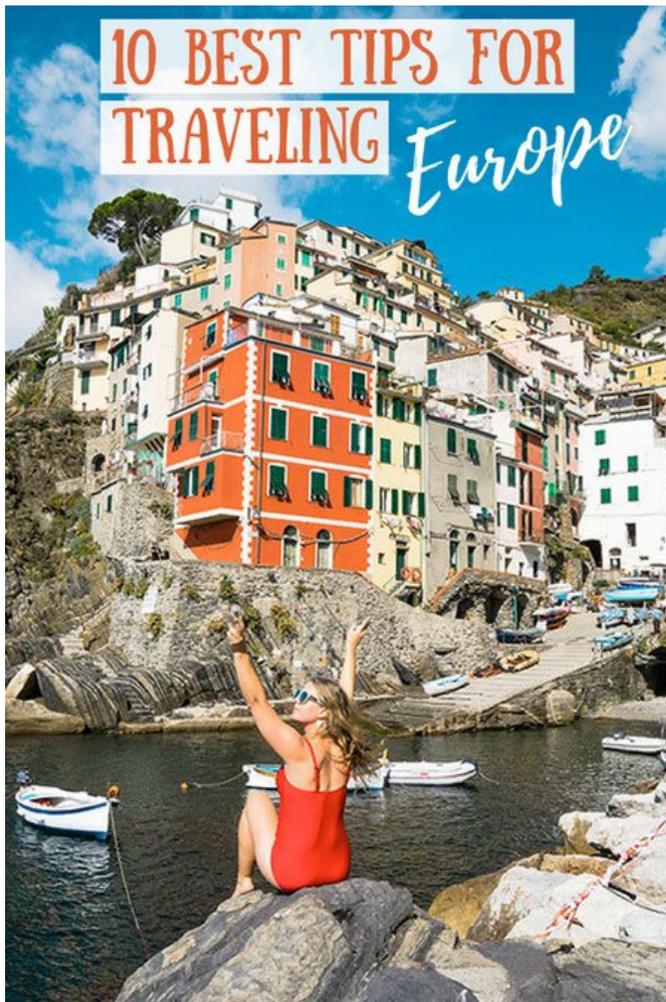


10 Best Tips for Traveling Europe • Ordinary Traveler

Christy Woodrow



Whether it's your first time visiting Europe or you visit multiple times per year, avoiding some of the most common travel mistakes will make your trip so much more enjoyable! A little planning goes a long way and these ten tips will help you a smarter and more relaxed European traveler.



10 Tips for Traveling Europe

1. Check Visa Requirements

One guaranteed way to ruin your trip is being denied entry into the country you are visiting because you don't have a tourist visa. While most countries in Europe don't require a visa for short visits, it's best to know which countries do.

Prior to your trip, a quick search online will find tourist visa requirements and whether you need to acquire a visa upon arrival at the airport or online prior to arrival. There are several websites online that list visa requirements, so find out ahead of time.

Read more: [My 25 Best Travel Tips](#)



2. Travel in the Off Season

While you might dream of sunbathing upon the Mediterranean beaches during the summer months, so does the rest of Europe — causing overcrowded beaches and long queues at tourist attractions.

Traveling during the off season is the best way to avoid the crowds and save money on accommodations, airfare, train tickets and tours. Most of the main tourist attractions are open year-round, just make sure to check closing times as some might have shorter hours during the off-peak travel season.

Read more: [How to Travel Expensive Countries Affordably](#)



3. Use Budget Airlines

With more than a dozen budget airline carriers throughout Europe, you can fly to almost anywhere on the continent for cheap when booking with a budget airline. Airfare will often be cheaper than train tickets, but the least expensive seats tend to sell out the fastest.

While you might be getting a bargain on airfare, make sure to check for additional fees and taxes which are often not included in the advertised rate. Also avoid sizeable baggage fees by researching each airline's rules on hand baggage and luggage size. Packing light will help you avoid baggage fees and let you ease through the airport!

Read more: [5 Secrets to Finding the Best Flight Deals](#)

4. Travel by Train

Traveling by train in Europe is often efficient — and depending on your destination — easier than air travel. Book your ticket at the train station with an actual person because some options are not available at the kiosks. Be sure to validate your ticket before you hop on the train to avoid fines!



5. Make Reservations in Advance

Making reservations in advance is the best way to secure accommodations and tours, especially in peak travel season. Booking airfare, hotels, train tickets, and tours in advance also ensures that you are getting the best price.



6. Bring Comfortable Shoes to Walk Everywhere

As one of the best ways to explore a city, you will do lots of walking during your European vacation, therefore having a pair of comfortable walking shoes ([these are my go-to shoes!](#)) is a must. After a long day of walking around the city, your feet will thank you!

Read more: [How to Choose the Best Shoes for Travel](#)

7. Bring a Suitcase You Can Carry

Navigating the train station, walking on cobblestone streets, carrying your luggage up several flights of stairs at your hotel (often European hotels don't have elevators) or accruing extra baggage fees, packing light in a suitcase you can carry is a must! You won't need as much as you think and laundromats are readily available throughout Europe if you need to do laundry during your trip.

Read more: [How to Choose the Best Luggage for Your Next Trip](#)

8. Stay Longer in One Place

Staying in one place longer can allow you to experience the city or neighborhood like a local. Making friends with locals, finding local restaurants and venturing off the beaten path, can make for exciting travel stories and often the most memorable experiences.



9. Get Off the Beaten Path

By all means seeing the popular attractions in a city is a must. While your heart might be set on visiting the most popular attractions, you should make it a point to visit lesser known sites. Ask the locals for recommendations, often you will get a better glimpse at the local culture when doing so. You can also research off the beaten path experiences in travel books and online.

10. Don't Plan on Using Credit Cards Everywhere

While it seems that most of the world now accepts credit cards, it's not uncommon for places in Europe to only accept cash. Having euros on hand for tips, taxi rides, restaurants, purchases at local markets and daily activities will make your transactions go smoother and it will save you money on foreign transaction fees.

Prior to your trip, order foreign currency at your bank or visit an ATM at the airport upon arrival. Airport ATMs don't always have the best exchange rate, but it's better than finding yourself stuck without any cash or searching for an ATM while you're jetlagged.

Also, be sure to notify your bank and credit card company before traveling so you don't find your accounts frozen.

Packing Essentials for Europe

Travel Umbrella: It's always a good idea to pack a small [travel umbrella](#) — especially during the winter and spring.

Earplugs: Bring a pair of decent [earplugs](#) just in case you end up in a noisy location. I find that I'm always using my earplugs in Europe hotels and [Airbnbs](#).

Daypack: You'll need something to carry your phone, camera and souvenirs while you're out exploring in Europe. I love this medium sized [purse that also converts into a backpack!](#)



Sunglasses: Don't forget your sunnies — even in winter. [This pair of aviators](#) come with a case!



Travel Adapter: You don't want to be stuck without a way to charge your electronics once you get to your hotel. [This all-in-one travel adapter](#) lets you simultaneously charge 5 devices and can be used in the USA, Europe, United Kingdom and Australia, so you won't have to buy a separate adapter for each trip!

Face Moisturizer with SPF: Traveling with a [daily moisturizer that also has SPF](#) is a must for me. You'll never forget to put on sunblock again!

Water Bottle: I ALWAYS carry a water bottle when I'm traveling. It's so much better for the environment, it reminds me to hydrate, and I save so much money on unnecessary water purchases. [This collapsible water bottle](#) is a no-brainer since it folds up when you're not using it.

