



**azorcan**  
SPORT, SCHOOL & SIGHTSEEING TOURS

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**azorcan.net**

## AZORCAN TOUR NOTES AND REMINDERS

**Tour Itinerary** – the tour itinerary has a day by day schedule with links and hotels. We may have some adjustments to make prior to departure and will be updating the itinerary links as we do. Although we plan the itineraries as best we can there sometimes are changes due to circumstances beyond our control. Be flexible and have an open mind as some things in Europe are not the same as in Canada.

**Please be punctual** as we have to stay on schedule or we may lose our scheduled tour or be late for a game.

***It is incumbent on passengers to ensure that they have all proper documentation and health requirements for travel on an Azorcan Tour. All passengers are required to hold a valid passport for travel. You are responsible for obtaining and paying for all visas and entry documents, for meeting all health and other requirements, and for any documents required by the laws, regulations, orders, and/or requirements of the countries you will visit. Azorcan is not responsible for providing you with specific visa and passport information or documentation, and Azorcan cannot accept liability for any passenger refused entry onto any transport or into any country due to failure of the passenger to carry correct documentation.***

Tour Notes – These tour notes are posted on the website for your reference,

The tour webpage has a multitude of information including:

**Money** - Currency, Credit Cards, ATMs, Safety and more.

**Electrical Power** - what you need to charge your devices in Europe

**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** – You can get taxes back on some of your purchases.

**ArriveCan** - You must use the ArriveCAN App to provide mandatory travel information

**Re-open EU** - This App provides information on travel and health measures in EU

**Shengen Visa Info** - Information on all the European Union countries

**Calling Canada from Europe** - to dial internationally from the Canada or from any other country

**Allianz Insurance** - We include the Medical and Cancellation Plan from Allianz in our package

**Allianz Insurance Policy** - All-Inclusive Plan policy, Covid information and pre-departure checklist.

**Netherlands Vaccine Declaration Form** - required when entering the Netherlands. (12 & older)

### DESTINATION INFORMATION

The website contains many links that offer information about their destinations' history, culture and top sights.

It is a good idea for you, as a traveler, to do some of your own research about our destinations. There are so many websites now with top 10 to do lists for cities, official tourist board pages and tips from locals.

One suggestion for you is to make a little package of information for each destination; however, please ensure that it is easy to carry along with you during the day.

Various websites contain some basic words and phrases in the languages of the countries on your tour. Courses at the local college in history, art, classics and languages are a great way to learn more about your destination and make your trip more enjoyable. A classics course can teach you the difference between Baroque or Gothic architecture. Knowing a bit about the Greeks, Romans, the French revolution, and other historical empires or events will help you put things in perspective.

## FLIGHT NOTES

**Passports** - make sure your passport is valid at least 90 days after the date of departure.

**Netherlands Vaccine Declaration Form** – on the website. We should have it on arrival in Netherlands.

**ArriveCan** – we need the app on our phone for Canada Customs on the return.

**Baggage Tags** – you have an Azorcan baggage tag for your checked bag and your carry on. Use a permanent marker to fill out your information. We will have airline bag tags with our first hotel at the airport to also stick on our bags.

## BAGGAGE

Here is the allowable baggage for the flight. Each passenger is allowed the following:

### Free Baggage Allowance

\*\* 1 checked bag\* - max. 23kg (50.5lbs), maximum 158cm (62in) L+W+H \*\* Carry-on bag: 1 bag + 1 accessory (handbag/laptop) combined max 12kg (26.5lbs)

***Please note that each passenger is allowed one suit case and one hand luggage (knapsack size) on our tours as buses have limited luggage space.***

## WHAT TO PACK

I recommend that everyone take a change of clothes in their knapsack in case their luggage is delayed and it may be a good idea to split your clothing amongst your check in bags so that you have some clothing for more than one passenger in each bag.

Over-packing can ruin a trip so travel lightly. Remember that you will buy souvenirs in Europe, so you will need space to bring them back. Try not to fill your suitcase to the maximum and try not to take non-essential items. If you plan to wear it once, don't take it. One suggestion to help you travel lightly is to put everything you want to take on your bed at home then try to justify why you need to take each piece of clothing. Remember that you have to haul your including the possibility of carrying them up some stairs at hotels, so **travel lightly!** The weather in Europe from spring to the fall can be very warm and highs can range from 25 degrees to as much as 40 degrees. Be prepared as you may run into the odd overcast or rainy day. The following items are recommended, but even some of these items are not essential.

- a couple of pairs of shorts (preferably with pockets)
- swimming trunks (there may be a pool or a lake near by on a warm day)
- tee-shirts, golf shirts (enough to last the tour)
- two pairs of long pants (eg. lightweight cotton, track pants) jeans may be too warm
- underwear to last the tour duration
- comfortable running shoes and maybe sandals (don't bring new ones as they may give you blisters)
- a light jacket (track suit type jacket)
- a small umbrella ( you can buy a cheap one there if you need one)
- a sweater or sweat shirt for cool evenings
- Camera or use your phone
- a power converter if you are taking any electrical items (120 Can, 240 Euro)
- medication you may require (keep in your carry on luggage)
- money belt (see safety section)
- toiletries (toothpaste, toothbrush, comb, shampoo, soap, shaving cream, shaver, female products)
- hat, sunglasses and sunscreen
- notepad and pen
- a small battery operated fan
- cards and cribbage board for evenings

Toiletries such as toothbrushes and soap should be in plastic containers. You can buy shaving cream, shampoo and toothpaste in small containers for travel. Wrap your toiletries in a plastic bag in case they burst open in your suitcase (eg. toothpaste, sun tan lotion, shaving cream, cologne, etc.) Also, take a large garbage bag to separate your dirty clothes from your clean clothes in your suitcase.

Laundry facilities in Europe are very tough to find, so any washing you do may be done in the confines of your hotel room. Bring laundry detergent or soap in a plastic container if you plan on doing laundry. Please remember to do

laundry early enough when you arrive to a hotel to allow it to dry before the tour moves on. It may be helpful to bring a small clothes line to hang in the bathroom.

If you take medication, bring enough to last you the entire trip and bring extra just in case you lose some or if you are delayed. Keep your medication in your carry on luggage in case you need it in an emergency. A prescription from your doctor may be a good idea to have as well.

## **ARRIVAL IN EUROPE**

When the group arrives in Europe the tour manager will have a list of our flight passengers. When you have all of your baggage notify the manager so that they can highlight your name. This way we can ensure that everyone has their bags prior to leaving the baggage area.

## **INSURANCE AND EMERGENCY NUMBER**

In your ticket jacket you will find your insurance policy plus a toll free or a collect number to call to open a claim file. You **MUST** call the insurance company as soon as possible after an emergency or possible claim and open a claim file. It is your responsibility to do so and to correspond with the insurance company. Azorcan are not insurance brokers nor are we responsible for any insurance claims. Our role is to provide an insurance option to all passengers. Please review the coverage provided and determine if you require additional coverage that you may purchase on your own to supplement the tour policy.

## **CALLING HOME**

Your cell phone provider may offer a travel plan that includes a set number of data, free texts and call minutes. Please make sure that you understand all costs and especially charges for roaming and data. Turning off your data during the tour and only using your phone for texting in emergencies is the best policy. Waiting to get to a WI-FI area to use Skype or calling from a internet/phone café is also good.

## **ELECTRICAL POWER**

If you are buying a power voltage converter please note that North America is 120 volts while Europe is 240. You may not need voltage converters if your computer power transformer and battery charger work with both voltages (it says so on each unit - check yours to be sure). Note that some power converters are made for small amounts of power and not for higher power items like hair dryers. Continental Europe has two small round prongs on the connection while Britain has three rectangular plugs. You only need the connections for where you are going

## **TOUR GUIDE & BUS DRIVER**

The guide and driver are there to ensure that the tour runs as smoothly as possible. The driver is responsible for loading and unloading baggage and of course to drive the group throughout the tour to destinations as planned. Please note that although they may be able to do some additional transfers at their discretion, they are not obligated to and keep in mind they do have strict guidelines in regards to hours of work in one day with mandatory rest periods. There are very harsh fines for drivers who exceed their driving time allotment. Drivers at times may be forced to alter routes due to traffic congestion or other problems. In some cases the driver may ask that a group leave earlier or later depending on schedule adjustments. Drivers are employees of the motorcoach company providing services for Azorcan.

On most Azorcan tours, the guide is there to ensure that the group stays on schedule. They will assist the group with check-in, offer assistance in an emergency, offer language assistance (if possible), co-ordinate any changes or provide updates with the group manager only and be the main point person with local guides and at excursion sites. The guide does not do any of the guided tours as we hire local professional guides in each location to provide this service. The guide is mainly a tour facilitator for the group.

Azorcan's escorted tours are conducted in English by a professional local guides often supplied by the local tourist board. Guides are registered as official licensed guides. Included are all excursions and entrance fees to places of interest visited as detailed on each itinerary with an English-speaking guide where necessary. Any tour or activity that is optional or not included will be clearly stated in the itinerary as "own cost", "not included" or as "optional." During local or national holidays or special events, on Sundays, and religious occasions, certain facilities such as museums, churches, restaurants, sightseeing tours, and shopping may be limited or not available. Alternatives will be offered whenever possible. Azorcan cannot be held responsible for any closures or curtails for any reason.

## ON THE BUS

The bus is going to be our home for the duration of the tour, so it is important that we are comfortable in it. Some items that may make your bus trip more enjoyable include:

- a small pillow
- a personal music player so that you can listen to your own music without annoying others
- a water bottle. You may also want to bring some drink crystals for the water.
- a small container for snacks
- a small battery operated fan (usually found at dollar stores)
- a knapsack to hold these items plus a light jacket

***The first row of seating on the bus is reserved for the group managers.***

**Be punctual!** Being late for the bus departure time can seriously damage the schedule for the remainder of the day.

In some cases bus drivers usually carry beverages in a small fridge at the front of the bus that they sell to passengers during the tour. It is at the discretion of the group if they would allow alcoholic beverages on board. Azorcan is not responsible for team policy in this regard. This fridge is not for personal use.

Everyone should ensure that they use a washroom prior to departure on the bus. On long trips the bus will make stops for washroom breaks. If you feel you need a washroom stop just ask the guide to stop at the next rest station. The bus washroom is for emergencies only. We will try to schedule a washroom stop every hour and a half on trips longer than 2 hours. Note that some washrooms require payment so please have coins for that purpose.

Make sure that the bus is clean and that garbage is not left on the seat or on the floor.

The bus driver can supply you with garbage bags to keep the bus clean.

If there is any damage on the bus please take note of it on the first day and point it out to the guide and the driver.

The team manager should also do a walk through on the final day. ***If any person damages the bus in any way they will be solely responsible for any costs.***

## FERRIES IN SCANDINAVIA (if applicable)

Ferries in Scandinavia can hold four persons to a cabin room for an overnight trip. Please refer to your specific itinerary for room details and for any surcharges regarding triple, double or single room options. Most of our tour include pricing with the same room type on the boat as on land. You only need a knapsack on the boat for the night so your suitcase stays on the bus which will travel on the ferry in the vehicle deck. Please note that during the cruise there is no access to the vehicle deck so make sure you have everything you need in your backpack.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The public transportation system in most European cities is very efficient and a cost effective way to get around during your free time. It is very worthwhile to do some research on each city about their public transportation before you go so that you are familiar with purchasing tickets and the tram or metro line that gets you to the hotel from downtown or to a point of interest during your free time. Azorcan provides links to public transportation on your tour webpage.

## NEVER LEAVE ANYONE BEHIND

Every time the team leaves a location on the bus a count must be made to ensure that everyone is aboard. It is important that you stay in your seat and pay attention so that nobody is left behind. One of the best ways to do the count is to give everyone a number. So if you have 40 persons you would each have a number from 1 to 40.

Everyone should be aware of who has the number before them and the number after them so that we can pinpoint who may be missing quickly. Whenever you need to have a count (on the bus or at a meeting point) you would start your count at 1 and each person would yell out their number until you reach 40. If at some point a number is missing then you know who you are missing. Simple and it works better than someone trying to count on a bus walking up and down the aisle.

## HOTELS

Passengers should refer to their specific tour package for accommodation information. The accommodations for our tours are usually double occupancy. Hoteliers are solely responsible for room allocation. Hotels in Europe are rated on a star system. In general, we stay in hotels in the three to four star range. It is important to remember that a hotel's rating is a combination of the room quality, services available, and location of the hotel.

It is not uncommon to find a three star hotel in city suburbs that has better rooms and services than a four star hotel in the center of a large city. We try to find hotels that meet our needs in terms of our tour itinerary and within our budget to keep the tours affordable. Our hotel is just a place to sleep and have breakfast as our days are usually filled with activities.

Some hotels in Europe have rooms much smaller than what we are used to here in North America. However, our rooms have their own washroom facilities, a shower, a television and a telephone. Your final itinerary will have the hotel name and all the contact information in case of an emergency.

Most rooms have two twin beds that can be pulled apart. Comforters are the most common bedding.

Note that single rooms in European hotels are generally smaller than twin-bedded rooms. European hotel standards and services provided may vary from those in other parts of the world and are often local in style. They may charge for use of facilities like a pool or business centre.

Passengers are responsible for any room optional charge including but not limited to telephone charges, mini-bar, pay television, meal, beverage, bar tab, internet or any other hotel service charged to your room. Any damages as caused by actions of a passenger to hotel or personal property will be the sole responsibility of the passenger.

Azorcan will not be an intermediary in any dispute between a passenger and a hotel.

Single rooms are available throughout the tour but there is a surcharge for single rooms. Contact your tour manager for the exact cost of a single room. Most of our tours are quoted with a price for double occupancy throughout the tour. Triple rooms may also be available but may not be at a lower cost per person for some tours. We do not recommend triple rooms as in some cases a cot or rollaway bed may be brought into a double room to make the triple. Furthermore many smaller hotels do not have many triple rooms and we can't guarantee that the triple in some cases would not be available. In short availability of triple rooms is limited and we encourage groups to use double or single rooms exclusively.

## **MONEY, HOTEL SAFE & SAFETY**

If you use the hotel safe be careful that you may forget something in the morning of departure. It will be impossible for the tour bus to go back to get personal items like money or passports. These usually have to be couriered, at your cost, to the next hotel. Leave jewelry or expensive items at home. Do not leave items lying around in your room. If you must leave them in the room put them in your suitcase and lock it. Use your discretion. Azorcan is not responsible for lost or stolen items. You must decide what is best for you.

Beware of pickpockets. Do not carry a wallet in your back pocket or carry a purse over the back of your shoulder. Ladies should always have their purse (if you want to take one) held in front of them where they can see it. Money should be placed in your front pocket and only carry what you need for that day. A credit card can be carried for emergencies.

Debit machines work to withdraw cash but please check with your bank to ensure that the pin number will work in Europe. It's a good idea to alert your bank that you will be in Europe so that they do not red flag your debit or credit card when they see purchases in Europe.

Have cash of each country you go to ahead of time as you may not get a chance to exchange before you need cash. Travelers cheques are not recommended as they are hard to use in stores or exchange. Please see your itinerary information sheet for currencies for the countries you visit.

## **MEALS**

Your specific tour package will outline what meals are included. Most of our tours include two meals a day for each passenger in Europe (breakfast and lunch or dinner). Breakfast will be buffet style (it may include coffee, juice, tea, milk, breads, eggs, cold meats, cheese, jams, cereals, etc.) and is usually at the hotel. Although we do have the odd buffet, most included lunches and dinners are pre-arranged sit down meals and are at the hotel or in restaurants. Please note that during most included lunches and dinners beverages are not included. During any meal anything extra you order may not be included so please ask if it is included and if not what the cost would be to avoid any surprises. Lastly, please remember that milk in Europe is very acidic and may be upsetting for some including bouts of diarrhea.

## **SPECIAL MEALS & ALLERGIES**

Any special meals such as vegetarian, gluten free, Moslem, kosher, lactose free etc. must be requested as soon as possible. Please notify your manager as soon as possible in writing, and we will do our best to see if we can provide you with special meals throughout the tour and on the flight. It is important that at each meal time you remind the manager on arrival so that they may check to see if a special meal has been made. It also gives the restaurant time to make a special meal if they forgot. Peanut allergies are now common and airlines no longer serve peanut products on board. Please ask before any meal about allergies to specific products.

## **WATER**

We will be walking a lot on the tour and possibly in hot weather so it is important that we ensure that we are drinking enough water each day. Bottled water is available everywhere and some bus drivers sell water from their little bus fridge. You can bring a water bottle from home that will keep your drink cold longer.

## **WASHROOM**

Finding a washroom in an emergency in Europe can be challenging, so make use of the facilities whenever you can – at hotels, restaurants, train stations etc. You can ask for the washroom by simply saying “Toilet?” and it will usually get you some relief. When searching for a washroom, a nearby restaurant is always a good bet, but they usually reserve it for customers’ use only. You can try asking for permission by saying the magical “toilet?” and doing so with a look of distress. The fast food joints such as McDonald’s are a good bet. However, don’t feel obligated to buy something.

Bathroom facilities in Europe often have a few norms that we are not used to in North America. For example, in many public restrooms, a tip or fee must be paid in order to use the facilities. Some places also have coin operated WC’s on street corners while others have a woman sitting in the corner of the WC with a tip tray.

At highway rest station shops where you pay to use the washroom sometimes a little ticket is produced. Keep the ticket and when you buy something from the store they may credit your washroom fee back to you.

## **SOUVENIRS**

The best advice for souvenir shopping in Europe is to buy where your money goes the farthest. The Czech Republic or Hungary, for example, are great places to buy your souvenirs at much lower prices than Germany or Austria. In addition, the best places for souvenirs are flea markets or shops that are away from the tourist areas. Be sure to shop around as most souvenir shops in an area have the same items at varying prices. You may want to consider buying your souvenirs near the end of your tour so you don’t have to carry them for the duration of the trip. It is also a good idea to avoid buying glass items at the beginning of your trip as they may not last until the end. It may also be helpful to ask if the vendor will ship the goods to North America.

Bargaining or haggling is accepted in parts of Europe especially in the Mediterranean region and the Czech Republic. Street vendors, flea markets and some small shops expect it and pad their price a little so that they can move closer to “your price”.

Sales taxes often run near twenty percent or more in Europe. On an expensive purchase (over \$ 100) you may want to ask the vendor if your purchase is eligible for a VAT refund. If yes, the vendor will give you a tax free shopping voucher that you can validate at customs in the airport and receive your refund. Keep in mind that you will have to show your goods to customs officials at the airport. Also, note that some local merchants may be persuaded to deduct the tax-free amount from your purchase and apply for the refund themselves.

## **NUMBERS & TIME**

Europeans use the metric system (except for Britain), so it is easy for Canadians to understand weights, measurements, and temperatures. Americans should be aware of the proper conversions to metric. When counting with your hand, the thumb always counts as one in Europe. Therefore, if you hold up two fingers at the beer hall, expect to get three beer as your thumb will be counted as one. Also, please note that the 24-hour clock is used far greater than in North America.

## **CANADA CUSTOMS ADVISORY**

Please note that in past years passengers have purchased knives or other weapons that may not be appropriate or legal in Canada or the U.S. These passengers risked penalties and in some cases possible imprisonment. Do not take a chance! You must also consider that should one person be caught with any item, the group as a whole may be subject to a mass baggage search. I don’t think that anyone would like to be responsible for delaying our tour at any border. If an individual wishes to bring back any item, it is their sole responsibility to check if that item can be brought into Canada. It is also important to note that taking these items to airports in Europe may also be illegal and you may be subject to fines or charges.

## **TIPPING**

At restaurants a tip of approximately 10% of the bill is normal in most European countries.

You can tip a guide conducting a city tour a Euro or two if you like.

The group usually tips our bus tour guides and bus drivers.

A reasonable amount is 20 Euros per person for the entire tour. In a situation when the tour has multiple drivers or guides we split the tour amongst the participants. Many tours collect the tip amount in advance.

## **AZORCAN GERNERAL TOUR CODE OF CONDUCT**

Teams may have additions to these basic guidelines for conduct by all passengers on the tour. By partaking in the tour you are agreeing to accept the following code of conduct without exception and the possibility of penalties for violation of the code. Azorcan reserves the right to accept or reject, or remove any tour member whose conduct is considered to be incompatible with the interests of other tour members. Azorcan is not responsible for any costs incurred if we have to terminate your tour participation due to unacceptable behavior.

Europe has various countries with different customs, cultures and beliefs. As representatives of Canada or the U.S.A. we must conduct ourselves in an appropriate manner. All passengers on the tour should follow the rules outlined below.

***In case of any damage to hotel rooms, the bus, or any other property, the person(s) responsible will be required to make immediate restitution.***

***Passengers are required to be on time for meals, tours, and bus departures. Arriving late can result in us missing our pre-paid tour times and it will disrupt the days schedule meaning we may have less time at some destinations.***

***Illegal drugs of any kind will not be tolerated for the safety of all passengers against prosecution. Any person caught with illegal drugs will be immediately expelled from the team and the tour. You will not be refunded your tour payment and will be on your own until your flight home.***

***Anyone running into legal problems will be required to pay their own fines and if detained, may be left behind when the tour carries on. You are responsible for your expenses to catch up to the tour or go home. Your tour cost will not be refunded in this case.***

***No abuse of any kind will be tolerated towards team management or fellow passengers.***

***Each passenger is reminded to use appropriate language during the tour.***

***During the tour all property belonging to fellow passengers must be respected. Public or personal property of locals must be respected during tours and events.***

***Excessive drinking to the point where it disrupts the tour or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.***

***Passengers will be responsible for their own beverages at mealtime or while on the bus. Note that some meals include beverages. Please ask if you are not sure,***