Essence of the Elbe

RIVER CRUISE

Plus optional extensions in

Hamburg; Warsaw and Krakow; Munich

ELB/ELP 2013

Essence of the Elbe River Cruise
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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. 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. 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. Refer to our recommended reading list (at the end of the handbook) for other 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 eight years — in 2012 ranking Grand Circle Cruise Lines the #1 World's Best River Cruise Line. 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 Cruise Tour, you'll have reliable assistance available at all times from up to four on-site 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 Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable.

Your Program 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 land extensions if you choose to 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. The sequence of ports visited and the days on which included features and optional tours occur may vary.

1. PASSPORT, VISA AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport Required

You need a passport for this itinerary.

Note

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**.

To renew your passport by mail, or get extra pages, you can get a form at your local post office. For information on obtaining your first passport, contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**. Allow several weeks for processing.

Visas Not Required

U.S. citizens do not need a visa 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. Or, you can contact PVS International, who can also assist non-U.S. citizens.

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

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, most travelers *aren't* asked. 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.

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

2. YOUR HEALTH

Keep Your Abilities In Mind

You can encounter unaccustomed challenges on even the shortest journey — 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. 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 and use of the hand sanitizer provided on board. 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 Web site at **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	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current **standard** is **50lbs for checked bags** and **15 lbs for carry-on bags**.
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (*length+width+depth*). Generally, **62 linear inches is the checked bag limit**; **carry-on limit is 45 linear inches**.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
The extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.	
REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS	
One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional 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. **Note**: Enforcement of published restrictions by countries and airlines is a matter of governmental and corporate policy. Enforcement may include spot checks and may be inconsistently applied. Expect penalties and fines to be imposed immediately, however, when and if enforced. Before you choose to ignore the published restrictions you should ask: *Do I feel lucky?* And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.	

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 then 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, sometimes even on international flights. Others will 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.

Airport Security/TSA

Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage may change. To avoid inadvertently packing restricted items in your carry-on, we suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov/public.

Liquids and your carry on: Follow the **TSA's 3-1-1 rule**: Liquids must be in a 3.4 ounce or less (100ml) bottle (by volume); all bottles must be in a 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. The 3.4 ounce (100ml) container size is a security measure. Note that this rule is used increasingly throughout the world.

For flights that originate in the U.S:
To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, do not lock your bags when checking in for flights originating in the U.S. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is responsible for screening all checked luggage at commercial airports throughout the U.S. TSA baggage-handling agents may need access to your luggage and will break locks if required. TSA "accepted and recognized" locks are widely available: screeners can open and re-lock bags using these locks if a physical inspection is required.

For flights originating outside the U.S.:
On all flights outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend you lock your luggage. This is not a legal requirement but merely a precaution against theft. Have the keys handy, as you may need to open your luggage for a security screening or for customs in the U.S. or Europe.

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 the luggage claims area and escort you to a private motor coach 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 the luggage claim area and into the arrival hall. When you exit the airport building, your motor coach driver will load your luggage onto your motor coach.*

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 nametag when you exit the luggage claim area, 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

We offer these general guidelines that are pertinent throughout your Cruise Tour when you are away from your ship. Information specific to a particular city on the main itinerary or to a destination on an optional extension is in the section that directly follows these general travel tips.

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 most 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.

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.

PIN Numbers
When you are *off ship* a personal identification number (or PIN for short) will be required for the majority of debit card transactions and credit card transactions, including aboard ship. However, a PIN number will not be required for the payment of optional tours.

Credit cards: In many parts of Europe a new credit card called a chip-and-PIN card has been introduced. This new card is more secure than a 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.

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.

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.

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.*

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. Note that Discover cards are not widely accepted outside of 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.

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, 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, 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

Germany

Currency: In Germany the official currency is the euro. Euro banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

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

There is no need to obtain local currency before your trip, although we do suggest that you exchange some money at the airport upon arrival, as we cannot guarantee that your first hotel will offer money exchange services. Later, you can change money at most banks, most hotels, and money exchange offices. Please note that torn, dirty, or taped bills may not be accepted.

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

Banking Hours, Germany

Bank hours are usually Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 4 to 5 pm; banks are closed on Saturdays. To exchange cash and traveler's checks you will need to have your passport with you.

Czech Republic

Czech legal tender is the Czech crown or koruna (CZK.), divided into 100 hellers or haler. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000, 2000, and 5000 CZK.
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 CZK.

Note that coinage below the crown (i.e. hellers) as well as the 50 CZK note are no longer in circulation. The Czech Republic is preparing to merge into the Eurozone (in 2020) and you'll find many places in the

larger cities accept Euros with no problem. Prices given in CZK and hellers – i.e. Kr. 36.70 – will be rounded to the nearest crown.

Banking Hours: In the Czech Republic, banks are typically open 9 am – 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.

Poland

The Polish monetary unit is the zloty, which is divided into 100 groszy. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 10, 20, 50, 100, and 200 zloty
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 groszy; 1, 2, and 5 zloty

The best way to exchange money: You'll get a better exchange rate in Poland at one of the privately run Kantors, open 9 am to 6 pm. Kantors will also change your leftover zlotys back into U.S. dollars.

Banking Hours: Banking hours may vary between seasons, but generally they are open from 8 or 9 am to 5 or 6 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.**

In General

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

Berlin

Berlin is a cosmopolitan city filled with a wide variety of alluring shops, specialty boutiques, elegant malls, and major department stores, including the KaDeWe at Wittenbergplatz, one of the biggest department stores in Europe. Whatever you wish to buy, you can find it here. Around the corner is the famous Ku'damm shopping area. Here the city's most upscale fashion boutiques and art galleries make for some pleasurable browsing and window-shopping.

Special to Berlin are handmade porcelain items, ranging from exquisite Staaliche Porzellan Manufactur china to kitsch souvenir pieces like freedom bells fashioned after the Freedom Bell hanging in Schöneberg Rathaus. Other popular German buys are high-quality cutlery, cameras, binoculars, and watches; goose-down comforters; glassware; and all kinds of delicious chocolates.

Store hours: Standard hours for department stores and stores in the major shopping areas are Monday-Friday 9:30 am to 8 pm, and Saturday 9:30 am to 4 pm. Smaller neighborhood shops may close at 6 pm.

VAT: Inquire locally about rebates on Germany's 16% VAT sales tax. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper or salesperson about the VAT at time of purchase, or talk to your Program Director about it before you shop. Be sure to save all receipts and VAT forms for Customs.

Dresden

The best shopping in Dresden can be found near the historic *Altstadt* (old town). A stroll down Pragerstrasse toward the Elbe will take you through the *Altmarkt* (old market), which marks the intersection of Pragerstrasse and Wilsdrufferstrasse, where you can find high-quality retail outlets. Crossing the Elbe on the Augustusbrücke, Pragerstrasse becomes Hauptstrasse, a tree-lined boulevard that has hosted Dresden's oldest covered market for centuries. Hauptstrasse terminates at Albertplatz, a center for commerce and fashion. From Albertplatz, you can sortie back toward the Elbe along Königstrasse for more high-end designer boutiques or venture further north to the cutting edge stores of Outer Neustadt.

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 stores 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.

Hours: Long store hours facilitate shopping. Shops are open Monday - 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.

Warsaw/Krakow

Polish folk objects make good mementos and are an excellent value. Some interesting possibilities include embroidery, lace, dolls in folk costumes, prints and engravings, amber, pottery, and woodcarvings. The wide range of chain stores specializing in different local wares makes shopping in Poland relatively easy. *Desa* stores carry tapestries, painting, sculptures, and porcelain. Most stores accept local currency and major credit cards.

Store hours: Department stores are open from 10 or 11 am until 6, 7, or 8 pm. On Saturday and Sunday, stores are normally open as well.

VAT: There is a 22% VAT (Value Added Tax) build into the price of most items. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper or salesperson about the VAT at time of purchase, or talk to your Program Director about it before you shop. Be sure to save all receipts and VAT forms for Customs.

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. **1-877-227-5511**
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 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 Cruise Tour. 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.

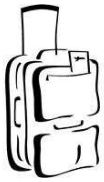
GCCL Program Director: It is customary at the end of your trip to express a personal "Thank You" to the Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Director assigned to your group, especially if he/she has provided you with individual assistance. We recommend $4-$6 per person, per day. Please note that tips for our Program Directors can only be in the form of cash, and local currency is appreciated.

Time at Leisure: During the times that you explore independently, you may dine in a local restaurant, take a taxi, or avail yourself of some other service where tipping is customary. The following are suggestions for your areas of travel:

- **Germany (base & optional extension):** Typically diners tip waiters 8% to 10% of the food bill; you can tip taxi drivers 10% of the fare, and barbers/hairdressers 10% to 15%. <u>In this country, tips in local currency are preferred.</u>
- **Poland & Czech Republic:** Unless service charges are included in your bill, we suggest you leave bartenders and waiters about 10% of the check in cash. It is also customary to tip taxi drivers about 10% of the fare.

Restrooms: It is very common to be charged a small fee (not a tip) to use the restroom. Typical amounts are about 1 Zloty in Poland, 10 Crowns in the Czech Republic, or 50 Euro cents elsewhere. Restroom attendants are usually prepared to give you change if you don't have exact amount. US dollars are not usually accepted for this fee, so **bring small change in the local currency with you to the restroom just in case.**

6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP



In General

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

Day excursions: On days that include full or half-day bus excursions, please remember to bring drinking water and any needed medications with you.

Luggage Suggestions

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

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

Inner bags: Packing is easier if you use inner bags to help organize your gear. Use plastic bags, nylon stuff sacks, or packing cubes to organize inside your suitcase. Isolate liquids, store camera gear and important papers in heavy-duty Ziploc style bags.

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

Packing Your Carry-On

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

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

Clothing Options

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.

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 the web site: **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
- ❑ Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger
- ❑ Insect repellent with DEET
- ❑ Travel money bag or money belt
- ❑ Moisturizer, lip balm
- ❑ Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- ❑ Pocket-size tissues
- ❑ Moist towelettes and/or anti-bacterial hand lotion
- ❑ Flashlight, extra batteries/bulb
- ❑ Compact umbrella
- ❑ Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards (and the originals)
- ❑ Extra passport-sized photos

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
- ❑ Hair dryer
- ❑ Wash cloth
- ❑ Handkerchiefs
- ❑ Basic sewing kit
- ❑ Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite), clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- ❑ Electrical transformer & plug adapters—see "Regional Electricity" below
- ❑ Reading materials
- ❑ Travel journal/note pad
- ❑ Swimsuit, if your ship or hotel has a pool or a whirlpool
- ❑ Home address book
- ❑ Photos, small gift for home-hosted visit
- ❑ Phrase book
- ❑ Water bottle for land excursions
- ❑ Collapsible walking staff
- ❑ Pocket calculator for exchange rates
- ❑ Packets of decaffeinated coffee/sweetener

7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION

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

Germany: Germany has a central European climate: weather is variable, and rain and drizzle are common occurrences year-round, and it can be breezy. Afternoons average about 60° F. during early spring, and about 70° 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.

Czech Republic: 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.

Poland: Poland has a long border with the Czech and Slovak Republics in the south and a coastline on the Baltic Sea in the north. Most of Poland has a very similar climate and the same sequence of weather throughout the year. Winter cold increases towards the east and in the southern mountains, while the coastlands of the Baltic Sea have slightly milder winters and cooler summers. Precipitation is well distributed around the year with a summer maximum of rain, often heavy and accompanied by thunder. Much of the winter precipitation is snow. Summer temperatures do not differ very much over the country. It rarely gets excessively hot but fine, sunny spells of weather and occasional droughts occur. Winters are distinctly cold and the length of really cold spells varies considerably from year to year.

Here are the data from the weather observation stations at or closest to our destinations:

WHAT'S THE TEMPERATURE?

***Average* highs (taken at 2 pm) and lows (taken just before sunrise) in °F.**

	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Berlin (main trip & optional extension)									
High	47	54	65	70	73	73	66	56	45
Low	33	37	45	53	56	55	50	42	35
Dresden, Germany									
High	45	54	64	70	73	72	66	56	43
Low	32	39	49	53	57	56	50	44	36
Prague, Czech Republic									
High	46	54	64	69	72	73	65	54	41
Low	32	36	45	51	54	53	47	39	32
Hamburg, Germany—Optional Extension									
High	45	52	62	67	70	71	64	55	45
Low	34	37	45	51	55	54	49	43	37
Krakow, Poland—Optional Extension									
High	45	54	64	69	71	71	64	55	42
Low	31	38	46	52	55	54	48	40	32
Warsaw, Poland—Optional Extension									
High	44	54	65	70	73	73	64	54	42
Low	31	37	47	52	55	54	47	40	33
Munich, Germany—Optional Extension									
High	48	53	63	68	72	73	66	55	44
Low	32	36	44	50	54	54	48	40	32

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

8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY

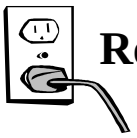
In General

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

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

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

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



Regional Electricity

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

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

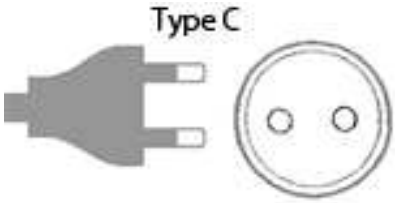
If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or a shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) as well as plug adapters. Regional transformer/adapter kits can be found at hardware or online stores. However, transformers can be unreliable and a broken one will leave you lugging a useless 110V appliance. Battery-operated alternatives are an option, but will need a supply of batteries.

Poland, the Czech Republic, and Germany the all use the Type C "*Europlug*" and receptacles that accommodate it, and use 230 V and 50 Hz current.

Electricity Onboard

M/S *Allegro* cabin bathrooms are equipped with an 110V outlet for electric shavers. The rest of the cabin has 220V, with European-style outlets.

Please note: 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, MP3 player, etc. – it's handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressors and USB port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without carrying device-specific plugs.

Smartphones

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

App quality, availability and costs vary – as do platforms (iPhone, Android, Blackberry …), so again you'll need to do some legwork. Apps come in all forms: packing lists, currency converters, language translators, maps, journals, Wi-Fi hotspot finders … one problem is going to be searching through the vast array of available apps to uncover what works best and what you're likely to use most. Smartphones have a lot to offer, but their small size can be a drawback for some uses (maps, extended reading, etc.)

Cell Phones

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

Phone Calling Cards

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

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

Photo Gear

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

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

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

Compact cameras are impractical for distant subjects and are often weak in dim light. Some models have a zoom lens of up to 120mm, which is good for middle distances. For distant subjects a *megazoom* (with a zoom lens of at least 300mm) or a single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with up to a 300mm telephoto lens are good choices. With a DSLR you can use multiple lenses, though your gear can quickly get complex, weighty and cumbersome. Cameras or lenses that need a tripod are impractical for travel photography. A single mid-range telephoto lens (18-200mm) coupled with a small, fast prime lens (for low light/no flash situations) is an effective, flexible and compact kit. Consider mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras (MILC), which combine small bodies and multiple, small lenses with high quality for both still and HD movie images.

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

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

9. GRAND CIRCLE'S EUROPEAN RIVER SHIPS

M/S *River Allegro*

Formerly the M/S *Dresden*, originally built in 1991 for Peter Deilmann Cruises, the M/S *Allegro* will be the newest vessel in the Grand Circle Cruise Line European fleet when she sets sail on the Elbe in April of 2011. Grand Circle Cruise Line is investing $3 million in major renovations with an emphasis on comfort. Among other improvements, she will have fewer berths (from 108 down to 90), expanded bar and lounge areas, a redecorated dining room and will ultimately achieve the high standards of Grand Circle's award winning fleet of European river ships.

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. You'll all be together for the joint celebrations, such as the Welcome cocktail party, where you'll experience the ambiance of a larger group. When we venture ashore, we'll break into smaller groups of no more than 45 with individual Program Directors to allow for more intimate and personal discoveries.

Included features of Grand Circle's M/S *Allegro*:

- Cabin size is approximately 120 square feet.
- Each cabin has twin beds that convert to sofas. During the day, you can sit and relax on the sofa. When you arrive back at your cabin in the evening, you'll find that the couches have been converted to comfortable beds with approximately two feet of space between them.
- Cabins feature a large picture window and river views.
- All cabins have a wardrobe, a drawer, and luggage storage space under the beds.
- Each cabin has a private bath with shower, hair dryer, shampoo and soap.
- Individual heating and air-conditioning controls.
- Flat screen color TV, including CNN, movies, music selections, and a "view from the bow" camera that looks out from the front of your ship.
- Direct-dial telephone with emergency call buttons.
- An in-room safe.
- All cabins are non-smoking.

An important word: Cabins aboard the M/S *Allegro*, though smaller than the cabins onboard the rest of the vessels in our fleet, will be quite comfortable. At 120 square feet, each cabin will feature a large picture windows and twin beds that convert into daytime couches. 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 Cruise Tour 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 most optional tours can only be purchased with a credit card.

Onboard Activities

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

Dining

You'll enjoy fine cuisine and excellent views in your ship's dining room, featuring a warm décor, floor to ceiling windows, and white-linen and china table settings. Your ship's daily service includes a breakfast buffet, lunch, and a casual dinner. Our professional chefs will create unique menus for you that feature regional specialties. Included with dinner are two glasses of complimentary house wine 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 Line 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 upon embarkation. The first meal available on board will be dinner. 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

Elevator/Chairlift

The M/S *Allegro* **does not** have elevators or chairlifts.

Laundry Service

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

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.

Linen Service

Bed linens are changed once a week; 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, and lounge with bar and dance floor.

Drinking Water

Tap water aboard ship is safe for drinking. Bottled water is also available. There is an ice machine onboard.

Shipboard Security

All Grand Circle Cruise Line vessels feature state-of-the-art shipboard radar to ensure safe navigation at night and during limited visibility situations. Safe docking spaces, onboard security staff; state-of-the-art fire safety systems, and secured entryway doors onboard all contribute to a safe and comfortable experience.

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

Smoking is not allowed anywhere inside the M/S *Allegro*, including in individual cabins. The only area on the ship where smoking is permitted is outside on the sun deck.

Ship Specifications

	Entered service	*Length*	*Width*	*Passenger capacity*	*Crew members*	*Decks*	*Cabins*	*Elevator*	*Chairlift*
M/S *River Allegro*									
	2011	320	36	90	29	3	48	no	no

10. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

We're including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you'll visit on your Cruise Tour. If you expect to explore in depth on your own, we recommend that you consult one of the many available book-length guides to your destinations. If you have one or two specific sites, museums or features that you're interested in, an Internet search is the ideal way to get-up-to-date information and details. And of course your Grand Circle 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.

In General

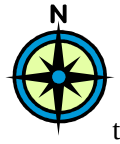
Drinking Water

Tap water in the countries you visit is perfectly safe for drinking, although the water in Poland and the Czech Republic may not always be tasty. Bottled water is usually for sale in hotels, food shops, and restaurants.

Internet Access and Email

Internet cafés are available in many of the cities you visit on your Cruise Tour; however it prices for use may vary. While sailing Internet access may be unavailable, depending on locks, bridges, and regional remoteness. Internet access will be most consistently available when the ship is docked in larger cities.

Krakow & Warsaw in Brief



City Layout: Krakow

Krakow, for centuries the capital of royal Poland, is today recognized as a valid competitor to the historic charms you'll discover in Vienna, Budapest and Prague. Having escaped serious damage in World War II, and come through the Communist years with minimal impact. The beautifully restored Old Town, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, retains its original Medieval form, and serves as a lovely setting for Wawel Castle. Surrounded by charming streets, a plethora of Catholic churches, and classic examples of historic architecture the formal Rynek Glowny is the huge central square. The Old Town bustles constantly, vibrant with visitors and locals admiring the square, picking up flowers at one of the many florists, stopping for a snack at the bagel cart or perhaps sitting in one of the restaurants.

City Layout: Warsaw

Bisected by the Vistula River Warsaw – the modern capital of Poland – is a very different animal from Krakow. World War II dealt Warsaw a particularly devastating hand – only 15% of the city emerged still standing after being razed by the German occupiers and nearly 60% of the population was either dead of missing. The Postwar years saw Soviet-style city planners, with a blank slate, design and build to their Socialist-Realist palette

Cuisine

As with many European counties, Polish cuisine feels the influence of many cultures: Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Jewish, Hungarian, German, etc., as well as a pinch of Russian, Italian, and Turkish. The focus is on meat, especially chicken and pork, and winter vegetables (cabbage in the dish *bigos*), and spices, as well as different kinds of noodles – particularly the *pierogi*. Traditionally, Poles take their festive meals seriously, and feast days — like Christmas Eve or Easter Breakfast — can involve days of preparation.

Normally the main meal is eaten in mid-afternoon or later, and involves three courses, starting with a soup, such as bouillon or tomato or more festive *barszcz* (beet) followed sometimes by an appetizer. The main course is usually meaty — a roast or breaded pork cutlet. Vegetables, though now replaced by leaf salad, were traditionally served as *'surówka'* - shredded root vegetables with lemon and sugar (carrot, celeriac, beetroot) or fermented cabbage. Popular side dishes are now boiled potatoes, and, less commonly the traditional **kasha** (cereals). Meals often conclude with a dessert such as *makowiec*, a poppy seed pastry, or *drożdżówka*, a type of yeast cake.

Local Transportation

The public transportation systems in both Krakow and Warsaw offer similar convenience and value, despite the differences in the cities. Trams are most convenient for distance travel, and they run from early morning to around 11:00 pm, though it's best to avoid the trams at rush hour. Buses and taxis are economical, efficient, and simple to use and tough more expensive than the trams, are relatively economical. Krakow's center is mostly closed to traffic, and is quite compact: with many attractions centrally located, walking in Krakow is both easy and a pleasure. Warsaw, on the other hand, is quite large, so you can expect to become more familiar with the transportation system. It's complex, and you should probably seek destination specifics before you set out.

Newspapers

Local newspapers in English are scarce in Poland. The *Gazeta Wyborcza*, with regional editions, is the most popular non-tabloid newspaper—and select articles are available in English on its website. The *Krakow Post* is a monthly English-language newspaper that mixes national and international stories with listings of concerts and cultural events.

Hamburg in Brief—Optional Extension

City Layout

Sitting beside the Elbe at its junction with the Alster River, Hamburg is Germany's second largest city and the world's fifth largest harbor. The Alster forms two lakes in the heart of the city, and the city center is largely situated there. Traveling further out (if you're here for a while, you'll want to see city features that are further afield) is easy via the metro system (U-Bahn and S-Bahn).

Hamburg won't ever be confused with a small town. However, the commercial and shopping district, centered on the Binnenalster (the Inner Alster, separated from the Outer Alster by the Lombard and John F. Kennedy bridges) and the Rathaus (city hall), includes a high density of historic buildings, restaurants and shops, and makes the city center a perfect start for an extended stay or an concise one-day tour of the best of the old city's highlights. Mönkberstrasse and Spitalerstrasse (pedestrian access only), south of the Binnenalster, are two fashionable streets; and the Jungfernstieg, at the foot of the Binnenalster, is the center of Hamburg's shopping district. Throughout the area you'll find stores, restaurants, and cafes. Much of Hamburg's center was destroyed during WW II, but many historic structures have been rebuilt.

In addition to the Rathaus you'll find St. Petri church, the restored St. Jacobi church, St. Michaelis church, the Kunsthalle art gallery, and the Hamburgische Staatsoper – Hamburg's modern opera house.

Venturing further afield, you'll find the harbor area – which stretches 25 miles along the Elbe, and has been a central port for the European continent since 1198. A harbor tour offers up an interesting view of the city and the part the river has played in making it what it is today. The St. Pauli district is famed for its nightlife and racy entertainment. Split by the Reeperbahn, the district, while toned down from its peak, is still in the business of nighttime diversions, including cafes, sex shows and music halls (this is, after all, where the Beatles honed their hard-edged early version of rock and roll.) Once a stand-alone city, the Altona district has been absorbed by Hamburg and is, on Sundays at dawn, home to Hamburg's famous Fischmarkt.

Cuisine

German cuisine brings to mind the aroma of sausages (it is thought there are more than 1500 kinds of German sausage), dumplings in a hearty stew, herbed meatloaf, and delectable roasts of pork. These hearty dishes are still found throughout Germany, but restaurants are also offering lighter fare along with regional meals. Along with the international selections a seaport like Hamburg is bound to offer, you'll find some distinctly regional taste treats.

Original dishes include green beans cooked with pears and bacon (*Birnen, Bohnen und Speck*), *Aalsuppe* (a soup containing whatever the cook wants to include), and a range of pan-fried delicacies including potato slices (*Bratkartoffeln*) and plaice (*Finkenwerder Scholle*). The typical American hamburger is said to have evolved from the local *Frikadelle* – a pan-fried patty of ground beef, egg, onion, and usually served with potatoes and vegetables – like a typical plated dinner. The addition of a bun – making it both highly portable and a one-handed meal – seems to be the American improvement. Due possibly to its northern exposure, Hamburg's cuisine shares some features you'll find in Copenhagen – particularly a liking for open-faced sandwiches of all types, often topped with cold-smoked or pickled fish. A summer pudding made of berries and served with cream (*Rote Grütze*) has a Danish counterpart. If you're thirsty after all that, try the local variant of the British shandy called *Alsterwasser* (after the river and lakes) that is 50/50 blend of beer and carbonated lemonade: it's refreshing without a high alcohol content.

Drinking Water

When ashore, tap water in Germany is perfectly safe to drink.

Local Transportation

An efficient network of buses and two railways serves Hamburg: the U-Bahn (inter-city underground line) and the S-Bahn (suburban above-ground line). The S-Bahn serves Hamburg's suburbs and outlying areas; the 60 miles of U-Bahn rail (some above and some below ground) serve the city proper. In addition you'll find about 600 bus routes, and ferries that cross the river Elbe. All public transport is under the control of the Hamburg Transit Authority (HVV), and tickets are valid on all types of transit. A one-day pass – *Tageskarte* – is an economical way of getting around the city on any given day, since it allows you to mix modes to meet your travel needs. The city center is the Nahbereich zone, stretching between St Pauli and the Hauptbahnhof. The Grossbereich (Greater Hamburg area) zone covers both the city center and communities like Blankenese, and offers the most flexible option for getting around. Taxis are an option as well.

Munich in Brief—Optional Extension

City Layout

Munich is a wonderful city for walking, and the best way to tour the *Marienplatz*, Munich's vibrant heart in the historic *Altstadt* (Old Town), is on foot. You can stroll its grand squares and see the Old City Hall and the New City Hall, whose façade boasts the famed *Rathaus-Glockenspiel*, a clock bedecked with life-sized mechanical figures that move through their performance several times a day to the ringing of bells. Not far from the Old City Hall is the open-air food market, *Viktualienmarkt*, with its jumble of stalls offering fruits, vegetables, and some trinkets. The city center also includes the *Frauenkirche* (the Cathedral of Our Lady), topped with its onion domes of brass that have become the symbol of the city. If you head west along the pedestrian-only Neuhauserstrasse and Kaufingerstrasse, you'll reach another lively square, *Karlsplatz* (referred to as *Stachus* after a 19th-century beer garden), where tram lines head out to other sections of the city.

North of *Marienplatz* is *Max-Joseph-Platz*, home to the Residenz (the former royal palace) and the National Theater. If you are interested in browsing boutiques and upscale shops, you should continue your walking tour eastward from *Max-Joseph-Platz* along *Maximilianstrasse*. Fashionable shops can also be found on *Kaufingerstrasse* and *Neuhauserstrasse*, east-west avenues in the Old Town's large pedestrian zone. During your travels, you might want to ask for directions to the Platzl quarter's *Hofbräuhaus*, possibly Europe's best-known beer garden.

A little outside of the Old Town, to the north, is *Schwabing*, which used to be the city's haven for artists, poets, and authors (Thomas Mann and Herman Hesse among them). In the latter part of the 20th century, this part of Munich became too expensive for struggling artists, but *Schwabing* still retains some of its former cultural appeal.

Cuisine

In Munich you will find a range of international foods, along with the city's renowned wine cellars and beer gardens where you can find traditional Bavarian dishes.

One of the city's prized menu items is the *Weisswurst*, a white sausage stuffed with veal, pork, parsley, and other flavorings. The *Weisswurst* is usually served before noon, and to enjoy its delectable filling, you first peal the sausage skin before eating its flavorful meat, possibly complemented by a sweet mustard. You can also feast on *Bratwurst mit Sauerkraut* (pork sausages with sauerkraut); chilled meat molds created with beef, pork, and liver; thick slices of a spicy meatloaf called *Leberkäse*; and roasted chicken, ham hocks, or knuckle of pork. You might want to try a taste of Munich's *Sauerbraten* (a marinated beef pot roast) or the popular *Müchener Schweinshaxe* (a pork shank roasted until its skin is crisped). Many restaurants also serve seasonal game, such as boar, venison, rabbit, or duck. Seafood includes herring, tuna, mackerel, and salmon – though these are not typically Bavarian. If you favor freshwater fish, you might try the regional trout, carp, pike, or *Rencke* (similar to perch). Accompaniments may include potato soup, more Sauerkraut, large pretzels (possibly coated with cheese), fresh horseradish, and boiled cabbage with bacon.

Rounding out the meal is a choice of sweets, some restaurants offering sweet pastries, apple strudel, or *Dampfnudln* (a type of dumpling served in a vanilla sauce and usually sprinkled with cinnamon). And of course, no trip to this region would be complete without sampling their renowned beers. There are a huge number of breweries (and associated beer halls), large and small, creating a tantalizing range of wheat beers (*Weissbier)* and lagers.

Drinking Water

When ashore, tap water in Germany is perfectly safe to drink.

Local Transportation

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

11. DEMOGRAPHICS & GEOGRAPHY

The Elbe River

At 680 miles long, the River Elbe is one of the major rivers of Central Europe. Starting in the Krkonoše Mountains of the northwestern Czech Republic it runs through much of Bohemia (Czech Republic), then Germany and finally flows into the North Sea at Cuxhaven, Hamburg. The Elbe's major tributaries include the Vltava, Mulde, and Ohre rivers, among others. The Elbe River basin, made up of over 57,000 square miles, is the Europe's fourth largest, and touches on four countries. The largest parts of the basin are in Germany and the Czech Republic, with significantly smaller parts in Austria and Poland. The basin is inhabited by 24.5 million people.

The Elbe rises in northwest borders of the Czech Republic in the Krkonose Mountains. At Mělník the river – already melding with several others – more than doubles in volume when the Vltava (or Moldau) joins it after itself winding northwards through Bohemia. The Elbe is joined by the Ohře (Eger) at Litoměřice. As it crosses the Czech-German frontier, it begins to run in a northwesterly direction and flows past Dresden and across the North German Plain to Hamburg. In Hamburg the Elbe has been engineered via dikes and canal connections to improve commerce and prevent flooding. Leaving Hamburg and now called the Lower Elbe, the river passes the entrance to the Kiel Canal and flows into the North Sea at Cuxhaven. The Elbe has been open to commercial vessels since 1842, and creates links as far inland as Prague. Numerous canals link it to industrial Germany and to Berlin, as well as to the Baltic Sea.

The Romans called the Elbe the *Albis*; but never managed to move the eastern edge of their empire past the Rhine. During the Middle Ages the Elbe was the eastern limit of the Empire of Charlemagne, and afterwards the river's navigable sections were essential to the commercial success of the Hanseatic League. In 1945, as was drawing to a close, Nazi Germany was caught between the armies of the western Allies advancing from the west and the Soviet Union advancing from the east. On 25 April 1945, these two forces linked up near Torgau, on the Elbe. The event was marked as Elbe Day. After World War II, the Elbe formed part of the border between East Germany and West Germany.

Germany—Base and Optional Extension

Area: 137,846 square miles
Capital: Berlin
Language: German is the official language. In Berlin, Turkish is also in use, as many immigrants from Turkey have settled here.
Location: Located in central Europe, Germany is bordered on the west by the Benelux countries and France, and on the east by Poland and the Czech Republic. Switzerland and Austria are to the south. Germany's northern coastline is met by the North Sea and the Baltic.
Population (2002 est.): 83,251,851
Religions: 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 Berlin.

Holidays (nationally recognized; does not include religious, local or culturally based events)**:**

01/01 New Year's Day
03/29 Good Friday
04/01 Easter Monday
05/01 Labor Day
05/09 Ascension Day
05/20 Whit Monday
10/03 Day of German Unity
12/25 Christmas Day
12/26 Second day of Christmas

Czech Republic

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.

Holidays (nationally recognized; does not include religious, local or culturally based events)**:**

01/01	New Year's Day
04/01	Easter Monday
05/01	Labor Day / May Day
05/08	Victory in Europe Day
07/05	Saints Cyril and Methodius
07/06	Jan Hus Day
09/28	St. Wenceslas Day
10/28	Independent Czechoslovak State Day
11/17	Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day
12/24	Christmas Eve
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	St. Stephen's Day

Poland—Optional Extension

Area: 120,728 square miles
Capital: Warsaw
Government: Republic
Language: Polish is the official language. It is a Slavonic language. Unlike Russian, it uses the familiar Roman alphabet, but with many additional accents. German, Russian, English, and French are spoken by most members of the travel industry and in hotels.
Location: Situated in the heart of Europe, Poland's low-lying plains extend from the Baltic shore in the north to the Tatra Mountains on its southern border with the Czech Republic and Slovakia. To the east of the Polish border are Lithuania, Belarus, and the Ukraine; to the west is Germany.
Population (2005 estimate): 38,635,144
Religion: Roman Catholic 90%, Eastern Orthodox 1.3%, Protestant 0.3%, other 8.4%
Time zone: The time in Poland is six hours ahead of Eastern Time in North America: when it is 12 noon in New York, it is 6 pm in Warsaw and Krakow.

Holidays (nationally recognized; does not include religious, local or culturally based events)**:**

01/01	New Year's Day
03/29	Good Friday
03/31	Easter Day
04/25	Liberty Day
05/01	Labor Day
05/30	Corpus Christi
06/10	Portugal Day
08/15	Assumption of Mary
10/05	Republic Implantation
11/01	All Saints
12/01	Restoration of Independence
12/08	Feast of the Immaculate Conception
12/25	Christmas Day

12. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books, Maps, and Movies

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

Germany and the Germans *by John Ardagh.* A contemporary study of the Germans, written by a noted British author and historian.

Twilight of the Habsburgs: The Life and Times of Emperor Francis Joseph *by Alan Warwick Palmer.* A fascinating history of the final decades of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends by Lonnie R. Johnson (History)
A panoramic history of Central Europe that provides a comparative analysis of the key events that have shaped Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia. The author abandons the Cold War convention of defining Central Europe in the bipolar terms of East and West, and emphasizes the underlying continuities in the region's history.

Woman from Hamburg And Other True Stories by Hana Krall
A journalist from Warsaw born in 1937, Krall reveals the lives and strange trajectories of her compatriots in these stories, profiles and interviews of survivors of WWII.

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.

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.

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.

The Power of the Powerless by Vaclav Havel (Political Science)
In his 1978 essay, Vaclav Havel (elected the first president of the Czech Republic in 1993) analyzes totalitarian oppression and the mechanisms used by the powerful to subdue the spirit and morality of the powerless citizenry. He speaks in searing terms of the meaning of citizenship, resistance, and the power of the moral and truthful individual.

Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s by Otto Friedrich
A noted historian describes this interesting and intriguing chapter in Berlin's history, a time when such well-known people as Marlene Dietrich, Albert Einstein, Greta Garbo, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Gropius, Kandinsky, and Klee all made their homes here.

Another Beauty by Adam Zagajewski (Memoir)
A quirky, lyrical memoir of coming of age in Poland in the 1960s and 1970s by the influential poet of the Polish New Wave. Zagajewski looks back on his life and particularly time in Krakow as a philosophy student, dissident and young writer. Susan Sontag, who provides the introduction, calls *Another Beauty* a wise and iridescent book, which dips in and out of many genres. It's many things: a coming-of-age-memoir, commonplace book, collection of vignettes and portraits, and a defense of poetry.

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

Culture Smart! – Focuses on local customs and etiquette instead of sights, dining, etc.
DK Eyewitness – Innovative visuals make these books easy to use and a nice souvenir once the trip is over. The focus is primarily on the sights and activities.
Fodor's – A classic guidebook with strong information on activities, shopping, and dining. Good mix of upscale recommendations and budget suggestions.
Frommer's – A comprehensive guide series that is known for its restaurant recommendations.
Insight – Offers more information on history and culture than usual, nice visuals, good maps.
Lonely Planet – Practical guides geared towards a more adventurous traveler on a budget.
National Geographic – From the same company that publishes the magazine. Excellent photographs, good information on history, nature, and culture.
Rough Guides –For the independent traveler on a budget -- particularly known for their maps.

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

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

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

GERMANY

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

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

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

CZECH REPUBLIC

Divided We Fall
In this 2000 comedy drama from director Jan Hrebejk, a couple from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia agrees to hide a Jewish teenager in their home. During this time, Josef and Marie Cizek's marriage begins to show signs of strain as a result of the political tension and Marie's inability to become pregnant. The situation worsens when an acquaintance of theirs becomes a Nazi collaborator and asks them to house a Nazi clerk. *Divided We Fall* is a reminder of the kinds of choices made by millions of people during times of devastation.

Closely Watched Trains
Another entry is the 1966 film *Closely Watched Trains*, about a boy working at a train station in German-occupied Czechoslovakia during World War II. Oblivious to the war around him, the young boy embarks on a journey of sexual awakening and self-discovery—revealing just how the film's subtle comedic flair complements its dramatic underpinnings. Perhaps the pinnacle of all Czech New Wave films, the film offers great insights into the country's unique cultural identity.

POLAND

Night Train
Night Train is a 1959 film by director Jerzy Kawalerowicz that brings together Jerzy and Marta—two strangers who both seem to be on the run from something. They accidently end up holding tickets for the same sleeping chamber on an overnight train to the Baltic Sea coast. The story takes a turn when the police enter the train in search of a murderer and rumors start brewing. This Polish thriller will leave you at the edge or your seat until the very end!

The Pianist

The 2002 film by director Roman Polanski focuses on the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto during World War II. *The Pianist* is based on the true story of a Polish Jewish pianist who spent five years struggling against the Nazi occupation of Warsaw. As his family is shipped off to the Nazi labor camps, he escapes deportation and lives in the ruins of Warsaw. The award-winning film tells the harrowing story of the brilliant pianist as he struggles to live through the extreme destruction and despair.

Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites

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

Visit the Grand Circle Community website for a world of travel news and information:
www.gct.com/community

Government websites:
International health information: CDC (Centers for Disease Control)
www.cdc.gov/travel
U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information
www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel
Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency responsible for screening luggage in U.S.
www.tsa.gov/public
National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information
www.travel.state.gov

General travel information websites:
Travel books
www.amazon.com
www.barnesandnoble.com
World weather
www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
Foreign languages for travelers: basic terms in more than 80 languages
www.travlang.com/languages
Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.
www.travelite.org
Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe
www.cybercafes.com
Electric current and plug types
www.kropla.com/electric2.htm
Foreign exchange rates
www.oanda.com/converter/classic
ATM locators
www.mastercard.com/atm for **Cirrus ATMs**
www.visa.com/pd/atm **for PLUS ATMs**

Country information:
www.czechtourism.com **Czech Republic**
www.welcome-vienna.com **Vienna**
www.visiteurope.com/ **Links to countries**
www.berlin.de **Berlin**
www.dresden.de/dmg/en/index.php **Dresden**
www.inyourpocket.com/free-instant-city-guides.html
http://www.poland.travel/en-us

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