



Travel Information for ExpeditionPlus!

Euro Velo 6 – Atlantic Ocean to the Black Sea

- A. Travel and Transportation
- B. Timeline Checklist
- C. While There

Weather Data Websites View historical weather information for your destination.

- www.weather.com
- www.wunderground.com
- www.weatherspark.com
- www.eurometeo.com

Flight & Travel Websites View itineraries to book your trip.

- www.kayak.com
- www.orbitz.com
- www.expedia.com
- www.whichairline.com
- www.yapta.com (to track flight prices)

Currency Conversion Websites

View exchange rates for local currencies.

In France, Germany, Austria, and Slovakia, you will be using the Euro (EUR). The countries not included in the Euro Zone are the Swiss Franc (CHF), Hungarian Forint (HUF), the Croatian Kuna (HRK), the Serbian Dinar (RSD), the Bulgarian Lev (BGN), the Romanian New Leu (RON).

- www.xe.com/ucc/
- www.oanda.com/convert/r/classic

VAT (Value Added Tax)

Refunds

The VAT collected on purchases

A. Travel and Transportation

Passport

You need a passport. Check yours today to see that it is valid for at least six months beyond the date you intend to return to the U.S. You can obtain application and renewal forms for a U.S. passport online at www.travel.state.gov or at a local Post Office. It can take up to six weeks to receive your passport.

Visas

You will not need a visa for any of the countries that you are passing through on this tour.

Booking your Flights

Most international flights leave Europe in the morning often requiring you to book your homebound flight for the day after the tour ends. Check your *Getting To and Away* information specific to your ExperiencePlus! cycling departure for start and end towns and airports.

Tips for booking flights:

- Search the web. Be sure to review their policies for restrictions and cancellation penalties.
- Contact your travel agent. A good agent can help you find a competitive fare. He or she will charge a fee for this service.
- Fly into smaller airports. Some European airlines and their American partners have competitive prices if you fly into large European hubs like London (on British Airways), Frankfurt (on Lufthansa), or Amsterdam (on KLM) and then connect to a smaller airport within your destination country. Also look at flying into major European hubs with standard airlines and then book internal European flights using low cost airlines. See www.whichairline.com

Travel planning services are available to assist you with transportation to and from the tour and pre/post tour hotels bookings. Contact us at travel.agent@experienceplus.com

Airport Transportation Information

Flying into Paris, France

1) Charles de Gaulle Airport

Name and airport code: Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG)

Website: www.adp.fr

is included in the price that you pay for an item, but there is a system that allows tourists to receive a refund. The time to decide if you want to pursue the VAT refund is at the time of purchase, not after you return home. We have provided links to websites that provide general information on VAT along with rate and minimum requirement charts to help you to decide if it is worth your time to pursue the refund. Keep in mind that both the VAT rate and the minimum amount for the expenditure (per shop) vary per country. If you choose to pursue the refund at your departure airport, remember to bring all of your paper work and allow enough time prior to your flight to stop at the Customs office to complete the process. If your vendor works with a refund service such as [Global Blue](#) or [Premier Tax Free](#), then stop by their respective refund desk. Expect to receive your refund in local currency. If your merchant does not work with such a service, you will need to contact the merchant for your refund either from the airport or from home.

For general information on VAT:
www.ricksteves.com/plan/tips/vat.htm
www.reidsguides.com/t_mo/t_mo_vat.html

VoIP Phone Calls

Make free (computer to

There are several transportation options to reach downtown Paris. Refer to the “[Train Transportation Information](#)” section of this document for details on traveling directly from the CDG train station to other parts of France.

To and From the Charles de Gaulle Airport:

By Bus: Air France buses will take you to several train stations in Paris:
http://videocdn.airfrance.com/cars-airfrance/index_en.html

By Shuttle: The Blue Airport Shuttle provides service to downtown Paris. Rates are reasonable for two or more people if you reserve online in advance: www.bluvan.fr

By Taxi:

Taxis to downtown Paris cost between € 50 and € 80.

2) Orly Airport

Name and airport code: Paris Orly Airport (ORY)
Website: www.adp.fr

To and From the Orly Airport:

There are several transportation options to reach downtown Paris. Follow signs to the Orlyval shuttle which will take you to the Antony station. From there you can catch the RER B train to downtown Paris.

Taxis to downtown Paris cost between € 50 and € 80.

Flying out of Bucharest, Romania

1) Bucharest Airport

Name and airport code: Henri Coandă International Airport (OTP)
Website: www.bucharestairports.ro/otp/index.php

This airport is located 16.5km (10.3 miles) northwest of Bucharest. We recommend taking a taxi or the bus. You can reach the airport by taking a taxi or the bus.

To and From the airport:

By bus: The RATB express bus on Line 783 connects the airport railway station and the main city square, Piața Unirii. Travel times are 20–40 minutes, with buses leaving every 15-30 minutes, depending on weekday vs. weekend.

By taxi: It will cost you about RON 60-80 and 40-60 minutes to take a taxi to the airport from the center of Bucharest. Note that it is very congested and there are often traffic jams at most intersections. Have our tour leaders or the hotel front desk coordinate your taxi arrangements, because Bucharest does have its share of dishonest taxi drivers and rigged taximeters.

By train: There is a direct train service to the main railway station in Bucharest, the Gara de Nord. The airport train station is 900 m from the terminal and connected by a shuttle if you decide to take the train to the airport. There is an hourly train, and will take you total an hour in transit for this option.

Train Transportation Information

French Train Information:

computer) and low-cost (computer to phone) calls with VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). Try Skype (www.skype.com), Google Talk (www.google.com/talk/), or VoipBuster (www.voipbuster.com).

Travel Language Guides

Learn the lingo with WorldNomads' language guides. Download free foreign language podcasts to your iPod or mp3 player. iPhone apps are available for purchase. Visit <http://journals.worldnomads.com/language-guides>

Safety Information for Traveling

- Be careful of pickpockets and purse snatching -- Do not wear valuable or showy jewelry and keep your wallet somewhere safe. Use common sense as you would in any large city.
- Keep a watchful eye on your personal belongings; never leave your luggage unattended. It takes seconds for someone to steal your things. Keep important documents such as passports, licenses, and money in a waist belt or passport holder around your neck. You can purchase these from your local discount retailer or specialty travel/luggage shop.

Web: www.sncf.com

The following website describes French train travel in detail:

<http://www.seat61.com/France-trains.htm#How%20to%20use%20voyages-sncf.com>

Schedules and Booking:

High-speed TGV trains require a reservation. For other trains you don't need to purchase tickets in advance, but you can if you wish. You may purchase TGV, first, and second class tickets online or from your travel agent or before you leave the U.S. In France, train schedules are available at train stations or travel agencies. Trains access most destinations in France, but note that there are differences in their services. Different types of trains offer different services. For instance

- **The TGV** requires a reservation and it is not possible to just "hop" on to the next train heading your direction. If you miss your train, you will need to exchange your reservation.
- **Regional and local trains**, (including the RER), do not require a reservation. If you miss this type of train, simply catch the next departure. These trains are mainly second class.

First Class or Second Class?

Many customers prefer a first class ticket and seat reservation for train travel. First class is roomier, has fewer people, and helps you deal with jet lag. Second class is economical, but can be crowded. Either way, you can reserve your space in advance if you'd like.

Purchasing in Advance:

We suggest buying TGV tickets online before leaving the US, but usually no more than 3 months in advance. For other trains, or for post tour TGV, you can wait until you arrive if you wish. Once on tour, your tour leaders can assist you in making post tour train plans. Also, you may pay extra for tickets purchased in advance through the Internet.

If you do decide to make your arrangements ahead of time, we suggest using the following companies:

- French National Trains (Société Nationale de Chemins de Fer): www.voyages-sncf.com
- Rail Europe (throughout Europe): www.raileurope.com (1-800-848-7245) or

Check schedule information and buy tickets on either site. Only Rail Europe delivers tickets in the U.S., but prices are higher. SNCF pre-purchased tickets can be retrieved from ticket counters at your departure train station. You'll need the credit card you reserved with and the 6-letter code you received when purchasing your ticket online. You can print some tickets from home, but these are generally non-refundable and non-exchangeable. On www.sncf.com, type in Aeroport CDG 2 TGV for the Charles de Gaulle (CDG) airport train station; Charles de Gaulle Etoile is a different station.

Traveling with your own bike

Bikes are allowed on all TER regional trains and some TGV trains that require special ticketing. Find out which TGV trains accommodate bikes by looking on the French National Train website: www.sncf.com. If you see a bicycle symbol listed on

Passport Photocopies

Carry a copy with you, separate from your passport, and leave another copy with someone at home.

Credit Card Photocopy

Carry a copy in a safe place with you.

Insurance Information

Bring health and travel insurance policy numbers and phone numbers. Toll free numbers will not work internationally so bring the regular published number.

International Time Zone

Most of continental Europe is on Central European Summer Time (CEST) and are 6 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. Romania is on Eastern European Summer Time (EEST), 7 hours ahead of EST.

Electrical Appliances

Electric current in central Europe is 220V as opposed to the 110V

the schedule next to your train that means it has a special car designed for storing bicycles. If your bicycle is packed into a special case (not a cardboard box) you can store it in the designated luggage areas on board provided that it does not restrict access to other passengers. You can also call the English-speaking service in France at 011-33-08-92-35-35-39, open from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm (be aware of the time difference). Please contact our office if you have questions about bringing your own bike on tour.

Romanian Train Information:

Romanian Rail Sector

Website: www.cfr.ro

By train: Romania's train network is comprehensive and very dense. There are daily international trains to Munich, Venice, Vienna, and Prague if you decide to continue traveling in Europe after your expedition.

Purchasing train tickets in advance:

You do not have to purchase train tickets in advance, especially if they are for post-tour travel plans (your tour leaders can help you with those).

Train Travel Reminders:

- **Before you board your train: *Validate Your Ticket!*** Look for the validation box (yellow box) on the platform or in the train station. Validate your ticket just before you board. Conductors will occasionally ask to see your ticket once the train is en-route. If your ticket is not validated, you may be fined. If for some reason you don't validate your ticket before boarding, find the conductor and inform him/her right away to avoid paying a fine.

Tickets purchased on-line: If you have purchased an online ticket and have printed your receipt, there is no need to validate your ticket as the printed ticket has a bar code that the train conductor will scan. Make sure you are traveling on the correct train on the correct day to avoid penalties.

- **To find your train:** At the train station, trains are listed in chronological order by departure time on large overhead boards. You can find your train by the exact departure time (rarely does more than one train leave at the exact same time). TRAVEL TIP: Please keep in mind that frequently your destination is not the same as the train's final destination (which is the city that will be listed next to the time on the board). Do not look for your destination town.

B. Timeline Checklist to Prepare for your Tour

Upon Booking

- Check your passport. For US residents the expiration date should extend six months past your date of return to the US.
- Purchase trip cancellation/interruption insurance within 14 days of booking to comply with time sensitive coverage clauses. Visit our Travel and Planning Information Page for more information www.experienceplus.com/travelinfo.

in the U.S. and Canada. Electrical outlets have two round pins (standard continental European “europlug”), so you will need a converter for the voltage and an adapter to plug in your device. Many modern electronics have a built-in voltage converter. In that case, you will only need an adapter. Both items can be found at a hardware or travel store.

Computer/Wireless Access

There are dozens of Internet cafes in major cities, and larger towns along the route. Most hotels offer internet to customers.

Bicycle Safety - Wear your Helmet Always

Be sure your bicycle helmet is properly adjusted to correctly fit your head and wear it always when you cycle.

Hotel Check-in and Check-out

Hotel check out time along the route varies, but is typically around noon. Check-in time is around 2-3 pm; occasionally your room may be ready early.

Hotels are required to log passport information for each traveler so the front desk will ask you for your passport when you check in. As a convenience to you, ExperiencePlus! provides this information to the front desk while you are traveling with us on tour.

ATMs are called “Bankomats”

Credit Cards

- Submit your *Customer Information Form* online. Access the form at www.experienceplus.com/travelinfo/tourcif.
- Start checking air fare. Contact us to see if your departure is guaranteed to run before you reserve a nonrefundable flight.

2 - 4 Months Prior to Departure

- Reserve your flights if you have not yet done so.
- Plan your pre and post-tour transportation. Refer to the *Getting To and Away* (an email attachment named GTA) for details. Bring this with you on the plane.
- Reserve your pre and post-tour extra hotel nights. The hotel contact information is in your *Getting To and Away* (an email attachment named GTA).
- Evaluate your conditioning and begin training using our Joel Friel Bicycle Program available on our Travel and Planning Information Page. www.experienceplus.com/travelinfo.
- Final payments are due 90 days prior to departure. Refer to your *Deposit Payment Letter* and *Final Payment Reminder* email for details.

2 – 4 weeks Prior to Departure

- Review your flight and other transportation tickets and extra night hotels reservations.
- Refer to the *Bicycle Tour Packing List* available on our Travel and Planning Information Page at www.experienceplus.com/travelinfo and verify your packing needs.
- Distribute the *Hotel Itinerary* attached to your Final Mailing email to a responsible person so they can reach you in an emergency.

Day of Your Flight

- Make sure you have your tour specific *Getting To and Away* (an email attachment named GTA) that provides our staff contact numbers and meeting time and location.
- Drink plenty of water and little or no caffeine or alcohol to help reduce jetlag and try to get as much sleep as possible.
- Have a great trip, smile and we will see you there!

C. While There

Currency and Banking Information

Even though you may pay a fee, you usually get the best exchange rate using ATM machines for ready cash. Check with your bank to be sure that your standard PIN number will work, as some cards require an international PIN. Many towns along the tour have ATM machines, but fewer towns have places to change dollars. Most of our customers withdraw or change money two to three times during the trip. We suggest withdrawing or changing \$300 at your arrival airport. Be aware that some machines limit the amount you can withdraw. Once on tour the best place to change dollars is at the post office. Changing money in Europe will get you a better exchange rate than if you change money in the U.S. Only exchange money in banks and certified exchange offices. Exchange offices can be found in all major hotels, travel agencies, and department stores.

Visa and Master Card are the most widely accepted cards in central Europe, followed by American Express. Most major hotels and restaurants and shops in large cities accept credit cards. Some museums, train stations, or bus stations may not accept credit cards. Particularly in the small towns we will be staying, cash is your best option.

Chip and PIN, Chip and Signature, and Magnetic Strip credit cards

Europe tends to use the chip-and-PIN type of credit and debit cards, meaning the “smartcard” contains a microchip that automatically authenticates the card with the use of a PIN at the time of the transaction. At this time, credit and debit cards issued in the United States are of the Chip and Signature or the magnetic strip type, with a very few companies starting to offer the Chip and PIN. U.S. credit card holders travelling in Europe can expect to find that some self-serve vending machines or kiosks such as those at train or metro stations, luggage lockers, toll booths, and fueling stations will not accept the magnetic strip or the Chip and Signature cards. You may wish to pay the transaction in cash, or make the transaction directly at a staffed window. Some smaller shops and vendors may not want to accept the magnetic strip card as they have to pay higher fees for those transactions. Again, having cash on hand for these transactions is advised. By far, the majority of hotels, restaurants and shops will accept a magnetic strip and the Chip and Signature cards.

Use your credit card for major shopping, restaurant meals in large towns, and for hotels outside of the tour. VISA and Master Card are most commonly accepted followed by American Express. (Be aware that many credit card companies charge a foreign transaction fee – check your card’s policies before you leave home.)

Open hours in banks (note that in Europe, they may close for an hour around lunchtime-1 pm-outside of the big cities):

Typically, banks are not open weekends or holidays.

- France (places other than Paris): 10am-1pm and 3-5 pm Tues-Saturday
- Switzerland: 10am-4pm, M-F
- Germany: 8:30am-12:30 pm, some afternoons, depends on the bank, M-F
- Austria: 8 am-4pm, M-F
- Slovakia: 9am-5pm, M-F
- Hungary: 8am -3pm, M-Thurs, 8am-1pm on Friday
- Croatia: 7:30am-7 pm M-F, 7am-noon on Saturdays
- Serbia: 9am-5pm M-F, 9-1 pm on Saturdays
- Bulgaria: 9am-4pm, M-F
- Romania: 9am-6pm, M-F

Traveling with your Cell Phone

For your cell phone to work in Europe you will need a mobile phone that supports the GSM Wireless system (Global System for Mobile Communications). Most cell phone providers do provide GSM capable phones although you may have to call your service provider to have the technology “turned on”. If you have T-Mobile or AT&T you will need to “unlock” your GSM phone. If a service provider does NOT provide GSM capable phones, it is possible to rent or buy a separate phone that is GSM capable. Once you have a GSM capable phone, you will need to have international roaming turned on in order to make phone calls. Please remember you will be charged for both outgoing and incoming phone calls and charges range between \$1-\$1.70 per minute. See Alternative cell phone ideas presented below.

Before you travel with your cell phone please check with your cell phone provider and make sure you know the answers to these questions:

1. Is my cell phone GSM capable?
2. If yes, is that option on and can I use it abroad or can I “unlock” the GSM?
3. If it isn’t GSM capable can I rent a GSM phone, or where can I get one?
4. What are the international roaming fees for the country(ies) I am traveling in?

Alternative ideas:

1.If your cell phone is GSM compatible (and unlocked) you may wish to consider purchasing a local SIM card in your country of travel that allows international calling without going through you cell phone carrier’s plan. Most medium sized towns or larger will have a cell phone store outlet and sell SIM cards. Cards cost around € 20 - € 30 and then you need to buy credit.

2. If your cell phone is GSM compatible (and unlocked) you may wish to consider

Language Lessons

French is a Romance language spoken in France and parts of Switzerland. The consonants c, f, and l at the end of a word are typically pronounced, while other final consonants are kept silent. Practice ‘gargling’ your r; it will be helpful!

- Hello – *bonjour*
- Yes – *oui*
- No – *non*
- Please—*s’il vous plait (si voo play)*
- Thank you – *merci*
- Goodbye – *au revoir*
- Have a nice evening/good evening—*bon soir*
- How much does it cost? – *combien cela coute-t-il?*
- Where is the bathroom? – *Ou sont les toilettes, s’il vous plait?*
- The meal was very good, thank you – *Le repas a tres bien, merci. (leh repah ah trey bienne, meh-ci)*
- Water – *d’eau (dehowe)*
- Do you speak English? – *Vous parlez Anglais? (Voo parlay ahnglay?)*
- Bicycle—*bicyclette*

German is a West Germanic language related to English and Dutch. It is spoken as a main language in Germany and Austria, and some parts of Switzerland.

- Hello – *hallo*
- Good morning – *guten morgen*
- Good day—*guten tag*
- Goodbye – *Formal – Auf*

purchasing a prepaid international SIM card plan. Look at the Passport SIM card from [Telestial](#), and [OneSimCard](#).

3. Mobal International Cell Phones, www.mobal.com offers international phones, SIM cards, and international phone service with no monthly plan or fee. The minutes do not expire and you pay for only the minutes used. Minutes can be added by credit card. If you already have a GSM cell phone you can purchase only the SIM card.

Eating and Drinking

As general policy for ExperiencePlus! trips, tap water is available at meals and in the van unless the US Center for Disease Control (CDC) advises otherwise for the region of travel.

France

Everything you’ve heard about French cuisine is true, and the French are very proud of their culinary diversity. With over 400 kinds of cheese, unique regional wines, and specialties such as Dordogne’s famous *foie gras*, you’ll never run out of ideas or choices for your afternoon picnic.

A standard **breakfast** (*le petit déjeuner*) usually consists of bread and/or croissants, jam, butter, juice and coffee, tea or chocolate. ExperiencePlus! makes sure you also get more filling choices such as yogurt, cereals, fruits, cold cuts and cheese. If you’d like to shop for additional supplies, you may want to purchase these items the night before; most stores open at 9:00 a.m., (bakeries open as early at 6:30/7:00) It’s also a very French experience to pick up a warm *croissant* or *pain au chocolat* at the local *boulangerie* (bakery) or *pâtisserie* (pastry shop) in the morning. Next door there’s probably a café for your coffee. A *café noir* is the regular French coffee. An express is an espresso. Beware: no free refills in France. NOTE: Every café, bar and restaurant is required by law to post its prices by the entrance.

France comes to a halt between noon and 2 p.m. for **lunch** (*le déjeuner*). Stop at a small village café, or put together a picnic. Restaurants and cafés run about € 8 for a *plat garni* (a one-dish meal of meat or fish and vegetables) or € 15 to € 30 for a three-course meal. For a quick lunch, pick up a sandwich at a bar for € 4 to € 6. You may want to get picnic supplies at the local *épicerie* or *charcuterie* (the French version of a delicatessen). *Épiceries* sell most of what you’ll need: cold cuts, cheese, fruit, mineral water and chocolate! *Charcuteries* cost a little more, but they offer regional handmade specialties: *pâtés*, *saucisson* (sausage), salads, cheeses and olives. With a crusty *baguette* from the local *boulangerie* (bakery), you’ll be set! Expect to spend € 6- € 10 per person for picnic supplies. Some people just snack all day instead of eating a traditional lunch. *La glace* (ice cream), water, sodas, coffee, fruit, and pastries are readily available along the way and cost from € 2 to € 5.

We’ll provide **dinner** (*le diner*) suggestions the nights you’re on your own. Most restaurants offer a *menu à prix fixe* which usually comes with an *hors d’oeuvre* (appetizer), such as a melon, *pâté* or *crudités* (raw vegetables); a main course such as *poisson* (fish), *canard* (duck), *poulet* (chicken) or *agneau* (lamb) and a side of vegetables; and a choice of regional cheeses or a dessert. These menus include

Wiedersehen (*owf vee-der-zay-en*)

- Thank you – danke (*dang-ker*)
- Please— bitte (*bitt-er*)
- Yes—ja
- No—nein
- Do you speak English? – Sprechen Sie Englisch? (*shprexh-en zee eng-lish*)
- Water—wasser (*vahsir*)
- Bike—fahrrad (*far-rod*)
- Bike mechanic – Fahrradmechaniker
- Where is the toilet? – Wo ist die toilette?

Slovakian is an Indo-European language belonging to the West Slavic languages (together with Czech, Polish, Kashubian and Sorbian). Slovak is mutually intelligible with Czech.

- Good morning - Dobro rano. (*DOH-brehh RAA-noh*)
- Good afternoon - Dobrý deň. (*DOH-bree deñ*)
- Good evening - Dobrý večer. (*DOH-bree VEH-chehr*)
- Good night - Dobrú noc. (*DOH-broo nohts*)
- Good-bye - Do videnia. (*doh VEE-deh-nee_ah*)
- Thank you - Ďakujem. (*DAH-koo-yehm*)
- Can you help me, please? - Môžete mi prosím pomôcť? (*mwoh-ZHEH-teh mi PROH-seeem POH-mwohtst*)
- Could I please use the telephone? - Môžem prosím použiť telefón? (*MWOH-zhem PROH-seeem PWOH-zhee-tuh teh-LEH-fawn*)
- Where are the toilets? - Kde sú tu záchody?(*deh soo too ZAA-khoh-di?*)
- What time is it? - Koľko je hodín? (*KOH-ehl-koh yeh HOH-deen*)

gratuity and usually run € 15 - € 35. Some menus also include wine. Try a pizzeria or *brasserie* for a lighter meal. They'll offer pizzas (€ 8 – € 15) and fresh *salades composes* (€ 8 - € 12): a mixed salad of greens, vegetables, ham, and cheese...

Switzerland

Breakfast usually includes some type of bread, some cereal choices or muesli with milk, tea, and coffee. A popular type of bread is white braided bread called 'Zopf' and is commonly served on Sundays.

Some Swiss specialties include Röstli, fondue, raclette, and other dishes that use the dairy of the particular region, or follow the culinary traditions of that part of the country. Since there are 3 distinct sections of the country with differing languages and traditions, the meals tend to follow those delineations (French food in the southwestern part, Swiss-German in the central & north, Italian in the southeast).

Röstli, Swiss hash browns (but so much more tasty), served with sausage and onions. **Fruit pies** are a homemade specialty meal element, resembling a *tarte tatin* of France with a nice crust with thinly sliced fruits (ranging from stone fruits to apples). Since we'll be in Switzerland during the summertime, fondue and raclette, both world-renowned cheese dishes, may be saved away for the colder months.

Dinner is the main meal of the day. You can expect your dinner to include meats and vegetables, potatoes, pasta, rice, and/or greens. Since Switzerland is known for its cheese and also chocolate, you can expect those items will be present.

Germany & Austria

Breakfast (*Frühstück*) commonly consists of bread, toast, and/or bread rolls (the term for which varies a lot by region) with jam (*Marmelade* or *Konfitüre*) or honey, eggs, and strong coffee or tea (milk, cocoa or juice for children). Deli meats, such as ham, salted meats and salami, are also commonly eaten on bread in the morning, as are various cheeses. A variety of meat-based spreads such as *Leberwurst* (literally "liver-sausage") can be found during breakfast as well. Muesli (*Müsli*) and cereals such as cornflakes are also popular.

Traditionally, the main meal of the day has been **lunch** (*Mittagessen*), eaten around noon. Vegetables are often eaten in stews or vegetable soups, but can also be served as a side dish. Carrots, turnips, spinach, peas, beans, and many types of cabbage are very common. Noodles are usually thicker than Italian pasta and often contain egg yolk. Especially in the south-western part of the country, the predominant variety of noodles is *Spätzle* which contain a very large amount of yolk. Besides noodles, potatoes and dumplings (*Klöße* or *Knödel*) are very common, especially in the south. Austria is unique in that *Mehlspeisen*, or sweet meals are often served as main courses. This could be sweet omelettes, souffles, strudel with fruit fillings, or gnocchi or dumplings with poppy seed, nut or fruit filling, or sauces.

Dinner (*Abendessen* or *Abendbrot*) is usually a smaller meal, often consisting only of a variety of breads and meats, similar to breakfast, or possibly sandwiches. However, dining habits have changed over the last 50 years. Today, many people eat only a small meal in the middle of the working day and enjoy a hot dinner in the evening at home with the whole family. Nevertheless, the traditional way is still rather common, especially in rural areas.

Hungarian belongs to the Finno-Ugric group of languages and is unlike any Germanic, Slavonic or Indo-European tongue. For instance, rather than using prepositions, such as "from", "to" etc. Hungarian relies on adding suffixes to words.

- Good morning - Jó reggelt
- Good day - Jó napot
- Good evening - Jó estét
- Goodbye – Viszontlátásra
- Yes – Igen
- No – Kérem
- Thank you/No thank you - Köszönöm/Nem Köszönöm
- Excuse me - Bocsánat!
- Pleased to meet you – Orvendek
- I understand/don't understand - Értem/Nem értem
- Entrance – Bejárat
- Exit – Kijárat
- Open – Nyitva
- Closed – Zárva
- How much is it - Mennyibe kerül
- Patisserie – Cukrászda
- Cafe/Coffee House – Kávéház
- Where is the toilet? – Hol van a mosodó? (*hol van a MOSH-doa*)
- Do you speak English (German / French)? - Beszél on angolul (németül/franciául)?

Croatian is a South Slavic language, and although we'll only be in the country for less than 24 hours, we wanted to include this phrase section.

- Good morning – *Dobro jutro* (say: Dobro yutro)
- Good day – *Dobar Dan* (say: Dob-ahr Dan)
- Good evening - *Dobra večer* (say: Dobrah vetcher)

Slovakia

The traditional basic components of the Slovak diet have always been and still are milk, potatoes, and cabbage. '*Bryndzové halušky*' is the Slovak national meal made with potato dumplings and a special kind of non-pasteurized fermented sheep cheese called '*bryndza*'. They may serve pieces of fried meaty bacon on top of *Bryndzové halušky*. Apart from being very tasty and delicious, the *bryndza* is also extremely healthy. Some scientists suppose it can even prevent cancer and treat allergies.

Smoked or fresh sheep cheese products are sold in different forms and shapes and Slovaks love them. They are sold at all food shops all over Slovakia. Soups are also very popular - *kapustnica* (made of cabbage), garlic soup (served in a bread bowl), a bean soup with a frankfurter, or beef or chicken consommé.

Traditional desserts are pastries of risen dough filled with marmalade, curd, nuts or poppy seeds.

Tap water from your hotel or from any restaurant or café is perfectly potable even though Slovaks generally drink bottled water.

Hungary

Contrary to widespread belief, Hungarian cooking isn't all *gulyás* (goulash) and heavily spiced paprika dishes, just in the same way as Italian isn't all pasta, and Indian isn't all flavored with hot spices. Hungarian dishes have a distinctive, unmistakable character of their own, often rich with sour cream, onions, eggs, butter and wine. An abundance of good local produce, meat and fish make for dishes such as *Halászlé* (Fish soup), *Sült libamájselet* (pan-fried goose liver), *Almával töltött fácán* (pheasant stuffed with apples), *Szarvastokány erdei gombával* (venison stew with wild mushrooms) and *Fogasszelet bakonyi módra* (fillet of pike-perch Bakony style).

Vegetarians fair less well though with a Hungarian diet that's traditionally meat heavy, but vegetarian restaurants do exist. Most traditional restaurants will offer fried mushrooms (*rántott gomba*), *Trappista sajt* (Trappist cheese in breadcrumbs) or egg dishes.

Tap water from your hotel or from any bar is perfectly potable even though you will see Hungarians drinking liters of bottled water. Generally, the tap water is heavy with minerals and will taste differently.

Croatia

Croatian standard fare is similar to many other central European or Mediterranean countries (pizza, pasta, meat dishes, fish). All food is safe to eat as restaurants are regularly inspected, and there is no problem with drinking water.

Hotel **breakfasts** generally include coffee, tea, bread, butter, jam, paté, cheese, and ham. We try to ensure that our hotels provide a substantial breakfast for cycling, and so ask them to include fruit, cereal, milk and maybe yogurt. If you are on your own and need more sustenance, you can always go to the supermarket to buy yogurt or cheese.

You can also find **good snacks** and pastries at *Slasticarna*, small pastry shops. Look

- Thank you - *Hvala* (say: H – like the first part of hotel, v – victor, Hvala)
- Flat tire—*puknuta guma*
- Village—*selo*
- Water—*voda*

Serbian is a Serbo-Croatian language spoken in Serbia as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina. It uses both Cyrillic and Latin alphabets.

- Hello – *ZDRAH-voh*
- Please – *MOH-leem*
- Good evening – *Dobro večē* (say: Dobroh veh-cheh)
- Thank you - *Hvala* (say: H – like the first part of hotel, v – victor, Hvala)
- Water—*vode (VOH-deh)*
- Where is the toilet? – *Gde je toilet? (gee-deh yeh TWAH-leht)*

Bulgarian is a South Slavic language, with similarities to Slovenian, Russian, and Polish. It uses the Cyrillic alphabet.

- Hello – (*zdrah-VEY-teh*)
- Goodbye – (*doh-VEEZH-dah-neh*)
- Please – (*moh-LYAH*)
- Thank you – (*blah-goh-DAH-ryah*)
- How are you? – (*KAHK steh*)
- I am fine – (*doh-BREH*)
- Do you speak English? – (*govorish li angliiski*)
- Where is the toilet? – (*kade e toaletnatuh*)

Romanian is a Romance language spoken principally in Romania and Moldova.

- Hello – *Salut (sah-LOOT)*
- Goodbye – *La revedere (lah reh-veh-DEH-reh)*
- Please – *Vă rog (vuh*

for apple, cheese or cherry strudel, ‘Croatian’ donuts with a bit of marmalade inside, chocolate donut, or “Pasta,” a cream-based pastry.

For **quick lunches** on the road, you can go to a *Pekara* (bakery) and try *Burek*, a savory pastry filled with cheese or meat and often eaten as a “fast food” item. It may also be eaten with yogurt and is made of thin dough layers that are stuffed and then rolled and cut into spirals. Another famous fast food item in Croatia is *Cevapcici*.” Originally from Bosnia, this is a delicious dish of grilled minced meat, found in the countries of the Former Yugoslavia. *Cevapcici* may be served on a plate or in a flatbread sandwich (then called a *lepinja*), often with chopped onions, a local type of sour cream (*kajmak*), a relish made of bell peppers, eggplant, chili and garlic (*ajvar*) cottage cheese, and so on.

For **sit down meals** at dinner or lunch you can go to fancier restaurants or to the local pub/eatery, the “Konoba.” Konobas generally have traditionally prepared dishes, made with natural home-grown ingredients and served in pleasant local surroundings. Service may be lower quality than in restaurants, but it is an authentic meal.

Serbia

Serbian cuisine is a mélange of Balkan, Mediterranean, Turkish, and central European traditions. National dishes include *Pljeskavica* (ground beef patty, similar to a hamburger without a bun), and *ćevapčići* also is popular in Serbia, as in Croatia.

Breakfast includes strong Serbian (Turkish) coffee, and pastries or bread. Common accompaniments for breakfast are bacon, sausage or two, and some eggs.

Lunch could consist of a soup of beef or chicken with noodles; standard soups are called *supa*, and soups with a roux are called *čorba*.

For **dinner**, you can expect stews or meat dishes with an accompaniment of bread, which is the basis for most Serbian meals. Oftentimes, the meats are grilled. Ham, bacon, dry ribs, and pork rinds are traditional Serbian meat products.

Alcoholic beverage fruit brandy called *rakija* is very popular and the plum brandy is considered the national drink.

Bulgaria

As we continue closer to Turkey and Greece, you’ll see both these influences in Bulgarian food. With a warm climate and diverse landscape capable of cultivating a variety of crops, you can expect many herbs, veggies, and fruits in the meals you eat here. Make salad eating a priority here; you will notice big salads at each meal alongside cold soups, or *moussaka* (oven baked potatoes, minced meat and white sauce). The most popular salad is the *shopska* with tomatoes, cucumbers, onion, roasted peppers, *sirene* cheese, and lightly dressed with vinaigrette.

Dairy products are important to the culture in Bulgaria, especially cheese made from goats and cheese native to the area (*Kashkaval*, similar to gouda and *Sirene*, a Feta variety). *Kiselo Mlyako*, is a Bulgarian native product too and contains the active culture found in plain yogurts elsewhere. This yogurt is somewhat of a staple of the country, used in several dishes, particularly a cold soup called *Tarator*. Keep your eye open and appetite piqued for *lutenitsa*, a red pepper, eggplant, & tomato

ROHG)

- Thank you – Mulțumesc (*mool-tzoo-MESK moolt*)
- Thanks – Mersi
- Yes – da (*dah*)
- No – nu (*noo*)
- Do you speak English? – Vorbiți engleză (*vot-BEETZ eng-LEH-zuh*)

puree commonly served on bread.

Traditional bakeries make treats like *mekitsa*, deep fried dough made with yogurt and served with jam, or *banitsa*, a cake-like treat made with eggs, & cheese cooked in filo pastry.

Romania

Romanian food, although similar to Western European fare, is unique in itself, with its traditional sauces, polenta dishes, and continual flavor presence of garlic and onions.

Traditional dishes include *sarmale*, grape, chard, or cabbage leaves wrapped around minced meat paired with *mămăligă*, a polenta-like porridge and a spicy sausage called *mici*. If you're craving a meat and vegetable salad, try the *salata boef*, which also has a topping of mayonnaise, tomatoes, and parsley. One dessert to keep your eye out for *pandispan*, literally Spanish bread, which is a cake filled with sour cherries.

If you're roaming the streets looking for a snack or lunch, there is good street food to be found, ranging from *covrigi* (hot pretzels), *gogoși* (doughnut dough covered with fine sugar), several good pastries, *shawarma* (sandwich wrap of lamb, goat, chicken, and other meat mixture served with pita stuffed with French fries, onion, tomatoes topped with spicy sauces).

Romania is known to be a principal wine producer, with good quality and reasonable prices.

Personal Care

Restrooms (WC) Along the Route

We design our routes to pass through villages and towns to give you the opportunity to locate cafés when in need of a bathroom, called WC or water closet. However, it may not always be possible and in some situations you may need to use the "green door" (outdoors).

If you stop at a local café or bar, please note that it is a common practice and an expected courtesy to purchase a small item such as bottled water, coffee, or a snack when utilizing their facilities. It may be useful to carry some tissue with you, since not all public restrooms have toilet paper. Folks often stop at a bar for a mid-morning coffee use the bathroom and fill their water bottles from the tap.

In Croatia, there are no public restrooms, but most restaurants and public buildings have them.

In Hungary, toilets usually have the words *Nők* or *Női* (women) and *Férfiak* or *Férfi* (men). Occasionally, signs for *Hölgyek* (ladies) and *Uraik* (gentlemen) also appear. Quite often a small fee of HUF 70 - 80 is paid to an attendant after using the facilities

Laundry Facilities

It will be a challenge to find do-it-yourself Laundromats in smaller towns, but you may be able to find them in large cities. Please be aware that we will have a few 24-

hour stays at hotels along the route, where you will have the option of laundry services. We will have a large supply of laundry soap and distribute it at the start of the expedition, but we suggest you bring a portable laundry line with you in case you want to wash by hand.

Hair dryers

Some of our hotels have hair dryers in the room, and others have them available at the front desk. If you use a hair dryer regularly, we recommend you bring your own. Bring the correct electrical adaptor and or convertor.

Tiping Guidelines

Tiping in restaurants

A tip of about 10 - 15% of the total bill is appropriate in restaurants where you were pleased with the service. Be sure to keep an eye out; sometimes the tip is included in the bill.

In Germany & Austria, the wait staff is paid a salaried wage, but leaving a 10% tip for good service is customary and appreciated.

In Switzerland, a service and sales tax are included in the price on your bill. You do not need to tip your waiter.

Tiping Your Tour Leader Team

If your tour leader team has done their job well, we recommend each traveller tip the team \$20 - \$25 per day (the equivalent in local currency if possible) for a 7 day tour. For longer tours, please use your discretion and add an amount that you feel is appropriate. Feel free to give the tip to the head tour leader who will then divide it between the team. In order to avoid social tensions, we encourage you to tip as individuals and not as a group. If you find your tour leader team has not done their job well, please let us know.
