship/hotel has a pool or whirlpool
- Home address book
- Photos, small gift for home-hosted visit
- Phrase book
- Collapsible walking staff
- Pocket-size calculator for exchange rates
- Insect repellent with DEET



## 7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION

We can't predict what the weather will be during your travels, but you'll find historical averages and general information on the climate of your destinations below. As your departure nears it's a good idea to visit the *My Account* feature of [www.gct.com](http://www.gct.com), where you'll find monthly temperature averages for the countries you'll visit as well as a current 10-day forecast of local temperatures and conditions. Or check Internet weather sites ([www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com) is very comprehensive) for those forecasts.

**Austria:** This country has a central European climate: variable weather reigns, and rain and drizzle are common occurrences year-round. Afternoons average about 60°F during early spring, and about 70°F later in the season. Summers are typically sunny and warm, though you should be prepared for a few cloudy and wet days. Evenings, too, can get quite chilly. Autumn weather comes early to this region of the world, so by November it can be on the brisk side, with daytime temperatures in the mid to high 40s, and evenings that dip into the 30s.

**Belgium & the Netherlands:** The northern part of Belgium is low-lying, with a climate that is almost identical to that of the Netherlands, its adjoining neighbor. As in most areas of northwest Europe, the weather in these two small countries is frequently rainy and can be very changeable from day to day all through the year. During spring, a fine, warm spell may last for weeks—or a stretch of cool, unsettled weather may prevail. Showers are common—Bruges, in particular, gets a lot of rain—but the sprinkles rarely turn into heavy downpours. Daytime temperatures are generally mild, averaging in the upper 50s and low 60s, but weather shifts do occur on a regular basis. In summer, fine warm periods may last for weeks on occasions; but then again, the weather could also be cool and unsettled. By autumn, overcast skies occur more frequently, and the overall weather pattern consists of longer, heavier rains and colder temperatures.

Generally, the flat countryside of the Netherlands makes it a rather windy place in all seasons. In the past, the Dutch relied on this weather element to run the windmills that pumped the seawater from the low-lying lands.

**Czech Republic (optional extension):** The climate of the Czech Republic is similar to that of Austria and Germany, but is perhaps a bit cooler in all seasons. In spring, variable weather reigns: some years it's warm, in others it's cool. Summer days can still be brisk, though there are spells of very warm weather. Temperatures start to fall in early autumn, and winter weather begins settling in by early November. In general, you can expect spring temperatures to average in the low 60s, summer in the low 70s, and fall in the 50s.

**Germany:** Germany has a central European climate. Variable weather reigns, and rain and drizzle are common occurrences year-round. The hill slopes along the Rhine and Mosel valleys have a climate particularly suitable to the cultivation of vineyards. Though summer weather is often volatile, it is generally sufficiently warm and sunny to make this a notable area for wine. Spring and fall weather is moderate with intermittent sun; cloudy, wet days are common. On the Rhine and Mosel Rivers, fog and mist appear frequently, especially in the early mornings. Evenings on the water can be quite chilly. The farther south you head, the milder the climate tends to become.

In the upper Rhine valley of southwest Germany, site of Baden-Baden and the Black Forest, the spring and summer temperatures are the warmest in the country, allowing for a variety of crops to grow, including vines and tobacco. Autumn can be noticeably cooler, and winter quite cold, due to the area's proximity to the Alps and distance from the ocean.

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

<b>WHAT'S THE TEMPERATURE?</b>										
<i>Average highs (taken at 2 pm) and lows (taken just before sunrise) in °F.</i>										
	<b>MAR</b>	<b>APR</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUN</b>	<b>JUL</b>	<b>AUG</b>	<b>SEP</b>	<b>OCT</b>	<b>NOV</b>	<b>DEC</b>
<b>Amsterdam, Netherlands</b>										
High	48	53	61	66	64	71	64	57	48	44
Low	37	40	46	52	55	55	51	46	39	36
<b>Regensburg, Germany</b>										
High	46	54	64	68	73	73	66	55	42	36
Low	30	36	45	51	54	53	47	40	33	28
<b>Vienna, Austria (base program &amp; optional extension)</b>										
High	49	57	67	72	77	77	69	57	44	39
Low	35	41	49	55	59	59	53	43	35	30
<b>Brussels, Belgium (optional extension)</b>										
High	49	55	63	67	72	72	66	58	48	44
Low	38	40	47	52	56	55	52	46	39	36
<b>Prague, Czech Republic (optional extension)</b>										
High	46	54	64	69	72	73	65	54	41	36
Low	32	36	45	51	54	53	48	39	32	28

**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

Cell phone, digital camera, camcorder, PDA, MP3 player: travel today can involve technology that didn't even exist as recently as ten years ago. The variety of digital gadgets and their usefulness when you travel – en route or after arrival – is enormous.

An e-book reader allows you to keep guidebooks for uncounted countries at your fingertips and not increase your luggage weight by an ounce. (*Tip: you can download **this** document from the Grand Circle Cruise Line website and import it into your tablet or e-reader. Many of those devices can display PDF files. A large screen is best, however, since PDF documents don't scale like documents designed specifically for e-readers.*) Compact, lightweight digital camcorders and cameras let you bring home high definition movies and still images of the people you meet and places you visit on your travels.

Laptops/netbooks/tablets can keep you connected and promise up-to-the-minute information via Wi-Fi and the Internet. As with all gear, you'll need to determine if bringing them makes sense for you. With laptops it's often wiser to rely on Internet cafes or hotel Internet access, if available, than pay the weight and space penalty just for casual Internet use. And, of course, the more time you spend gazing into gadgets the less time you have to relish the local sights, sites, and people.

To take advantage of the devices you choose to bring, you'll need to consider some variables—particularly in regard to the services that will be available in the countries you visit. You'll encounter a range of electrical current standards, varied physical plug configurations to access that current, erratic availability (electricity and internet access), and different technological standards (cell phone networks differ across borders.)

You'll need to understand your power and data storage needs, and the accessories required to recharge/connect/use these devices under the different conditions you'll encounter. You'll find some tips below to ensure that your gadgets reach their full potential. Read the owner's manual *before* you depart, particularly if it's a new gadget. Pay special attention to electrical, charging and storage requirements to ensure that you understand exactly what you need. And remember that good preparation is the best guarantee that you'll get the most benefit from your devices.



### Regional Electricity

Outside the U.S. most countries use electrical systems that differ from the standard U.S. 110 V 60 Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system. The use of 220-240 V and 50/60 Hz current is the overwhelming choice for the rest of the world. Plug shapes, sizes, and configurations vary from country to country and often inside countries as well. In addition, some plugs will work with multiple receptacles and some won't. Europe is largely and conveniently standardized to the Type C “Europlug.”

Plugging a 110 V U.S. appliance into 220/240 V 50/60 Hz service will result in a broken appliance, since the motor will burn out as it tries to run twice as fast as it was designed to run. We suggest that you bring **dual** voltage appliances that will work on both **110 and 220/240** voltage. These are widely available, though you may have to read the fine print to confirm the dual voltage capability. With dual voltage appliances you'll only need to carry whatever plug adapters you need – which are both inexpensive and reliable.

If you **do** choose to bring 110 V American appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or shaver, you'll need a current transformer (to cut the 220/240 V in half) as well as the necessary plug adapters. Transformer/adaptor kits can usually be found at your local hardware or at many online stores. Note, however, that transformers are unreliable and tend to burn out – which will render your 110 V appliance useless. Another option is to use battery-operated appliances—which don't need adapters or transformers—just an ample supply of batteries. (Rechargeable batteries are an economical option, but then you'll need a charger.)

Austria and Belgium use the Type C “Europlug” and receptacles (Types C, E & F) that accommodate it, and 230 V AC/50 Hz current.

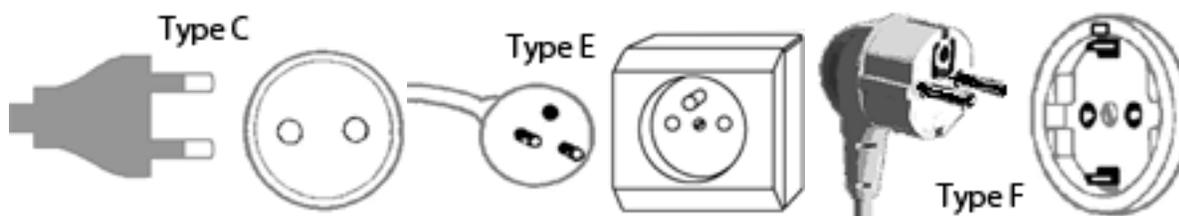
## Electricity Onboard

### *River Adagio, Aria Concerto, Harmony, Melody, Rhapsody*

Cabin bathrooms are equipped with a 110-volt outlet for electric shavers. The rest of the cabin has 220 volts, with European-style outlets: you will need a transformer to operate 110V appliances, as well as plug adapters.

On the *River Symphony* the current onboard is 220V only. You will need a transformer to operate 110V appliances throughout the ship, as well as plug adapters.

On all ships, a *limited* number of transformers and adapter plugs are available at the ship's reception desk for occasional use. If you need these items for the duration of the cruise, we recommend you bring your own.



If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, and MP3 player for instance – it's handy to have a travel power strip to increase the number of available outlets for charging these devices. Some types include surge suppressors and USB-style plugs capable of charging cell phones and MP3 players without the need for a brand-specific charging block – saving weight and packing space. You'll have to review the specifications of your device to ensure that it will work with the power strip you choose—and that the power strip will work with the various voltages you may encounter.



## Cell Phones

If you want to use a cell phone while traveling overseas, be sure to check whether your own phone will work outside the U.S. or whether you're better off renting an international phone. The websites [www.travelcell.com](http://www.travelcell.com) and [www.globalcellularrental.com](http://www.globalcellularrental.com) have good information on rentals. You may also want to consider buying an inexpensive local phone for your stay.

To use your own phone, it's best to investigate the options and fees your plan offers for international use. Consult your service provider ([www.verizon.com](http://www.verizon.com), [www.t-mobile.com](http://www.t-mobile.com) etc.) for details. U.S. service is dominated by the CDMA technology standard, while most of the world uses the incompatible GSM standard. Some U.S. providers do offer GSM, but in either case you may incur high international roaming fees. With GSM, however, you can often choose to have your phone "unlocked" and then add a local SIM card for lower fees. If you can access the Internet as you travel, you can take advantage of email or a Skype Internet telephone (VOIP) account for the best value.

## Phone Calling Cards

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, we advise that you use a prepaid calling card, because the only additional charge you'll normally incur (besides the prepaid long distance charges) is a local fee of a few cents and possibly a connection fee if you are using your card at your hotel. It is best to check with the hotel's reception desk prior to making phone calls to avoid unexpected charges.

Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.



## Photo Gear

One of the most enjoyable aspects of traveling to new places is the chance to photograph some of the highlights of your experience and bring them home. You can share them with friends and family, relive some of the important moments, and savor them for years to come. Lightweight and compact, digital cameras and camcorders are excellent travel accessories—and you can find models of either cameras or camcorders that will record both movies *and* still images. Camcorders weighing as little as 9 ounces and about the size of your fist can capture high definition movies and high quality still photos; compact still cameras are great for snapshots and can capture casual movie clips. With an ample supply of high-capacity memory cards you can have all you need for your whole trip in a very compact, lightweight package.

Be sure to bring enough batteries. Recharging batteries is not always possible, due to a lack of outlets, electrical shortages or outages—and some cameras go through batteries *very* quickly. Whether your camera uses standard-size (double or triple A) rechargeables or proprietary batteries, it's handy to have backup for extended shooting or for an emergency. Be sure your battery charger will work with the local electrical current. You'll need to bring enough memory cards—these can be hard to find and, if found, will often be pricier than in the U.S. Whatever the storage format (usually Compact Flash or Secure Digital) memory cards are small, light and thin and, as with being thin, there's probably no such thing as too much storage. MiniDVD discs are compact to pack, as well.

Compact cameras, however, are impractical for capturing distant subjects (such as wildlife in Africa or architectural details on Europe's taller buildings), as their lenses rarely reach long distances. Some compact models have a zoom lens of up to 120mm, which is acceptable for moderate distances. For photographing distant subjects a *megazoom* compact (physically larger than a compact – and built for lenses that telescope to 500+mm) or a single lens reflex (35mm film SLR—or DSLR for the digital variety) camera with a telephoto lens of 200mm to 300mm is ideal. With a DSLR you can consider wide-angle lenses, which are valuable for panoramic shots, and fast prime lenses for low light/no flash situations. As your photographic gear gets more elaborate, however, you'll need to consider luggage weight and size constraints. Professional quality equipment weighs more, is larger in size, and multiple lenses add size and weight. A single megazoom lens for your DSLR may be the best option for a walk-around travel lens. Large lenses that need tripod support, or double reflex cameras are impractical for casual travel photography. If you use a SLR camera, protect your lens with a UV filter and remember to bring lens caps and covers. When traveling it is easy to get dirt or moisture on the front of your lens, which could permanently damage it. A screw-in filter can protect the lens and if the filter is damaged, it is much less expensive to replace than a lens; caps and covers are common sense.

Bring lens paper for cleaning the lens and a waterproof bag to protect your camera—a heavy duty Ziploc style bag is a good choice. If your camera's flash is detachable, remember to pack it. Be sure to bring a camera with a flash that can be turned off, and learn how to turn it off when it's not needed. (At some sites, and in many museums, flashes are not permitted; in other situations flashes can frighten wary wildlife.) It's good to note that in some countries you may be charged for photography at specific sites; and that some cultures and individuals are less receptive to photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs.

Disposable cameras are also an option. They are inexpensive and capable of perfectly acceptable photos in light that is not too dim *or* bright. A panoramic disposable can add a particularly interesting perspective when compared to standard photo formats—and may suggest inventive ways of seeing your subjects. X-rays do not damage the data of digital cameras (in any media format), and so poses no problems for travelers using digital cameras.

## 9. GRAND CIRCLE CRUISE LINE'S EUROPEAN RIVER SHIPS



*M/S River Aria, M/S River Adagio; M/S River Concerto, M/S River Harmony, M/S River Melody, M/S River Rhapsody*

Our private fleet of custom-built river ships—with designs incorporating suggestions from Grand Circle Cruise Line travelers—offers a host of amenities to make you feel right at home. Each ship is designed to carry a moderate number of passengers, ensuring an intimate shipboard atmosphere, plus the ease of maneuverability that's so important when entering small river ports. Amenities on each ship include a restaurant with panoramic windows and wraparound promenade, sun deck with lounge chairs, a whirlpool, library, sauna, bar, lounge, dance floor, and small souvenir shop.

By owning our ships, we can assure that you'll be sharing this unique travel experience with only like-minded Grand Circle Cruise Line travelers. You'll find your ship to be an intimate haven that's especially conducive to camaraderie. We'll all be together for the joint celebrations, such as the Welcome Cocktail Party, where you'll experience the gala ambiance of a larger group. At other times, such as when we venture ashore, we'll break into smaller groups with individual Program Directors to allow for more intimate and personal discoveries.

### **Included features of all Grand Circle Cruise Line European river ship cabins:**

- A layout of at least 150 square feet
- All outside cabins
- Individual climate control (heat and air conditioning)
- Twin beds that ship staff convert into daytime couches
- Storage space under beds of 57 inches x 22.8 inches x 11.8 inches (length x width x height)
- Sufficient closet and dresser space
- Color TV, including CNN programming and a bow camera for ship-front views
- Direct-dial international telephone
- Hair dryer
- Desk
- Private bath with shower

Cabins on the Serenade deck have small balconies with sliding doors; those on the Sonata deck have large picture windows; cabins on the Cantata deck have two picture windows, and Prelude Deck cabins have a square window, placed high in the cabin. For safety reasons, cabin windows do not open.

**An important word:** While our fleet features larger-than-usual riverboat cabins, please keep in mind that these ships are river vessels, not large ocean cruise ships. Riverboat cabins, in comparison, are relatively small, and ship amenities, in general, are comfortable but not lavish.

## **Shore Excursions**

Included on your CruiseTour are many sightseeing tours. Other optional tours are available for purchase. Your Program Director will provide information on these optional excursions on your arrival. Please note that all optional tours can only be purchased with a credit card.

## Onboard Activities

During your cruise you'll enjoy exclusive Discovery Series events, such as folklore and local music entertainment, theme dinners, organized discussions, group activities that relate to the region (may include a language lesson), and talks on upcoming ports of call.



You'll enjoy fine cuisine and excellent views in your ship's dining room, featuring a warm decor of dark woods, rich carpeting, floor-to-ceiling windows, and white-linen and china table settings. Your ship's daily service includes a breakfast buffet, lunch, and a more formal dinner. Our professional chefs will create unique menus for you that feature regional specialties. Included with dinner are two complimentary drinks (choose from house wine, draft beer, or soft drink) per guest, per meal. In addition, a selection of other fine wines and beer is available for purchase. Passengers may also bring a bottle of their own favorite wine to dinner to enjoy at their table. Should you care to avail yourself of this service, there will be a corkage fee of approximately €10 (Euro) per bottle, charged to your passenger account.

Please note that if you bring your own alcohol aboard, it can only be consumed in the dining room as described above, or in your cabin. Consumption of alcohol purchased outside the ship is not permitted in the lounge or public areas. We also offer complimentary coffee and tea throughout the day, available at meals and from the machine in the reception area.

**Open-table, single-seating for all meals:** Each meal is open seating—reservations of any kind are not accepted. Dinner has only one designated time for its open seating, announced each day aboard ship.

**Dining times:** Dining times for all meals may vary depending on the day's sightseeing and sailing schedule, but in general, meal times are as follows:

**Early riser breakfast:** 6:00-7:00 am

**Breakfast:** 7:00-9:00 am

**Lunch:** 1:00-2:00 pm

**Dinner:** 7:00-9:00 pm

**Special diets & celebrations:** Special diets, such as low-cholesterol or vegetarian, can be accommodated, as well as the recognition of an anniversary or birthday. Please call Grand Circle Cruise Lines to submit your request no later than 45 days prior to departure. Religious dietary regimens, such as kosher or halal meals, cannot be prepared aboard ship.

**Dress code:** The dining-room dress code is casual, though most travelers dress nicely for the Captain's Welcome Reception and Farewell Dinner.

**Non-smoking policy:** The entire dining room is non-smoking at all times.



## Embarkation/Disembarkation

On the day you board ship, your cabin will be available at around 1:00 pm. The restaurant will open at 12:30 pm and serve a light lunch. On the day of disembarkation, your cabin will no longer be available after breakfast. You may sit in the ship's lounge or on the sun deck until disembarkation.

## Dock and Landing Etiquette

River waterways are simply not big enough to support large landing docks such as those built on ocean shorelines. It is common for river ships to tie up alongside each other at some piers—particularly in ports where docking area is restricted. While we try to arrange the most convenient mooring available in each port of call, outboard boats may occasionally obstruct views, and you may have to step across other ships when you want to go ashore.

## Onboard Facilities



### Headsets

During the cruise portion of your trip, complimentary headsets will be provided on all of your included and optional tours, so that you can better hear your Program Director or local guide.



### Wi-Fi Access

Limited Wi-Fi service is available for free in the lounge, library, reception and bar areas on board these Grand Circle Cruise Line ships: *Concerto*, *Harmony*, *Melody*, *Rhapsody*, *Adagio*, *Aria*, and the *Bizet*. Wi-Fi service is not available in individual cabins, restaurants or other common areas. If you want to use the Wi-Fi connection you'll need to bring your own device (laptop/tablet/netbook) — ships do **not** rent or loan these devices. To use the Wi-Fi service, please visit Reception after you board for access information. Shipboard access is subject to the challenges of travel: ship location, signal availability, and usage volume on board will affect connectivity and speed. The ship's Internet connection demands a strong 3G cell phone signal, which is unavailable in many of the areas we visit. You can expect disruptions of both long and short duration.



### Elevator/Chairlift

Each ship has an elevator and chairlift service to the sun deck from the deck below (or you can use the staircase to the sun deck, which has one flight of ten to twelve steps). The elevator does not provide service to or from the Prelude Deck. The staircase to/from the Prelude Deck features about six stairs, with a banister to hold on to. The chairlift is a single-seat transport that slides up the staircase banister.



### Fitness Center

A fitness center with an exercise bike and walking/running treadmill is available on each ship.



### Laundry Service

Laundry service is available for a fee. Please note that neither self-service laundry facilities nor dry cleaning services are available.



### **Linen Service**

Bed linens are changed once a week (twice during the 14-night cruise); towels are changed daily.



### **Lounge/Bar**

The bar is open from 9:30 am to 1 am, with soft drinks, beer, wine, and liquors for sale. Prices are in Euros.



### **Medical Care**

Our entire fleet adheres to stringent European safety standards. In addition to an emergency call button in all cabins, ships also feature fully staffed reception desks, 24 hours a day.



### **Recreational Facilities**

These include a sun deck with lounge, library, and lounge with bar and dance floor.



### **Drinking Water**

Tap water aboard ship is safe for drinking. Bottled water is also available. There are two ice machines onboard.

## **Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy**

Smoking is not allowed anywhere inside our Grand Circle Cruise Line European River Ships, including in individual cabins. The only area on the ship where smoking is permitted is outside on the sun deck.

## Ship Specifications

<i>Entered service</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Passenger capacity</i>	<i>Crew members</i>	<i>Decks</i>	<i>Cabins</i>	<i>Elevator</i>	<i>Chairlift to sun deck</i>
<b>M/S River Adagio</b> 2003	410	38	164	38	4	82	yes	yes
<b>M/S River Aria</b> 2001	410	38	164	40	4	82	yes	yes
<b>M/S River Concerto</b> 2000	361	38	140	32	4	70	yes	yes
<b>M/S River Harmony</b> 1999	361	38	140	32	4	70	yes	yes
<b>M/S River Melody</b> 1999	361	38	140	32	4	70	yes	yes
<b>M/S River Rhapsody</b> 1999	361	38	140	32	4	70	yes	yes

## 10. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

### In General

We're including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you'll visit on your River Cruise. 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 Cruise Line 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.

### Brussels in Brief—Optional Extension



#### City Layout and Details

The city is relatively compact and most of its interesting sights are situated within the inner circle of boulevards, known collectively as the Petite Ceinture, which enclose the central sections of town. A great majority of attractions lie in the rather small area between the Grand Place and Parc de Bruxelles and can easily be covered on foot.

Geographically, the city is shaped like a diamond. It is flat in its center and western areas. The eastern side of town is hilly, and here the Royal Palace is perched high up among some of Brussels's most affluent residential areas and prestigious office buildings.



#### Cuisine

**Belgian specialties:** Brussels' pride in good food is evident in its 1,500-plus restaurants, which range in cuisine, size, ambience, and price. French cooking prevails, but there are many distinctly Belgian specialties too. These include the inevitable Brussels sprouts; asparagus from Malines; fresh seafood, especially *crevettes* (tiny shrimp from the cold waters of the North Sea); red cabbage prepared *a la flamande* (with apple); *frites* (twice-fried French fries with a Belgian difference); *carbonnades flamandes* (beef braised in beer); *moules* (mussels), a Belgian national dish; *jambon d'Ardenne* (smoked ham from the Ardennes); and, of course, *gaufres* (waffles, topped with sugar, fruit, and/or whipped cream). In addition to the wonderful Belgian waffles, there are excellent custard tarts and other pastries, as well as superb chocolate.

**Beer and wine:** Belgium is famous for its brewing tradition and there are more than 4,000 brands produced within its borders. Among names to look for that you won't commonly find outside Belgium are those still brewed by Trappist monks, Orval and Westmalle; Faro, Krieklambiek, and Lambiek from the area around Brussels; and Leuven.

**Hours:** Most Belgian restaurants are generally open seven days a week from noon to 2:30 pm for lunch, and from 7 to 10 pm for dinner. These hours may vary.



### Drinking Water

Tap water in Brussels is perfectly fine for drinking.



### Local Transportation

**Metro:** Brussels has an excellent network of subway lines extending 28 miles through the city. Metro entrances are clearly marked by signs bearing a white **M** on a blue background. Maps of the metro network are free at tourist offices, and service is continuous from 6 am to midnight, with timetables displayed at each stop.

**Bus and Tram:** Above ground, yellow trams and buses run from 6 am to midnight, and timetables are posted at stops. Tram and bus stops are marked by red-and-white or blue-and-white signs. You may purchase a ticket for a single ride, a card for five or ten trips, or a card for a 24-hour unlimited ride.

**Taxis:** Taxis are plentiful, but quite expensive. The tip is not included in the fare. There are taxi stands on all principal streets.

## Prague in Brief—Optional Extension



### City Layout and Details

Prague, an ancient and historic city, is the capital of the Czech Republic (made up of Bohemia, Moravia, and part of Silesia). The city, located at the crossroads of Europe, is both ancient and modern and possesses a palpable energy. Getting around Prague can be a bit tricky—many of the streets are small, narrow cobblestone paths that seem to wind about endlessly. But the “city of 1,000 spires” is one of the most beautiful you will ever see.

Prague is really a series of five historic towns welded together to form one great city. The river Vltava slices through Prague, giving the city its distinctive bridges. Hradcany, the castle district, is on the river’s west bank with Prague Castle and St. Vitus cathedral nearby. Below this section lies Mala Strana (the Lesser Quarter) with buildings dating back to the 13th century. Petrin Hill to the south offers wonderful views out over the city. On the east bank of the river is *Stare Mesto* (Old Town) with its large central square. Nearby is Josefov, the former Jewish ghetto. *Nove Mesto* (New Town, though parts of it go back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century) stretches around parts of Stare Mesto and historic Wenceslas Square. The Charles Bridge, a city landmark, stretches over the Vltava and links much of the city.

Ruzyne airport is in the western suburbs of the city. The Prague Information Service offers good information about Prague and is located in Old Town Square. The Tourist Office (Cedok) at Na Prikope is also a good place for information and maps.

Prague is a lovely city for walking so be sure to stroll the Royal Way, which takes you by some of the city’s architectural treasures, including Prague Castle and St. Vitus Cathedral. In Hradcany stop to see the Strahov Monastery and the Summer Palace. If you are a fan of classical music you’ll want to stop in at the Smetana Hall in Obecni Dum. The Museum of the City of Prague in northern Nove Mesto is an impressive and interesting stop. Wenceslas Square in Old Town and Josefov in Stare Mesto both offer excellent walking and sightseeing opportunities.



## Cuisine

The foods of the Czech Republic are hearty and rich, its flavors influenced by German cooking, and they tend toward meaty dishes accompanied by sauces and gravies. The three items that are nation-wide favorites are pork, dumplings, and cabbage.

Thick soups offer some of the strongest flavors on a typical menu, with garlic, onion, and fish soup being among the tastiest. Pork as a main course is often a seasoned brisket that is breaded and fried. Another mainstay is *svickova*, slices of oven-braised beef served rich sauce of sour cream and cranberries. Restaurants also may offer baked chicken, smoked hams, and wild game, such as rabbit, duck, or venison. As the country is landlocked, fish usually comes from freshwater fish farms and includes perch, trout, and carp. Seafood such as shellfish or shark is sometimes offered at restaurants, but is usually fairly expensive.

Accompanying almost every meal is the ubiquitous dumpling, or *knedlik*. The lighter dumplings are made from wheat flour, while the hearty and denser version is created using potato flour. The rolled dough is boiled and served in slices with a gravy or sauce. The vegetable that graces most dinners is the *zeli*, or cabbage. The cabbage is often cooked in a lightly sweetened sauce. Condiments include fruit chutney, horseradish, mustard, and tartar sauce. Vegetarian main courses may be quite difficult to find, but dishes of root crops such as carrots, turnips, beets, and of course potatoes are plentiful. For cheese lovers, there's *smazeny syr*, a delectable breaded cheese, fried until its center is creamy.

You can top off your meal with sweet delights. Desserts offered are thin pancakes with fillings of chocolate, fruit, or marmalade. And in case you didn't have your fill of dumplings with the main course, you can savor one for dessert. The chefs fill them with apricots, cherries, or strawberries and sprinkle them festively with powdered sugar.

While in Prague, don't miss the opportunity to sample some of the delightful beers born of the region's fields of cultivated hops. Pubs are in integral part of the Czech neighborhood life, and the nation brews some of the best beer in the world. In the town of Plzen, the brewing of beer dates as far back as the founding of the town, in 1295. Plzen is internationally known for its award-winning Pilsener Urquell, and there are numerous other local beers that perfectly accompany the region's hearty dining. To conclude your culinary explorations, you might consider capping the night with a taste of *Becherovka*, a unique herbal liqueur from the Karlovy Vary area.



## Drinking Water

Tap water in the Czech Republic is safe for drinking. You can also buy bottled water in hotels, restaurants, and food shops.



## Local Transportation

**Subway:** Prague's modern subway system—the Metro—is easy to use and spotlessly clean. It provides the simplest and fastest means of transportation, and most new maps of Prague mark the routes. Subways run daily from 5 am to midnight with trains every two minutes during peak hours, slowing down to every ten to fifteen minutes by late in the evening. There are several lines, each a different color, which intersect at various points in the city center and the route plans are easy to follow. Once inside the Metro, acquaint yourself with these words: *vystup* means exit, and *prestup* means connection.

**Tram/Bus:** You'll probably stick to the Metro, but a bus ride can be a good way to see some of the city, especially if you want to venture farther out. You need to buy a new ticket every time you change vehicles.

**Taxi:** These are not recommended, as some drivers try to take advantage of tourists and inflate the price, possibly by driving miles out of the way. If you must take a taxi, it is best to use the hotel's taxi service—it is a little more expensive than taxis found at taxi stands but it is more reliable. Another choice is to ask the hotel to contact AAA Taxi for you (or call them at **233 113 311**)—AAA Taxi is also dependable and they speak English. If you choose instead to use a taxi at a taxi stand or one you hail on the street, *definitely agree on a price beforehand!*

**Punch your ticket on the Metro, trams, and buses:** For the Metro, punch the ticket in the station before getting on the escalators; for buses and trams, punch the ticket inside the vehicle.



## Newspapers

The *Prague Post*, an English-language newspaper, offers information on concerts, museums, theaters, restaurants, and other events.

## Vienna in Brief—Optional Extension



### City Layout and Details

Vienna's "Ring," once the location of the city walls and today a broad boulevard in the inner zone (the oldest part of the city), encircles most main sights. In the center is Stephansplatz, site of the city's famous St. Stephen's Cathedral. Just a short walk away is the Hofburg (the Habsburgs' official residence), the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Art History Museum), and the Staatsoper. The pedestrian thoroughfare, Kaernter Strasse, is the city's major shopping venue; it runs from Stephansplatz past the Staatsoper to Karlsplatz. The "Ring" itself is two and one half miles long and 187 feet wide. Constructed in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to protect Vienna from outside threats, the Ring encircles the Old City. All sites inside the Ring are part of the First *Bezirk* (or 1<sup>st</sup> precinct, designated by the #1010 in addresses). The remainder of the city is also sectioned into precincts.



## Cuisine

Viennese cuisine is the culmination of various ethnic influences, including Bohemian, Hungarian, Croatian, Slovenian, German, and Italian. Wild game, fish, poultry, and beef dishes are popular. The following are some local specialties.

**Soups:** *Griessnockerlsuppe* (clear soup with semolina dumplings), *rindsuppe* (beef broth), and *gulaschsuppe* (Hungarian goulash soup).

**Main courses:** Familiar dishes are *bauernschmaus* (a combination of many varied sausages and pork items with sauerkraut and dumplings), *tafelspitz* (boiled beef with vegetables), *wiener schnitzel* (breaded veal or pork cutlet), *schweinebraten* (roast pork), *Backhendl* (fried and breaded chicken), and *gulasch* (stew). *Nockerl* are little dumplings, usually served with sauce.

**Desserts:** Vienna's *apfelstrudel* (apple strudel) is probably the best in the world. *palatschinken* are light, sugared pancakes; *klaiserschmarren* is a diced omelet, served with jam and sprinkled with sugar.

**Coffee:** Austrian coffee, of which there are at least 20 varieties, is delicious and not to be missed. Introduced 300 years ago by the Turks during their unsuccessful attempt to conquer Vienna, coffee has become an art form, served in veritable institutions known as the Viennese coffeehouses. Among the many kinds of coffee are *kleiner schwarzer*, a small cup without milk; the *melange*, large cup with foamy milk; *mokka*, strong black Viennese coffee; *kapuziner*, same as *melange* but topped with whipped cream; and *tuerkischer*, Turkish coffee boiled in a small copper pot and served in tiny cups.



## Drinking Water

Vienna's ice-cold water comes from a natural underground reservoir in the mountains and is famous for its clean taste and purity. It is very safe to drink. Bottled water is also sold in most restaurants and grocery shops.



## Local Transportation

Vienna is divided into 23 numbered districts. Most sights are concentrated in the city center, the 1<sup>st</sup> District, which is largely a pedestrian zone and easily reached by public transportation. Many 1<sup>st</sup> District attractions are within walking distance of one another. You can walk from one end of the Old City to the other in about 30 minutes. Even the walk from the Ring to either train station is only a half hour or so. Beyond this central hub, districts proceed from the 2<sup>nd</sup> on up to the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Vienna's transit network consists of five U-Bahn (subway) lines, trams, buses, and several rapid transit and commuter trains. A single ticket (good for the tram, bus, S-Bahn, or the U-Bahn) permits as many transfers as you need to reach your destination as long as you keep moving in the same direction. It can be purchased from machines found in U-Bahn stations, ticket booths, or from conductors. Instead of single tickets, you may prefer to purchase the *Vierfahrtenstreifenkarte*, a strip ticket that allows four rides. These must be purchased in advance, either from ticket booths at the Karlsplatz or Stephansplatz U-Bahn station, or from automatic machines at all U-Bahn and train stations. There's also a 24-hour ticket available. Lastly, the Vienna Card, which is valid for 72 hours, allows you to travel on all modes of public transportation and gives you a discount in a great many museums.

**Note on Ticket Validation:** You must validate all tickets yourself by inserting them into machines at the entryway of S-Bahn and U-Bahn platforms or on buses and trams. When entering streetcars, look for a blue box with a white “E,” which is for validating tickets.



### **Newspapers & Magazines**

The Vienna Tourist Board puts out a monthly program of what’s going on in opera, concerts, jazz, theater, and galleries, which is available at hotels and tourist offices. Similar information is posted on billboards and newspaper advertising columns around the city.

# 11. DEMOGRAPHICS & GEOGRAPHY

## Austria

**Area:** 32,378 square miles

**Capital:** Vienna

**Language:** German is the official language, spoken by virtually all Austrians. English is the second most common language, however, and is spoken in all tourist areas and major cities.

**Location:** Austria is bordered by Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein. It combines rich agricultural plains along the Danube with alpine peaks, lakes, vineyards, and castles that evoke the Middle Ages.

**Population (2007 estimate):** 8,199,783

**Religion:** Roman Catholic 85%

**Time zone:** Austria is on Central European Time, which is six hours ahead of U.S. EST: when it's 6 am in New York, it's noon in Vienna.

### Holidays:

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

04/06 Easter

05/01 National Holiday

05/17 Ascension Day

05/28 Whit Monday

06/07 Corpus Christi

08/15 Assumption

10/26 National Day

11/01 All Saints' Day

12/08 Immaculate Conception

12/25 Christmas Day

## Germany

**Area:** 137,486 square miles

**Capital:** Berlin

**Language:** German is the official language. Many Germans are impeccably fluent in English.

**Location:** Located in central Europe, Germany is bordered in the north by Denmark and in the south by Austria and Switzerland. On the west are the Benelux Countries and France; on the east are Poland and the Czech Republic. Germany has coastlines on both the North Sea and the Baltic.

**Population (2007 estimate):** 82,400,996

**Religion:** Protestant, 38%, Roman Catholic, 34%, unaffiliated or other, 26.3 %.

**Time zone:** Germany is on Central European Time, which is six hours ahead of U.S. EST: when it's 6 am in New York, it's noon in Vienna.

**Holidays:**

01/01 New Year's Day  
01/06 Epiphany  
04/06 Good Friday  
04/09 Easter Monday  
05/01 Labor Day  
05/17 Ascension  
05/28 Whit Monday  
06/07 Corpus Christi  
08/15 Assumption  
10/03 Day of German Unity  
10/31 Day of Reformation  
11/01 All Saints' Day  
11/21 Repentance Day  
12/25 Christmas

**Holland (official name: the Netherlands)**

**Area:** 16,033 square miles

**Capital:** Amsterdam

**Language:** Dutch is the official language. A large percentage of the Dutch are also fluent in English and German.

**Location:** Situated on the coast of the North Sea, the Netherlands borders Germany to the east and Belgium to the south.

**Population (2007 estimate):** 16,570,613

**Religions:** Roman Catholic 34%, Protestant 25%, Muslim 3%, other 2%

**Time zone:** The Netherlands is on Central European Time, which is six hours ahead of U.S. EST: when it's 6 am in New York, it's noon in Amsterdam.

**Holidays:**

01/01 New Year's Day  
04/06 Good Friday  
04/09 Easter Monday  
04/30 Queen's Day  
05/05 Liberation Day  
05/17 Ascension Day  
05/28 Whit Monday  
12/25 Christmas Day  
12/26 Boxing Day

## Belgium—optional extension

**Area:** 11,780 square miles

**Capital:** Brussels

**Languages:** Flemish (57%), French (32%), bilingual (Brussels) 10%

**Location:** Belgium is located on the western edge of continental Europe. It has about 40 miles of seacoast on the North Sea, at the Dover Strait. France is south of Belgium, the Netherlands is directly north. The country measures only 150 miles across from the sea to the Ardennes.

**Population (2005 estimate):** 10,392,226

**Religion:** Roman Catholic 75%

**Time zone:** Belgium is on Central European Time, which is six hours ahead of U.S. EST: when it's 6 am in New York, it's noon in Vienna.

### Holidays:

01/01 New Year's Day  
04/09 Easter Monday  
05/01 Labor Day  
05/17 Ascension Day  
05/28 Whit Monday  
07/11 Flemish Community Holiday  
07/21 Independence Day  
08/15 Assumption  
09/27 French Community Holiday  
11/01 All Saints' Day  
11/11 Armistice Day  
11/15 German Community Holiday  
12/25 Christmas Day  
12/26 Boxing Day

## Czech Republic—optional extension

**Area:** 30,464 square miles

**Capital:** Prague

**Language:** Czech is the official language.

**Location:** Landlocked in eastern Europe, the Czech Republic comprises the ancient provinces of Bohemia and Moravia with a mountainous rim on the German border to the west. Other countries that share borders with the Czech Republic are Austria and Slovakia to the south, and Poland to the northeast.

**Population (2007 estimate):** 10,228,744

**Religion:** atheist 39.8%, Roman Catholic 39.2%, Protestant 4.6%, Orthodox 3%, other 13.4%

**Time zone:** The Czech Republic is six hours ahead of Eastern Time in North America: when it is 12 noon in New York, it is 6 pm in Prague.

## **The Rhine, Main, and Danube Rivers**

### **The Rhine River**

The Rhine starts high in the Swiss Alps, runs a course of some 840 miles through six countries—Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, France, Germany, and the Netherlands—then empties into the North Sea at Rotterdam. Though the Danube is twice as long as the Rhine, it is the latter that, throughout history, has served as the most important route for river trade between the European continent and the North Sea.

Of particular significance is the segment of the Rhine that forms a natural geographical boundary between Germany and France; this stretch of the river was once Europe's major link between Basel and the Atlantic, before the onset of efficient land transportation. Prominent cities such as Strasbourg, Mainz, Cologne, and Düsseldorf cropped up along the Rhine's shores, and further established the river's commercial importance, not only to this region, but to all of Europe.

For the artistic community, too, the Rhine has been an endless source of inspiration—from Heinrich Heine's famous poem about the Lorelei legend to Wagner's epic operas, *der Ring des Nibelungen*, to William Turner's paintings of the Rhine's foggy sunsets. Indeed, to travel the Rhine by boat, and witness the rising mists enshrouding the castles perched above, is to comprehend why the river has so strongly stimulated the creative imaginations of Germany's greatest poets and composers.

Even though the Rhine flows through other countries besides Germany, it is in Germany—especially the stretch between Mainz and Cologne known as the Middle Rhine—that the riverside scenery is most spectacular. This is the “typical” Rhine: a land of steep and densely wooded hills, terraced vineyards, tiny villages hugging the banks, Gothic churches, and a succession of brooding castles. This portion of the river is the focal point of your cruise on the Rhine.

### **The Main River**

Formed near the German town of Kulmbach, by the confluence of the rivers Roter Main and Weisser Main, the Main River flows for some 310 miles. It winds through the rich farmland of central Germany and past the industrial areas of Schweinfurt, Würzburg, Aschaffenburg, and Frankfurt to the Rhine River at Mainz. The feisty Main River calms down and widens at its junction with the Regnitz River, its chief tributary, and from that point on is an important east-west route. Indeed, the Main serves as a “water bridge” between the Rhine River and the Danube River. It is the “Main/Danube Canal” that connects the Main with the Danube. It stretches 106 miles from Bamberg on the Main River to Kelheim on the Danube.

### **The Danube River**

The 1,766-mile-long Danube originates in Germany's Black Forest, continues east through Bavaria, crosses Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria, and then empties into the Black Sea. This legendary river not only shaped the destinies of all the countries that line its banks, but influenced the whole continent as no other European river ever could.

The power of its strategic location was recognized centuries ago by Roman Emperors who sought to control it. Ruins from that period now perch on banks above the river, reminding you of the Danube's multi-faceted past. Even today, the Danube continues to be one of Europe's greatest assets, in part because it provides a water link between the four national capitals on its banks: Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, and Belgrade. Back in the heyday of river transport, other great cities grew up along the

Danube's banks, too, serving as ports for the various cargo being carried on the river, namely salt, wood, and ores. These same products now are transferred on the railroad and highways, which run alongside the Danube's course.

There is no question that few river voyages can match the romantic appeal of a journey down the Austrian segment of the Danube. Here is the heart of the lilting Strauss waltzes, of myth-laden castles, Old World villages, and rolling vineyards. As you sail along this twisting river, stopping at fascinating ports, you'll gain an understanding of the art, music, and culture of a fabled region with a history that stretches back more than 3,000 years.

## 12. REFERENCE MATERIALS



### Recommended Reading

***The Improbable Voyage*** by Tristan Jones (Travel Account)

In 1985, former Royal Navy skipper Tristan Jones embarked on a 2,307-mile voyage across Europe, traveling from the North Sea to the Black Sea via the Rhine and Danube rivers. Battling ice and cold, life-threatening rapids and narrow gorges, German bureaucrats and Romanian frontier police, Jones made his way through eight countries and emerged triumphant, albeit penniless, at the Black Sea. His spirited account of his adventures gives readers a vivid glimpse of the quality of life along Europe's oldest water routes—and of life on the Danube at the height of the Cold War era.

***Danube*** by Claudio Magris (Travel Account)

This highly regarded descriptive travel book follows the river as it flows from its source in Germany to its mouth in the Black Sea, with wonderful descriptions of the scenery en route.

***A Tramp Abroad*** by Mark Twain (Travel Account)

The American humorist details his travels through Germany in witty, highly entertaining prose.

***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 Nervous Splendor: Vienna 1888/9*** by Frederic Morton (History)

Morton's popular history brings to life Freud, Mahler, Archduke Rudolph, and other famous Viennese.

***Germany and the Germans*** by John Ardagh (History)

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

***Amsterdam*** by Geert Mak (History)

A Dutch journalist and native of Amsterdam offers a delightful 338-page survey of Amsterdam's past and present, incorporating elements of politics, economics, and art history.

***The Bridge at Remagen*** by Ken Hechler (History)

A detailed, compelling description of how the Rhine was amazingly breached on March 7, 1945—an event which lives on in history as one of the great episodes of WWII.

## **Prague — Optional Extension**

*Hastening Toward Prague* by Lisa Wolverton (History)

Published in September, 2001, this book examines the power and society in the medieval Czech Lands, where kings and rulers set the stage for conflicts that would still raise issues centuries later.



## 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](http://www.gct.com/community)

### **Government websites:**

**International health information: CDC (Centers for Disease Control)**

[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

**U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information**

[www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel)

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

[www.tsa.gov/public](http://www.tsa.gov/public)

**National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information**

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

### **General travel information websites:**

#### **Travel books**

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

[www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)

#### **World weather**

[www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)

[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

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

[www.travlang.com/languages](http://www.travlang.com/languages)

**Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.**

[www.travelite.org](http://www.travelite.org)

**Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe**

[www.cybercafes.com](http://www.cybercafes.com)

**Electric current and plug types**

[www.kropla.com/electric2.htm](http://www.kropla.com/electric2.htm)

**Foreign exchange rates**

[www.oanda.com/converter/classic](http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic)

#### **ATM locators**

[www.mastercard.com/atm](http://www.mastercard.com/atm) for **Cirrus ATMs**

[www.visa.com/pd/atm](http://www.visa.com/pd/atm) for **PLUS ATMs**

### **Country information:**

[www.welcome-vienna.com](http://www.welcome-vienna.com) **Vienna**

[www.germany-tourism.de](http://www.germany-tourism.de) **Germany**

[www.holland.com](http://www.holland.com) **Holland** (You can send email to: [information@holland.com](mailto:information@holland.com))

[www.visitbelgium.com](http://www.visitbelgium.com) **Belgium**

[www.visiteurope.com/](http://www.visiteurope.com/) **Links to countries**

[www.danube-river.org](http://www.danube-river.org) **Danube River**

[www.czechtourism.com](http://www.czechtourism.com) **Czech Republic**

[www.inyourpocket.com/free-instant-city-guides.html](http://www.inyourpocket.com/free-instant-city-guides.html)

[www.visiteurope.com/](http://www.visiteurope.com/) **Links to countries**



## **Tourist Board Addresses**

For further information, contact:

### **Austrian Tourist Information Office**

P.O. Box 1142  
New York, NY 10108-1142  
Telephone: 1-212-944-6880

### **Belgian Tourist Office**

220 East 42<sup>nd</sup> St, Suite 3402  
New York, NY 10017  
Telephone: 1-212-758-8130

### **Czech Tourism**

1109 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10028  
Telephone: 1-212-288-0830

### **German National Tourist Office**

122 E. 42nd St.  
New York, NY 10168  
Telephone: 1-212-661-7200

### **Netherlands Board of Tourism**

The Netherlands Board of Tourism now provides information only through its website, listed above under "Internet Websites." You can visit their website and contact them by email.

# Measurement & Temperature Conversions

Conversion Chart	
<b>U.S. Standard to Metric</b>	<b>Metric to U.S. Standard</b>
1 inch = 2.54 centimeters	1 centimeter = 0.4 inch
1 foot = 30 centimeters	1 meter = 3 feet 3 inches
1 mile = 1.6 kilometers	1 kilometer = 0.6 mile
1 ounce = 28 grams	1 gram = 0.04 ounce
1 pound = 454 grams	1 kilogram = 2.2 pounds
1 US gallon = 3.8 liters	1 liter = 1.1 US quarts

## To convert Kilometers to Miles:

Multiply the first digit by 6. A 40-kilometer drive is about 24 miles ( $6 \times 4$ ). For a one-digit figure, use .6. For a three-digit number, multiply the first two digits by 6; thus, 150 kilometers equals about 90 miles ( $15 \times 6 = 90$ ).

## To convert Celsius to Fahrenheit:

Double the Celsius temperature, then add 30 degrees.

For example, if the temperature is  $20^{\circ}\text{C}$ , that's about  $70^{\circ}\text{F}$ :

( $2 \times 20 = 40$ ;  $40 + 30 = 70$ ).

For Celsius temperatures below zero, ignore the minus sign, double the number, and subtract it from 32.

Thus,  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$  equals  $12^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $2 \times 10 = 20$ ;  $32 - 20 = 12$ ).

## To convert hectares to acres:

Multiply the hectares by 2.471.

For example, a 3-hectare area is equal to 7.413 acres:

( $3 \times 2.471 = 7.413$ )