

FROM BARGES in FRANCE / BARGES in EUROPE / SPECIAL PLACES TRAVEL ...
BARGE TRAVEL INFORMATION

To help you with your planning, see details below about barge cruises in general, from A to Z. Note two of the most important things mentioned in the information, below:

- Notify your ATM and credit card issuers of your travel before leaving home.
- Get cash from an airport ATM machine when you arrive, so you'll have initial cash.

Bar: The ship's bar is normally open at all times. All bar drinks are included (unless specifically excluded in the price) - some barges ask that Champagne and Chateaux wines be ordered in advance. All cruises include a Champagne Welcome. Drinking responsibly is appreciated by the crew.

Bicycles: Canal barges typically provide a bicycle for each passenger. Some barges can provide bicycle helmets on request. We suggest you either bring your own, or purchase one locally before your cruise starts. Participation is at your own risk and the barge assumes no responsibility for your safety. If you want to bike, ask the crew that morning to let you know where you can get off the barge and where you can get back on. Be sure you are ready to get off at the designated spot and coordinate this with the crew.

Clothing: Informal and casual clothing is the norm on board. A raincoat or light jacket and sweater are recommended. Warmer clothing is often needed in early spring and late fall. Dress in layers because weather can be extremely variable in all seasons. Soft-soled shoes are essential, for the decks, cycling, and walking (and rain). A coat and tie is not necessary, although some men may wear a jacket for the Captain's Dinner. Women may want to dress up a bit that night, as well. Throughout the week, for men, a shirt and slacks are fine for dinner, while shorts are fine during the day. For women, slacks and a nice top are fine for dinner. But if you want to dress up by all means go ahead - it's your cruise! Don't forget to bring a bathing suit if your barge has a hot tub.

Cell Phones and Internet Connections. We highly recommend that you have a cellphone

turned on and available on your pickup day, so that the barge can contact you in the event of delay or emergency. Bear in mind that on most barges there is no access to a telephone for outgoing calls. We have provided you with an emergency number for the barge in case you need to reach the barge OR they need to reach you in an emergency. To make and receive calls during the cruise, you will need to bring your own Europe-ready cell phone (GSM capable).

For US Residents: Before you leave home, call your mobile carrier at 611 from your mobile device to ask if your phone has Europe cell network capability, and to turn on international data plans. For example, Verizon Wireless' "TravelPass" option and AT&T's International Day Pass both cost \$10 for any use within a 24-hour period for all of your US plan's talk, text & data limits while you are in Europe. (To avoid the \$10 per 24 hours charge, use "airplane mode" and Wi-Fi instead of cell service.) T-Mobile offers free unlimited text/data and 25¢/minute calls for US residents traveling to Europe.

For Non-US Residents: Check if special talk, text, and data rates may apply from your mobile carrier during your travel.

Barge Wi-Fi: Note that while most barges offer low-speed wi-fi, its use is limited to emails and quick checks of websites, and cannot be used for video or audio streaming, web news video, making calls through Skype, WhatsApp, Viber or similar apps. If you want this level of connection, arrange for Europe coverage through your mobile carrier. Keep in mind that connections depend on cellular networks and may not be available at all locations along your cruise route, and speeds are significantly slower than you are used to at home.

Electricity: Note that most barges are wired for 220 volts but not the North/South American standard 110 volts. Check any electrical devices you wish to bring with you for "110v/220v, 50/60Hz" labeling. Do NOT bring items without this labeling. (Even a 220v/110v voltage adapter may not allow the appliance to work properly, or may damage equipment not compatible with it.) Certain items, hair dryers and curling irons, CPAP machines, for example, can ONLY be used if it has this specific labeling, and cannot be used with a voltage converter. (Hair dryers are provided in most hotels, and all barges.) For all electrical equipment, **bring a set of standard European round socket adapters** (available from travel stores, airport stores and from Amazon). Even more importantly, it also lets you extend the prongs so that you can plug your device into the deeper hole of the round European sockets. One last note of caution. Many hotel bathrooms and some barges have shaver sockets set up in such a way that they have three prong holes. The 110V side is the left two prong holes, and the 220V side is the right two prong holes. They share the middle prong hole. If you bring a 110V shaver or curling iron, you must plug your shaver (or curling iron) into the LEFT two holes, otherwise you are plugging it directly into 220V, and may work for a fraction of a second, and then burn out. A utility socket in a bathroom that has both 110V and 220V markings is designed ONLY for use for very low power appliances, such as a shaver or curling iron. It cannot be used for a hair dryer. Please ask one of the crew when you arrive on board to ensure your equipment is suitable to the barge's electrical system. Contact us if any questions.

CPAP machines: If you will be bringing medical devices, such as a CPAP machine, please advise us well in advance. We recommend bringing an extension cord. Make sure the voltage marked on your device is 110V and 220V and 50/60Hz. Contact us if you need more information.

Entertainment: A small library of English books are carried on all barges, along with playing cards and other games. Most barges have a sound system such as a CD player and bluetooth connection to enjoy the barge's and your own playlists.. Only a very few barges have television on board and reception may be spotty.

Gratuities: For those who want a guideline, the barge industry standard is 5 - 10 % of the cruise cost, at your discretion, based on the level of service you receive. It is customary for gratuities to be given in Euros for cruises in Europe (or in British Pounds for cruises in England and Scotland) to the Captain on the last day; he or she will divide it among the crew. For current euro exchange rates see www.xe.com

Hairdryers and toiletries: A hairdryer is available in all cabins on board. Ask the crew if you do not see one in your cabin. Shampoo and soap is normally provided in your bathroom, however conditioner may not be included.

Language: Almost all crew members speak English. For cruises in France (or Italy), most also speak French (or Italian), and may speak other languages, as well. For cruises in France, Holland, Germany, and Italy, the crew will guide or accompany you on all excursions, so no knowledge of the local language is required. However, if you do speak (or attempt to speak!) the local language to those you encounter in towns and villages you will find they will respond with warmth and friendliness. While many locals know some English, we suggest that you bring along a phrase book or dictionary, or use a mobile app to help translate.

Laundry: Laundry facilities are not available on board most barges. We recommend that you bring sufficient clothing for your cruise or bring hand-washable items. The barges generally cannot make special arrangements for you to stop at a laundromat.

Luggage: Take as little luggage as possible. Most people over pack. We suggest one carry-on bag and one medium suitcase per person (soft-sided is best). While there is storage space in the cabin, hanging areas are somewhat limited. Once suitcases are unpacked, they are normally stored by the crew for the duration of the barge trip or they can be placed under your bed.

Meals: For your convenience and the Chef's planning, please advise us well before the cruise begins if you have any special dietary requirements which the Chef will do their best to accommodate. We forward your requests to the crew before your arrival. However, to be sure there are no misunderstandings, we strongly recommend that you discuss special dietary requirements (allergies, etc.) directly with the Chef or the Captain upon your arrival on the barge.

Medical Problems: Barges do not carry medical personnel. Most will have a list of local doctors and hospitals, however. As a

normal travel precaution, we suggest that you bring along sufficient quantities of prescription medicine (best carried in hand luggage). Bring a spare pair of glasses or extra contact lenses and a pair of sunglasses. Please let us know well before your departure if you have any physical disability or medical condition that may need attention during your barge cruise.

Smoking: Barges do not permit smoking inside the barge or in the cabins for safety reasons. Most barges (but not all) will allow smoking on deck away from other guests, but if you smoke, please ask the captain about designated smoking areas when you arrive.

Weather: Weather in Europe can be quite variable. Dress in layers to accommodate anything. You can check the forecast at www.weather.com, or www.wunderground.com/history/ (weekly view) for historical weather archives ... check the last three years' history, for example, to give you an idea of temperature ranges.

AVERAGE HIGH and LOW TEMPERATURES in Fahrenheit

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
SCOTLAND	50/39	56/44	60/49	64/53	63/52	58/48	53/44	46/39
IRELAND	54/40	58/45	63/49	67/54	67/52	63/49	58/47	50/40
ENGLAND	56/40	63/57	68/52	72/56	70/54	65/50	58/45	49/40
HOLLAND	56/38	63/45	68/50	72/54	72/54	67/49	58/45	49/38
GERMANY	56/41	62/47	67/52	72/56	69/54	63/49	54/43	45/37
ITALY	61/46	71/55	77/61	82/65	82/64	74/58	64/49	53/39
FRANCE: Burgundy	60/43	68/49	73/55	76/58	75/58	70/53	60/46	50/40
Canal du Midi	64/46	68/55	75/61	81/64	81/64	77/61	70/54	63/46

While the above are "averages", note that temperatures typically vary widely within each day and from one day to the next, with even as much 40 degrees variation between the week's high and low temperatures. Dress in layers to accommodate heat and cold in the same day.

Fahrenheit to Celsius Temperature Converter

Fahrenheit	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	32
Celsius	32	29	27	24	21	18	15.5	13	10	7	4	1.6	0

FROM SPECIAL PLACES TRAVEL ... HELPFUL HINTS FOR TRAVEL IN EUROPE

Cash and credit cards: For the best rate of exchange, use the ATM card(s) you use at home to get cash while in Europe and use credit cards for all purchases during your travel. For American Express cardholders, we recommend that you also take Visa or MasterCard since American Express is not accepted as widely as it is in the U.S. or some other countries. Do not bring US dollars in cash, nor traveler's checks as they are not accepted. ATMs are available in most towns, using the same PIN you use at home (try the card at home and know your PIN, before you go). You can save a substantial amount of money if you shop around for no-transaction-fee and no foreign exchange fee credit cards, or negotiate no fees on your current cards.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME: Call the customer service department of your ATM and credit card issuers and tell them when you will be in Europe; otherwise you may not be able to use them.

WHILE IN EUROPE: We suggest bringing several credit cards in case one doesn't work, particularly important at highway toll kiosks. Many credit card payment stations support "touchless" card transactions, but others require that you have a credit card with "chip-and-pin" (EMV standard), AND know your PIN. This is particularly important at unattended locations with automated machines such as gas station pumps and train ticket kiosks which may REQUIRE that you use a PIN associated with your credit card. Residents outside the U.S. may already have a chip-and-pin card, as they are standard in Europe and in 86 countries, but not the US. They are also available in Canada (request from your bank). For residents in other countries, ask your credit card issuer if they offer an EMV standard chip-and-pin card. Most US banks do not currently issue EMV standard chip-and-pin cards (only "chip-and-signature"), preventing you from unattended transactions. For U.S. residents,

you may want to get the Barclay American Airlines Aadvantage Aviator MasterCard with chip-and-pin and no transaction fees for Europe. Apply by phone at 800 307 0341 or online at <https://cards.barclaycardus.com/banking/cards/aadvantage-aviator-red-world-elite-mastercard/> (An \$99 annual fee applies.) The card includes additional benefits like Travel Accident Insurance, Auto Rental Collision Damage Waiver, Baggage Delay Insurance, 24/7 Travel Assistance Services, Trip Cancellation and Interruption coverage and more. When you receive your card, carefully follow their instructions for chip-and-pin initialization and use in Europe. We've tested it extensively and it works (with PIN) in unattended transaction situations. **For CHIP-and-PIN credit cards, be sure that you have set, and know, your credit card PIN before you travel to Europe. Contact your card issuer to be sure.**

Driver's license: If renting a car, bring your driver's license with you and keep a copy of it in a separate place. For US residents, an "international driving permit" is an official translation of your US drivers license. It is generally not required for driving in Europe, although it is required for driving in Spain, Italy, and Portugal. In the US, it is obtainable through AAA.

Insurance: Carry the details of your trip cancellation/interruption insurance coverage and claim procedures with you while traveling. Before leaving home, be sure you have a local number to call in the country where the travel insurance was issued, not a toll-free number.

Luggage: We've found that a checked 24-26 inch high (60-62cm high) wheeled bag plus a carry-on bag with your valuables works the best. Check with the airlines you will be using abroad about their baggage allowance, weight

and size limits. Smaller regional carriers in Europe have strict baggage policies and significant fees for checked baggage; some may have low weight limits even for carry-on bags. Soft-side luggage works best on barges.

Passports: You will need a valid passport to travel to Europe, with expiration date no less than 6 months from the end of your travel. Keep your passport with you at all times. None of the hotels we've been to in Europe will ask to keep it. Make a copy of the photo and signature pages of your passport and keep it in a separate place.

Prescriptions: Bring a copy of prescriptions for medicines, eyeglasses or contact lenses, in case you lose them. Carry your medications in your hand luggage.

Purchases: Get receipts for all purchases and keep them available for Customs when you return home. Take your purchases home with you rather than shipping them. We highly recommend that you NOT ship wine home, as there is high likelihood that your shipment will not arrive. (You may wish to use the "Vivino" mobile app to check if a French wine may be distributed to and available in the US, and purchase bottles in the US when you return.) Any items shipped are done so at your own risk. For U.S. residents, do not bring any fresh foods, plants, cheeses, seeds, etc., back home with you, as they are generally prohibited or restricted. See:

<https://www.cbp.gov/travel/clearing-cbp/bringing-agricultural-products-united-states>

Theft Precautions: Do not carry large amounts of cash with you. Use ATM cards to get cash along the way in major cities and most towns. Use the same caution that you would use at home to conceal entering your PIN number. Make a copy of the credit cards and your passport "picture page" and keep it in a separate place. US residents should use special caution to protect credit cards from theft. Thieves know that non-US credit cards require PINS, making them virtually unusable in event of theft. US credit cards are particularly valuable targets for thieves since they can be stolen and used immediately **without** a PIN, so guard them like cash. In event of theft or loss, report this immediately to the card issuer (keep a separate list of numbers to call).

Tips: Service is always included in restaurant bills but leaving a 5% tip (or more for exceptional service) in bills or larger coins (e.g., 2 euro coins or more) is always appreciated.

Visas: For the 2023 season, no visa is required for nationals of the US or European community countries to visit countries in Europe. Holders of other nationality passports should check with the Embassy in the country concerned, to see whether a visa is required. Immunization records are not required from US residents; residents of other countries should check on-line if this is required.

FOR PASSENGERS SPENDING TIME IN PARIS ...

GETTING FROM CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT TO PARIS:

If you stay in Paris before or after your cruise, we recommend taking a taxi from the airport to Paris (see signs to taxi stand). You pay a fixed rate (typically about 60 euros), plus a charge per bag. Before boarding the taxi, get money from an ATM machine -- in terminal 1 there's one at porte 32. We have found shuttles unreliable from the airport due to the unpredictable times of YOUR arrival at the airport. We found taxis the best method for return to the airport, too. Ask your hotel to arrange it (an extra 7 Euro advance booking fee may apply).

A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE THINGS TO DO IN PARIS:

- ◆ Take the Bateau Mouche from Pont d'Alma or the Vedettes du Pont Neuf (less crowded) from Pont Neuf at night for an inexpensive but spectacular cruise on the Seine, where the barge illuminates the major sights of Paris.
- ◆ Buy the Paris Museum Pass for free access with no waiting time at the cash register for major museums and monuments such as the Louvre, Musee d'Orsay, Rodin museum, Tuileries, Notre Dame, etc. (<https://parisjetaime.com/eng/tickets/paris-museum-pass-entry-to-50-museums-and-monuments-m9001082>), or you may want to get the Paris Pass, a 2, 3, 4, or 6-day day museum and attraction pass that includes free entry to the Louvre as well as a 1-day hop-on-hop-off bus tour, plus unlimited use of public transport inside central Paris, at <https://parispass.com/en-us>
- ◆ Take a taxi and go to Montmartre
- ◆ Walk around the Left Bank, visiting the shops and markets
- ◆ Walk along the Champs Elysees
- ◆ See the view from the Eiffel Tower
- ◆ Take the CityWonders.com tour to Versailles or the Chateaux of the Loire Valley: <https://citywonders.com/paris-tours>