



azorcan
SPORT, SCHOOL & SIGHTSEEING TOURS

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AZORCAN GENERAL TOUR GUIDE

Azorcan is a 100% Canadian owned European group tour operator based in Edmonton, Canada. We are the leaders in custom group travel to Europe since 1994 with thousands of satisfied clients from Canada and the U.S.A.. Our experience in almost every country in Europe is your guarantee of a carefree and memorable experience.

This document is a general guide for all our Azorcan tours so please be aware that some items may not be applicable for your tour. Additional information to what is presented here may be provided as well for some tours.

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TOUR WEBPAGE - 1

We continually update the tour webpage with information until shortly before departure.

The **Travel Links and Information** section contains resources and information sheets covering:

- Azorcan General Tour Notes
- Important Forms
 - Child Permission Form
 - Sports Player Medical Form

The **Tour Destination Links and Information** section includes:

- Azorcan destination guides
- Maps and city guides
- Metro and transportation maps
- General destination information
- Local attractions
- Suggested free-time activities
- Useful travel resources and links
- We encourage everyone to research destinations before departure to ensure they do not miss activities or sites of personal interest.
- Many European museums are **free on certain days** — research in advance
- Learn a few **basic phrases** in local languages — it goes a long way!

The **Tour Forms & Insurance** contains details about our Allianz travel insurance policy. Please review the policy carefully, including coverage limitations and exclusions, to ensure you understand your protection while travelling.

Travellers who take medication or have a significant medical history are encouraged to complete a medical information form and submit it to their team manager before departure. In the event of a medical emergency, this information may be invaluable.

AZORCAN SOCIAL MEDIA, PHOTOS & PRIORITY LIST - 2

On the Azorcan webpage we have a media section and a podcast section. In addition, we suggest following our Facebook page, visiting our SmugMug page and registering on our Priority List.

Facebook – www.facebook.com/azorcantours

We post images and descriptions from our tours and follow for tour announcements and destination information.

SmugMug - <https://azorcan.smugmug.com>

Here you can find free images from some of our tours that you can download in full resolution.

Priority List - <https://www.azorcan.net/priority-list>

An exclusive early-access registry for [Azorcan Tours](#) that guarantees front-of-line information and registration for European sports, cultural, and major international fan tours. A must if you or your friends are interested in joining our sightseeing tours to Europe or our fan tours to the World Juniors in Finland 2028 or Czechia 2030.

PASSPORTS & DOCUMENTS - 3

Here are some important details about valid passports and documents for the trip.

- Valid **Canadian passport** (ensure it's valid for at least 6 months beyond your return date)

- Keep **digital and physical copies** of your passport, travel insurance, and bookings
- **Schengen Zone rules:** Canadians can stay up to **90 days within any 180-day period** across all Schengen countries combined
- Register your trip with **Global Affairs Canada** (travel.gc.ca) for emergency notifications

Passengers without a valid passport will be denied boarding by airlines and at some tours.

Please provide Azorcan a clear image of your passport. Passport information is required for hotel registrations and to ensure that names on airline tickets exactly match passport details.

Player Medical Form - Required Forms for Sport Tour Participants

All athletes participating in a sport tour are required to complete and submit a Player Medical Form prior to departure. This information helps team staff respond appropriately in the event of a medical situation and ensures that any relevant health concerns, allergies, medications, or emergency contact information are readily available.

Child Travel Permission Form

If a participant under the age of 18 is travelling on a sport tour without one or both parents/legal guardians, a Child Travel Permission Form is strongly recommended. The form should be completed, notarized, and carried with the participant throughout the tour. Border officials may request proof that the child has permission to travel internationally, and having this document readily available can help avoid delays during travel.

EUROPEAN ENTRY REQUIREMENTS (ETIAS & ETA) - 4

The European Union is introducing the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS), an electronic travel authorization requirement for visitors from Canada, the United States, and other visa-exempt countries.

Implementation has been delayed several times while the EU completes its Entry-Exit System (EES). ETIAS is now expected to be introduced no earlier than the final quarter of 2026. The European Union has indicated that travellers will receive at least six months' notice before the requirement comes into effect. For additional information, visit: www.etias.com

- Starting in late **2026**, the **ETIAS** (European Travel Information and Authorization System) is required for visa-free entry into the Schengen Area — apply online in advance (~€7 fee)
- UK entry may require an **ETA** (Electronic Travel Authorisation) — check the latest UK government requirements

If you are not a Canadian Citizen, it is your responsibility to check entry requirements for all countries on the tour itinerary. Here is a website with information on [Schengen Visa Information](#) for Europe.

CURRENCY & EXCHANGE RATES - 5

We recommend the free app **XE** which allows you to select various currencies, that when you enter the amount in one, it gives the equivalent in all others. Your phone calculator also does currency exchange.

Most of Western Europe uses the **Euro (€)** — Eurozone includes France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Netherlands, Austria, and more.

- **Non-Euro countries to note:**
 - UK → British Pound (£)
 - Switzerland → Swiss Franc (CHF)

- Czech Republic → Czech Koruna (CZK)
 - Croatia → Euro (adopted 2023)
 - Hungary → Forint (HUF)
 - Norway/Sweden/Denmark → their respective Kroner
- Notify your bank and credit card providers before departure that you will be abroad.
 - Make sure your PIN will work abroad.
 - Record card numbers and emergency contact numbers in case cards are lost or stolen.
 - Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted, but small shops and markets may only accept cash.
 - Use a **no-foreign-transaction-fee credit card** (e.g., Scotiabank Passport Visa, Rogers World Elite Mastercard)
 - Withdraw cash from **bank ATMs** (avoid airport/tourist area exchange kiosks — poor rates)
 - Avoid **Dynamic Currency Conversion (DCC)** — always pay in local currency, not CAD
 - Carry some cash; many European spots (especially smaller towns) are still cash-heavy

Exchanging Cash in Europe

- Use official exchange offices and compare rates before exchanging money.
- Ask exactly how much local currency you will receive, including any fees.
- Avoid exchanging money with people on the street, as scams are common.

Many of our travellers use Calforex for currency exchange to exchange Canadian into European currency <https://www.calforex.com/en/>

MEALS & FOOD ALLERGIES - 6

What to expect on Azorcan tours breakfasts, lunches and dinners, plus wine, beer and food tastings. Please let us know about any dietary restrictions and allergies.

BREAKFAST

Many European hotels include quite a good breakfast buffet of hot & cold items including bread rolls, baguettes, sliced breads, cold cuts, cheeses, yogurt, hard-boiled eggs or scrambled eggs, bacon or sausages, cereals and fruit, coffee, tea, and juice. You should have a very good breakfast each day.

LUNCHESES & DINNERS

Included lunches or dinners can be pre-ordered menus or buffets. Please note that sometimes a beverage is included. In cases where a beverage is not included, you are required to pay for your family's drinks prior to departure. A small tip is appreciated and can be left on the table for servers.

WINE or BEERS TASTINGS & FOOD VISITS

Wine tastings can vary in the number of wines per tasting. Wines are usually accompanied with tapas or snacks that can include shared plates of breads, meats, cheeses, olives, or olive oil. We will list the items in your tour itinerary. Please note that tastings are not usually intended to be a full meal unless otherwise indicated. Beer tastings usually involve a flight of beers, but without any accompanying snacks. Food visits to cheese, vinegar, olive oil, salumi or other producers can vary in their offerings and may include a full meal.

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS & ALLERGIES

If you have food allergies or dietary restrictions, please notify your group manager as soon as possible. Group managers should provide Azorcan with a list of participants with food allergies at least two weeks before departure.

Although we communicate allergy information to restaurants, suppliers, and guides whenever possible, travellers should also remind guides and restaurant staff directly. If you have concerns about ingredients, please ask restaurant staff before consuming any meal.

When selecting airline seats, you may also request special meals. We recommend bringing snacks or food onboard in case special meal requests are not fulfilled.

HOTEL INFORMATION - 7

Hotels receive rooming lists and passport information before arrival. We also carry passport copies to assist with check-in procedures if required.

Please note that hotels may still request to see your physical passport at check-in, as many countries require hotels to collect this information for local authorities. Some hotels may also request an email address and mailing address for each room. Group managers may wish to prepare this information in advance if needed.

Europeans have quite different hospitality standards and hotel customs compared to what Canadians are used to. Here's what to expect so there are no surprises.

- Bed sizes are often smaller than North American equivalents — a "double" in Europe is closer to a Canadian full/double, not a queen. Sometimes a double is two twins pushed together.
- hotel rooms, especially in city centres, are noticeably smaller than Canadian equivalents
- Bathrooms can be very compact. Showers sometimes have only a 3-4 foot glass screen.
- face cloths (washcloths) are rarely provided in European hotels, even upscale ones
- Pillows tend to be larger and squarer (European pillow style) and fewer in number
- Top sheets are often not used — just a duvet cover directly
- Many European hotels, especially in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, use two single duvets on a double bed instead of one shared duvet
- Many older buildings, especially in the UK, France, and northern Europe, have no A/C at all
- Even in summer, A/C may be limited or turned off at night
- Bring a small portable fan if travelling in July–August, or specifically search for "air-conditioned room" when booking
- bidets are common in some southern countries. They are for personal hygiene after toilet use.
- Some hotels do not have triple rooms with three beds. The third bed is usually a cot or a sofa bed. We always recommend double, twin and single rooms.
- Light switches are often outside the bathroom door — not inside
- Many hotels use motion-sensor or timer hallway lights that switch off automatically
- Blackout curtains are not always standard — bring a sleep mask especially in summer when it stays light until 10–11pm in northern Europe
- TV channels will be mostly local language with limited English options; often BBC and CNN
- European city hotels are often in historic buildings with thin walls and older windows
- Street noise can be significant — church bells, traffic, nightlife
- Pack earplugs — especially if you're a light sleeper Many European hotels are going cashless. Especially in Northern Europe.
- A credit card pre-authorization hold is standard at check-in (just like Canada)
- Some hotels charge a city tax (taxe de séjour) per person per night — it's small (€1–5) but not always included in the booking price; you pay it at the hotel
- Check-in is typically 2–3pm and checkout 11am–12pm — stricter than many Canadian hotels
- Luggage storage is usually available if you arrive early or are departing after check out
- Daily housekeeping is increasingly optional or reduced (post-pandemic norm)
- Wi-Fi speed and reliability varies, especially in older buildings with thick walls

- Wi-Fi passwords are usually on your room card, key packet, or at the front desk
- Ice sometimes is hard to come by. Ask the hotel bar for some.
- Avoid the minibar. Stocked but expensive; buy snacks and drinks from a nearby supermarket
- Strictly non-smoking indoors everywhere; designated outdoor areas only
- Keep luggage locked and valuables out of sight.
- Use the hotel safe for important items.
- Remember to empty the safe before checking out.

PHONES & COMMUNICATION - 8

We recommend that travellers exchange contact information before departure. Many past tour groups have found a **WhatsApp** group useful for sharing updates and staying connected throughout the trip.

- Contact your Canadian carrier about an **international roaming plan** (Rogers, Bell, and Telus all offer travel add-ons)
- Better value: buy a **local SIM card** or an **eSIM** (apps like Airalo offer European data plans)
- Download **offline maps** (Google Maps or Maps.me) before you go
- Useful apps: Google Translate (download offline packs), Revolut, Wise, WhatsApp

Alternatively, you may disable cellular service and rely on Wi-Fi networks when available. Please note that eSIMs may provide a different phone number than your regular Canadian number.

TIPPING GUIDELINES - 9

Tipping culture differs in Europe, it's appreciated but not mandatory like in North America. Here are some general tipping suggestions.

- Local city guides: €1–€2 if you enjoyed the tour
- Group dinners: €1–€2 per person for good service
- Independent dining: Approximately 10% is customary

It is customary to provide gratuities to your European tour guide and driver if they accompany the group for an extended period. For a typical two-week tour, a suggested contribution is:

- €10 per person for the guide
- €5 per person for the driver

Collection and distribution of tips are generally coordinated by the group leader, although the final amount is at the group's discretion.

PUBLIC TRANSIT - METRO, BUSES & TRAMS - 10

Public transit in Europe is generally excellent, affordable, and far superior to most Canadian cities. Once you get the hang of it, it's the best way to get around during your free time. In smaller cities and towns, **walking is often the best option** — many historic centres are pedestrian-only anyway.

- Single ride, daily or multiday tickets or cards can be bought at stations or on transit apps
- Validate your train/transit tickets before boarding (fines for unvalidated tickets are common)
- Validation machines are at the entrance gates or on the metro platform or on buses and trams
- Keep your ticket until you exit the system — some cities require scanning on exit too
- Some passes only cover central zones so check before travelling to airports and outskirts
- Download the city's official transit app or save an image of the metro map on your phone
- Direction is indicated by the name of the last stop on that line — know your end station
- Trains run frequently — often every 2–5 minutes during peak hours
- Last trains are typically around midnight–1am; some run 24-hour service on weekends
- Google Maps and Citymapper are excellent for planning bus routes
- Watch your belongings on crowded buses — high pickpocket risk

- Many buses are cashless and you may be able to tap to pay for your fare.

TAXI, UBER & BOLT - 11

Like other parts of the world, local taxi companies are now competing with Uber and Bolt. For airport transfers to city centers trains and buses offer affordable options to consider.

- Always use **licensed taxis** from official ranks or booked via app
- Look for official taxi markings — lit roof sign, meter visible, licensed plates
- **Always insist the meter is running** before the journey starts
- Tipping is not expected but rounding up is appreciated
- **Uber** operates in most major European cities
- **Bolt** is widely used across Europe and often cheaper than Uber
- **Free Now** (formerly MyTaxi) is popular in Germany, Ireland, and UK

BAGGAGE & PACKING - 12

While recent tours have experienced minimal baggage delays, we recommend carrying a change of clothes and essential items in your carry-on bag. There are no formal dress requirements for the tour, although you may wish to bring one or two semi-formal outfits for evening activities. Upon arrival in Europe, we will ensure all travellers have collected their luggage before departing the baggage area.

Please review your airline's baggage policies, including:

- Weight allowances
- Size restrictions
- Fees for special baggage or sports equipment

Suggested Packing List

- Less is more — you'll walk far more than you expect; every extra kilogram matters
- Most things you forget can be bought in Europe (toiletries, clothing, adapters)
- Pack clothes you can mix and match around a neutral colour palette
- Layers — European weather varies greatly; even summer evenings can be cool
- Comfortable walking shoes (cobblestone streets are everywhere)
- One smart/dressy outfit (for nicer restaurants or churches)
- Modest cover-up for visiting religious sites (churches, mosques, cathedrals)
- Compact rain jacket or umbrella
- Small backpack or daypack
- Foldable shopping bag
- Electrical adapters
- Charging cables and portable battery pack
- Prescription medications and prescriptions (extra supply & put in separate bags)
- Basic first-aid kit
- Sunglasses and sunscreen (sunscreen can be expensive in Europe)
- Hand sanitizer and a reusable water bottle
- Moisturizer and wet wipes
- Emergency contact information
- Credit card cancellation numbers
- Copies of passports and identification documents
- Local currency for each destination
- Small portable fan (buses can be hot until the AC kicks in for a while)

We strongly recommend leaving expensive jewelry and unnecessary cards (membership cards, library cards, gym passes, discount cards, etc.) at home.

ELECTRICITY, PLUG INS & ELECTRONICS - 13

We recommend purchasing a power bar with various inputs with a voltage converter.

- Europe uses **220–240V electricity** which differ from Canada's **110–120V system**.
- A **plug adapter** lets Canadian plugs fit European outlets but **does not convert voltage**.
- Most modern devices (phones, laptops, chargers) are **dual voltage** and only need an adapter—check the device label to confirm.
- Devices that support only **110–120V** require a **voltage converter** to avoid damage.
- A **combined adapter/converter** can be a convenient travel option.
- Bring a **power bar** and **multi-port USB charger**, as hotel rooms often have limited outlets.
- Some hotels use **key-card power systems** that cut electricity when you leave the room; an extra card can sometimes keep power on for charging devices.
- Bathroom outlets are often **low-wattage shaver outlets** and may not work for hair tools.
- Hotel hair dryers are usually provided but may be low-powered.
- High-wattage items such as **hair dryers, curling irons, and straighteners** may need special converters or may be easier to purchase locally.
- Always verify your device's **voltage compatibility, wattage requirements, and converter settings** before use.
- A **portable power bank** is useful for keeping devices charged while traveling.

COACH (BUS TRAVEL) - 14

Passengers may generally choose their preferred seat on the coach and often remain in the same location throughout the tour.

Please note:

- The first row is reserved for tour staff.
- Keep the coach clean and dispose of garbage appropriately.
- Report any damage to the driver when boarding so it can be documented.
- Some drivers may offer bottled water and refreshments for purchase at prices lower than those found at rest stops.

Using washroom facilities onboard is not recommended and not all coaches have onboard washroom facilities. For journeys longer than two hours, rest stops are typically scheduled. We recommend using washroom facilities whenever the opportunity arises, especially before departure.

FERRIES IN SCANDINAVIA & GREECE - 15

SCANDINAVIA FERRIES

Many ferry crossings in Scandinavia include overnight travel. Cabins typically accommodate up to four passengers, although configurations may vary depending on the vessel. Wherever possible, cabin arrangements are coordinated to match your hotel room occupancy for consistency throughout the tour.

When boarding the ferry, you will only need an overnight bag or backpack. Your main suitcase will remain securely stored on the coach, which travels on the ferry's vehicle deck. Please note that access to the vehicle deck is not permitted during the crossing, so all essential items must be packed in your carry-on bag before boarding.

This should include medications, toiletries, a change of clothes, travel documents, and any personal items you may need overnight, as you will not be able to retrieve luggage from the coach until arrival at the next port.

GREECE FERRIES

Ferry travel is a common and efficient way to move between the Greek islands and mainland destinations. These vessels range from large cruise-style ferries to smaller inter-island ships, and travel times can vary depending on the route.

Passengers are typically responsible for carrying their own luggage onboard. In most cases, baggage is stored in designated areas of the ferry rather than being checked in, so travellers should ensure they are comfortable handling their own bags during embarkation and disembarkation. We recommend packing a smaller day bag with essential items such as medications, travel documents, valuables, and any necessities needed during the crossing, as larger bags may not be easily accessible while underway.

Boarding procedures can involve ramps, stairs, and busy dock areas, so secure, manageable luggage is strongly advised. Please follow all instructions from ferry staff and allow sufficient time for boarding, especially during peak travel periods.

HEALTH & TRAVEL INSURANCE - 16

INSURANCE INCLUDED

Some Azorcan tours include a “comprehensive” travel insurance for passengers under 65 through our preferred provider, Allianz Insurance. Passengers aged 65 and older will require an individual insurance quote and will be asked to complete a basic **Medical Screening** form, which is available under **Final Tour Information** on your group webpage.

Passengers over 65 will be charged only the difference in cost of their policy or they can choose to decline our insurance and receive a credit using our **Insurance Form**.

INSURANCE NOT INCLUDED

Some tours include the option to purchase “comprehensive” or “trip cancellation” insurance through our preferred provider, Allianz Insurance. Azorcan will provide insurance quotes for both policies and passengers can choose either policy or decline the insurance. Passengers aged 65 and older will require an individual insurance quote and will be asked to complete a basic **Medical Screening** form, which is available under **Final Tour Information** on your group webpage.

ALLIANZ INSURANCE

Details of the insurance coverage, including policy information and emergency contact numbers, are available on our website. Once insurance policies are issued the policy numbers and Allianz contact information will be posted on the group webpage.

We strongly encourage all travelers to carefully review the policy details, including coverage limits, benefits, and exclusions, to ensure the plan meets their individual needs. It is the responsibility of each passenger to understand the coverage provided and to obtain any additional insurance they feel may be necessary.

Here are some insurance and health tips.

- **Travel insurance is essential** — provincial health plans provide virtually no coverage abroad
- Have coverage for medical emergencies, trip cancellation, lost luggage, & medical evacuation
- Bring a **sufficient supply of prescription medications** + a doctor's note
- Carry medications in **original labelled containers**
- European pharmacies (marked with a green cross) are widely available for minor issues

All travellers are responsible for ensuring they meet the necessary health requirements for entry into each destination included in the tour. This may include, but is not limited to, valid medical

documentation, vaccination records, or testing requirements as determined by government authorities, airlines, or border control agencies.

Health regulations can vary by country and may change without notice. It is the responsibility of each passenger to review and comply with the most current requirements prior to departure and throughout the duration of the trip.

Any costs associated with vaccinations, medical testing, or required documentation are not included in the tour package and are the responsibility of the traveller.

We strongly recommend consulting official government travel advisories and speaking with a healthcare professional or travel clinic well in advance of departure to ensure all requirements are met.

FLIGHT TICKETS & ONLINE CHECK-IN - 17

If flights are included in your tour package, your flight tickets will be posted on the group webpage once they are issued. Please note that tickets may be provided in multiple files, and family members travelling together may appear on separate documents.

Along with your ticket files, the group webpage will include specific instructions for seat selection based on the operating airline. Once your tickets are available, you can use the airline's booking reference (file locator) to access your reservation directly on the airline's website. We strongly recommend reviewing and completing the following steps where possible:

- **Seat selection:** Select or upgrade your seat in advance if options are available
- **Passport details:** Enter or verify passport information (some airlines allow scanning via mobile devices)
- **Contact information:** Ensure up-to-date contact details are provided for schedule changes, gate updates, delays, or cancellations
- **Frequent flyer information:** Add your loyalty program number to receive travel credit
- **Special meal requests:** Select any required dietary or special meal options
- **Lounge access:** Where available, consider booking lounge access for extended layovers
-

Please be aware that some airlines automatically assign seating for group bookings and may restrict individual seat selection in advance.

Full seat selection instructions specific to your airline will be provided on your group webpage along with your ticket documents.

SAFETY - 18

Europe is generally very safe for tourists, but like anywhere, awareness and preparation go a long way.

- Europe is **not a high-risk destination** — most visits are trouble-free
- The biggest threats to tourists are **petty crime and scams**, not violent crime
- **Tourist-heavy areas** (major cities, transit hubs, markets) carry the most risk
- Canadians tend to be perceived as friendly and approachable — which unfortunately also makes you a target for scammers
- Stay alert, especially in crowded tourist areas.
- Beware of distractions such as strangers asking for help, bumping into you, or creating a scene.
- Keep your passport, cash, and cards in a concealed money belt or travel pouch.
- Carry only the cash you need each day and keep it in a front pocket.

- Avoid displaying valuables and keep bags secure.
- Travel in groups when possible.
- Be cautious on public transit, busy streets, and crowded markets.
- Count your change carefully when paying with cash.
- Keep digital or paper copies of important documents and emergency contacts.
- **dedicated bike lanes** are separate from pedestrian paths
- **Never walk in a bike lane** — cyclists will ring their bell and are not pleased

CANADIAN CUSTOMS & TRAVEL INFORMATION -19

Remember that bringing goods back to Canada has its own rules:

- **Personal exemption after 7+ days abroad:** CAD \$800 duty-free
- Amounts above \$800 are subject to **Canadian customs duties and HST/GST**
- Declare everything honestly — penalties for under-declaring are serious
- Alcohol and tobacco have **separate lower limits**
- Keep your **receipts for everything** purchased abroad in case customs asks

The VAT refund and Canadian customs exemption are **separate processes** — you can claim your European VAT refund and still declare goods at Canadian customs on arrival.

Canadian Travel Websites

[Government of Canada](#) - Information on travelling to, from and within Canada.

[Canada Passports](#) - all the information regarding passports.

[Canada Embassy](#) - Contact information for Canadian embassies and consulates abroad.

[Health Canada](#) - Travel advice and advisories by destination.

[Bon Voyage, But...](#) - Essential Information for Canadian Travellers

TAX FREE SHOPPING – VAT REFUND - 20

Tax Free Shopping is one of the most **underutilized money-saving opportunities** for Canadian tourists in Europe. You can reclaim the local sales tax (VAT) on purchases made during your trip — in some countries that's up to **25% back**. [Europe VAT webpage](#)

- **VAT (Value Added Tax)** is Europe's equivalent of HST/GST
- Unlike Canada, the Europe **VAT is already included** in the displayed price
- As a non-EU resident, you're entitled to a **refund of the VAT** on eligible goods you take home
- VAT rates vary by country and product type
- You must spend **above the minimum threshold** in a single store in a single day
- Each country sets its own minimum purchase amount before you can claim VAT back
- Have a **valid passport** as proof of non-EU residency
- These items are eligible: Clothing and shoes, Jewellery and watches, Electronics and cameras, Cosmetics and perfume, Souvenirs and gifts, Handbags and accessories, Artwork and antiques

How to get a refund

Step 1 — Shop and Ask for a VAT Refund Form

- When purchasing, tell the retailer **before paying** that you want a VAT refund
- Show your **Canadian passport** as proof of non-EU residency
- The store will give you a **VAT refund form** (also called a tax-free form or détaxe form)
- Major retailers often use third-party refund services like **Global Blue** and **Planet Tax Free**

Step 2 — Keep Everything Together

- Keep your **original receipt**, VAT form, and goods together and accessible

- Do **not pack these items in checked luggage** before getting your customs stamp — you need to show the goods
- Keep items **unused and in original packaging** if possible

Step 3 — Get Your Customs Stamp at the Airport

- This is the most important step — **without the customs stamp your refund is invalid**
- Go to the **customs/détaxe desk** at the airport before check-in if possible, or after security at dedicated booths. Show the customs officer your: Passport, VAT refund forms, Original receipts, and the goods you purchased.
- The officer will **stamp your forms** confirming the goods are leaving the EU
- Allow **extra time** — queues at customs desks can be long

Step 4 — Four Ways To Get Your Refund

Cash at airport	Hand stamped forms to Global Blue/Planet	Immediate	Higher fee
Credit card refund	Mail stamped forms or submit via app	2–8 weeks	Lower fee
In-store refund	Some refund if they trust you'll get stamp	Varies	Varies
Digital/app	Global Blue and Planet Tax Free have apps	2–4 weeks	Moderate fee

TRAVEL EXPECTATIONS - 21

A successful group travel experience relies on flexibility, patience, understanding, and adaptability. Unexpected delays or changes can occur while travelling, and maintaining a positive and cooperative attitude helps ensure an enjoyable experience for all participants.

PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality is essential. Late arrivals for scheduled departures can significantly disrupt the itinerary and affect the entire group's schedule for the day. In some cases, missing a scheduled tour start time may mean the activity cannot be rescheduled, resulting in the loss of a prepaid tour or experience. All participants are expected to be ready at the designated departure time.

GROUP COUNTS

To ensure everyone is accounted for at all times, a head count will be conducted each time the group departs a location, including busy or crowded public settings. It is important that all travellers remain in their assigned seats or designated positions and pay attention during these counts to prevent anyone from being missed.

In order to make this process efficient, each participant may be assigned a number. For example, in a group of 40 people, each individual would be assigned a number from 1 to 40. Everyone should know the numbers immediately before and after their own so that any missing person can be identified quickly. During a head count, the group will count aloud in order from 1 to the total number of participants. If a number is not called, staff can immediately determine who is missing. This system is particularly effective not only on the bus, but also in crowded locations where visual tracking can be more difficult. It provides a simple, fast, and reliable method of ensuring the group remains together and accounted for at all times.

This system is simple, fast, and more reliable than manually counting individuals walking through a bus or crowded area. It helps ensure safe, accurate, and efficient group movement throughout the tour.

SPORTS TOURS – EQUIPMENT - 22

Here are some tips to help you prepare for your sports tour. Please be aware that sports equipment is extra to your allowed check in baggage and the airline may charge fees for the extra baggage/

Hockey & Ringette Equipment

Please note that hotel storage space for hockey and ringette equipment bags may be limited. Players should be prepared to keep equipment bags in their hotel rooms. For security reasons, never leave equipment or valuables on the bus overnight.

Before departure, ensure your skates are sharpened and in excellent condition. Check all grommets, rivets, and blades for wear or damage, and replace any defective parts before traveling. If possible, bring a second pair of sharpened skates as a backup. Players are also encouraged to pack extra skate laces, helmet hardware, a screwdriver, and sufficient sock and stick tape for the duration of the trip. Check with your team manager to confirm whether a team toolbox and spare parts will be available.

Inspect all equipment thoroughly before leaving home and complete any necessary repairs. Double-check your equipment bag to ensure nothing is forgotten. If you have spare equipment, such as a helmet, gloves, or other essential gear, consider bringing it along. Replacement equipment in Europe can be difficult to find and is often expensive.

Families should review their homeowner's insurance policy to determine whether hockey or ringette equipment is covered in the event of loss or theft. Please note that travel insurance may only cover a limited portion of the total value of a player's equipment.

For insurance and safety requirements, all players must wear a full-face shield and neck protector. Players should also pack:

- A towel for arena showers (hotel towels may not be removed from the hotel)
- Shower sandals
- A personal water bottle
- Three practice pucks or rings (for warm-up and practices in Europe)
- Enough sock and stick tape to last the entire trip

Please note that team staff will not be transporting practice pucks, or rings due to baggage limitations.

Soccer Equipment

Prior to departure, inspect your soccer cleats and ensure the studs are in good condition. Bringing a second pair of cleats is strongly recommended in case your primary pair becomes damaged. Since playing and training surfaces may vary, players should pack footwear suitable for multiple field types whenever possible.

Shin guards should be checked for cracks or damage, and an extra pair is recommended. Players should also bring an extra set of laces.

In addition, each player should pack:

- A towel for arena or facility showers (hotel towels may not be removed from the hotel)
- Shower sandals
- A personal water bottle