

Overseas Adventure Travel[®]

THE LEADER IN PERSONALIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide[®]



Alpine Europe: France, Italy's Dolomites,
Switzerland & Austria

2025

Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with O.A.T. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

When you join us, you will slip seamlessly into local life as you explore off the beaten path in your small group. Like all our itineraries, this one is designed to give you an intimate understanding of your destination, not just a superficial view. You will get to know community leaders and try your hand at local trades during your *A Day in the Life* experience, share traditional fare and lively conversation during a Home-Hosted Visit, discuss the Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, and visit sites supported by Grand Circle Foundation. And if you choose to travel solo, you will enjoy all these cultural experiences at an unmatched value, with our FREE Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

To ensure you experience the true culture and feel supported every step of the way, we provide the services of a local Trip Experience Leader from the beginning of your adventure to the end. Along with introducing you to the history and culture of their homeland, these friendly experts will gladly help you out with any special requests to make your trip even more special. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the **87% of our travelers who personalize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-955-1925**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis
Chair
Overseas Adventure Travel

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South Tyrol, Italy

New! Alpine Europe: France, Italy's Dolomites, Switzerland & Austria Small Group Adventure

France: Chamonix | **Italy:** Biella, Bolzano, San Candido | **Switzerland:** Lugano | **Austria:** Innsbruck

Small groups of no more than 16 travelers, guaranteed

18 days starting from \$7,195

including international airfare

Single Supplement: **FREE**

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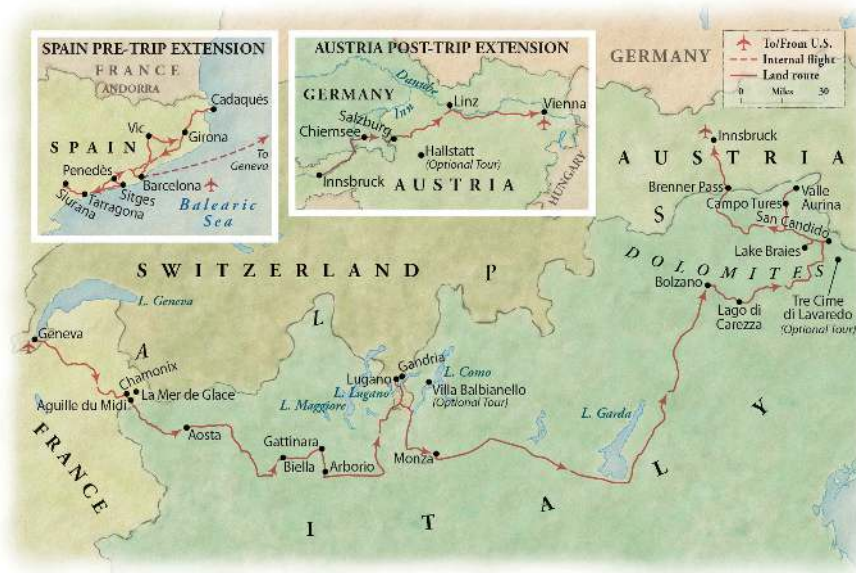
Learn what it means to follow the Alpine way—from its snowcapped peaks, mountain valleys, and glacial lakes to the warmth, charm, and culture of the cities and villages of the foothills. Ride a funicular up to the peak of Aiguille Du Midi in Chamonix, France or trek across Italy's Dolomites. Glide across Lake Lugano on a private boat tour, gaze up at the triple-peaked Tre Cime, and discover a unique part of the world where people embrace nature and take joy in the simple pleasures of life.

IT'S INCLUDED

- 16 nights accommodation
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- All land transportation
- 30 meals: 16 breakfasts, 8 lunches, and 6 dinners (including 1 Home-Hosted Dinner)
- 21 small group activities
- Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- Baggage handling for 1 piece of luggage, per person, including tips
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next adventure

Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.

Alpine Europe: France, Italy's Dolomites, Switzerland & Austria



WHAT TO EXPECT

①②③④⑤ Moderately Strenuous

Pacing: 6 locations in 17 days

Physical requirements: Travel on some rugged paths and many cobblestoned streets on foot, as well as over bumpy, narrow rural roads by bus; several hikes at elevated altitudes in the Alps and Dolomites.

Flight time: Travel time will be 11-18 hours and will most likely have one connection

View all physical requirements at www.oattravel.com/fsa

ALPINE EUROPE: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

Unbeatable Value: Travel at the lowest price and per diems in the industry.

People-to-People Experiences: Enjoy a glimpse of life in northern Italy when you savor a **Home-Hosted Dinner** with a family from Biella—a unique opportunity for true cultural connection.

O.A.T. Exclusives: Get a true taste of rural life in the town of Biella when you experience **A Day in the Life** of a cheese farm. Roll up your sleeves and pitch in with everyday chores as you learn about the farm and how it benefits the surrounding community.

ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAYS	DESTINATION
1	Fly to Geneva, Switzerland
2-4	Chamonix, France
5-7	Biella, Italy
8-10	Lugano, Switzerland
11-12	Bolzano
13-15	San Candido
16-17	Innsbruck, Austria
18	Return to U.S.

PERSONALIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

Catalonia, Spain: Barcelona, Girona & Tarragona

PRE-TRIP: 8 nights from **\$3,095**

Austria's Alpine Heart:

Innsbruck, Salzburg & Vienna

POST-TRIP: 6 nights from **\$2,895**

ARRIVE EARLY

We recommend that you relax after a long flight or explore more in depth before your trip. Prices shown include accommodations and private airport transfer.

- Arrive early in **Barcelona** before your Catalonia pre-trip extension from **\$410** per room, per night
- Arrive early in **Chamonix** before your main adventure from **\$340** per room, per night

Alpine Europe: France, Italy's Dolomites, Switzerland & Austria

YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

8 nights in *Catalonia, Spain: Barcelona, Girona & Tarragona*

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Day 2 Arrive Barcelona, Spain

Day 3 Explore Barcelona

Day 4 Explore Vic • A conversation about Catalanian independence and cultural identity • Overland to Girona

Day 5 Explore Girona • Jewish Quarter tour

Day 6 Explore Cadaqués • Explore Gala Dalí Castle

Day 7 Overland to Tarragona • Visit to a local winery • Explore Sitges

Day 8 Explore Tarragona • Visit ancient Roman ruins

Day 9 Priorat wine region • Priorat winery visit • Scenic ride

Day 10 Overland to Barcelona • Fly to Geneva, Switzerland • Join main adventure

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart today on your flight to Geneva, Switzerland.

Day 2 Arrive in Geneva, Switzerland • Transfer to Chamonix, France

- Destination: Chamonix
- Accommodations: Hotel Mercure Centre Chamonix or similar

Afternoon: You'll arrive in Geneva sometime this afternoon, depending on your specific flight arrangements. An O.A.T. representative

will meet you at the airport, and you will transfer by motorcoach to Chamonix, France—about a 1.5-hour drive.

Our Trip Experience Leader will meet you at our hotel, and together you'll join your fellow travelers—including those who have arrived from our pre-trip extension, *Catalonia, Spain: Barcelona, Girona & Tarragona*—on an orientation walk of the area with our Trip Experience Leader.

Dinner: On your own in Chamonix—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Evening: On your own. You may wish to retire early tonight after your day of travel.

Day 3 Montenvers Train ride • La Mer de Glace glacier

- Destination: Chamonix
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Mercure Centre Chamonix or similar

Activity Note: Today's activities will include a walking tour at an altitude of 6,276 feet, which is subject to local weather conditions.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Awaken at the foot of Mont Blanc this morning—the beginning of your adventure through Europe's iconic Alpine region. After breakfast, we'll gather for a Welcome Briefing. Then, enjoy free time to explore Chamonix independently this morning.

Lunch: On your own in Chamonix. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to offer suggestions.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll depart for the local train station, where we'll meet an Alpine guide and begin our journey aboard the Montenvers Railway—the valley's first custom built train which began operation in 1908. The funicular railway departs from Chamonix and makes its way up the sides of the Aiguilles de Chamonix to an altitude of around 6,276 feet.

Once we reach the top, we'll disembark to begin our explorations of La Mer de Glace, or The Sea of Ice. The largest glacier in France—and the third largest in the Alps—La Mer de Glace is four miles long and 656 feet deep. We'll spend some time here, witnessing its vast, shimmering splendor and taking in awe-inspiring views of surrounding mountain peaks. We'll also talk about the current threat of climate change with a local nature guide, and how melting glaciers are impacting the environment.

Next, we'll walk down to a gondola which will bring us down to explore La Mer de Glace's Ice Cave. Here, we'll discover the glacier from within its icy interior.

After our explorations conclude, we'll board the train to return to Chamonix.

Dinner: We'll reconvene with our fellow travelers for a Welcome Dinner in a local restaurant, during which we'll celebrate the discoveries to come.

Evening: Free to spend as you wish.

Day 4 Chamonix • Aiguille Du Midi

- Destination: Chamonix
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel Mercure Centre Chamonix or similar

Activity Note: Today's activities will involve a funicular ride to elevations of approximately 12,600 feet and in temperatures that can drop as low as 14 degrees Fahrenheit. This excursion is subject to local weather conditions.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Following breakfast this morning, we'll make our way by foot to the Aiguille Du Midi station to begin our journey into the sky. We'll ascend by funicular to Aiguille Du Midi, the highest mountain peak that can be reached by an aerial lift. At just over 12,600 feet, Aiguille Du Midi is accessible year-round, making it a popular place for visitors to experience what it's like to walk above the clouds. The name Aiguille Du Midi translates to "Needle of the Mid-day;" the sun can be seen passing over its summit at noon when viewed from the front of the Eglise Saint Michel.

When we reach the top, you'll have time to grab a cup of coffee and enjoy the panoramic views of Mount Blanc. Brave souls may wish

to see what the view straight down is like by paying a visit to the glass-floored Step Into the Void experience. Be sure to dress warmly as the temperature can still drop to as low as 14 degrees Fahrenheit even in the summer months.

After our visit concludes, we'll make our way back down into town.

Lunch: Upon arrival in Chamonix around noon, we'll walk to a local restaurant to enjoy lunch.

Afternoon: The rest of the afternoon is free to discover more of the town on your own.

Dinner: On your own. You may wish to try some traditional (and hearty) Alpine fare, such as fondue or *raclette*—grilled cheese cooked table side.

Evening: On your own—you may wish to enjoy a cocktail at one of Chamonix's welcoming bars.

Day 5 Overland to Biella, Italy • Visit Aosta

- Destination: Biella
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Augustus Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll say *adieu* to France today, as we check out of our hotel and begin our journey to Biella, Italy. Along the way, we'll drive through the Mont Blanc Tunnel. A highway tunnel carved beneath Mont Blanc, it links Chamonix, France with the Aosta Valley in Italy.

We'll stop in the ancient city of Aosta, about a 40-minute drive from the tunnel. A local guide will greet us upon arrival and lead us on a tour. Also known as the Rome of the Alps, Aosta was founded by the Romans in 25 BC and has the second largest number of Roman ruins still visible in Italy. We'll explore some of these structures from the past today, such as the Arch of Augustus, the Neronian

Cryptoporticus, and a single-arched Roman bridge that still stretches across the Buthier River. We'll also witness the Praetoria Gate, one of the few examples from Roman times still perfectly intact.

Afterwards, take advantage of about an hour of free time to continue exploring Aosta on your own.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in Aosta.

Afternoon: We'll continue our drive to Biella. Upon arrival, we'll check into our hotel and—after getting settled in—join our Trip Experience Leader for an orientation walk.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Evening: Your evening is yours to explore Biella as you wish.

Day 6 Explore Biella • Visit the Oropa Sacred Mount • Home-Hosted Dinner

- Destination: Biella
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Augustus Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Get to know our first stop in Alpine Italy today as we explore the city of Biella with a local guide and our Trip Experience Leader. Situated in the foothills of the Alps, Biella is somewhat of a hidden gem—largely unexplored by the regular tourist track. As we walk, we'll witness the medieval Piazza Square, situated on the top of a hill and lined with stone buildings, arcades, and cobblestone streets. You can still view the ancient doors once used to close the village off. We'll also see Biella's elegant cathedral, or Duomo, and historic Palazzo Ferrero. Then, we'll enjoy a visit to La Marmora Palace, a historic 16th-century mansion.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Afternoon: This afternoon, we'll visit the Oropa Sacred Mount: A UNESCO World Heritage site, the Oropa Sacred Mount is located nearly 4,000 feet above sea level, surrounded by the Alps on all sides. For centuries, this holy complex has been a destination for pilgrims. Work on the Sacred Mount of Oropa began in 1617 and its construction was financed by the population of Biella, the duke of Savoia, and the small parish community of the area—unlike the creation of other churches where wealthy and noble families were the only patrons. The Sacred Mount is made up of twelve chapels dedicated to the life of the Virgin Mary. The original project proposed twenty chapels which would narrate the life and legends of the Virgin Mary through the Gospel.

Following our visit, we'll return to Biella where the remainder of the afternoon is free for independent discoveries. Then later today, we'll split into smaller groups and set off to experience a **Home-Hosted Dinner**.

Dinner: We'll meet a typical Alpine Italian family during today's **Home-Hosted Dinner**. The families we will visit will be multi-generational households, giving us a fuller picture of life here.

Evening: On your own. Perhaps you'll close out the evening with a glass of wine at a local bar.

Day 7 A Day in the Life of a local cheese farm

- Destination: Biella
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Augustus Hotel or similar

Activity Note: Today we will visit a local cheese farm for our **A Day in the Life** experience. We'll meet the family who owns and operates the

farm, help out with some daily chores, and make and share a meal together. Read on to learn more about this enriching activity below.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll head out after breakfast today to drive to the nearby countryside to experience **A Day in the Life** of a typical Italian cheese farm.

We'll be greeted by the farm's owners who will take us on a tour—showing us their animals (typically cows or goats) and explaining the cheese making process. We'll then get a chance to roll up our sleeves and pitch in on some daily chores. Depending on the time of year, you may help feed the animals or harvest some vegetables from the garden. And of course, we'll try our hand at making some of the farm's special cheese as well.

Then, we'll head to the farmhouse where we'll help the family prepare a midday meal using seasonal vegetables and other regional ingredients.

Lunch: We'll enjoy both lunch and cultural connections at our hosts' table this afternoon, sharing the meal we helped to prepare.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll thank our hosts and return to Biella where the balance of the day is on your own.

Dinner: On your own in Biella—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Evening: Free to spend as you wish.

Day 8 Overland to Lugano, Switzerland • Winery visit • Arborio village visit

- Destination: Lugano
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel de la Paix or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll check out of our Biella hotel this morning and drive to Lugano, Switzerland, the next destination on our Alpine adventure.

Along the way, we'll stop at a local winery to learn about the red varietals Italy's Piedmont region is famous for. After we learn about the wine-making process, we'll have a chance to sample a taste as well.

Next, we'll drive to the village of Arborio. The town's name may ring a bell, as it is also the name of a special Italian rice that is grown here. As we walk through town with our Trip Experience Leader, we'll discover what makes this short-grain, white rice so special and perfect for the creation of creamy Italian *risotto*.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in Arborio.

Afternoon: We'll continue our drive to Lugano, check into our next hotel upon arrival, then later gather with our Trip Experience Leader for an orientation walk of the neighborhood, ending at the restaurant where we'll enjoy dinner.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Evening: You are free to spend the rest of the evening as you wish.

Day 9 Explore Lugano • Lake Lugano boat ride • Funicular to Mount Bre

- Destination: Lugano
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel de la Paix or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we'll witness the beauty of Lugano from both the water and the mountain top.

Nestled on the shores of lovely Lake Lugano, this picturesque region is one of the most unique ones we will visit, as the glacial lake is situated along the border between southern Switzerland and northern Italy. With a population of around 63% Swiss and 37% Italian, the best of both cultures are represented here—from Swiss sophistication to Italy's world-renowned cuisine.

Our explorations begin with a ferry boat ride on the lake, the best way to appreciate the surrounding natural beauty—green mountainsides rising from the sparkling waters—as well as the man-made allure of the resort town cozied up on the shore. We'll also get a chance to ride alongside locals going about their day-to-day activities. We'll disembark in Gandria, on the other side of the lake, where we'll set off on a discovery walk with our Trip Experience Leader.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Afternoon: We'll set off on a 2.5 mile hike along the Oil Tree Trail. Our hike will end at a funicular station, where we'll board a cable car and ascend to the top of Mount Bre for a scenic walk with view of the lake, town, and lush valley below.

Then we'll ride the funicular back down into town where the rest of the afternoon is free for your own discoveries.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: On your own in Lugano. Perhaps you'll have a coffee in a local café.

Day 10 Lugano • Optional Lake Como tour

- Destination: Lugano
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel de la Paix or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Enjoy a day on your own in Lugano today, perhaps discovering its boutique shops and inviting cafés.

Or, join an optional tour to the resort town of Tremezzo, located on the shores of iconic Lake Como. Once there, we'll take a private boat to Villa Balbianello for a guided tour of what some call "the most beautiful villa of all Lake Como." Not only a popular spot for high-end weddings, this famous villa is often featured in movies such as *Casino Royale*.

Lunch: On your own in Lugano.

Or, for those who have joined our optional tour, we'll stop for lunch in a small local restaurant.

Afternoon: Continue your independent exploration of Lugano.

Or, if you're on our optional tour, the remainder of the afternoon will be for your own explorations, before boarding the bus back to Lugano.

Dinner: On your own. Perhaps you'll seek out a local recommendation from your Trip Experience Leader.

Evening: On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Day 11 Visit Monza Duomo • Overland to Bolzano

- Destination: Bolzano
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Parkhotel Laurin or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we'll journey to to Bolzano—the capital of the South Tyrol region. Along the way, stop in Monza to visit its impressive Duomo, or cathedral. Discover the rich history of the medieval structure, from its vibrant frescoes to the unique treasures it holds—such the famous iron crown which numerous European sovereigns were crowned with for centuries, including the kings of Italy.

Afterwards, we'll take a Discovery walk of Monza, best known for high-speed Grand Prix races and historic architecture. Then enjoy some time to explore on your own before we regroup for lunch.

Lunch: Sit down for an included lunch at a local restaurant in Monza.

Afternoon: We'll continue our journey to Bolzano after lunch, arriving at our hotel late in the afternoon. Once everyone has had time to settle in, our Trip Experience Leader will lead an orientation walk of the area surrounding the hotel and Bolzano's downtown area.

Dinner: On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: Your evening is free to continue your explorations of Bolzano.

Day 12 Explore Bolzano • Cable car ride • South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology & Ötzi the Iceman

- Destination: Bolzano
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Parkhotel Laurin or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: A local guide will lead us on a walking tour of Bolzano this morning. Then, we'll board a cable car to the commune of Ritten, a collection of villages set on a high plateau. Once there, we'll take in the spectacular views before exploring the village of Collalbo, the central village of Ritten.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Afternoon: After some free time, we'll gather together again for a visit to the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology—also known as the Ötzi the Iceman museum. Older than the pyramids of Egypt, Ötzi's remarkably preserved remains offer us an unprecedented look into humanity's ancient existence.

Dinner: At a local restaurant in Bolzano.

Evening: On your own. Perhaps you'd like to venture out to one of Bolzano's cozy bars.

Day 13 Dolomites trekking experience • San Candido

- Destination: San Candido
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Boutique Hotel Zenana or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we'll experience what it's like to hike in one of Italy's most spectacular natural landscapes. The Dolomites offer

hikers of all levels various trails to explore and seemingly endless vistas. After a photo stop at glacial Lake Carezza, we'll continue our panoramic drive until we reach one of the most beautiful passes. Here, a naturalist guide will join us for a hike in this scenic region of lush Alpine meadows and soaring mountain peaks.

After working up an appetite on the trails, we'll enjoy a picnic lunch.

Lunch: Weather permitting, we'll enjoy a picnic lunch amidst the mountain scenery.

Afternoon: We'll continue our journey through the Dolomites today, driving to our next stop: the village of San Candido. Also called Innichen, San Candido is situated right on the boarder of Austria and is part of the Tre Cime Natural Park.

We'll check into our hotel upon arrival and, after getting settled in, take part in an orientation walk with our Trip Experience Leader.

Dinner: On your own in San Candido—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Evening: On your own. Perhaps you'd like to venture out to one of this resort town's cozy bars.

Day 14 Lake Braies hike • World War II bunker visit • Chalet lunch

- Destination: San Candido
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Boutique Hotel Zenana or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: After breakfast, we'll drive to Lake Braies. This deep, vibrant blue lake is arguably once of Italy's most beautiful and is surrounded by the mighty Dolomites. We'll set off on hike

here, around 2 miles, taking in the glorious scenery and stopping to take our fair share of photos.

After our hike, we'll drive to a World War II-era bunker to learn about Alpine Europe's history during the war. Using the protection of the mountains to their advantage, the bunker was built in the cliffside. A volunteer from the Historical Association will be on hand to answer any questions we may have. We'll next climb back aboard our private motorcoach and drive back towards San Candido, stopping at a local chalet for lunch.

Lunch: At a chalet featuring local specialties.

Afternoon: We'll drive back to our hotel after lunch and spend the rest of the day independently exploring San Candido—perhaps admiring the pretty Tyrolean style houses, some featuring flower-laden balconies, or visiting some of the wealth of shops offering traditional Alpine souvenirs.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Evening: Free to spend as you wish.

Day 15 San Candido • Optional Tre Cime trekking tour

- Destination: San Candido
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Boutique Hotel Zenana or similar

Activity Note: Today's optional Tre Cime tour is subject to weather conditions and is only available from the end of May to the end of September. If either is the case, we will visit Cortina d'Ampezzo instead.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Enjoy a full free day to independently discover San Candido at your own pace.

Or, experience another part of the Dolomites when you hike at the foothills of Tre Cime on our optional tour. Tre Cime—or Three Peaks—is one of the Dolomites' most recognizable regions, defined by its three staggering peaks reaching towards the sky in unison. These jagged limestone peaks are some of the world's most photographed, and with good reason. You may want to snap a few shots of your own as you explore.

Lunch: On your own in San Candido.

Or, for those on our optional tour, enjoy lunch at a local mountain chalet.

Afternoon: Continue your independent explorations of San Candido.

Or, if you have joined our optional tour, after lunch, we'll head back to our hotel in San Candido.

Dinner: At a local restaurant in San Candido this evening.

Evening: On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Day 16 Riva Waterfalls hike • Overland to Innsbruck, Austria

- Destination: Innsbruck
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Stage 12 Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Say *arrivederci* to Italy today as we begin our drive to the last Alpine country of our adventure—Austria.

But first, we'll have the opportunity to hike around one of the region's most lovely sights, the Riva Waterfalls. Also known as *Le Cascade di Riva* in Italian and *Reinbachfälle* in German, we'll admire these picturesque falls as we head up the trail.

After about two hours of exploration, we'll climb back aboard our private motorcoach and continue on to lunch.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll continue our drive to Innsbruck, about 2 hours further. Upon arrival, we'll check into our hotel, settle in, then join our Trip Experience Leader on an orientation walk of the neighborhood.

Dinner: On your own in Innsbruck. Perhaps you'll try an Austrian classic, such as *wiener schnitzel*.

Evening: On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Day 17 Innsbruck • Visit Imperial Palace • Optional Swarovski Crystal Worlds tour

- Destination: Innsbruck
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Stage 12 Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we'll discover Innsbruck, the capital of Tyrol. A colorful city tucked into the arms of the Alps, Innsbruck offers visitors sweeping views, charming cobblestone streets, and an ideal location for those looking to take advantage of the nearby ski slopes.

We'll first visit Innsbruck's Imperial Palace. Dating back to the 15th century, the palace was originally built for Emperor Maximilian and was inhabited or utilized by royalty in one way or the other over the ensuing centuries. After the end of Austria's monarchy in 1918, the palace became state property and was named the third most important historical building in Austria.

Next, along with our Trip Experience Leader, we'll continue to uncover more of the city's

highlights, such as Altstadt von Innsbruck (the Old Town), a bustling section filled with shops, street performers, and outdoor cafés.

After our walking tour, enjoy some free time to continue exploring on your own.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Afternoon: The rest of the afternoon is yours to spend as you wish. Or, you can join an optional tour to visit Swarovski Crystal Worlds (Swarovski Kristallwelten). Opened in 1995 to celebrate Swarovski's centennial anniversary, this 19-acre museum, exhibition center, and theme park rolled into one features a wealth of art installations such as the Crystal Cloud, an exhibit featuring 800,000 floating crystals that are reflected in a Mirror Pool.

Dinner: Enjoy a Farewell Dinner with your fellow travelers at a local restaurant this evening.

Evening: On your own. You may wish to begin packing for your journey home tomorrow.

Day 18 Return to U.S. or begin post-trip extension

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Check out of our hotel this morning and transfer to the Innsbruck airport where you'll catch your flight home to the U.S. Or, begin your *Austria's Alpine Heart: Innsbruck, Salzburg & Vienna* post-trip extension.

END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

6 nights in *Austria's Alpine Heart: Innsbruck, Salzburg & Vienna*

Day 1 Innsbruck • Visit Alpine Zoo • Nordkette cable car ascent

Day 2 Overland to Salzburg • Discover Herrenchiemsee Palace, Germany

Day 3 Explore Salzburg

Day 4 Salzburg • Optional Hallstatt tour

Day 5 Overland to Vienna • Explore Linz

Day 6 Explore Vienna

Day 7 Return to U.S.

OPTIONAL TOURS

During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with your Trip Experience Leader. He or she will ask you to confirm the payment for these tours by filling out a payment form. Optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and Discover credit cards. We also accept Visa and MasterCard debit cards, but it must be a debit card that allows you to sign for purchases.

In order to correctly process these charges, there can be a delay of 2–3 months from the date of your return for the charges to be posted to your account. Therefore we ask that you use a card that will not expire in the 2–3 months following your return.

Please note: Optional tour prices are listed in U.S. dollar estimates determined at the time of publication and are subject to change. Optional tours may vary.

Lake Como, Tremezzo & Villa Balbianello

(Day 10 \$220 per person)

Join us on an optional tour to the resort town of Tremezzo, located on the shores of iconic Lake Como. Take a scenic boat ride across the lake to visit the famous Villa Balbianello, a popular spot for high-end weddings and featured in movies such as *Casino Royale*. Lunch will be included.

Tre Cime

(Day 15 \$235 per person)

Experience another part of the Dolomites when you hike at the foothills of Tre Cime. Tre Cime—or Three Peaks—is one of the Dolomites' most recognizable regions, defined by its three staggering peaks reaching towards the sky in unison. These jagged limestone peaks are some of the world's most photographed, and with good reason. You may want to snap a few shots of your own as you explore. Later, enjoy an included lunch at a local mountain chalet.

Swarovski Crystal Worlds

(Day 17 \$110 per person)

This optional tour features a visit to Swarovski Crystal Worlds (Swarovski Kristallwelten). Opened in 1995 to celebrate Swarovski's centennial anniversary, this 19-acre museum, exhibition center, and theme park rolled into one was designed by multimedia artist André Heller. It includes numerous art installations such as Crystal Cloud, an exhibit featuring 800,000 floating crystals that are reflected in a Mirror Pool. Other exhibits like the Chambers of Wonder feature the works of internationally and nationally recognized artists, designers, and architects who have interpreted crystal in their own unique ways. After an audio tour of the park, you'll have some free time to explore on your own before we return to our hotel in Innsbruck.

PRE-TRIP

Catalonia, Spain: Barcelona, Girona & Tarragona

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- | | |
|---|---|
| » Airfare from Barcelona to Geneva | » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader |
| » 8 nights accommodation | » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters |
| » 15 meals—8 breakfasts, 4 lunches, and 3 dinners | » All transfers |
| » 13 small group activities | |

PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Along the shores of Spain's famous Costa Brava lies the fiercely independent region of Catalonia—a place with its own language, customs, and unique natural wonders. Begin your explorations in Barcelona, a city imbued with an artistic soul, before continuing to medieval Girona. You'll wrap up your discoveries in Tarragona where ancient Roman structures still stand beside the glittering Mediterranean.

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart today on your flight to Barcelona, Spain.

Day 2 Arrive Barcelona, Spain

- Destination: Barcelona
- Accommodations: HCC St. Moritz or similar

Afternoon: You'll arrive in Barcelona sometime this afternoon, depending on your specific flight arrangements. An O.A.T. representative will meet you at the airport, and you will transfer by motorcoach to your hotel.

After settling in, you'll get acquainted with your surroundings during an orientation walk led by your Trip Experience Leader.

When we talk about Barcelona's architectural wonders, one name that stands paramount is Antoni Gaudí. The revolutionary architect has left indelible footprints across the city,

shaping its identity with a style that's distinctly his own. Some of his masterpieces grace the UNESCO list.

Barcelona is also a hub of new trends in the world of culture, fashion, and cuisine. It combines the creativity of its artists and designers with respect and care for local traditions. The charm and slower pace of the old town, the avant-garde vibe of more modern neighborhoods, and the fast pace of one of the world's most visited cities coexist in Barcelona. It is a city that encourages you to visit time and time again.

Dinner: On your own. Barcelona boasts a diverse and world-renowned food culture. Your Trip Experience Leader will be a wealth of knowledge in finding authentic eateries. Perhaps you'd like to sample *fideua*, a one-pan dish best described as a *paella* but made with pasta instead of rice.

Evening: Free to make independent discoveries this evening. Nighttime is when Barcelona truly comes alive, as the typical Spaniard doesn't eat dinner until around 10pm. Perhaps you want to venture out for a stroll to witness a typical evening's activities.

Day 3 Explore Barcelona

- Destination: Barcelona
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: HCC St. Moritz or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: After breakfast, we'll set off on a walking tour of Barcelona's highlights, including El Born—a neighborhood with all the charms of Barcelona's more heavily-traveled districts, but with an atmosphere that is decidedly more local and laidback. Characterized by its medieval streets, quaint cafes, and boutiques, this district is equally as trendy as it is rich with history.

Lunch: On your own in Barcelona.

Afternoon: The afternoon is free to spend as you'd like. Check with your Trip Experience Leader for free time activities. Perhaps you'd like to wander Las Ramblas, the spacious boulevard that runs through the heart of the city from Plaça de Catalunya to Port Vell. This is a great spot for people watching—you may even catch some talented street performers.

Other options include a walk along the seafront, evenings on a rooftop terrace with views over the city skyline, or a pleasant stroll through spacious parks such as Parc de Montjuïc or Ciutadella, the marina, or Olympic village. Culinary options are also varied, with world renowned haute cuisine restaurants, traditional Catalan dishes, food markets, and establishments that take you around the world with their flavors. The city's cultural agenda features major art centers such as the

Picasso Museum, the National Art Museum of Catalonia, and Caixa Forum. The city is also home to one of Spain's leading opera houses, *Gran Teatre del Liceu*.

Dinner: Gather for a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant tonight.

Evening: Free to make your own discoveries.

Day 4 Explore Vic • A conversation about Catalan independence and cultural identity • Overland to Girona

- Destination: Girona
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Carlemany Girona or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll check out of our hotel in Barcelona today and begin our drive to Girona. On the way, we'll stop in the town of Vic.

Capital of the region of Osona, Vic is located on the banks of the Meder river, in the vicinity of the impressive Sau reservoir. During the Middle Ages, Vic was divided into two sections: one surrounding the castle of Montcada and the other around the cathedral. Nowadays, the region's capital has a secluded historic quarter, dominated by the impressive cathedral, which is also the Archbishopric see. The most remarkable feature of this Neoclassical temple, erected towards the end of the 18th century, is a series of mural paintings by Josep Maria Sert, in its interior.

A city and center of conflicting cultures since ancient times, Vic was also a battleground between Frankish and Islamic forces in the eighth and ninth century, and where one of the earliest battles in the War of the Spanish Succession was fought. We'll take a walking tour of Vic, exploring the highlights of the town, before meeting an *Assemblea*

Catalunia member for a conversation about Catalan independence and the legalization of a cultural identity. We'll delve deep into the cultural conflicts that simmer under the surface of Spanish culture, and sometimes boil over into violence. Vic was the site of a car bomb attack by an armed militant group of Basque separatists which killed ten people.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll complete our journey to Girona. Once there, we'll check into our hotel.

The so-called "City of the Four Rivers," Girona features a historic center dominated by medieval buildings and reminders of Romans, Arabs, and Jews. Inside the walled enclosure (*La Força Vella*) you can find the culminating works of its historical destiny. The old center of this Catalan city preserves remains of its lengthy history, stretching back to its founding by the Romans in the first century BC. The remains of the original Roman wall can be seen along the Archaeological Walk to the Wall Gardens.

Dinner: On your own. You may want to try a regional specialty such as *botifarra*—a sausage cured with sugar instead of salt that is usually served roasted with apples and cinnamon.

Evening: You're free to spend the evening as you wish.

Day 5 Explore Girona • Jewish Quarter tour

- Destination: Girona
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Carlemany Girona or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll begin our explorations with a walking tour of El Call, Girona's Jewish Quarter, led by a local guide. One of the best-preserved Jewish quarters in the world, the narrow cobblestone streets, winding stairs, and stone archways of El Call are all contained within the walls the *Força Vella*, an ancient Roman fortress that was built the 1st century BC.

Our walk will lead us to the Museum of Jewish History. Housed in an old synagogue, the museum offers guests an immersive look at the culture of Jewish people in Catalonia, and in Girona in particular. Some of the impressive relics on display include medieval tombstones from the Montjuïc Jewish cemetery in Barcelona which date back to the 1200s.

Set in this walled enclosure (*La Força Vella*), stands the Cathedral. Its Romanesque origin is shown in its fortress-like appearance and strategic location, although the most outstanding aspect is an immense Gothic nave, the widest in Medieval European architecture. Inside, it preserves one of the textile jewels of Catalan Romanesque, the Creation Tapestry. Beside the entrance staircase to the cathedral is the *Pia Alomoina*, an old charitable institution in Gothic style.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Afternoon: The remainder of the day is free to make your own discoveries. You may wish to walk over the iconic red iron Eiffel Bridge, designed by Gustave Eiffel before the construction of its famous Parisian cousin—the Eiffel Tower.

Girona has other key pieces of religious architecture, including the Benedictine monastery of Sant Pere de Galligants and the church of Sant Nicolau. The convent of Sant Doménech is a vivid reminder of the

importance of the religious orders in the colonization and repopulation of Catalonia during the Middle Ages.

Before crossing the river and walking towards modern Girona, you can climb up to the belltower of Sant Feliu or go to the *Pont de Pedra* (Stone Bridge) over the Onyar, where you can look out over the houses in the city and their façades painted in ochres, dark blues, and copper. On the other side of the river you will find one of the most beautiful examples of Catalan Modernism, the work of Rafael Masó. On the other side of the Passeig Devesa you can visit the Parc Devesa, an exotic forested area of plane trees that provide a strong contrast to the city's medieval architecture.

Dinner: Early this evening, we'll reconvene with our fellow travelers for dinner at a local restaurant.

Evening: On your own. Perhaps you'll enjoy a drink at one of the myriad bars and pubs that cater to the students here.

Day 6 Explore Cadaqués • Explore Gala Dalí Castle

- Destination: Girona
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Carlemany Girona or similar

Activity Note: Today we will be hiking around 1 hour over hilly and sometimes rocky terrain.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: The Costa Brava forms the most northerly stretch of the coast of Catalonia and one of the most beautiful in Spain. Right in the heart of Cap de Creus is Cadaqués, one of the most picturesque villages along the Costa Brava. Cadaqués beckons travelers with its charming, white-washed buildings nestled around a sheltered bay. Originally, the small

town's economy was based on its fishing, wine- and olive oil-making industries, but over the years its scenic location turned Cadaqués into a prime vacation destination. During the 20th century in particular, it became a popular retreat for writers and artists alike, such as Federico García Lorca, Pablo Picasso, and Salvador Dalí.

We'll enjoy a hike along the coastline of Cadaqués to take in the stunning views of the resort town.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in Cadaqués.

Afternoon: You'll enjoy some free time to explore Cadaqués independently after lunch before we begin making our way back to Girona. Along the way, we'll stop in Púbol to explore Gala Dalí Castle. This is a castle Salvador Dalí bought for his beloved wife, Gala, and slowly transformed it into a sanctuary dedicated to her. Salvador was only allowed to visit the castle if he received a written invitation from his wife. Here, in the privacy of her own space, Gala, who was born Elena Ivanovna Diakonova, reconstructed memories of her Russian past, assembling a collection of family photographs and Cyrillic texts, and documented life with Salvador through surrealist books, clothing, and assorted keepsakes.

Simultaneously muse, model, artist, businesswoman, writer and fashion icon, Gala has long been treated as a cipher by art historians, but thanks to the new Barcelona exhibition, she is finally emerging as a singular individual connected with—but not dependent on—the male surrealists who surrounded her. When she passed away here, Gala was buried in the crypt Salvador had built, and at the same time Dalí himself moved into the castle to live and work there, even completing his final painting while residing in the castle. Now, it is a museum dedicated to Salvador and Gala Dalí.

Salvador Dali's name has long been associated with the early 20th-century surrealist movement, and for good reason. He is one of the best-known painters of the modern era due to his masterful ability to subvert accepted ideas and push the limits of creativity.

Dinner: On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for restaurant suggestions.

Evening: You're free to spend the evening as you wish.

Day 7 Overland to Tarragona • Visit to a local winery • Explore Sitges

- Destination: Tarragona
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: H10 Imperial Tarraco or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel

Morning: We'll depart Girona this morning and begin our journey to Tarragona, about a 2.5-hour drive total. We'll break up our drive by first stopping to visit a winery in Penedes, where you'll learn about Spanish viniculture before enjoying a tasting. The region of Penedès is home to more than 80 Cava producers. Perhaps Spain's most popular sparkling wine, Cava is characterized by its bubbles and bright-golden color. The name comes from the old underground stores in which the wine was originally stored, also known as *cavas*.

Then, we'll continue on to Sitges, an upscale resort town that was once a center of counterculture, and now attracts artists and European expats alike. Sitges is often described as the Saint-Tropez of Spain thanks to its glitzy beach crowd, lively nightlife, and beautiful natural setting.

We'll embark on a discovery walk of Sitges with our Trip Experience Leader before making our way to lunch.

Lunch: Included at a local restaurant in Sitges.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll continue our drive to Tarragona. Upon arrival, we'll check into our hotel, then embark on an orientation walk of the surrounding area with our Trip Experience Leader.

Dinner: On your own in Tarragona. You may want to step out of your culinary box and try a local favorite—*arròs negre*. Similar to *paella*, *arròs negre* is a one-pan rice-based dish made with squid or cuttlefish and squid ink, which gives the dish its distinctive black color.

Evening: The rest of the evening is free to continue exploring Tarragona on your own.

Day 8 Explore Tarragona • Visit ancient Roman ruins

- Destination: Tarragona
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: H10 Imperial Tarraco or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Get to know Tarragona today, a Catalan port city that—while small in size—is overflowing with sights and experiences to delight any traveler, from rich history and a thriving food scene to its wide and inviting *playas* (beaches).

This morning, we'll delve into Tarragona's more ancient history when we visit its impressive Roman ruins. Founded in 218 BC, Tarragona—then called Tarraco—was the first Roman colony in Spain. The Romans left many structures in their wake, including the Amphitheatre and the nearby Forum. We'll spend some time here, staring down at the spot where gladiators battled to the death thousands of years ago.

After, we'll take a walking tour, visiting some of Tarragona's highlights. We'll stop at the city center, and explore the streets of Carrer de la Merceria and Carrer Major, narrow winding alleys where you can find antiques and local restaurants. Finally, we'll emerge onto the Plaça de Santiago Rossinyol, where you'll see the regal gothic facade that adorns Tarragona Cathedral, built in the 12th century. Since the time of the ancient Romans, there has been a place of worship here, and that has remained true through the periods of Visigoth and Moorish rule until today.

Tarragona's wealth of cultural and historic treasures is recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

Lunch: On your own in Tarragona. You may wish to sample a traditional *paella*, the one-pan rice dish that features seafood—usually shrimp.

Afternoon: The remainder of the afternoon is on your own. Perhaps you'll choose to explore Tarragona's excellent Archaeological Museum to delve even deeper into the city's ancient Roman history. Or you may wish to walk to one of Tarragona's wide, sandy beaches and dip your toes in the Mediterranean.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: Free to spend as you wish.

Day 9 Priorat wine region • Priorat winery visit • Scenic ride

- Destination: Tarragona
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: H10 Imperial Tarraco or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we'll drive from Tarragona to the Priorat wine region. Nestled in the foothills of the Serra de Llaberia mountains, Priorat is

known for its abundant agricultural offerings and incredible scenic beauty. Here, among the quaint villages and winding paths, some of the world's most renowned wine is made. The range of wineries to visit in the Priorat area, as well as the variety of experiences they offer, will meet the expectations of both newcomers to the wine world and demanding connoisseurs.

Our destination is a family-owned vineyard in the picturesque mountain town of Cornudella de Montsant. Upon arrival, we'll tour the grounds and learn about the wine production that goes on here before partaking in a tasting.

Lunch: Included at the winery's restaurant.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll begin the journey back to Tarragona where the rest of the afternoon will be on your own.

Late this afternoon, we'll reconvene as a group to toast to our Catalan discoveries with a Farewell Drink.

Dinner: On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for restaurant suggestions.

Evening: The evening is free to spend as you wish.

Day 10 Overland to Barcelona • Fly to Geneva, Switzerland • Join main adventure

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: After checking out of our hotel this morning, we'll say *adios* to Spain and drive to the Barcelona airport where we'll board our flight to Geneva, Switzerland and join our main adventure.

POST-TRIP

Austria's Alpine Heart: Innsbruck, Salzburg & Vienna

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » 6 nights accommodation
- » 10 meals—6 breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 3 dinners
- » 6 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Discover the Alpine beauty of Austria on this extension to three of its most stunning cities. Ascend the slopes of the Nordkette mountain chain via cable car in Innsbruck; immerse yourself in the sound of music in Salzburg; and marvel at the imperial splendor of Vienna.

Day 1 Innsbruck • Visit Alpine Zoo • Nordkette cable car ascent

- Destination: Innsbruck
- Accommodations: Stage 12 Hotel or similar

Morning: Our Austrian extension begins as we awake in Innsbruck, the capital of the alpine region of Tyrol. We'll get an introduction to the area's mountain spirit when we board a cable car that will take us in stages up the slopes of the Nordkette mountain range, one of the most scenic sections of the Alps.

Our first stop will be the Alpine Zoo, the highest zoo in Europe at an altitude of almost 2,500 feet. We'll explore the zoo with an expert nature guide, who will acquaint us with the more than 100 species of alpine creatures that reside here, including golden eagles, bearded vultures, bears, wolves, ibexes, and lynxes. Many of these animals are endangered, and we'll learn about how the park has helped to conserve and reintroduce threatened species since its inception in 1962.

Next, we'll continue our cable car ascent up the mountain, stopping first at around 6,200 feet at the station at Seegrube, where we'll have a chance to stretch our legs and enjoy some views at the scenic terrace. We'll then finish our journey as the cable car makes its way to the 8,500 foot peak of Hafelekar, where 360-degree panoramic views wait to take your breath away.

Lunch: On your own at Hafelekar. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend options.

Afternoon: We'll linger at Hafelekar for a few hours, giving you the chance to take in the alpine scenery that surrounds you at your own pace. If you're feeling spry, you can do some light hiking—your Trip Experience Leader can point you in the right direction. Or, you can take your time and admire the sprawling alpine landscape below until it's time to return to Innsbruck via cable car.

The rest of the day is yours to spend in Innsbruck independently.

Dinner: On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend a restaurant.

Evening: The evening is free to rest or explore independently.

Day 2 Overland to Salzburg • Discover Herrenchiemsee Palace, Germany

- Destination: Salzburg
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: NH Collection Salzburg City or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll check out of our hotel and begin our transfer to Salzburg this morning, stopping along the way for a trip across the border into the lakeside town of Prien am Chiemsee, Germany. Here, we'll board a ferry bound for the island of Herreninsel for a tour of Herrenchiemsee Palace, built by the Bavarian King Ludwig II in the 19th century in the image of Versailles. We'll explore the palace and its grounds on a guided tour, taking note of its resplendent state rooms, including the Great Hall of Mirrors, a reflection of the iconic room in Herrenchiemsee's French sister palace.

Lunch: On your own in Herreninsel. Your Trip Experience Leader can suggest a café or restaurant.

Afternoon: You'll have some free time to continue exploring the palace gardens at your own pace this afternoon. In the summer, the palace offers horse-drawn carriage tours, and you might choose to explore the grounds via this charming mode of transportation.

We'll then return to Prien am Chiemsee via ferry, where we'll board our motorcoach to continue our transfer to Salzburg, Austria. We'll arrive at our hotel late this afternoon, and enjoy a short orientation walk with our Trip Experience Leader before dinner.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: Spend the evening settling into your room or exploring Salzburg independently. Your Trip Experience Leader can offer suggestions.

Day 3 Explore Salzburg

- Destination: Salzburg
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: NH Collection Salzburg City or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Awake this morning in beautiful Salzburg, the fourth largest city in Austria, and birthplace of Mozart. Salzburg is perhaps best known as the setting of the 1965 film, *The Sound of Music*, and we'll acquaint ourselves with that cinematic (and historic) legacy on a tour with a local guide.

First, we'll visit Nonnberg Abbey, home to a sisterhood of Benedictine nuns. We will—quite literally—immerse ourselves in the sound of music as we enjoy a performance of Gregorian choral music from the nuns, who fill the abbey with their song every morning. The abbey has another connection to Hollywood, as Maria Kutschera—a real woman who joined the sisterhood before becoming the governess of a local family known as the Von Trapps—was the inspiration for the events of the film. We'll learn more about the abbey, its history, and its current residents during a guided tour.

Next, we'll visit Stiftsbäckerei St. Peter—the oldest bakery in Salzburg, dating back to the 12th century. The bakery is located adjacent to St. Peter's Abbey, whose cemetery and catacombs were also featured in *The Sound of Music*, and the bakery's wood-fired oven still produces fresh loaves daily. We'll learn more about the bakery's long history from our guide.

Lunch: On your own in Salzburg. Your Trip Experience Leader can offer suggestions.

Afternoon: The rest of the day is free to explore Salzburg independently. Your Trip Experience Leader can help you make the most of your time. Perhaps you'll witness the Hohensalzburg Fortress, stroll through the Mirabell Gardens, or simply soak in the Alpine beauty of this town.

Dinner: On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend a café or restaurant.

Evening: The evening is free to explore independently.

Day 4 Salzburg • Optional Hallstatt tour

- Destination: Salzburg
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: NH Collection Salzburg City or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Enjoy a full day to explore Salzburg independently. Or, join an optional tour to the village of Hallstatt, a quintessential alpine town with a population of fewer than 1,000 people. We'll begin our discoveries by riding a cable car up the mountainside, where we'll go on a short, easy hike to a viewing platform (known as the "5 fingers", owing to its shape, reminiscent of an open hand) for breathtaking panoramic vistas of the mountain landscape below. From our alpine vantage point, we can take in views of the village below, and the forested mountain scenery stretching into the distance.

Then, we'll drive into the village center for a discovery walk with our Trip Experience Leader to familiarize ourselves further with this UNESCO World Heritage Site. Hallstatt's unassuming façade belies a long history—the region is home to one of the world's oldest

salt mines, which itself is the location of a 3,100-year old set of bronze age stairs, currently the oldest known staircase in Europe.

Lunch: Travelers on today's optional tour will enjoy an included lunch at a local restaurant in Hallstatt. Otherwise, lunch is on your own in Salzburg. Your Trip Experience Leader can offer recommendations.

Afternoon: We'll have about an hour free to explore Hallstatt independently after lunch before we return to Salzburg, where you can spend the remainder of the afternoon as you please before dinner.

Dinner: At a local pub.

Evening: Enjoy a free evening to rest or explore independently.

Day 5 Overland to Vienna • Explore Linz

- Destination: Vienna
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Regina Hotel Vienna or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll check out of our hotel and begin our transfer to Vienna this morning. Along the way, we'll stop for a tour of Linz, one of the largest ports on the Danube and the second-most populous city in Austria. Initially settled by Romans in the first century AD, Linz today is one of the country's cultural and technological capitals.

We'll get to know the city on a guided walking tour of its historic center. Discover the city's *hauptplatz*, or main square, featuring a 65-foot marble column commemorating survival from the wars, disasters, and plagues that have swept through central Europe over the centuries. The square is also surrounded by baroque and Renaissance architecture, which

we'll have the chance to admire on our tour. We'll also enjoy a taste of Linzer torte, a nut-and-jam pastry whose recorded recipe can be traced back to 1653, making it one of the oldest cakes in the world.

Linz is also a forward-thinking city, however, which we'll learn more about during a visit to the Ars Electronica Center, Linz's "museum of the future." The center is dedicated to humankind's quest for knowledge and innovation, with media and other exhibits detailing the work that scientists and engineers are doing on the cutting edge of new technology, from robotics to genetic engineering.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: We'll have about an hour after lunch to continue exploring Linz independently before returning to our bus and continuing our transfer to Vienna. We'll arrive at our hotel and check in later today, followed by an orientation walk of the neighborhood surrounding our hotel with our Trip Experience Leader.

Dinner: On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend a local restaurant.

Evening: You'll have the night free to rest or explore Vienna independently.

Day 6 Explore Vienna

- Destination: Vienna
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Regina Hotel Vienna or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll begin our discoveries of Austria's capital with a journey into the life and work of one of the city's most influential artists—Gustav Klimt. Klimt was part of the vanguard of the Vienna Secession movement,

a rebellion against the old-fashioned and traditional style that dominated the Austrian art scene at the time. We'll see his influence and examples of his work on a guided tour, including a visit to the Belvedere Museum, where a local guide will show us some of his masterpieces and lesser-known works, as well as pieces from contemporary artists of the time.

Lunch: On your own in Vienna. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend a café or restaurant.

Afternoon: The afternoon is free to explore Vienna independently. You may want to head to the old Jewish Quarter to see the only Viennese synagogue to have survived the 1938 *Kristallnacht*. Or perhaps explore Austria's capital aboard a *fiaker*. These horse-drawn carriages have been in business since the 17th century, and drivers are happy to show you the sights and delight you with Viennese anecdotes. You'll also find out for yourself whether or not it's true that drivers whistle strains of Mozart's beloved *Magic Flute* as they conduct passengers through the city.

Before dinner, we'll gather at the hotel for a Farewell Drink with our Trip Experience Leader, for a toast to the discoveries we've made together over our adventure.

Dinner: We'll walk to a local restaurant for an included Farewell Dinner.

Evening: Enjoy a final night in Vienna to spend according to your preferences.

Day 7 Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Transfer to the airport to board your flight home to the U.S.

OPTIONAL TOUR

Hallstatt

(Day 4 \$230 per person)

Discover the village of Hallstatt, a quintessential alpine town with a population of fewer than 1,000 people. We'll begin our discoveries by riding a cable car up the mountainside, where we'll go on a short, easy hike to a viewing platform (known as the "5 fingers", owing to its shape, reminiscent of an open hand) for breathtaking panoramic vistas of the mountain landscape below. From our alpine vantage point, we can take in views of the village below, and the forested mountain scenery stretching into the distance. Then, we'll drive into the village center for a discovery walk with our Trip Experience Leader to familiarize ourselves further with this UNESCO World Heritage Site before lunch at a local restaurant.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this vacation.

- **Main trip only:** You will need 5 blank passport pages.
- **Pre-trip extension to Barcelona, Girona, & Tarragona, Spain:** You will need an additional page, for a total of 6.
- **Post-trip extension to Austria:** No additional pages needed.
- **Both a pre- and a post-trip extension:** You will need a total of 6 pages.

Visa Required

We’ll be sending you information with detailed instructions, application forms, and fees about 100 days prior to your departure. In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. This info is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.

- **Europe (France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Spain):** Starting in 2025, U.S. citizens will be required to fill out an online European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) visa-waiver to enter countries in the European Union. There is no confirmed start date for the ETIAS at the time of printing. The ETIAS will be valid for 3 years.

Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **www.pvsinternational.org**.

Traveling With a Minor?

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency). If applicable, you will receive a list of these fees with your Final Documents.

RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

Is This Adventure Right for You?

Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure. We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

PACING

- 6 locations in 17 days
- Return flights often require departing in early morning
- Air travel time will be 11-18 hours and will have at least one connection

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Not appropriate for travelers using wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility aids
- You must be able to walk 5-6 miles unassisted and participate in 4-6 hours of physical activities each day
- Agility and balance are required for embarking boats
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience
- You may encounter animals on this trip. We make every effort to keep these encounters safe, however animals may behave unpredictably or dangerously at times. Please use caution when interacting with animals on this trip: Keep a safe distance, stay alert, and respect the animals

ALTITUDE

- We will spend time at elevations of between 6,276 and 12,600 feet in the Alps and Dolomites.

CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 58-82°F
- June-August are the warmest months
- Dolomite summers are mild with average temperatures from June to October rarely going above 77°F

TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Uneven walking surfaces, including steep paths, hills, and cobblestones, which can be slippery in wet or colder conditions

- Travel by 30-passenger coach, funicular, and private boat
- Two drives of 3 to 5 hours each

ACCOMMODATIONS & FACILITIES

- Hotel rooms are smaller than those in the U.S. and offer basic amenities
- All accommodations feature private baths

Steps to Take Before Your Trip

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at **www.cdc.gov/travel** or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

No Vaccines Required

Recommended Vaccines

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **travel.state.gov** (Go to "Find International Travel Information", select "Country Information", then enter the country into the search bar; if you don't see any medications specifically mentioned under the "Health" section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- 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.
- 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.

Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

Water

- Water on this trip is considered safe, but as an added safety precaution against possible stomach upsets, we recommend you drink bottled water as much as possible.
- Bottled water is usually for sale in hotels, food shops, and restaurants.
- If you're out of bottled water, hotel tap water is okay to drink, but it may taste unpleasant because of heavy chlorination.

MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card
- **Traveler's checks are not recommended.** They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It's more practical to view them as a last resort in the event of a special situation.
- **You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars on this trip;** you will need local currency instead.

Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like www.xe.com/currencyconverter, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

Euro Countries: European Euro (€)

Switzerland: Swiss Franc (Fr.)

How to Exchange Money

If you want to exchange money before your trip, you can usually do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Or you can wait and change money on the trip instead—but it might be helpful to arrive with some local currency in case you run into a bank holiday or an “out of order” ATM.

On your trip, the easiest way is to withdraw funds from a local ATM. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars.

You can also exchange cash at some hotels, large post offices, and money exchange offices. To exchange cash, you'll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2004) are best.

Please note that many banks in Europe will only exchange money for their own customers. Never exchange money on the street. All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card.

Many banks charge a fee of \$1–\$10 each time you use a foreign ATM. Others may charge you a percentage of the amount you withdraw. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart.

Lastly, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM.

Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. Even if you don't plan on using a credit card during your trip, we still suggest that you bring one or two as a backup, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, because not every shop will take every card. For example, although Discover and American Express cards are accepted in some countries outside the U.S., they are not widely adopted, so other brands will work at a much larger range of stores, restaurants, etc.

If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

France: Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in France. For small purchases or markets, you may need cash instead.

Italy: Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in Italy. Occasionally a small “Mom and Pop” restaurant will be cash only, and street vendors or taxis usually are cash only, but most other businesses will take cards.

Austria: Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in Austria. For small purchases or markets, you may need cash instead.

Spain: Visa and MasterCard credit cards are fairly common in Spain, but may not be accepted for small purchases or in the markets. American Express is not commonly accepted.

Chip Cards

Many countries have adopted credit cards that have an embedded computer chip. These cards are inserted into the reader instead of swiped. The card owner then authorizes the purchase using a PIN instead of signing.

Though this technology is common in the U.S., occasionally there are machines in other countries that can't read U.S. cards or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. This doesn't happen often, and is nothing to worry about. You can usually resolve the situation by asking the cashier to let you sign. (If you don't speak the language, just mime signing on your hand.) If you are not able to sign for a purchase, such as at an automated ticket booth, you can use another form of payment, such as a debit card that has a PIN.

Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines:

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$10–\$14 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Hotel Housekeeping:** Many travelers will leave the equivalent of \$1–\$2 per day, per room for the hotel housekeeping staff.
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

Time at Leisure: When you are exploring on your own, it's useful to know when to tip and how much, because local customs often differ from the U.S. Here are a few helpful guidelines for the most common services a traveler might use:

- **Taxis:** In Italy, tipping is not customary, but many locals will round up the fare and let the driver keep the change. In many cities in Switzerland, Austria and France, the tip is included in the fare, and will be announced on a sign inside the cab; otherwise a 10% tip is appropriate.
- **Restaurants, cafes, and bars:** Throughout Europe, the tip for the waiter or bartender is usually included in the prices or added on as a service fee. Look for a statement on the menu like *servizio incluso*, *service compris*, or *service enthalten*—all of which mean “service is included”, or for a service charge on the bill. If you would like to leave a tip on top of the service fee (or in the rare case when the service is not included) then 10% would be considered generous. Note that in Italy, you may see the word “coperto” on your bill. This is not a tip, but more of a cover charge for the use of the table, table cloth, napkins, etc.

- **Public Restrooms:** Most public restrooms in Europe have attendants that take care of cleaning and supplies. It is customary to leave a small tip for them—usually half of whatever currency is in use in that country (i.e. euros)—so hold on to those coins! Some restrooms are pay-toilets; you pay the staff at the entrance to the restroom or drop the appropriate coin into the slot on the stall door. Many restaurants, cafes, and shops offer only pay-toilets or reserve their restrooms for patrons only.

AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

Land Only Travelers & Personalized Air

Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Personalization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Personalization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. If you chose one of our Personalization options, and purchase air through O.A.T. but not the accommodations, the airport transfers are not included. We have included transfer options below.
- **Personalization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with us, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **U.S. Departure:** If you are among a group of ten or more travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have an O.A.T. Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.
- **U.S. Return:** If you are among a group of ten or more travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, an O.A.T. Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

- **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.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45–30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.
- If you are arriving early, you must have arranged the hotels through our Arrive Early personalization option

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: www.rome2rio.com

Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)

- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as “OPT Boston”.
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you’re on the trip. But if you’d like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner).

Communicating with Home from Abroad

Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone can accept one.

Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype or FaceTime. These services are usually less expensive than making a traditional call, but you’ll need a Wi-Fi connection and the calls may count towards your phone plan’s data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

Calling Cards and 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.).

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

How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

France: +33

Austria: +43

Switzerland: +41

Spain: +34

Italy: +39

PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

Luggage Limits

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 50 lbs 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	
Same as the main trip.	
REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS	
<p>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 airline luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights.</p> <p>Luggage rules: Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p>	

Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.

- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.

Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Due to space limitations on our motorcoaches, 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.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Travel light:** A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.
- **Pack casual clothes:** Comfortable, informal apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations. At dinner, you will not need to wear “dressy” clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you.
- **Consider clothing designed for travel, sports, or camping:** With modern fabrics, lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy.
- **Bring rain gear:** Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell. Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through.
- **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. If you prefer more ankle support, take light hiking boots. In case you get caught in the rain, we suggest you bring an extra pair of walking shoes, and rain boots or galoshes. Aboard ship, you'll want non-slip shoes with rubber soles.

Style Hints

- **Proper attire in churches:** To satisfy dress codes for Italian churches, men and women are requested to cover their arms and legs. No shorts above the knees or sleeveless garments please. Women wearing sleeveless blouses can cover their bare arms with a scarf. It's no longer necessary for women to cover their heads. Pantsuits are now acceptable in churches.

Suggested Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. We recommend using www.weather.com and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

And don't forget a reusable water bottle—you'll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

Recommended Clothing

- ☐ Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer
- ☐ Trousers, jeans, or skirts
- ☐ Comfortable walking shoes and/or water resistant shoes
- ☐ Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- ☐ Sleepwear
- ☐ Socks and undergarments
- ☐ A jacket or sweater, depending on the time of year

Essential Items

- ☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- ☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- ☐ Sunglasses with a neck strap
- ☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- ☐ Pocket-size tissues
- ☐ Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards

- ☐ Compact umbrella

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

Home-Hosted Visits

It is customary, though not necessary, to return your hosts' generosity with a small gift. If you do bring a gift, we recommend that you bring something the whole family can enjoy, or something that represents your region, state, or hometown. Get creative and keep it small—peach jelly from Georgia, maple sugar candy from New England, orange blossom soap from California; something that can be used or used up is best. When choosing a gift, be certain to consider the local culture as well. For example, we do not recommend alcohol in Muslim countries because it is forbidden in Islam, and your hosts may be religious. Not all Grand Circle vacations include a home-hosted visit; please check your final itinerary before you depart.

Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

Voltage

Electricity at hotels in Italy, Switzerland, and Austria is 220 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smartphones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner's guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Plugs

The shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you'll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Because you will encounter multiple plug types on this trip, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

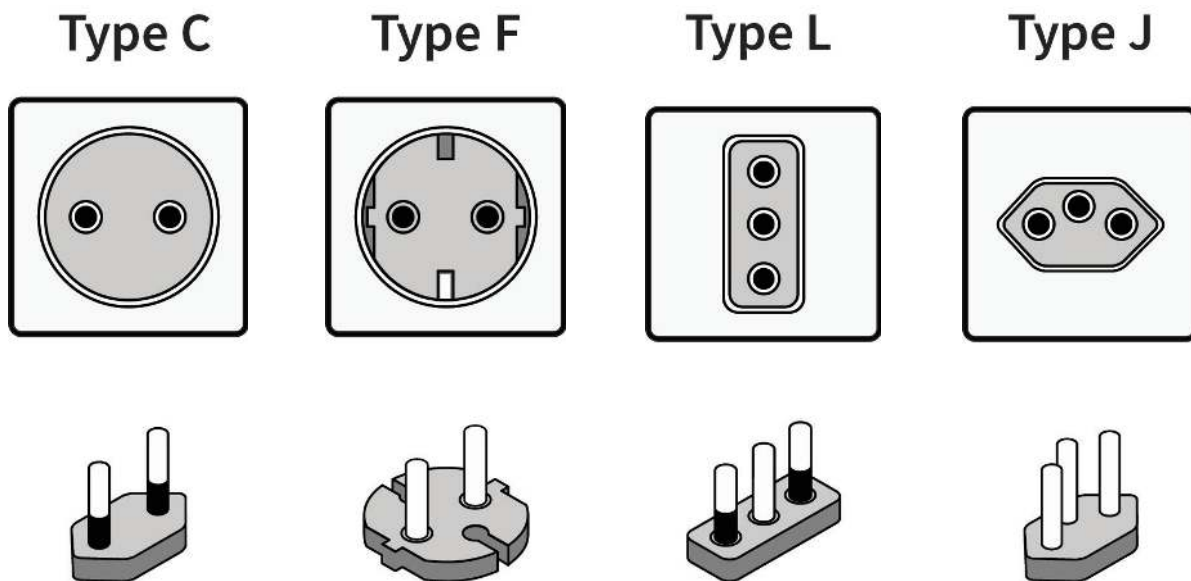
France: C and E

Switzerland: C and/or J

Italy: C, L, or F

Austria: C and/or F

Spain: C and/or F



CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Barcelona, Spain: Barcelona has mild, humid winters and warm, dry summers. Located on the east coast of the Iberian Peninsula Atlantic winds often arrive in Barcelona with low humidity, producing little rain. Barcelona winters tend to be mild. The coldest months are December, January and February; average daily winter temperatures range from 50 to 63 °F. The summer season lasts about six months, from May to October. July and August are the hottest months, with average temperatures around 82 °F during the day. May, June, September and October the average daily temperature is around 74 °F.

Salzburg, Austria: The climate in Salzburg is subtropical. Autumn and winter typically exhibit fog but not too many thunderstorms. In summer the temperatures are moderate and in winter they are mild, though the winter winds tend to be quite strong. On average, the warmest month of the year is July (66°) and the coolest month is January (31°).

Austria: Austria has a central European climate: variable weather reigns, and rain and drizzle are common occurrences year-round. Spring weather is moderate, with intermittent sun and showers; afternoons in early spring average about 60° F 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 with some drizzle 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.

Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use **www.weather.com** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	CHAMONIX, FRANCE			BIELLA, ITALY		
	Temp. High- Low	% Relative Humidity	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High- Low	% Relative Humidity	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	41 to 31	70	9	42 to 27	68	8
FEB	40 to 31	70	9	47 to 30	68	8
MAR	43 to 34	71	10	56 to 37	69	8
APR	48 to 39	75	12	62 to 44	71	11
MAY	56 to 47	80	15	69 to 52	72	12
JUN	64 to 53	76	14	76 to 58	72	11
JUL	70 to 58	74	14	81 to 62	69	9
AUG	69 to 58	74	13	79 to 61	72	9
SEP	63 to 53	77	11	72 to 54	74	9
OCT	65 to 47	77	10	61 to 46	78	11
NOV	47 to 38	77	10	50 to 36	75	10
DEC	43 to 34	70	10	42 to 29	68	8

MONTH	LUGANO, SWITZERLAND			INNSBRUCK, AUSTRIA		
	Temp. High- Low	% Relative Humidity	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High- Low	% Relative Humidity	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	45 to 34	70	6	39 to 24	77	8
FEB	48 to 36	67	6	44 to 27	76	7
MAR	56 to 41	65	6	53 to 33	75	8
APR	62 to 47	66	10	61 to 39	74	10
MAY	69 to 54	69	11	69 to 47	78	11
JUN	77 to 60	67	10	74 to 53	78	14
JUL	82 to 64	66	9	78 to 56	78	15
AUG	80 to 64	70	10	77 to 55	79	13
SEP	73 to 38	72	8	69 to 49	80	9
OCT	63 to 50	77	9	61 to 41	80	7
NOV	53 to 42	76	8	48 to 33	80	8
DEC	47 to 36	71	6	39 to 26	77	9

MONTH	BARCELONA, SPAIN			SALZBURG, AUSTRIA		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	56 to 40	82 to 65	8	38 to 25	86 to 74	2.8
FEB	58 to 42	82 to 63	8	42 to 27	86 to 66	2.5
MAR	61 to 44	84 to 64	9	51 to 33	84 to 58	2.6
APR	64 to 47	84 to 66	10	58 to 39	82 to 55	3.7
MAY	69 to 54	86 to 70	10	68 to 47	79 to 53	5.1
JUN	76 to 60	85 to 68	9	72 to 53	80 to 56	6.8
JUL	82 to 66	82 to 66	6	76 to 56	81 to 55	7.9
AUG	82 to 67	84 to 66	8	76 to 56	84 to 56	6.9
SEP	78 to 62	86 to 66	8	68 to 50	87 to 59	5.2
OCT	71 to 55	85 to 66	10	59 to 42	87 to 63	3.5
NOV	63 to 47	84 to 66	9	46 to 33	87 to 71	2.9
DEC	58 to 42	81 to 64	8	39 to 28	86 to 75	2.8

MONTH	VIENNA, AUSTRIA		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	39 to 31	84 to 75	1
FEB	43 to 33	82 to 68	2
MAR	52 to 38	81 to 62	4
APR	63 to 46	76 to 54	2
MAY	73 to 55	76 to 54	7
JUN	79 to 59	76 to 57	4
JUL	84 to 63	76 to 54	7
AUG	88 to 64	78 to 54	5
SEP	75 to 57	84 to 61	5
OCT	63 to 48	86 to 65	2
NOV	50 to 39	86 to 75	3
DEC	40 to 33	85 to 78	2

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

OAT Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure you'll be accompanied by one of our local, expert Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with OAT is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

The Cultures of Alpine Europe

The locations visited on this journey have all been shaped by the Alps, though the landscapes you'll admire each have a unique character. So, too, do the cultures of each destination, where you will encounter a variety of languages, cuisines, traditions, and attitudes.

In **Northern Italy**, you'll find some truth to the stereotype of Italians being passionate, animated, and gregarious. This is certainly true relative to their northerly neighbors, though a southern Italian might describe their northern countrymen as reserved. This is all a matter of *campanilismo*—a sort of provincialism. The word derives from the Italian for “bell tower” (*campanile*), and refers to a sort of “our bell tower is taller than yours” mentality. So you'll hear people identify themselves not as Italians, but in terms of their region, town, or even their specific quarter of town.

In terms of *campanilismo*, northern Italy in general is the most prosperous and industrious part of Italy. A southerner would tell you that the northern way of life is fast-paced and business-oriented.

Italian culture places a high value on interpersonal relationships, starting with the family. To reflect well on one's family, one is expected to dress well, behave graciously, and be dutiful. It is part of the concept of *la bella figura*, the “beautiful figure” that all Italians strive to cut. In the north, perhaps that *figura* is just a little more *bella* than elsewhere, because people here tend to be the most fashion conscious in Italy. You can see this in action during the early evenings, when locals may gather at public squares and lakeside promenades for *la passeggiata*, the traditional evening stroll. Even in rural areas, people will be fashionably (if casually) dressed, the mood will be upbeat, and good manners will be on display. As a cultural phenomenon, *la bella figura* may well be a metaphor for the allure of Italy itself: confident, elegant, charming, and engaging.

Switzerland defines itself not as a nation, *per se*, but officially, as the “Swiss Confederation,” a conscious and mutually beneficial bonding of 26 different cantons (states) speaking four main languages (German, French, Italian, and Romansch) and numerous dialects. Your destination, Interlaken, lies in the German-speaking canton of Bern, in the Bernese Oberland. This was and still is dairy country. But thanks to its stunning setting between lakes Thun and Brienz, and

its brace of mountains dominated by the Monch, Eiger, and Jungfrau peaks, Interlaken's main industry has, for hundreds of years, been tourism. As a result, about 26% of its residents are foreign nationals, and the people are generally multilingual and quite cosmopolitan.

It is considered common courtesy to greet everyone with a friendly “Grüezi.” If you enter a room full of people, you'll be expected to greet each one individually. You may be surprised when even very young children come up to shake your hand and introduce themselves. Otherwise, the Swiss are rather formal, and are not known to be outgoing. Their reticence is often mistaken for diffidence, but it really is more about having respect for individual privacy. Most Swiss will be happy to help you with directions or assist you if you need a hand. But you have to ask.

For every stereotype, there are exceptions. For instance, the Swiss have a reputation for being orderly and law abiding. But you may be surprised, say, if you are patiently waiting your turn at the deli counter, and the local Swiss people just keep barging ahead of you. The Swiss, oddly, rarely line up for anything, so do as the locals do: nudge your way forward and just speak up.

In a land of expert watchmakers, it's no surprise that precision and punctuality are highly valued. You might find Swiss requirements about being on time a bit obsessive, or their insistence on the finer points a bit pedantic. But remember that that perfectionism has garnered the world's esteem and confidence when it comes to the celebrated Swiss quality—whether that pertains to scientific instruments or chocolate or trains or cutlery. The Swiss claim to have more registered patents and Nobel Prize winners (mainly in science) per capita than any other nationality. Considering their penchant for precision, you can probably trust their numbers.

Austria has much to be proud of when it comes to cultural milestones: the music of Mozart, the philosophy of Wittgenstein, the psychoanalysis of Freud, the art of Klimt, and more. As the home of the Hapsburg dynasty, Austria exerted unprecedented influence over European history, from the Middle Ages up until the first World War. Today, Austria enjoys an enviable standard of living; is home to many international agencies; and has maintained its neutrality, even during the height of the Cold War. Yet with all that, outsiders often confuse Austrian culture with that of Germany, which causes understandable resentment among many Austrians.

Austrians tend to think of themselves as more easygoing than most Germans. This comes across in what is called *Schmäh*. This is a uniquely Austrian sense of humor that originated among Viennese cabaret performers, and is now prevalent all over Austria. Where Germans are said to be direct, proper, and literal, *Schmäh* relies on a subversive sense of irony, sly wit, and innuendo. It is all in good fun, so don't take offense if an Austrian seems to be teasing you.

Austrians love to socialize and place a high value on good conversation. It's very traditional for friends and family to gather at the local *Gasthaus* (pub), *Heuriger* (wine pub), or coffeehouse to relax and socialize for hours. This is an important aspect of *gemütlichkeit*, which is a state of friendliness, warmth, nostalgia, and happiness.

Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Don't be overly nervous or suspicious, but keep your eyes open. If you are venturing out after dark, go with one or two other people.

Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room. Most hotels will offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe (for which you can set your own personal number). Please utilize this.

Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful.

Hotel Courtesy in Italy

Italian hotels do not allow food and beverages to be taken from their breakfast rooms, nor is it courteous to eat or drink food or beverages purchased elsewhere in hotel common rooms. In conformity with municipal laws to promote urban decorum, hotels do not allow hanging laundry on room balconies. Travel clotheslines, used in your bathroom, are a more private and effective solution.

Hotel Courtesy in Spain

Like in many other European nations, manners are more formal in Spain than the U.S. Hotel staff will likely address you as "señor" or "señora" and may be caught off guard if you ask a question without greeting them with a quick "hello" or "good day" first. Local staff (and other visiting Europeans) will generally make an effort to be quiet in hallways and common rooms, which are normally used for reading, relaxing, or quiet conversation. For this reason, eating and drinking in any common rooms other than the bar or restaurant is frowned on. If you have any laundry to dry, please keep it inside your room (and not on the balcony).

Getting Around in Spain

Taxi: Taxis are widely available in the area.

Bus: Generally less expensive than both taxi and train travel, bus travel in Spain has increased in recent years.

Trains: Spain has an extensive railway network linking all major towns and cities, and rail travel in Spain is generally comfortable, reliable and often cheaper than many other European countries. Trains are modern and many are high-speed.

Taking Photographs

The etiquette of photographing people in most countries is about the same as it would be on the streets of your hometown. You need permission to take a close-up, but not for a crowd scene. Be especially polite if you want to photograph children or older women. If you want to shoot a great portrait, show interest in your subject and try to have a bit of social interaction first. Then use sign language to inquire if a picture is OK.

Please do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

In museums or at archaeological sites, there may be restrictions on using your flash. Please obey any signs or directions by staff; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos.

Safety & Security

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Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room. Most hotels will offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe (for which you can set your own personal number). Please utilize this.

Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful.

French Cuisine

It would be an understatement to say the French have an appreciation for fine food. They have a reverence for it, and it shows in the quality of French cuisine, which was designated by UNESCO as part of the World's Intangible Cultural Heritage. You certainly don't need to dine at a Michelin-starred restaurant to experience the best of French cuisine. A visit to just about any local *marché* (open-air market), *pâtisserie* (pastry shop), *boulangerie* (bakery), *café*, *bistro*, or *brasserie* may well be as memorable an outing as visiting the famed monuments and museums.

Classical French dishes formed the basis of what we once called *haute cuisine*. But some of these dishes were regional in origin. Fortunately, because there is such widespread regard for gastronomy, regional dishes may appear on menus far from home, especially in large cities. Some of these dishes include:

- **Soupe à l'oignon:** a sweet and savory broth of caramelized onions, beef stock, and sherry with a crust of grilled Comté or Gruyère cheese.
- **Coq au vin:** a specialty of Burgundy, made with chicken braised with red Burgundy wine, lardons, mushrooms, and garlic.

- **Entrecôte à la Bordelaise:** A traditional dish in Bordeaux. It is a rib eye steak cooked in a red wine sauce with bone marrow.
- **Bouillabaisse:** A seafood soup made from fish and shellfish cooked in a broth of onions, tomatoes, saffron, and herbs.
- **Coq au Riesling:** A flavorful dish of chicken braised in white Riesling wine, accented with lardons of bacon and button mushrooms, and enriched with a silky touch of crème fraîche
- **Flammekueche** (or in French, *tarte flambée*): A chewy flatbread smothered with *fromage blanc* (a tangy fresh cheese), *crème fraîche* or sour cream, slivered onions, and crispy *lardons* of bacon.

Swiss Cuisine

Swiss gastronomy reflects the best traditions of neighboring France, Germany, Italy, and Austria. But often these borrowed dishes have a Swiss twist. Then, there are uniquely Swiss specialties that tend to be simple, but stand out for the freshness and quality of their local ingredients.

One of the most well-known dishes is *fondue*, which is cheese melted with white wine in a special pot called a *caquelon*. It's as much a social experience as gustatory one, because it is meant to be shared by all at the table. Each diner will dip small pieces of bread into the melted cheese. Another cheesy classic is the Valais specialty, *raclette*. This is not only a type of cheese, it's a way of enjoying it. The cheese is slowly grilled over a fire, and as each layer melts it is sliced off to blanket boiled potatoes, pickles and onions. Friends will patiently wait for their slices of *raclette* to melt while sharing conversation and glasses of local **Fendant wine**.

- **Roesti:** These potato cakes are grated, pan fried till golden and crispy, and topped with salty *speck* (bacon), a fried egg, and melted *raclette* cheese. They are delicious paired with gherkins and pickled pearl onions.
- **Papet Vaudois:** A mix of leeks and potatoes that are simmered for hours. This makes a creamy base for the plump, red *saucisson Vaudois* or sausage of the Vaud canton.
- **Risotto:** This famous rice dish is popular all over northern Italy, but here it is flavored with dark red saffron grown in the canton of Valais. It is one of the best in the world, referred to as red gold. In the Ticino, your risotto may come with veal and bacon.
- **Zurcher geschnetzeltes:** This dish hails from Zurich but is a national dish. This is diced veal, calves kidneys, and sweetbreads sautéed in a sauce of onions, butter, white wine, cream, and mushrooms.
- **Zopf:** Try this sweet, yeasty bread that is braided and baked and served with butter and jam for breakfast.
- **Birchermüesli:** A glass of oat flakes mixed with milk, yogurt, grated apple, hazelnuts and almonds. It's all left in a fridge overnight and served in the morning.

- **Cordon bleu:** You may think this is a French dish, but it was actually invented in Switzerland. It is a meat cutlet of chicken, veal, or pork that is pounded thin, layered with a thin slice of ham and **Gruyère cheese**, then breaded and fried.
- The French also made **absinthe** fashionable, but it was introduced here by a Swiss doctor, Pierre Ordinaire, who created this potent spirit that is anything but ordinary.
- **Leckerli:** If you want something sweet try these sticky, spicy, sweet gingerbread cookies with a hint of hazelnut. They originated in Bern but are now a Christmas favorite all over Switzerland.
- Of course, your sweet tooth will crave the heavenly **Swiss chocolate**, but when you want something lighter, the Swiss are wizards with **meringue**. You'll find it whipped into cake frosting, mounded on pies, or mixed into chewy cookies with chocolate, fruits, and ground nuts.

Italian Cuisine

Italy may have been unified as a nation in 1861, but its cuisine is another story—and a glorious one at that. Here, gastronomy has always been a matter of regionalism and seasonality. The country is divided up into 20 distinct regions, each with its own specialties. The good news is that there is certainly culinary overlap, and since Italians are famously passionate about food, you can enjoy many beloved regional dishes all over Italy.

The structure of a typical Italian meal is designed to stimulate your appetite, and promote moderation—along with variety. So it will begin with dishes like the following:

- **Apertivo:** A glass of sparkling prosecco or spumante white wine or Spritz.
- **Antipasto all'Italiana:** Raw vegetables served with various cheeses salami and Speck
- **Crostini** Fried polenta squares topped with sauces or pâtés,
- **Bagna Cauda:** A hot dish made with garlic and anchovies, dipping sauce for vegetables typical of Piedmont

The first course, called Primo, comes next. Here is where you may enjoy your carbohydrates as a small dish such as:

- **Polenta:** A dense cornmeal porridge can be served with various toppings, like tomato meat sauce or a “white” sauce of sausage and mushrooms.
- **Canederli:** A large gnocchi dish made with stale bread soaked in milk, eggs, and smoked bacon, flavored with butter and cheese.
- **Risotto alla Milanese:** A simple and creamy risotto with the perfect combination of simple ingredients like butter, white wine, parmesan, and saffron
- **Pizzoccheri:** Long noodles, made from a dough of wheat and buckwheat, is served with potatoes, butter, Casera cheese and stewed savoy cabbage from Lombardy

The main course is called *Il secondo*. This is usually a small, simply prepared dish of chicken, meat, or fish including:

- **Cotoletta alla Milanese:** A tender veal cutlet coated in crunchy breadcrumbs fried in butter
- **Osso Buco:** Braised veal shanks crusted with a citrus zest mixture called *gremolata*.
- **Vitello Tonnato:** A dish of cold, sliced tuna

Your meal will conclude with a *Dolce* (sweet) such as:

- **Tiramisu:** A layered confection of sponge cake, mascarpone cheese, coffee and liqueur.
- **Sbrisolona:** A crumbly almond cake from Lombardy.
- **Strudel di Mele:** Similar to the German apple strudel, this is a flaky pastry stuffed with apples.
- **Castagnaccio:** A gluten-free cake, baked with chestnut flour mixed with olive oil, walnuts, pine nuts, raisins, and rosemary for a slightly savory taste

Dolci may be served with coffee or an alcoholic digestivo such as herbal amaro or limoncello. It is meant to aid your digestion of a memorable meal, one that will certainly have been toast-worthy

Austrian Cuisine

Austria has quite a bit of culinary overlap with neighboring Germany. But you have only to consider the scope of the Hapsburg Empire to understand the many influences that have also shaped the national cuisine: the empire once ruled over Switzerland, Holland, Alsace, Burgundy, Spain, Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia and Italy, and happily appropriated many of their ingredients and cooking techniques. This is to say nothing of the Turkish influence that wafted westwards across the Austro-Hungarian empire.

- One constant on Austrian menus is the national dish, **wiener schnitzel**, the classic Viennese veal cutlet which is pounded till thin, breaded, fried and served with wedges of lemon and greens. It can also be made with chicken or pork.
- **Tafelspitz:** A filet of beef (or veal) that is gently simmered with vegetables, and served with applesauce and horseradish. Late spring brings spargel, or asparagus, which are particularly tender and flavorful here. It'll appear as a special on many menus, often served with a delicate hollandaise or just butter, lemon, and toasted bread crumbs.
- **Kasspätzln:** A Tyrolean casserole of chewy, hand-made egg noodles that are mixed with sauteed onions, covered with *bergkäse*, a strong local cheese, and baked till browned. Before serving, it is topped with crispy fried onions and parsley.
- **Speckknödeln:** A bacon dumpling that is often served as an appetizer or in stews or clear soups. It is just one of the dozens of different dumplings that grace the Austrian table.

- **Frittatensuppe:** Or “pancake soup” is a Styrian specialty that is popular all over Austria. It’s a bowl of clear beef consommé with strips of cooked crepes or pancakes.
- **Würstelstande:** Or sausage booths. These street stalls are the go-tos for snackers on the go, and the sausage of choice will usually be a wiener sausage, which Austrians will only ever call a “*Frankfurter*.” You can also ask for a *bratwurst*, a *Käsekrainer* (which is studded with cheese), or a *Debreziner*, which is a lightly-smoked, reddish sausage spiced with paprika.
- **Sachertorte:** A classic chocolate sponge cake layered with apricot jam, and covered in chocolate ganache. It’s available all over, but for the quintessential Viennese experience, try it where it originated, at the Sacher Hotel, or at the famed Demel bakery.
- **Mozartkugel:** Small, round candies are balls of pistachio marzipan and nougat, covered with dark chocolate.

One thing Austria can thank the Turks for is coffee. Legend has it that when Hapsburg troops chased the Turks out in 1683, the retreating invaders left behind bags of coffee beans. Within two years the first Viennese coffee house opened, and the rest is history. In 2011, UNESCO designated Viennese coffee house culture as part of humanity’s intangible cultural heritage, saying that the coffee houses have a “very specific atmosphere” and are places “where time and space are consumed, but only the coffee is found on the bill.”

Spanish Cuisine

The 21st century’s culinary firmament is lit by a galaxy of superstar chefs from Spain. Among them are the legendary Ferran Adrià (whose former restaurant, El Bulli, launched the “molecular gastronomy” trend), Carme Ruscalleda (the only female chef to be awarded five Michelin stars), octogenarian Juan Mari Arzak (the father of the “New Basque” cuisine), and Jose Andrés, (credited with bringing small plate dining to America). Even if you do not dine in one of their restaurants, they have influenced Spanish chefs in even the humblest establishments, where you might find traditional classics like these:

- **Gambas al ajillo:** Shrimp cooked with Garlic and Chilies
- **Gazpacho:** A chilled soup that hails from Andalusia
- **Jamón Iberico:** A Spanish ham that is dry-cured and hung on the rafters of local bars and restaurants
- **Txangurro:** A baked spider crab stuffed with onions, tomatoes, leeks, brandy, and parsley, topped with breadcrumbs.
- **Pastel Vasco:** A slice of vanilla custard cream with a crunchy crust.

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

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. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, 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 or that you are guaranteed a refund.

Crafts & Souvenirs

France

Popular French souvenirs include fashion, art, antiques, perfume, food, and wine. Each region has its own specialties, but you can often find them for sale in other parts of the country. If time is short, try checking out a big department store, like Galeries Lafayette or Printemps. Or look for Monoprix chains, which have lower prices and are more for everyday shopping (sort of like the French version of Target).

The French value-added tax (VAT) is typically 19.6% and can be as high as 33.33% on luxury articles. 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 at the time of purchase. Be sure to save all receipts for Customs. (Generally, you have to spend over 175€ at the same shop, on the same day, and have filled out a special form for this process.)

Switzerland

Popular Swiss souvenirs include chocolate, cheese, clocks and watches, embroidery, and Swiss Army knives. Switzerland's bargains are to be discovered during sales in July and August. The sales tax (or VAT) is already included in the price. The amount on the price tag is the one you pay.

Italy

Popular souvenirs include leather goods, silk ties, knitwear, gold jewelry, ceramics, straw goods and other handicrafts, small cabinets, and jewelry boxes. Each region in Italy has its specialties. You'll also see many different items made from olive wood or Carrara marble; just remember that any marble items you purchase should be put into your checked luggage for the flight home. (If you put them in your carry-on, they may be confiscated by security as "weapons".) In Italy, a Value Added Tax is levied on most articles, services, and meals, and ranges from 4% to 22%. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods in specially marked Tax Free Shopping

stores, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper, salesperson, or our local staff for details. Be sure to save all receipts and the special Global Tax Refund forms for Customs, as receipts alone are not enough.

Austria

Popular buys include glassware, crystal, porcelain, petit point, musical instruments and scores, fur hats, ski wear, and, of course, lederhosen (leather pants), loden-cloth coats, and sachertorte (chocolate cake). But be forewarned: the quality of Austrian wares is exceptionally high, and so are the prices!

Value Added Tax: In Austria, a Value Added Tax is levied on most articles, services, and meals, and ranges from 10% to 30%. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods in specially marked Tax Free Shopping stores, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper or salesperson for details. Be sure to save all receipts and the special Global Tax Refund forms for Customs, as receipts alone are not enough.

Spain

Leather goods, from supple suede gloves and elegant calf handbags to wineskins that require careful curing (botas), are excellent purchases. Other good buys are shoes, from classical calf pumps to provincial cloth espadrilles; porcelain by Lladro and pottery by regional craftsmen; and wool rugs made by tapestry makers or simple cotton-rag throws.

Siesta: Throughout Spain, most stores and offices close between 1:30 pm and 5 pm. Then they reopen until 7:30 pm (many close even later). Restaurants generally remain open during siesta. In the larger cities you may find that big department stores will stay open from 10am – 10pm.

Value Added Tax: Known in Spain as the IVA, Value Added Tax is levied on most articles, services, and meals. The IVA ranges from 7% to 21% (luxury items, cars). 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. Be sure to save all receipts and forms for Customs.

U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, **www.cbp.gov** has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your

responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.

- 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.

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

France

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 248,573 square miles
- **Capital:** Paris
- **Language:** French
- **Location:** France is a large country, two and a half times as big as Great Britain, extending for some 600 miles from north to south and from east to west. It has coastlines on both the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Its southern land border is Spain; to the north are Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany; to the east are Switzerland and Italy.
- **Geography:** Except for extreme northern France, which is part of the Flanders plain, the country may be described as four river basins and a plateau. Three of the streams flow west—the Seine into the English Channel, the Loire into the Atlantic, and the Garonne into the Bay of Biscay. The Rhône flows south into the Mediterranean. For about 100 miles, the Rhine is France's eastern border. In the Alps, near the Italian and Swiss borders, is Europe's highest point—Mont Blanc, at 15,781 feet.
- **Population:** 68,042,591 (Estimate)
- **Religion:** Roman Catholic 48%, None 34%, Islam 4%, Protestant 3%, Buddhist 2%, Jewish 1%, Other 2%
- **Time Zone:** France is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is noon in Paris. Daylight Saving Time begins the last weekend in March and ends the last weekend in October.

National Holidays: France

In addition to the holidays listed below, France celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Whit Monday. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

05/01 Labor Day

05/08 World War II Victory Day

07/14 Bastille Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

11/01 All Saints' Day

11/11 Armistice Day

12/25 Christmas Day

France: A Brief History

That the French do things with flair has been borne out by history. Even their most famous prehistoric treasure, the 17,000-year old cave paintings of Lascaux, are a dazzling work of art. The rest of French history is just as dazzling, colored by events and ideas that have impacted all of humanity, far beyond the borders of this hexagon-shaped crucible of culture.

When the Celts arrived in Gaul in the 5th century BC, it was already occupied by Iberians, Ligurians, and Greeks, who established the oldest city in France, Massilia (Marseille). It was a major port with temples, theaters, an agora, and a flourishing wine trade. The city had forged an alliance with Rome by the time Julius Caesar conquered Gaul in 57–52 B.C. Julius often gets credit for founding Lutetia (Paris), but the Gallic Parisii tribe had already established a settlement there on the banks of the Seine. The Romans erected their own magnificent cities whose ruins still stand in Arles, Nimes, Vienne, Lyon, and beyond.

During the 5th century AD, the Franks invaded and converted to Christianity under Clovis I. A national spirit emerged when Charlemagne, King of the Franks, was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800 AD. Though his reign left an indelible imprint, French national history is considered to begin in 987, when Hugh Capet centralized the monarchy. During the 12th and 13th centuries, trade prospered, guilds were founded, and cathedrals were built. But the 14th century brought the Hundred Years War with England (1337–1453), whose Norman kings held vast estates in France. The English were expelled and as in the days of Charlemagne, the throne held a powerful mystique, this time with the aid of Joan of Arc, whose divine voices urged her to lead France to victory at Orleans in 1429 and to champion Charles VII as king.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, France moved closer towards absolute monarchy, best exemplified by Louis XIV, whose reign was unequalled for its autocracy—and magnificent style. From Versailles, he presided over a gloriously gilded France—so resplendent that it earned him the title of “the Sun King.” Ironically, the very splendor of the French monarchy precipitated its downfall, for it was exorbitant to maintain. That burden fell to the peasants and middle class, as nobles and the clergy were exempt from the taxes. That ended with the French Revolution in 1789. King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were guillotined, the monarchy was abolished, and the new (but short-lived) First Republic was established.

The ensuing chaos led to the rise of Napoleon, who became emperor in 1804 and built an empire across nearly all of Europe. Though Napoleon was a dictator, his Napoleonic codes brought unprecedented legal rights and civil liberties to his domains, in many places ending feudalism. With his fall in 1814, the monarchy was restored. France's Third Republic was founded in 1870, during which the groundbreaking Impressionist school of painting emerged, as well as the Modernist movement. From 1914–18, France fought with the Allies in World War I, prevailing but suffering devastating losses. Between wars, France nourished major intellectual movements: Constructivism, Dadaism, Surrealism, and Existentialism.

In 1940, France was invaded by Germany who set up a puppet government in Vichy under Marshal Philippe Petain. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, the Allies landed in Normandy and went on to liberate Paris in August. A provisional government was set up under General Charles de Gaulle. He remained France's most influential statesman of the 20th (or perhaps any other) century, becoming president in 1958 until his resignation in 1969. Post-war France saw the break-up of its remaining colonial outposts. The country was one of the leaders in the founding of the European Union (1993) and the Eurozone (1999).

More recently France, like its European neighbors, had to contend with the fallout of the 2008 global economic crisis. Unemployment, immigration, structuring the post-Brexit EU, and climate change are some of the issues France must address with its historic resourcefulness—and characteristic flair.

Switzerland

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 15,940 square miles
- **Capital:** Bern
- **Languages:** German is the main language of Switzerland and is spoken in Interlaken. French and Italian also are widely spoken in certain areas. English is spoken widely in tourist and business circles.
- **Location:** Switzerland, in central Europe, is the land of the Alps. About the size of New Jersey, it is surrounded by France, Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, and Italy. Interlaken, which is about 1,850 feet above sea level, is the gateway to the Bernese Oberland region.
- **Geography:** Switzerland is a small country nestled amidst the Jura Mountains and the Alps. Situated between Germany, Austria, Italy, France, and Liechtenstein, it offers a combination of towering glaciers, crystalline lakes, rolling hills, fertile river valleys, and a broad central plateau.
- **Population:** 8,738,791 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Roman Catholic 38.2%, Protestant 26.9%, Muslim 5%, other Christian 5.6%, other 1.6%, none 21.4%, unspecified 1.3%

- **Time Zone:** Swiss time is six hours later than Eastern Time; when it is 6 am in Washington D.C., it is noon in Switzerland. Daylight Saving Time begins the last Sunday in March and ends the last Sunday in October.

National Holidays: Switzerland

In addition to the holidays listed below, Switzerland celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. Each region can also set its own holidays as well. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/02 Berchtold Day

05/01 May Day

08/01 Swiss National Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

11/01 All Saints' Day

12/08 Immaculate Conception

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 St. Stephen's Day

Switzerland: A Brief History

Archaeological evidence suggests that Switzerland's history dates back to Paleolithic times, when hunter-gatherers began to settle in the lowlands north of the Alps. Swiss territory became integrated into the Roman Empire in the centuries following Julius Caesar's invasion of Gaul in 58 BC. Under Roman rule, important cities were established including Geneva, Basel, and Zurich. These remained linked to Rome and the northern tribes by military roads and trade routes.

After the decline of the Western Roman Empire, Germanic tribes including the Burgundians and Alamanni invaded and forced the Celto-Roman inhabitants to retreat into the surrounding area. The Burgundians took over the western territory, while the Alamanni settled in the north. Both Burgundy and the dukedom of the Alamans eventually came to be known as the kingdom of the Franks, and by 800 AD they fell under the rule of Charlemagne, the first of the Carolingian kings.

The land that would eventually become Switzerland was divided in the aftermath of the three-year Carolingian Civil War. Charlemagne's son, Louis the Pious, signed the Treaty of Verdun in 843, the first in a set of treaties that would ultimately divide the Swiss territories into three distinct kingdoms. These kingdoms would not be re-integrated until the middle of the 10th century, when the Carolingian territories fell under the rule of the Holy Roman emperors.

In centuries to come, the Swiss territories would become an area of great importance as north to south trade routes opened up through the Alps. After the death of the Holy Roman Emperor in the 13th century, the three regions finally came together and signed a charter on August 1, 1291, leading to the formation of the Old Swiss Confederacy. The confederation experienced substantial growth as more of the surrounding regions, known as cantons, joined. This was the beginning of Switzerland as we know it today. But it wouldn't be until 1648 that Switzerland finally gained legal independence from the Holy Roman Empire.

After 1798, a post-Revolutionary French invasion led to the disintegration of the cantons and a period of severe economic decline. Napoleon's Act of Mediation eventually restored partial autonomy to the original cantons. But it was not until the map of Europe was redrawn in 1815 with the Congress of Vienna that Switzerland's independence was reestablished, and the confederation was recognized as a permanently neutral territory.

This neutrality has withstood ever since, but peace was never a given. In 1847 a civil war broke out pitting a largely Protestant army against a special league of Catholic cantons. The Protestants made quick work of it in only 26 days, but the result was a new constitution that established a compromise between those who wanted a centralized government and those who supported cantonal authority. This balance is one that was honed over time and is still a hallmark of the Swiss Confederation. So is direct democracy, which was affirmed in 1874 with constitutional amendments that require many federal laws to be approved by national referendum. Today, a petition with 50,000 signatures can challenge a proposed law, and 100,000 signatures can force a public vote.

Switzerland's neutrality left it untouched during World War I, when its only involvement was to organize Red Cross units. During World War II, surrounded by fascist-run states, Switzerland again proclaimed its neutrality, though some of its leaders advocated appeasement. But the world took note when Swiss General Henri Guisan led an army to the Rütli Meadow (site of the 1291 Oath of Allegiance) in a show of force that displayed just how ready and well-prepared the Swiss were to defend their own soil. There were some "accidental" Allied flyovers that went unpunished, and Switzerland provided a safe haven for escaping Allied POWs and other refugees. But that shelter was infamously not extended to Europe's Jews, and Switzerland's banks have been condemned for being havens for stolen Nazi assets. (In 1998, the two largest banks, UBS and Credit Suisse, paid \$1.25 billion in compensation to Holocaust survivors and their families.)

Switzerland's postwar history has been characterized by remarkable economic growth and stability; and buffeted by its armed neutrality, the country has moved away from its previous isolation to become a major player on the world stage. The country hosts the European headquarters of the UN and World Health Organization, despite the fact that Switzerland did not join the UN until 2002. Switzerland is also not a member of the EU, though it joined the EU's Schengen passport-free travel zone. This opened the borders to workers from the other EU members, but in 2014, Swiss voters approved a referendum to reinstitute immigration quotas.

Italy

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 116,348 square miles
- **Capital:** Rome
- **Languages:** Italian is the official language; German, French, and Slovene are also spoken in towns near the borders of Austria, France, and Slovenia.

- **Ethnicity:** Italian, with small clusters of German-, French-, and Slovene-Italians in the north and Albanian- and Greek-Italians in the south
- **Location:** Italy is bordered by France, Slovenia, Austria, Switzerland, the Ligurian Sea, the Tyrrhenian Sea, the Ionian Sea, the Adriatic Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Geography:** Italy lies in southern Europe and includes the Mediterranean islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and several other small islands. The region of Tuscany is a blend of rugged hills, fertile valleys, and long stretches of sandy beaches that curve along the west coast of central Italy and fringe the pine-forested coastal plain of the Maremma. Sicily enjoys mountains in the north and east, a vast central plateau, and a fertile coastline dotted with sea-level resort towns.
- **Population:** 58,990,000 (estimate)
- **Religions:** Christian 80% (overwhelming Roman Catholic), Atheists and Agnostics 20%, Muslims estimated at less than 2%
- **Time Zone:** Italy is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is noon in Rome. Daylight Saving Time begins the last weekend in March and ends the last weekend in October.

National Holidays: Italy

In addition to the holidays listed below, Italy celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

04/25 Liberation Day

05/01 Labor Day

06/02 Republic Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

11/01 All Saints' Day

12/08 Feast of the Immaculate Conception

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 St. Stephen's Day

Italy: A Brief History

Italy proudly wears the mantle of Rome, the polity from which so much of Italy's historical, cultural, and religious heritage has derived. But even though the Romans were the first to unify the peninsula, they were not the first to dominate it. That honor goes to the Etruscans, whose empire, Etruria, reached its zenith in the 7th century BC. It was centered between the Arno and Tiber rivers, mostly in Tuscany. The Etruscans were farmers, miners, seafarers and warriors, but they were riven by factionalism and in 509 BC, their last king was tossed out by Ligurian-Latin nobles in the small town of Rome. Tired of monarchs, they created the first Roman Republic.

Etruscan culture disappeared by the 2nd century AD, but the Romans were quick to appropriate many aspects of the Greek culture that had taken root in southern Italy and Sicily, where there were Hellenic colonies called “Magna Graecia.” As the colonies were absorbed, so were Greek religion, architecture, and the basic tenets of democracy. During the 1st century BC, Julius Caesar defeated Gaul, making Rome the ruler of the entire Mediterranean world. After Caesar’s assassination in 44 B.C., his nephew Octavian, later called Augustus, became Rome’s first official emperor. The capital became an architectural showcase, and new territories stretched across Europe into Asia Minor, existing under a “Pax Romana” that brought prosperity and stability.

Pax Romana declined in the 3rd century A.D. thanks to inept and corrupt emperors, and attacks by outside barbarians. Rome eventually embraced Christianity in 313 under Constantine I, who established an eastern capital in Constantinople. But splitting the Rome into western (Roman) and eastern (Byzantine) halves did not halt the empire’s demise. The eastern Roman empire fell in 476, and though the Byzantine half survived, it never regained the full might of Rome. In 800, Italy was briefly reunited under Charlemagne, but soon disintegrated into squabbling kingdoms.

Italian culture peaked during the 15th and 16th-century Renaissance. The independent city-states formed a delicate balance of power, with ruling families (such as the Sforzas, Borgias, and the Medicis) funding a golden age of art, invention, and intellectual activity that produced some of the greatest figures of Western civilization—Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Dante Alighieri, Brunelleschi, Galileo, and others. It did not, however, stop the rival families from fighting.

By the 19th century, many Italians believed that they could function as a single nation, a belief spearheaded by the general Giuseppe Garibaldi. Independence was declared in 1861, and by 1870, the nation was consolidated under King Victor Emmanuel II. Italy was ruled as a monarchy and joined the Allies in World War I. But the 1920s ushered in a dark era as Benito Mussolini organized discontented Italians into the Fascist Party to “rescue Italy from Bolshevism.” What he delivered was a totalitarian state. Mussolini joined with Hitler and fought the Allies during World War II, during which 400,000 people were killed, hundreds of thousands were left homeless, and the economy was ruined. In 1945, Mussolini was captured and killed by partisans.

Italy was again declared a republic in 1946, but remained seriously divided during the postwar era by political extremes. Governments rose and fell, and in the 1970s, a series of terrorist acts by the left-wing Red Brigades threatened stability. By the early 1980s, the terrorists had been suppressed, but public discontent spilled into the 1990s as inflation and ongoing scandals involving public officials and the Mafia altered Italian politics. Parties dissolved, new ones formed, and new alliances emerged. This led to the election of media mogul Silvio Berlusconi as Prime Minister in 1994. But within a year, Berlusconi was forced to resign. He ran again in 2001 and was reelected, setting up a pattern that repeated for more than a decade: Berlusconi has been Prime Minister three separate times between 1994–2011, and continues to remain a political force despite having been convicted of tax fraud.

The previous Prime Minister, independent Giuseppe Conte, was elected in 2018 and heads up a populist coalition. Among his accomplishments have been the introduction of a national guaranteed minimum income, the nationalization of several companies, stricter immigration policies, and the western world’s first national lockdown in response to COVID-19. The current

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Italy's first female Prime Minister, was sworn in on October 22nd, 2022. Meloni is a member of the right-wing, national-conservative party, Brothers of Italy, a party that is considered to be the most right-wing party in power in Italy since World War II.

Austria

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 32,382 square miles
- **Capital:** Vienna
- **Languages:** German is the official language. English is also spoken, particularly in all tourist areas and major cities.
- **Location:** Austria is bordered by Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein.
- **Geography:** Landlocked in Central Europe, Austria features the mountainous Alps in the south and west, but also is home to flat plains and gentle slopes in the north and east.
- **Population:** 8,665,550 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Roman Catholic 73.8%, Protestant 4.9%, Muslim 4.2%, Orthodox 2.2%, other 0.8%, none 12%, unspecified 2%
- **Time Zone:** Austria is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is noon in Vienna.

National Holidays: Austria

In addition to the holidays listed below, Austria celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

05/01 Labor Day/May Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

10/26 National Day

11/01 All Saints' Day

12/08 Feast of the Immaculate Conception

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 St. Stephen's Day

Austria: A Brief History

Austria has been populated since Neanderthal times, but its most significant early culture was the Hallstatt, which arose around 400 BC when Celtic people settled along the shores of the Hallstatter See. The Celts formed a confederation called Noricum, established a prosperous salt

trade, and forged iron implements. When Romans arrived in 15 BC, they made the area a province. In exchange for their excellent Noric steel (which the Romans used for swords), the Celts received protection—and they needed it, as Germanic Teutons and other tribes invaded.

When Charlemagne arrived in the 8th century and created a zone in the Danube Valley called the East March. In 976, the Babenburg dynasty became the margraves of this “eastern realm” or Österreich, German for “Austria.” The Babenburgs extended the territory and made Vienna their capital. When they died, Rudolf I took over in 1278, ushering in the dynastic powerhouse that dominated Europe for 500 years. Consolidating power through strategic marriages, they built a network from Spain to the Netherlands to Germany. The Hapsburgs were all prince-electors of the Holy Roman Empire, and from 1452 they elected their kinsmen as its Emperors. But holding power was not easy. In 1618 Europe erupted into a Thirty Years War that caused nearly eight million deaths. It was largely a contest between Bourbon and Austro-Spanish Hapsburgs. Things further destabilized when the Turks advanced to Vienna. They remained a threat until 1699.

Austria bloomed during the Enlightenment reigns of Maria Theresa and her son, Joseph II. They instituted reforms, and were patrons of the arts (with Mozart as their court composer). Decades later, a result of the Napoleonic wars was that the Holy Roman Empire was dissolved in 1806. But the Hapsburgs survived, creating a German Alliance of hundreds of small states. In 1867, Austria and Hungary united as a dual monarchy—and reveled in the Austro-Hungarian Empire’s cultural flowering. Vienna, newly magnificent after a flurry of building, was its epicenter. The Empire prospered until Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in 1914, sparking World War I. The 1919 defeat of the Central Powers (Austria-Hungary, Germany, Turkey, and Bulgaria) ended the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which split into several nations per the Treaty of Versailles.

Austria became a republic, but suffered inflation, unemployment, and the loss of a national identity. Political tensions erupted into violent street fights, and in 1934, a Conservative government took legislative powers from the parliament, making Austria a fascist country. Though the Treaty of Versailles had expressly forbidden the reunification of Germany and Austria, Hitler (himself an Austrian) had other ideas about this Anschluss. When the Nazis goose-stepped into Austria in 1938, they were welcomed by cheering crowds. Austria’s military, economy, and political infrastructure were integrated into Germany’s war efforts; the execution of Jews and resisters stepped up; and many Austrians participated in the Nazi’s crimes.

Austria was liberated by Allied and Soviet troops in 1945, a second republic was established, and Austria remained under occupation. In 1955, Russia demanded that Austria declare its neutrality as a condition for ending Soviet occupation. This status enabled Austria to be a bridge between East and West during the Cold War. But the nation never came to terms with its war history. That started in 1986, when former U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim ran for president. He won and served until 1992, and investigations into his wartime activities were inconclusive.

Austria joined the EU in 1995, adopted the euro in 1999, and is one of Europe’s most prosperous nations. It is considered a liberal democracy, and consistently ranks high for its quality of life.

Spain

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** The mainland occupies approximately 195,364.5 square miles. Off Spain's east coast in the Mediterranean are the Balearic Islands (1,936 square miles), the largest of which is Majorca. Sixty miles west of Africa are the Canary Islands (2,808 square miles).
- **Capital:** Madrid
- **Languages:** Spanish, Basque, Catalan, and Galician. In resort areas, many people also speak English, French, and German.
- **Geography:** Spain's topography consists of a broad central plateau that slopes to the south and east, crossed by a series of mountain ranges and river valleys. It is a land of both towering peaks and endless beaches, as well as fertile landscapes and high, dry plains. Principal rivers are the Ebro in the northeast, the Tajo in the central region, and the Guadalquivir in the south.
- **Population:** 47,325,360 (estimate)
- **Religions:** Roman Catholic 67.8%, atheist 9.1%, other 2.2%, non-believer 18.4%, unspecified 2.5%
- **Time Zone:** Spain is six hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Time.

National Holidays: Spain

In addition to the holidays listed below, Spain celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

05/01 Labor Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

10/12 Hispanic Day

11/01 All Saints Day

12/06 Constitution Day

12/08 Immaculate Conception

12/25 Christmas

Spain: A Brief History

Spain has been continuously inhabited for 1.2 million years, but the bulk of our knowledge about Spain's earliest people begins around 1100 BC, when Phoenicians established trading colonies along the southern coast. These attracted the Greeks; and around the same time, Celts descended in the north, establishing hill villages known as *castros*, many of which still stand in Galicia and northern Portugal.

The Romans arrived in Spain around 206 BC, but had to defeat the Carthaginians for it. Afterwards, the Romans still had a fight on their hands: The Iberian tribes resisted for 200 years. Today, in places like Mérida, Córdoba, Segovia, and Tarragona, you can see remnants of Roman roads, bridges, aqueducts, temples, and amphitheaters. Towards the end of their dominion, the Romans also brought Christianity. But Pax Romana crumbled as Visigoths and Franks swept over the Pyrenees.

The civilized heights of Rome were not equaled until the Moors arrived from North Africa around 711 AD. The enlightened Islamic civilization they established was called Al-Andalus, and it lasted for nearly 800 years. Islamic cities such as Córdoba, Seville, and Granada flourished. Throughout Al-Andalus, Christians, and Jews lived under some restrictions, but were free to worship, work, own property, and trade. When the rest of Europe was struggling through the Dark Ages, the city of Córdoba became a beacon of enlightenment with a celebrated university, palaces, gardens, observatories, libraries, street lamps, and running water. Mathematics, astronomy, literature, music, and architecture flourished.

Córdoba's star began to dim in the 11th century as the caliphate broke into dozens of small kingdoms. Infighting opened a crack for northern Christians to pry open, and the Christian Reconquest pushed south. The last stronghold of the Moors, Granada, fell to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in 1491. They instituted a 300-year campaign of terror, the Spanish Inquisition, which sought to root out heretics through the confiscation of property, imprisonment, torture, and execution. It required Muslims and Jews to convert to Christianity or leave Spain, thereby ending a source of valuable cultural contributions.

But Spain's fortunes continued to rise. In 1492, Christopher Columbus opened up the New World to Spain's imperial ambitions. Spain amassed tremendous wealth and a vast empire through Columbus' conquest of the Caribbean, as well as the conquest of Mexico by Cortes (1519–21) and Peru by Pizarro (1532–33). In 1588, Philip II sent his Armada to invade England, but its defeat cost Spain its supremacy. After centuries of dwindling losses, Spain's overseas empire ended with Cuban independence in 1898.

Spain remained neutral during World War I, but was unable to avoid the upheavals that arose in its aftermath. Civil war erupted in 1936, pitting right-wing Nationalists under Francisco Franco against socialist, communist, and centrist Republicans. Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy supported Franco with planes, weapons, and 92,000 troops, making Spain a testing ground for WWII. Franco declared the war over in 1939, but there was no peace. In the ensuing years, his regime killed 100,000 intellectuals, teachers, and dissenters. After World War II (which Spain sat out), a UN-sponsored boycott plunged the nation into "years of hunger." They didn't wane until the 1950s, when U.S. aid and tourism infused the economy. When Franco died in 1975, Juan Carlos I took the throne and Spain transitioned to democracy.

When the 2008 global economic crisis plunged Spain's economy, the conservative government enacted harsh austerity measures. Youth unemployment reached 60%, and by 2017 over 87,000 workers left Spain, creating a brain drain. Recently, the government rolled out a "Return Plan" to lure them back. Also in 2017, a referendum in Catalonia backed separation from Spain. Madrid imposed direct rule, though polls show that 68% of Spaniards prefer dialogue with Catalonia.

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

France

The Seine: The River That Made Paris by Elaine Sciolino (2020, Nonfiction) Sciolino traces the history, route, and impact of the Seine River through the stories of its people—a riverbank bookseller, the Seine police, a houseboat owner, fishermen, and film directors, to name a few. She also includes a touching chapter on the 2019 Notre Dame fire, which was put out with water pumped from the river.

A Brief History of France by Cecil Jenkins (2017, History) Exactly what the title promises: A compact overview of the history of France. Look for the 2017 edition, which was updated to include more recent events.

The Miracle of Dunkirk: The True Story of Operation Dynamo by Walter Lord (2017, History) A well-written and comprehensive account of the British evacuation from Dunkirk in 1940 with the help of the French. The author has been praised for his ability to weave the personal stories of the survivors—who he interviewed in great depth—into the overall narrative of how events unfolded.

My Life in France by Julia Child with Alex Prud'homme (2007, Memoir) Memoir of the famous chef's first, formative stay in France in 1949. Child describes herself as a “rather loud and unserious Californian,” without a word of French. She enrolled at the Cordon Bleu and toiled with increasing zeal and competence. With the bestselling *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, she revolutionized the American idea of cooking. This memoir recalls gorgeous meals in bygone Parisian restaurants, and reveals the personality and some of the secret arts of a culinary genius.

Paris to the Moon by Adam Gopnik (2001, Travel Essays) A self-described “comic-sentimental essayist,” Gopnik spent the years from 1995 to 2000 in Paris writing the “Paris Journals” for the *New Yorker*. Collected here are his most charming, insightful, heartfelt, and humorous dispatches on the Parisian people, culture, food, economy, and lifestyle.

Switzerland

Slow Train to Switzerland: One Tour, Two Trips, 150 Years – and a World of Change Apart by Diccon Bewes (2013, Historical Fiction). Mass tourism started in 1863, when seven travelers departed London for a train ride through the Alps, to Switzerland. Follow as Bewes as he tells the story of Thomas Cook's first Conducted Tour of Switzerland, using the diary of Jemima Morell, one of the seven travelers.

The White Hotel by D. M. Thomas (1981, Fiction) This controversial novel mixes fantasy with historical accuracy as it tells the story of Lisa, a young opera singer, who is treated by Sigmund Freud for “severe sexual hysteria.” Through erotic fantasies, poems, letters, and case study notes, we learn about Lisa's chance encounter with a soldier, which leads to their affair at a white hotel in the Swiss countryside, to marriage and family life in Kiev, and to the barbaric Nazi atrocities at Babi Yar.

Why Switzerland by Jonathan Steinberg (1976, History) This book is based on the author's premise that Switzerland is a unique country from which the world can learn much about how democracy ultimately rests on the community level. The author has been a lecturer at Cambridge and is married to a Swiss-German woman.

The Magic Mountain by Thomas Mann (1924, Fiction). Nobel Laureate Mann brings us to an exclusive sanatorium in the Swiss Alps, which is a microcosm for European society in the days before World War I.

Heidi by Johanna Spyri (1881, Fiction) One of the most popular works of Swiss literature, this best-selling book tells the story of a young girl's coming of age in the Swiss Alps, where she lives with her grandfather.

Italy

Princes of the Renaissance by Mary Hollingsworth (2021, History) An exploration of the lives and times of the aristocratic elite whose patronage sparked the art and architecture of the Renaissance in fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy.

Absolute Monarchs: A History of the Papacy by John Julius Norwich (2011, History) A deeper look into the most significant popes in history and what they meant politically, culturally, and socially to Rome and the rest of the world.

La Bella Figura: A Field Guide to the Italian Mind by Beppe Severgnini (2007, Nonfiction/Humor) An Italian columnist and best-selling author journeys through his homeland while providing hilarious observations at the beautiful face Italy shows to the world, and the chaotic, garrulous, and often contradictory impulses that lie behind it.

The Monster of Florence by Douglas Preston and Mario Spezi (2008, Non Fiction) A remarkable true story by best-selling author Douglas Preston who, with Italian investigative journalist Mario Spezi, try to track down the identity of a serial killer known as the Monster of Florence.

History by Elsa Morante (1974, Fiction) A half-Jewish, Roman mother tries to survive in WWII Rome with her two sons. Though the main characters are fictional, each chapter opens with an factual account of real events that happened when the action takes place.

Austria

The Habsburgs: The History of a Dynasty by Benjamin Curtis (2013, History) Discover how this Austrian family gained power—and held it—for more than 500 years, shaping all the nations featured on this adventure.

When Nietzsche Wept: A Novel of Obsession by Irvin D. Yalom (2013, Fiction) Set in 19th-century Vienna, this novel is built upon a clever conceit: the psychoanalytic sessions between the impoverished and suicidal philosopher, Frederic Nietzsche; and distinguished physician Josef Breuer, who is undergoing his own existential crisis. The twist is that Nietzsche, too proud to

seek help, does not know that he is Breuer's "patient." As the two meet in Vienna's salons and coffeehouses, we encounter the personalities of the day, including Sigmund Freud, and gain a sense of the healing power of connection.

The Age of Insight by Eric Kandel (2012, Art) This book takes us to Vienna in 1900, where leaders in science, medicine, and art began a revolution that changed forever how we think about the human mind—our conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions—and how mind and brain relate to art. Kandel traces the ideas and advances of Vienna, in rich and rewarding detail, and their enduring influence today.

The Painted Kiss by Elizabeth Hickey (2005, Historical Fiction) The author, an art historian, imagines the relationship between the artist Gustav Klimt, and his younger model-mistress, the couturier Emilie Flöge. She was the inspiration for his famous work, *The Kiss*, and it was her name that he uttered as his dying words.

The Austrians: A Thousand-Year Odyssey by Gordon Brook-Shepard (1996, History) A noted historian, draws upon his long-standing associations with Austrian leaders and his special access to the private Hapsburg family archives to trace the identity of Austria as it developed over a millennium.

Spain

A Million Steps by Kurt Koontz (2013, Travel Narrative) Follow the author as he walks the Camino de Santiago—a pilgrimage route in Spain that stretches more than 400 miles—a journey that is both physical and spiritual.

Sister Queens: The Noble, Tragic Lives of Katherine of Aragon and Juana, Queen of Castile by Julia Fox (2011, biography). The daughters of Ferdinand and Isabella each lost positions of power—one to the whims of England's Henry VIII, and the other to madness.

The Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafon (2005, Fiction) A mix of mystery, romance, and hauntings abound in this international bestseller, set in 1950s Barcelona.

The Last Jew by Noah Gordon (2000, Historical Fiction) A sweeping tale of survival during the Spanish Inquisition.

Traveler's Tales: Spain edited by Lucy McCauley (1995, Anthology) Incisive, lyrical musings on all aspects of Spain, written by luminaries such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Calvin Trillin, and Barbara Kingsolver.

Suggested Films & Videos

France

Loving Vincent (2017, Biography) Van Gogh's paintings come to life in this remarkable, animated film created by 125 artists, who hand-painted each of the film's 65,000 frames in the style of Vincent Van Gogh. The plot follows the efforts of a postmaster's son to solve the mystery of van Gogh's life and death in Auvers-sur-Oise.

Midnight in Paris (2011, Comedy) Screenwriter Gil Pender (Owen Wilson) escapes his romantic troubles by roaming the streets of Paris at night, where he is miraculously (and hilariously) transported back to 1920s Paris, where Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, Salvador Dali, F. Scott Fitzgerald and the entire "Lost Generation" await him.

Amelie (2001, Romantic Comedy) This quirky gem tells the heartwarming story of a shy waitress in Paris who decides to change the lives of those around her for the better, while struggling with her own isolation. The award-winning film is a whimsical depiction of everyday life, sure to capture the hearts of its viewers time and time again.

Chocolat (2000, Drama/Comedy) In this warm and beautifully filmed romance, a lovely chocolatier (Juliet Binoche) falls in love with a handsome gypsy (Johnny Depp), disrupting life in a prim riverside village. Many scenes were filmed in the Dordogne region.

Saving Private Ryan (1998, Drama). Probably the best (and most riveting) depiction of the Normandy D-Day landings and their aftermath. It won Steven Spielberg an Oscar for Best Director.

Switzerland

The Clouds of Sils Maria (2015, Drama) The misty Engadine backdrop sets the moody tone for this story about a middle-aged actress (Juliette Binoche), and the young assistant (Kristen Stewart) who for whom she feels both attraction, and mistrust.

Journey of Hope (1990, Drama) Three members of a Kurdish family make a grueling journey on foot, in search of a better life in Switzerland. Though made in 1990, the struggles it depicts are still topical in modern Switzerland—and all the world.

Courage Mountain (1990, Adventure) This film is about a young Swiss girl named Heidi who is sent off to an Italian boarding school at the beginning of World War I. She's reluctant to leave until she learns that her sweetheart Peter has joined the army. This film version of the sequel to Johanna Spyri's novel *Heidi* tells the charming story of Heidi and her five classmates as they embark on a journey through the forest and mountains to cross over into Switzerland.

Downhill Racer (1969, Drama) For a satirical spin on the American Dream, *Downhill Racer* is a 1969 film centered on the efforts of a self-centered and ambitious Olympic-grade skier (Robert Redford) to reach the top—a goal that he believes can only be achieved by discarding any emotional attachments that might impede his progress. When he finally attains his goal, he learns that the thrill of this victory is indeed an empty one.

Italy

The Life Ahead (2020, Drama) At 86, Sophia Loren makes her first screen appearance in ten years in this Netflix original, filmed in Puglia. And it's a stunner. She plays Madame Rosa, a Holocaust survivor who takes in the children of local sex workers. A neighbor asks her to care for Momo, a Senegalese refugee whose delinquency may be too much for Rosa, whose own tormented past is catching up to her.

The Tourist (2010, Thriller) Beautiful Elise (Angelina Jolie) has a mysterious off-screen lover, Pearce, who has fled England and is wanted by both Scotland Yard and the mob. He tells Elise to entrap an unwitting tourist (Johnny Depp), who will be mistaken for Pearce (who is rumored to have altered his appearance), and arrested in his place. This convoluted caper plays out beautifully in Venice's mysterious alleys, romantic canals, and opulent palaces.

Rome (2005–07, Television Series) This multiple Emmy-winner from HBO deftly weaves the stories of fictional and real characters (Julius Caesar, Octavian, Marc Antony, Cleopatra, etc.) during Rome's 1st century BC transition from a republic to an empire. Outstanding production values and a stellar cast.

The Merchant of Venice (2004, Drama) Al Pacino gives us one of the most masterful portrayals on stage or screen of Shakespeare's tragic moneylender, Shylock. He receives strong support from Jeremy Irons and Joseph Fiennes, and Venice itself, where much of the production was filmed. The city looks so enticing, it's a wonder that Pacino did not chew up the scenery.

Life Is Beautiful (1997) Roberto Benigni is the lead actor and director of this heart-wrenching comedy/drama about a Jewish Italian bookshop owner in Mussolini's Italy who tries to shield his son from the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp. Italian with English subtitles.

Austria

The Woman in Gold (2015, Drama) Helen Mirren stars as Maria Altmann, an Austrian-Jewish Holocaust refugee who successfully sued the Austrian government for the return of a major artwork that was stolen from her family by the Nazis: Gustav Klimt's *Portrait of Adele Bauer-Bloch*, who was her aunt. Based on a true story.

Museum Hours (2012, Drama) A lonely guard at Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Art Museum befriends an enigmatic American visitor, who has been called here due to a family emergency. Through conversations sparked by the art they both admire, the two begin sharing their lives, and the life of Vienna.

Before Sunrise (1995, Comedy/Drama) Two strangers meet on a rain and decide to get off in Vienna for just one evening. As they explore some of the city's most evocative landmarks, their conversations go from wryly philosophical to deeply personal, before they must decide to go their separate ways. Stars Julie Delpy and Ethan Hawke collaborated on writing the sparkling dialogue.

Amadeus (1984, Drama) The pious Italian composer Antonio Salieri is obsessed with his rival, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, whom God has favored with divine talent and worldly success—despite Mozart's immaturity and vulgarity. The Oscar winner for Best Picture, this epic from director Milos Forman is gorgeously filmed, and lifted by its pitch-perfect performances by F. Murray Abraham (as Salieri) and Tom Hulce (as Mozart.)

Spain

Pain and Glory (2019, Drama) Antonio Banderas earned a Best Actor nomination for his portrayal of a legendary director flashing back through his past, and facing a present filled with loss, memory, physical ailments, and imagination. This thinly-veiled autobiographical sketch from director Pedro Almodovar is a rueful reflection on creativity, wrapped up with warmth, humor, and vivid glimpses of life in late 20th-century Spain.

Ocho Apellidos Vascos (released in the U.S. as *Spanish Affair*, 2014, Comedy) Two of Spain's most disparate cultures collide as a jilted bride from the Basque Country goes to Seville, where a skillful Andalusian ladies man is frustrated by his inability to woo her. A fun and warm-hearted look at the differences between northern and southern Spain.

The Way (2010, Drama) A grieving father (Martin Sheen) honors his lost son's desire to finish the journey of a lifetime by competing the historical pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago. Along the way, he meets other trekkers with their own stories to tell.

Pan's Labyrinth (2006, Fantasy) From director Guillermo del Toro. Following Spain's bloody civil war, young Ofelia enters a world of unimaginable cruelty when she moves in with her new stepfather, a brutal military officer. Armed only with her imagination, Ofelia discovers a labyrinth and a faun who offers her a path to saving herself and her mother. The lines between fantasy and reality begin to blur, and before Ofelia can turn back, she's at the center of a ferocious battle between good and evil.

All About My Mother (1999, Comedy) When her 17-year-old son is tragically killed in a car accident, Manuela sets out to reconnect with her son's father and ends up forging new connections with an outrageous transvestite, a pregnant nun, and her son's favorite actress. This 1999 Oscar winner for Best Foreign Language Film is another from director Pedro Almodovar, whose other acclaimed works include *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* and *Volver*.

Useful Websites

Overseas Adventure Travel

www.oattravel.com

Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions

www.oattravel.com/faq

International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

Electricity & Plugs

www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets

Foreign Exchange Rates

www.xe.com/currencyconverter
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM Locators

www.mastercard.com/atm
www.visa.com/atmlocator

World Weather

www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

www.travlang.com/languages

Packing Tips

www.travelite.org

U.S. Customs & Border Protection

www.cbp.gov/travel

Transportation Security

Administration (TSA)

www.tsa.gov

National Passport Information Center

www.travel.state.gov

Holidays Worldwide

www.timeanddate.com/holidays

History & Culture

en.wikipedia.org

Useful Apps

Flight Stats

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

LoungeBuddy

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

Timeshifter

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

GoogleMaps

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

Triposo

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

Rome2rio

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

Flush or Sit or Squat

Find a clean toilet anywhere

Uber

Ride sharing around the world

Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus

ATM locations

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

TunnelBear

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

What's App, Skype, or Signal

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

Duolingo, FLuentU, or Babbel

Learn dozens of foreign languages

Google Translate

Fast and simple translations

XE

Currency conversions

SizeGuide

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

Best Units Converter

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

Tourlina

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

Happy Cow

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

Eatwith

Dine with locals all over the world

Meetup

Connects you with locals who share your interests

Skyview

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

Travello

Find travel friends on the road

ALIX for One

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

TripWhistle

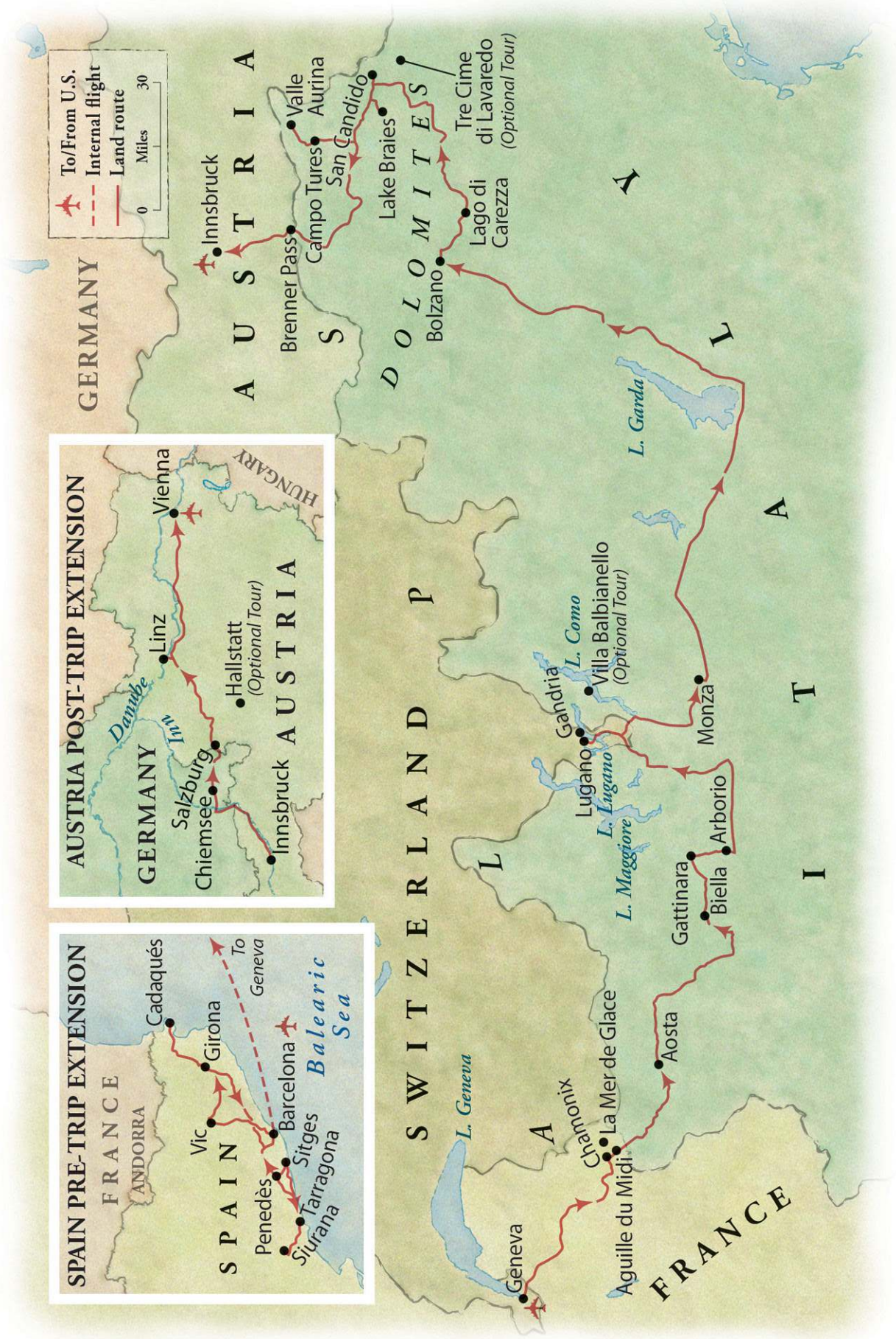
Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

GeoSure

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

Chirpey

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more



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23-time traveler from Oakland, CA



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