TRAFALGAR
see the world from the inside

Eastern Mediterranean

Know Before You Go

A step by step guide to your Trafalgar trip.

Your insider's journey begins…

Thank you for choosing Trafalgar to show you the insider's view of Eastern Mediterranean. A wealth of experience has taught us that your journey begins well before you leave home. So we have compiled this guide to provide you with as much information as possible to help you prepare for your travels. We look forward to welcoming you on the trip of a lifetime!

Temple of Zeus and Acropolis, Greece

Before you go…

Travel Documents

A couple of weeks prior to your holiday you will receive your Trafalgar wallet with your travel documents and literature. These documents are valuable and contain a wealth of advice and essential information to make your holiday as enjoyable as possible. Please read them carefully before your departure.

Passports and Visas

You will require a passport valid for six months beyond the conclusion of your trip, with appropriate visas. Some itineraries may require multiple-entry visas for certain countries. You must contact your travel agent or applicable government authorities to get the necessary documentation. It is the sole responsibility of each guest to have a valid passport and necessary visas, as well as to comply with entry, health or other requirements of the countries visited.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a must have! It is imperative that you take out a comprehensive travel insurance policy that covers you the entire time you are away from home. Your policy should cover the following:

- Trip cancellation or curtailment
- Loss or damage to property and baggage
- Loss of cash, traveller's cheques, etc.
- Medical costs and personal accident

Don't forget to pack a copy of your policy, contact phone numbers and instructions on how to claim in the unlikely event that it is necessary.

Airport Transfers

Trafalgar bonus in the Eastern Mediterranean region! Trafalgar is pleased to offer complimentary airport transfers at any time either on the first or last day of the itinerary or on other days in conjunction with pre and post accommodations booked through Trafalgar.

Note that flight timings must be provided to Trafalgar no fewer than 21 days before flight departure. Please see Trafalgar's transfer terms and conditions.

Trafalgar's Express Check-In

Please register as soon as possible after making your booking.

By registering with Trafalgar's Express Check-In, you are ensuring we receive all the essential information we need to better anticipate your needs while on your trip.

Other benefits include:

- You won't be required to show your passport at each hotel
- Your Travel Director will have all your important details immediately
- You'll receive useful information and tips before you go and compelling offers from our partners

It should take less than 10 minutes to register and you should have the following information ready:

- Your booking number and last name
- The passport details of everyone on your booking
- The emergency contact details of your nominated person (should an unlikely event arise)

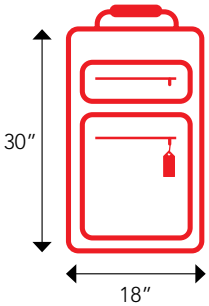
Please note, if you check in within 15 days of departure, we cannot guarantee your Travel Director will receive your details. In this instance, please print your completed registration form and present it to your Travel Director at the start of your holiday. All of your details are kept secure.

1. Go to www.trafalgar.com/express

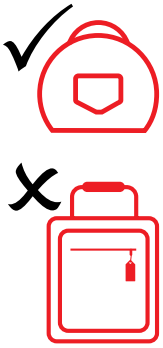
2. Enter your Booking No. and Last Name

3. Answer all questions and click 'submit'

Luggage



Luggage Allowance
This is restricted to one large suitcase per person with dimensions not exceeding 30x18x10" (76x45x25 cm) and a maximum weight of 50 lb (23 kg). Hotel porterage of this luggage is included in your holiday price.



Hand Luggage
Hand luggage should be one piece per person and small enough to fit under your coach seat or on the small overhead shelf compartment. This is your responsibility and should be carried on/off the coach with you. Please note that luggage with an adjustable handle and wheels will not fit in the overhead compartment of the coach and cannot be accepted as carry-on luggage.

Your understanding and cooperation is appreciated, particularly as it is necessary for your safety and comfort. If a second suitcase is carried, or if it exceeds the permitted weight and/or dimensions, a charge of €6/£5 per travelling day will be collected by your Travel Director. Airlines may have additional restrictions and may impose additional charges if you choose to check any baggage. Please contact your airline or refer to its website for detailed information regarding your airline's checked baggage policies.

Please note that airport porterage at the beginning and end of your guided holiday is not included. Loss or damage to luggage or any of your belongings is at your own risk, so please protect yourself with appropriate insurance.

Packing

When travelling as a couple, pack each suitcase with day and evening clothing for each person, so that in the unlikely event one of your suitcases is mislaid on your flight, you'll still be able to manage.

Ensure that your personal and holiday details are written on a label inside each suitcase (including name, address, telephone number, departure and return flight details). Write only your name and destination address on outside labels.

Make sure that your luggage is in good secure condition, and use a TSA approved lock for US security checkpoints. When carrying fragile items, use a rigid style suitcase for protection.

Check-in only your own suitcases. Do not carry items packed by other people. Never accept packages or articles from anyone unknown to you to carry on board the aircraft.

There are strict airport security regulations on items that may be carried on board aircraft such as liquids/gels and metal objects. Please consult your airline or travel agent regarding these and other restricted items and how they must be displayed at airport security checkpoints. We suggest you pack only essential items for daytime use in your hand-baggage, both for your flight and while on the coach. For example, your camera, medicines, anything that you use frequently or is particularly valuable. Expensive jewellery, clothing, etc. should be left at home for your peace of mind.

Clothing & Footwear

For information on suitable clothing and footwear, please refer to the listings under each country. However, a general tip would be to make sure you bring comfortable walking shoes as a number of cities in Europe are developing as havens for pedestrians.

What to Bring

This will depend upon your personal preferences, where you are travelling to and the time of year you are travelling. We generally recommend casual, lightweight, drip-dry clothing that requires little or no ironing. Laundry facilities are available at most of the places we stay, however, take sufficient clothing to last for about a week. Below is a list of items to consider packing for your Trafalgar holiday:

Clothing

Swimsuit	Undergarments
Sandals	Socks
Hat	Sleepwear
Shorts/skirts	Jeans/trousers
Warm jacket	Pullover/cardigan
Waterproof jacket	Shirts/blouses
Good walking shoes	

General Items

Spare batteries/charger	Camera/memory cards
Medications & prescriptions	Power plug adapters/converter
Toiletries	Collapsible umbrella
Insect repellent	Sunscreen
Travel sewing kit	Pocket calculator
Plastic bags	Travel alarm clock
Water bottle (screw top lid)	Sunglasses
Sachets of washing powder	Money belt or holster

Essentials

Passport (& Visas)	Travel insurance policy
Trafalgar documents	Airline tickets

Credit cards/pre-loaded currency cards

NB Do not pack your passport or money in your suitcase.

Tip: Weed out your wallet prior to leaving. Only take the essential identifiers like your drivers license and just two credit cards - one to carry, another to be locked in your hotel room safe.

Health

See individual country information for any specific health requirements or recommendations. If you are on a regular course of medication or there are medicines that particularly suit you, we recommend that you bring an adequate supply for your entire trip. Identical brands may not be available elsewhere, but also bring a copy of your prescription.

For easy access when travelling, please keep all your medication in your hand luggage, not in your suitcases. Carry prescription drugs in their original package to avoid customs questions. We respectfully suggest older passengers and those suffering from any existing medical conditions should have a thorough check-up with their doctor prior to departure. If you wear eyeglasses, you may wish to bring an extra pair or set of contact lenses in your carry-on luggage.

If you have any existing medical conditions, dietary requirements or disability that should be brought to our attention, it is essential that you inform us via your travel agent. Medical attention can be very expensive outside your own country, so be sure to take out adequate insurance.

Vaccinations

Please contact your doctor or healthcare provider before travelling to determine which vaccinations are recommended.

Make Friends Before You Go

When you travel with Trafalgar you will have the opportunity to meet new and interesting people from around the world. You can meet up with your fellow travelling companions by visiting Trafalgar's Online Community. Read posts from fellow travellers in our Online Forum and register for My Community, your private travel group portal. Visit www.trafalgar.com/community and click on the links at the bottom of the page.

Budgeting

Trafalgar itineraries include many features that will save you money on your trip – if you study your itinerary pages in the Trafalgar brochure you will see how many highlight visits and other sightseeing is included, as well as meals and entertainment. For personal items such as souvenirs, gifts, taxi fares, laundry and gratuities, we suggest you allow €9-€11 per day in Europe and £8-£10 per day in the UK. In addition, we recommend you budget for the following extra expenses per person:

Meals

Lunches are usually not included and individual requirements vary, but we suggest you allow €10/£9 per day. Where evening meals are not included, the cost will depend on the type and locations of restaurants used. As a guide, allow €25-€30/£22-£30 per day. You should budget for drinks with meals and refreshment stops during the day. Non-alcoholic drinks cost approximately €2-€3/£1.50-£2.50 each.

Optional Excursions

Experience has shown us that most guests participate in these excursions and you should therefore budget for them in advance. Optional excursions are operated by third party suppliers, but have been approved and endorsed by Trafalgar. These may be purchased direct from your Travel Director who will accept payment in cash in most major currencies, such as US Dollars or Australian Dollars as well as major credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express). Full details and prices are shown in your itinerary leaflet or on the guided holiday itinerary pages on the Trafalgar website.

Money

Since 2002, the Euro has been the currency throughout much of Europe. Please see the individual listings under each country for the applicable currency. We strongly recommend that you buy a small amount of each currency, particularly Euros, before arriving on the continent, since there may be no opportunity to exchange money as you enter a country. This enables you to make your initial purchases until you manage to get to a bank.

It is also possible at some banks and ATMs to draw cash on presentation of your credit card, though this may incur fees/interest payments – check with your bank before departure. It is a good idea to deposit sufficient funds into your accounts prior to departure and then use your Personal Identification Number (PIN) to access them. Check with your bankcard company regarding possible ATM availability. Even if you are planning to use your credit card, you may also like to arrange a Prepaid Currency card before you leave home. These are available in Euros, Pounds Sterling and other major currencies and allow you to pre-load any amount you wish. They can be used at ATMs as well as in shops and restaurants across Europe. Further information can be found at **www.cashpassport.com**

Please note that we don't recommend the use of travellers cheques as these are increasingly difficult to change and often incur fees.

Credit Cards

If you have a credit card, we strongly recommend that you bring it with you, since this gives you extra financial flexibility while travelling. The major international credit cards, especially Visa or MasterCard, are accepted by many restaurants, shops and hotels. The bill you sign will be made out in much the same way as at home, except that the total will be in the local currency. This will be converted into your home currency by the credit card company and invoiced in the usual way. Here are some further tips on using credit cards while travelling.

Check the expiry date of your credit card and the amount of credit available to you (do not forget any credit card purchases made just before you leave).

- Call your credit card company to advise them you will be travelling, as some companies will block the credit card when they notice unusual charge activity.
- Ensure you memorise your Personal Identification Number (PIN); do not write it down.
- Ensure that your credit card is kept in view at all times when paying for goods and services.
- Ensure that the total amount of your purchase is entered on the sales voucher in the correct currency before you sign it.
- Retain all copies of sales vouchers until you have verified them against your statements.
- Insist that all 'spoiled' sales vouchers be destroyed in your presence.
- Make sure your credit card is carried on your person.
- Never leave your credit card unattended in your hotel room, a vehicle or any other place.
- Treat your credit card as you would cash.
- Report immediately the loss or theft of your credit card.

Weather

The climate in the Eastern Mediterranean is hot in the summer. For weather conditions pertinent to your travel timetable, visit these websites:

- www.weather.com
- www.cnn.com/weather
- www.bbc.co.uk/weather/world

Mail

Prior to departing you should stop your mail or arrange for a neighbour to collect it. A full mailbox can be a treasure trove for hackers and identity thieves.

While you are travelling...

Your Travel Director and Coach Driver

Throughout your Trafalgar guided holiday you will be accompanied by a professional Travel Director and experienced Coach Driver. A Trafalgar Travel Director is more than just a guide. They are seasoned and experienced travellers, specially selected for their in-depth knowledge of the regions you will visit. They will enrich your experience with informative commentary on the history, culture and natural landscape of the region and reveal the hidden places that only an insider would know. They will also introduce you to your travelling companions and make you feel welcome. Trafalgar's Coach Drivers are fully licensed, qualified and experienced professionals who are selected for their impeccable driving skills and record.

Lost/Damaged Baggage

If upon arrival at the airport after your flight, your baggage fails to arrive or arrives damaged, go immediately to the airline representative (often situated in the Arrivals Hall before you go through customs) and report your loss/damage. They will ask you for the numbered baggage receipts given to you when you checked your baggage in for the flight. They will then commence a search for your baggage, and may award you some compensation to buy essential clothing until your baggage is found. You should also contact your travel insurance assistance company, as they may help with the recovery of the bag and offer some monetary compensation depending on the length of time the baggage remains missing.

Your Holiday

Trafalgar's philosophy is that it's your holiday and you should have the freedom to enjoy yourself as you wish. However, a great deal of planning goes into your itinerary to ensure you see all the main sights in the places visited. Trafalgar ensures you enjoy a full sightseeing experience in all major towns and cities visited on your itinerary. Local sightseeing is conducted by qualified Local Guides who are eager to share their vast knowledge and love of the local history and culture. In other places, your Travel Director will give you a brief orientation drive or walk to familiarise you with the locality, usually on the way to your hotel.

Optional Excursions

Most of your sightseeing activities are included in your holiday price. However, there is a wide range of other exciting excursions available, both while travelling and in the gateway cities before and after your trip. To assist you with planning your budget, your travel documents will include a comprehensive day-by-day itinerary with full details and costs of the optional excursions available. Some optional excursions cannot be paid by credit card. Your Travel Director will advise you. Please note that optional excursions are operated by third parties and Trafalgar accepts no liability. All optional excursions are undertaken at your own risk.

Trafalgar Noticeboards

In London, most of our hotels display a Trafalgar Noticeboard. If you do not find one, please ask the Trafalgar Local Host or at the concierge desk. Please read the notices as they contain details about the times your Local Host will be in the hotel and about meeting your Travel Director, if you are joining your holiday in London.

During your trip, your Travel Director will post a daily notice with details of the program timetable. Please check this regularly for the most up-to-date information and be ready at the specified times.

Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean are different

Visiting Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean is a totally new and different experience from life back home. You will find different people, food and customs and a completely different attitude and way of life. While many of its customs may seem strange to a visitor, they are, after all, what makes Europe and The Mediterranean 'Europe and The Med'. So our advice is to keep an open mind and enjoy the unfamiliar.

Hotels

At Trafalgar we pride ourselves on our superior hotel selection. Our hotels are centrally located and close to major attractions. As we travel from major cities to remote regions, the standards can vary, but you can rest assured that the hotels we have selected are the best available.

Europe has a tourism industry which has developed over several centuries and across many different countries, each with its own culture and traditions. The hotels often reflect that, so don't expect European hotels to be the same as those back home. Not all hotels are air-conditioned, for example, since in parts of Europe the climate does not usually warrant it. All Trafalgar hotel accommodation have private facilities, but again, this will vary. Most bathrooms have a bathtub with integrated shower, but occasionally only a walk-in shower. Room sizes in Europe, the UK and Ireland are generally smaller than in other parts of the world, and can vary within the same hotel, particularly where the hotel is a historic building.

Twin rooms usually consist of two single beds while double rooms contain one matrimonial bed. Triple rooms may consist of one double-bed and the third bed may be a rollaway bed. Single rooms in European hotels are generally smaller than twin-bedded rooms, and may contain one single bed.

You are strongly advised to book all your pre and post trip hotel accommodation before you travel. In large cities rooms are constantly in demand for tourism and business purposes.

NB Trafalgar contracted your trip accommodation many months ago. However, on occasions the hotel may need to relocate its guests into alternative accommodation. This can happen particularly when special events such as major conferences or exhibitions are taking place. It is beyond Trafalgar's control, but we will always do our utmost to minimise any inconvenience and you can rest assured that all sightseeing inclusions will be unchanged.

Facilities

All hotel rooms are clean and well serviced. Tea and coffee making facilities are provided within most hotels rooms in the UK, however this is uncommon in European hotels. Rooms usually contain STD/ISD phone and a television, and may have a mini bar, room service and in-house movies. Wherever possible we select establishments that offer additional facilities too, such as swimming pool, sauna, restaurants and bars. Please refer to the itinerary in your travel wallet for information regarding accommodation at each stop.

Allocation of rooms

Trafalgar does not allocate the rooms in any hotel – this is done by the hotel staff – nor can we guarantee the position of your room within any hotel. If you are on your guided holiday and you feel that you are receiving a disproportionate number of smaller rooms or rooms without a view, please inform your Travel Director.

Hotel Check-in & Check-out

Arrangements are made to ensure that check-in and check-out at hotels run smoothly, and your Travel Director will advise you in advance of the procedure before arriving at each hotel. On departing the hotel, always remember to return your room key to reception before boarding the coach!

Personal Hotel Expenses

Any additional costs incurred during your stay at the hotels (for example, laundry, telephone calls and bar bills) are your responsibility. Please ensure that your account is settled on the evening before you leave to ensure a smooth and speedy departure the following morning.

Laundry Facilities

When there is a two-night stopover, arrangements can be made for your laundry with hotel housekeeping (at your cost). Please note laundry services are not available on weekends or local holidays.

Lost Property

Once something is lost it is often difficult to find. Trafalgar cannot accept responsibility for property lost anywhere, although we will do our utmost to try and recover lost items. If you notice the loss while on your trip, you should immediately report it to your Travel Director who will complete a lost property form and give you a copy for insurance purposes. If you wish Trafalgar to trace any lost property for you – once your trip has ended – you should contact Trafalgar's London Reception Centre or Hotel Service Desk. Any lost property found will be returned to you at your own expense.

Your Coach

Modern, air-conditioned coaches have been carefully selected by Trafalgar with your comfort, safety and scenic viewing in mind. Your Trafalgar team will explain all the safety features of your coach at the beginning of your trip. For the comfort of all travellers, Trafalgar enforces a no-alcohol and no-smoking policy on board the coach. Our coaches are equipped with DVD and/or CD players.

Please note that antiseptic, bandages and other over-the-counter medications such as aspirin are not carried on the coach. Your Travel Director will be able to direct you as to where these items may be purchased locally should you need them.

Porterage

Your coach crew is always there to lend a hand and to liaise closely with hotels to ensure efficient handling of your luggage.

Seat Rotation

Where appropriate, our seat rotation scheme ensures you get to know your fellow travelling companions and enjoy the views from a different vantage point each day.

A Clean Coach

Your driver is responsible for the coach inside and out. Please assist by eating and drinking on board as little as possible.

No Smoking

For the comfort of all travellers, smoking is not permitted on board our coaches, but smokers need not worry – frequent comfort and relaxation stops are made along the way.

Onboard Restroom

Coaches on all itineraries in Europe are equipped with restrooms. While you are free to use this facility whenever required, your Travel Director will suggest that you make use of the facilities available at our frequent comfort stops.

Meals

Breakfast

Your holiday includes daily breakfasts following local traditions. Please note that in London, breakfast is only included if you have stayed in the hotel on the preceding night and booked it through Trafalgar. Check with Trafalgar in London as to how your breakfast will be served at your London hotel on the morning of your trip departure.

In Britain and Ireland, and on the majority of our Europe itineraries, you will enjoy a cold or hot buffet style breakfast. Please refer to your itinerary pages in the relevant Trafalgar brochure for full details.

Dinner

While Trafalgar encourages hotels to provide meals that feature local flavours, most offer fairly plain international fare that caters for the broadest range of tastes. If you have a more adventurous palate, you will still have a number of opportunities to sample local specialities throughout your holiday, either during your free time or on our unique Be My Guest dining experiences and other Highlight dining occasions.

Freedom at Meal Times

Trafalgar's philosophy of a careful mix of free time and organised activities extends to your meal arrangements, and only a limited number of lunches are included on our itineraries. We believe you should be free to spend your time at lunch stops in your own way, maybe trying a local dish or taking a light snack and using the extra time for additional sightseeing or shopping. Occasionally, our daily itinerary may require us to make a lunch stop at a recommended roadside eatery. In certain cities, dinners are not included, giving you an opportunity to dine out on your own, sample regional dishes and eat in typical local restaurants. Your Travel Director will be able to offer advice to help you choose.

Drinks

When not specified on an included meal, drinks are always at your own expense. In some European cafés/bars you pay one price to drink at the bar, and a higher price to sit at a table. Alcoholic drinks can be much more expensive if purchased in hotel bars.

Water

While tap water is perfectly safe to drink in many European countries, we suggest you drink bottled water where available. You may also wish to carry a small bottle of water with you throughout the day to ensure you are sufficiently hydrated.

Tipping

- We are confident that by the end of your trip you will have come to appreciate the important role your Travel Director and Coach Driver have played in giving you the best possible holiday experience. If you have been pleased with their services, you may wish to express this satisfaction with a gratuity, as is customary throughout the world. Since this is a matter of a private and individual nature, you should seal your gratuity in an envelope to present to each of them separately at the end of your holiday.
- Suggested tipping rates (per person travelling) for your Trafalgar team in Europe/UK are €4/£3 per day for your Travel Director, €2.50/£2 per day for your Coach Driver, and €2/£1 per half-day for a Local Guide.
- While on your guided holiday, tips and service charges are included for your included meals, accommodation and porterage, but at other times we suggest the following as a guide to general tipping practices in Europe/UK:
- Room service waiter: €1/£1 (We recommend that you carry some small change with you, as it is not usual to ask for change when tipping.)
- Taxis: 10-15% of the fare on the meter.
- Restaurants & bars: 10-15% of the total bill. If a service charge has already been added, there is no need to tip as much or at all.

Photography

Bring extra batteries and memory cards. Depending on the destination, use re-sealable plastic bags to protect camera equipment from dampness. Never leave a camera in a hotel room or elsewhere unattended.

Staying In Touch

Phoning home from hotels can be expensive. All hotels will add a service charge to the cost of any phone calls you make from your room. This charge can be very high. It is always cheaper for you to use public telephones (pay phones). Your Travel Director will advise you how to use the telephone if you are unsure. Alternatively, you could use an eKIT phonecard

What is eKIT?

eKIT is your global phone card and web communication service designed to keep you in touch with family and friends while you're travelling.

eKIT provides:

- Low cost international calls
- Send and receive voice mails
- Free email service
- Send SMS text messages from the web
- An online travel vault for secure storage of important documents (e.g. passport number)
- 24-hour customer service.

For more information check out the Trafalgar eKIT phone card in your travel wallet or go to **www.Trafalgar.eKIT.com**

How do I join?

Use your credit card to set up an account at **www.Trafalgar.eKIT.com** or call 24-hour customer service. Join before you go and receive a Trafalgar eKIT joining bonus!

How do I use it?

Your account number and PIN gives you access to all the phone and web based services. To make a call, simply use the toll-free access numbers for the country you are in, which you will find listed on your eKIT card, or at **www.Trafalgar.eKIT.com**

How long does it last?

eKIT is a rechargeable service – simply recharge your account using your credit card at **www.Trafalgar.eKIT.com** or call their 24-hour customer service. Ask about the monthly recharge bonus.

Is it competitive?

Yes – you may find cheaper phone cards in major cities – but you can only use them in the country of purchase and may not be in a language you understand.

The advantages of eKIT:

- It can be used from 70+ countries.
- You can call over 200 countries.
- You can recharge the card as you travel.
- You can use any balance remaining once you get home.

Emailing Home

Many hotels have wi-fi in the public areas as well as in the rooms and there is usually a charge for this. Some hotels also have one or two computers in the reception area for the use of guests. Internet cafes are also available in many cities.

Tip: Be careful with hotel computers. Do not access financial data on hotel or public computers or on public wi-fi networks.

Shipping

If you plan to purchase heavy items, we would recommend that you have them shipped to your home address, as airline charges are high for excess baggage. This can either be arranged by the shop where you make your purchases, or you can make up a parcel and ship it home. Our Reception Centre in London can advise you of some companies who specialise in this service.

Note:

- Goods may take several months to reach your home.
- You will be liable for import duty on all goods shipped to your home – personal duty-free allowances only apply to goods carried home personally.
- You are strongly advised to insure goods being shipped in case of breakage or non-arrival.

Security

It is important that you take precautions when travelling anywhere. If hotel security boxes are available then we recommend you use them for all your valuables. Do not leave these items in your hotel room. Prior to leaving home, purchase a shoulder or neck holster or a money belt to carry items such as your passport or extra money – make sure it is not visible under your clothing. Be wary of pickpockets! Wallets and purses should be kept out of sight in front/inside pockets; carry your handbags and backpacks around your front.

We also recommend that you photocopy your passport and credit card details and leave them in your suitcase in case of loss. If you are unsure about security while on holiday, your Travel Director will provide you with the best advice. If you need to make cash withdrawals, ATMs in bank lobbies are less vulnerable to devices that capture your credit card information - as they generally have camera surveillance.

Doctors

If at any time on your guided holiday you require a doctor, please inform your Travel Director who will arrange this for you. If you are staying at a Trafalgar hotel prior to your guided holiday commencing, please ask the hotel concierge to call the doctor. Ensure that you keep receipts for the doctor's visits, medicines and any other expenses incurred, as you will need them to claim on your insurance.

Public Holidays and Changes

During local or national holidays, certain facilities such as museums, sightseeing tours and shopping may be limited, so we sometimes have to make slight itinerary adjustments. We advise you to check with your Travel Agent before selecting a departure date so that your enjoyment won't be diminished. Also, local holidays, closing days and other circumstances may change the day of the week for timetabled dining out, gala dinners, sightseeing and other included activities.

Guest Feedback

Your feedback is always welcomed. Towards the end of your trip, your Travel Director will hand out a feedback questionnaire. We ask that you answer the questions, make any relevant comments and hand it back to your Travel Director. The questionnaires are sealed and returned to our Head Office. Every sheet is read and a summary of each holiday is given to management, and where necessary, appropriate action is taken to rectify any problems.

Egypt

Capital: Cairo
Location: Northern Africa
Language: Arabic
Population: 90 million
Land Area: 1,001,450km^2 (86,662mi^2)
Famous for: Pyramids, The Nile, Cleopatra

Money Matters

The currency used is the Egyptian Pound (LE). It is divided into 100 piasters (1 Egyptian Pound = 100 piasters). It is mainly a paper currency but there are also 25, 50 and 100 (1 pound) piaster coins.

Bank opening hours
Sundays to Thursdays only from 9.30am to 2pm.

Geography

It is the only land bridge between Africa and the remainder of the Eastern Hemisphere, it controls the Suez Canal, a sea link between the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean Sea.

Climate and Clothing

Except for the Mediterranean coast the country experiences a desert climate, which is hot and dry most of the year. Egypt's climate demands the coolest possible cotton clothing from May to September; a hat and sunglasses are essential.

Manners and Customs

Egypt society is conservative by nature and it is encouraged to respect local customs and sensitivities by dressing modestly. Being a Muslim society, women especially are encouraged to wear long skirts or loose fitting trousers and to cover their shoulders. In Cairo (and when visiting mosques) a head-scarf may also be necessary; men should wear trousers and a shirt.

Food and Drink

For a taste of Egyptian fare try a mezzeh – a selection of local salads, cheese, vine leaves and meat or Makhallal (tursho) spicy pickled vegetables. Or kebabs (chunks of lamb marinated in spices and grilled over charcoal) and hummus (chickpea dip). Although Egypt is a Muslim country, alcohol is still available in selected restaurants. However, local wine is definitely an acquired taste. Kahwa (thick, strong coffee) and Shay bil na'na' (mint tea) are very popular drinks. It is recommended that you only drink bottled mineral water.

Best Buys

Papyrus paintings, jewellery, copperware, stone carvings, perfume oils in beautiful glass blown bottles.

Shopping Hours
10am to 7pm (winter) and 10am to 8pm (summer).

Postal Information

Green post boxes with a motorcycle picture are for express mail, blue with an aeroplane for airmail and red with a train for ordinary mail.

Telephone

The country code is +20 (dialling in) and international access 00 (dialling out). Public telephones are most commonly found in cigarette shops. If you make a local call from your hotel room, you may be charged several times the normal rate.

Pyramids of Giza

Abu Simbel Temple, Egypt

Greece

Capital: Athens
Location: Southern Europe
Language: Greek
Population: 11.4 million
Land Area: 131,940km^2 (50,942mi^2)
Famous for: Greek Gods, Greek Islands, the Acropolis

Money Matters

The currency used is the Euro.

Bank opening Hours
Banks are open Monday to Thursday 8am to 2.30pm but close on Fridays at 2.00pm.

Geography

It is a peninsular country, with an archipelago of about 2,000 islands.

Climate and Clothing

Greece has a Mediterranean climate with mild winters and warm summers with little rainfall. From mid-May to September, it's very hot in Athens so pack light clothing and good sunglasses. Winters can get chilly and wet so bring a warm jacket or coat.

Spring and autumn evenings can turn cool so you may need a light sweater or raincoat.

Manners and Customs

Greek people are proud of their culture and with 97% being Christian Orthodox many of the traditional festivals celebrated today are religious. The Greeks are generally gregarious, generous and hospitable.

Tipping is normally at 10% of the bill. Handshaking is common and frequent. A nod of the head is a negative response.

Food and Drink

Food is celebrated in Greece. Appetisers (mezedes) come on small plates and can be shared. Try dolmades (stuffed vine leaves) or a selection of dips such as Tzatziki (yogurt with finely chopped cucumber, garlic and olive oil), Melitzanosalata (eggplant purée) and Taramosalata (crushed fish eggs).

Main dishes generally include meat, Moussaka (potatoes topped with eggplants, onions, minced beef and béchamel sauce) being the most famous, and kebabs.

Seafood dishes especially on the islands are recommended. There is a large range of Greek wines to choose from, the most famous being Retsina, a white wine made with pine needle resin. Today's Greek wines are internationally recognised and are frequently awarded wine industry prizes. Local spirits include ouzo, an anise based clear spirit. Coffee is thick and sugary. It is advisable to drink bottled mineral water.

The Acropolis, Athens

Best Buys

A selection of jewellery (gold, silver and reproductions of ancient jewellery), handmade carpets and rugs, leather (shoes, clothes, handbags), handicrafts such as embroidered items, woodwork and pottery.

Shopping Hours
Approximately 9am to 2.30pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Then approximately 9am to 2.30pm and then 5.30pm to 8.30pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Postal Information

Stamps may be purchased at the post offices. The post boxes are yellow. Stamps may also be bought at news stands and souvenir shops at a 10% surcharge.

Telephone

The country code is +30 (dialling in) and the international access code is 00 (dialling out). Yellow phone booths permit direct dialling to countries abroad.

eKIT
The access numbers for Greece are 00800-126-434 or 00800-1809-201-2429.

Public Toilets

Located in parks and squares throughout the centre of Athens. If there is someone in attendance, you should leave a small tip.

Useful website

www.gnto.gr

Israel

Capital: Jerusalem
Location: Middle East
Language: Hebrew and Arabic
Population: 7.6 million
Land Area: 20,770km^2 (8,019mi^2)
Famous for: Religious history

Money Matters

The currency is the New Sheqel (NIS), which replaced the Sheqel in 1985. Coins are issued in 5, 10, 50 agorot, 1, 2, 5, 10 new sheqel and notes in 20, 50, 100, 200 new sheqel. Money can be changed in the small exchange bureau found on most main streets, or at banks and hotels. Major credit cards are widely accepted, along with travellers cheques, although commission can be high. ATMs are found throughout the country.

Bank opening hours
Sundays to Thursdays 8:30am to 12 noon and normally 4pm to 5pm. Closed on Fridays and Saturdays.

Climate and Clothing

Israel has a Mediterranean climate, with a pleasant spring and autumn. It is hot and dry in southern and eastern desert areas. We recommend light weight clothes for warmer months and medium weights for winter.

Manners and Customs

Shalom (peace) is the word that begins and ends every conversation.

Food and Drink

Food specialities includes Falafel (deep fried chickpea balls, served in pita / flat bread and salad), Shwarma (meat slowly grilled on a rotating skewer, served in pita bread with fresh vegetables) and Hummus (chickpea puree). Soft drinks are on sale everywhere. Coffee is popular. Arab cafes serve very sweet Turkish coffee while other cafes also have cappuccino (café hafukh). Bottled water is advisable, as the tap water, while drinkable, does not taste nice.

Best Buys

Local handicrafts made from olive wood, embroidered clothing, diamonds, ceramics, gold and silver jewellery.

Shopping Hours
Shops are generally open Sundays to Thursdays, 9am to 1pm and 4pm to 7pm. Many stores close at midday on Friday and open again on Sunday morning.

Postal Information

Most letter boxes are red English-style pillar boxes. Others are white and blue and bear the postal symbol of a leaping deer. Shops and kiosks selling stamps also have the same sign.

Telephone

The country code is +972 (dialling in) and international access 00 (dialling out). Public phones can be found in post offices and are cheaper than calling from a hotel or a shop; have the operator in the post office make the call for you.

eKIT
The access numbers for Israel are 1800-920-3300 or 180-931-5243

Public Toilets

Toilets may be marked 'WC' or with male and female silhouettes.

Dead Sea

Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem

Jordan

Capital: Amman
Location: Middle East
Language: Arabic
Population: 6 million
Land Area: 89,342 km² (34,595mi²)
Famous for: The Red Rose City of Petra, The Dead Sea, Jerash, Wadi Rum

Money Matters

The local currency is the Jordanian Dinar, symbol JD, also pronounced as "jaydee". There are 1, 5, 10, 20, and 50 JD notes. The dinar is divided into 100 piasters (pronounced "pee-asters") of 1000 fils ("fills"). The fils is the unit most commonly used and you will usually see prices written as 4,750 (which is 4 JD and 750 fils). Currency can be exchanged at major banks, exchange booths and at most hotels. Street money-changers are best avoided. Exchange rates are set daily by the Jordanian Central Bank.

Bank opening hours
Banks are open 8.30am to 3pm Sunday to Thursday and closed on Fridays and Saturdays.

International credit cards are accepted at hotels, restaurants and larger shops. Please note that many smaller shops still prefer cash payment in the Jordanian currency, and it's essential for shopping in the local souks.

Geography

Located on desert plateaus in southwest Asia, Jordan is almost landlocked but for a short coast on the Gulf of Aqaba.

Climate and Clothing

Jordan has a hot, dry climate characterised by long, hot, dry summers and short, cool winters. January is the coldest month, with temperatures from 5°C to 10°C, and August is the hottest month at 20°C to 35°C. Daytime temperatures can be very hot in the summer; on some days it can be 40°C or more, especially when the Sirocco, a hot, dry southerly wind blows.

Lightweight cotton clothes are recommended for the summer, with a sweater for cooler evenings, especially in the inland areas. Warm clothing is recommended for the winter and a waterproof jacket.

Petra Monastery, Jordan

Manners and Customs

Jordan is a primarily Muslim country, although the freedom of all religions is protected. Muslim women's clothing often covers their arms, legs and hair. Western women are not subject to these customs, but very revealing clothing is never appropriate and conservative dress is advisable for both men and women in the old part of Amman (downtown) and outside the cities. Shorts are rarely worn and would be out of place in the downtown Amman area.

Food and Drink

The cuisine of Jordan relies heavily on fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables. Meals are usually leisurely occasions, with a lavish assortment of tasty salads and mezzah's (appetisers). These are usually served family-style, with diners sampling a variety of dishes with freshly baked bread. Hummus, a staple of the Middle Eastern cuisine, is usually prepared daily. Tasty street food includes sandwiches made with falafel or shawarma (slow-roasted meet); mixed grills, gallayat bandura (pan-fried tomatoes, onions and peppers often prepared with cubes of lamb, chicken or egg); kofta (ground beef topped with roasted tomato or tahina sauce); sunniyah (pan-roasted meat or chicken with roasted potatoes, onions and other vegetables; and, maglubah (which literally translates as "upside down"), a dish of rice, chicken and vegetables cooked together and then turned upside down onto a serving tray, along with bowls of yoghurt and fresh salad. The national dish of Jordan is Mansaf, a dish served on a large tray with steam rice and lamb piled on top of wafer thin shiraq bread, and flavoured with jameed, a tangy yoghurt based sauce.

Drinks

Although Jordan is a Muslim country, alcohol is still available in selected restaurants & hotels. However, local wine is definitely an acquired taste. Kahwa (thick, strong coffee) and Shay bil na'na' (mint tea) or Shay bi Maramiyyeh (Sage Tea) are very popular drinks. It is recommended that you only drink bottled mineral water. Also, try the Shanineh which is Cold Laban beverage (Cold Yoghurt Beverage).

Jordan continued...

Best Buys

Hand-woven rugs and cushions, beautifully embroidered items and clothing, traditional pottery, glassware, silver jewellery embedded with semi-precious stones, Bedouin knives, coffee pots, narghiles (hubble bubble), hand-made soap's, personal care products made from the unique minerals of the Dead Sea, cold – pressed olive oil, dried organically grown herbs and spices and a variety of table wines.

Shopping Hours

These vary but are typically from 10.00am to 10.00pm in the Malls and until 8.00-9.00pm in the open area shopping areas. Friday is exceptional where the Malls open at 2:00pm (after the noon time prayer) and many of the shops at the open shopping areas are closed on Fridays. However, restaurants and cafes are open 7 days a week.

Postal Information

Post Boxes are located in most hotels and stamps can be purchased either from the gift shops or the front desk. In Petra and Jerash the post office is inside the visitor centre itself.

Telephone

The country code is 00962 (dialing in) and international access 00 (dialing out). If you make a local call from your hotel room, you may be charged several times the normal rate. A local mobile SIM card is easy to obtain with a reasonable price.

Public Toilets

Located at the visitor centre in Petra, Jerash, Madaba, the Citadel, and Shobak. Elsewhere public toilets generally below standard and a tip is usually expected. It's a good idea to carry tissues with you when travelling, as toilet paper is not always supplied. Facilities are generally fine in hotels and restaurants.

Useful Website

www.visitjordan.com

Dead Sea, Jordan

Turkey

Capital: Ankara
Location: South East Europe
Language: Turkish
Population: 75 million
Land Area: 780,580 km^2 (301,383 mi^2)
Famous for: Hand woven carpets, Turkish baths, ceramics and leather

Money Matters

The currency in use is the Turkish Lira (TRY). It is divided into Kurus (1 Turkish Lira = 100 Kurus). Coins are issued in TL 1 and 50, 25, 10, 5 and 1 Kurus and notes are issued in TL 200, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1. Major credit cards are widely accepted and ATMs are widely distributed.

Bank opening hours
Mondays to Fridays, 9am to 12 noon & 1.30pm to 5pm.

Geography

Turkey has a high central plateau (Anatolia), narrow coastal plain and several mountain ranges. Mount Ararat, the legendary landing place of Noah's Ark, is in the far eastern part of the country. Turkey is generally hot or warm in summer with mild winters.

Manners and Customs

Hospitality has a strong emphasis on the Turkish way of life. Following religious laws of the Koran, the Turkish people are gracious and generous hosts and all guests (Misafir) are treated in the best possible manner. Turks also make every effort to communicate no matter what the linguistic barriers might be. Turkish life is centred around the coffee house and the bath house. Even the smallest Turkish village has its coffee house or Kahve as the social centre. Casual light clothes is the answer for the coast but include something stylish for dining and dancing. Modesty will win respect; low-cut tops and miniskirts (for women) are unsuitable everywhere except at the beach.

Blue Mosque, Istanbul

Food and Drink

Food generally has a Middle Eastern influence. Speciality dishes include Meze (a selection of starters), kebabs, in particular the Shish kebabs (pieces of meat such as lamb threaded on a skewer and grilled), Doner kebab (lamb and beef roasted on a vertical spit which is then thinly sliced) and for desert try Nightingale's nest (walnut stuffed pastry), baklava, various milk puddings and of course Turkish delight. The national drink is Raki (an aniseed liqueur), which can be drunk throughout the meal either neat or with water. Turkish coffee is strong and served black. Stick to bottled water, either carbonated or still.

Best Buys

Turkish Delight, local handicrafts, embroidered silks, woven carpets, jewellery, ceramics and leather.

Shopping Hours
Mondays to Saturdays, 9am to 7pm.

Postal Information

Post offices are identified by the letters PTT in black on a yellow background. Large hotels have post offices or will handle your mail for you at the desk. Post boxes are painted yellow.

Telephone

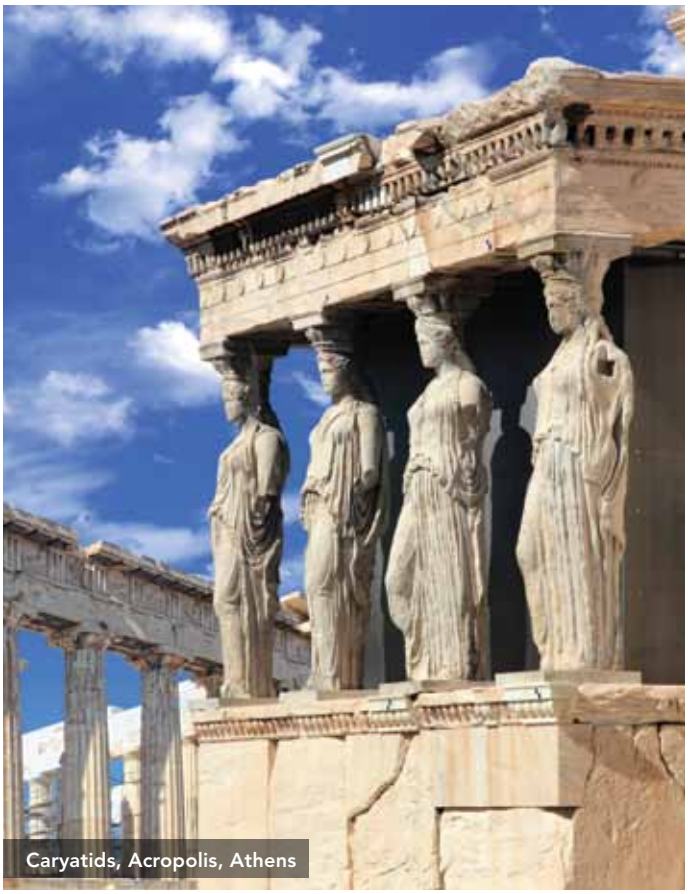
The country code is +90 (dialling in) and international access 00 (dialling out). Only a few countries can be called reverse-charge (collect).

eKIT
The access number for Turkey is 00800-151-0788.

Public Toilets

Facilities are generally fine in hotels and large restaurants and acceptable at big highway filling stations, otherwise they are often below standard. Carry tissues with you when travelling, as toilet paper is not always supplied. Men's toilets are indicated by the word Erkekler or Baylar and women's by Kadinlar or Bayanlar or are recognisable by symbols.

Greece


Caryatids, Acropolis, Athens

Rhodes, Aegean Sea