

# Prepare for Your Next Vacation to Europe

Are you ready to prepare for your next vacation to Europe? If so, great, because traveling to Europe is an incredible lifetime experience that I highly recommend. Now, while traveling to Europe in the summer fits perfectly into school summer vacations, here are five things that can potentially ruin your beloved vacation if you aren't aware of summer travel woes in Europe.



Prepare for your European Vacation

## **It's too expensive**

There are three main travel seasons in Europe, High, Medium, and Low. The 'High' season is when travel is most active and rates are the highest, so summer is one of the most expensive seasons to travel. Hotels, plane tickets, reports, and restaurants have higher prices that can be a shocker to many first time Europe travelers. To avoid paying high prices:

- Do consider traveling in the spring or early fall. Not only is the weather beautiful with flowers blooming or fall leaves turning, but prices are considerably

reduced.

- Do plan and research properly, you could probably travel to Europe twice if you travel in the off-season.
- Do sign-up for airline, hotel, and resort newsletters to receive savings updates. This means you'll have to think and plan in advance.

### **It's really too crowded**

Everybody and their grandmother want to visit Europe during the summer months, which is understandable. Here's something to consider though when you prepare your next vacation to Europe. Do you like crowds? Do you like long lines? Do you like sitting in traffic jams for hours? This is what you can expect during the summer travel months. For this reason, many Europeans leave their home country for the entire month of August—just to avoid the crowds. So, how can you avoid summer crowds:

- Do view point of interest sites, they often provide tables showing busy periods.
- Do venture out early or late to see that point of interest.
- Do be flexible and have a plan B to visit, for example, another site not on your list.

### **Sorry, we're closed**

One advantage of working in Europe is the amount of vacation we receive. Most Europeans receive about 4 weeks of vacation and take a long summer or winter vacation during their children's school holiday. This includes hotel, restaurant, and shop owners too. Therefore, to avoid surprise closures:

- Do email hotels to ensure they are open, not in summer construction, and have enough staff to make your experience memorable.
- Do check online or email restaurants to ensure they're open and have open tables to reserve.
- Do remember many European restaurants take a mid-day

break, so you can't always expect to get a late lunch or early evening meal anytime you wish.

### **It's terribly hot**

Travelers have a tendency to assume air-conditioning is a standard everywhere in the world. This is so not the case, at least in parts of Europe. Sure, some hotels and B&Bs have small A/C units but they may not be running or provide sufficient streams of cool air during brutal European heat waves. To stay cool during without air conditioning:

- Do take advantage of early morning and evening opening hours to avoid the heat and long lines outside popular sites such as museums.
- Do like the locals and 'get out to hang out' by finding a nearby plaza, piazza, or fountain to people watch. A visit to a local ice cream parlor or wine bar are also great ways to spend a hot summer evening.
- Do close the windows and drapes during the day and open the windows during the late evening hours to enjoy cool breezes.
- Do bring a hat to shield you from the sun and hydrate with plenty of water.

### **Busy Trains/Motorways/Mass transit**

With so many people going on vacation and travelers needing to reach their final destination, whether using automobiles, trains, and or local transit, you'll surely run into massive logistical headaches. I've heard of horror stories of people being stuck on the motorways or tunnel entrances for hours during the high season. This also means be prepared to experience the summer scent of people squished in a hot subway or cable. Therefore, to enjoy your transit experience:

- Do book trains ahead and spend a few extra euros and reserve a seat.
- Do plan your driving route ahead and have an alternative travel route if necessary. Navigation systems are great

for re-routing, but I also like to create a PDF of routes and maps just in case.

- Do take a longer route or a more expensive one where tolls are involved where you are virtually alone on the roads.
- Do visit the city tourist center and purchase a city tour card which often comes with unlimited transit. This allows you to avoid having to have exact change on hand and often after a few trips will pay for itself.

Check with your city tourism site for tips.