

Hello Travelers!

We hope all of you are excited for our trip ... only 42 days away! We are looking forward to traveling with you and getting to know you better; this really will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience!

We'd like to go over some important logistics to make sure our trip is a success. Apologies in advance for the length of the email but PLEASE MAKE SURE TO READ THIS to assist you in preparing for our adventure.

Arrivals into Madrid, Spain

We will arrive on June 10th in Madrid at 9:15am. When we land, an EF staff member (our tour director) will be there to meet us outside customs/baggage claim (we will look for the EF sign) and then he/she will take us to our hotel, or if time allows, we will do a little group adventure before checking into our hotel.

Flexibility

One of the most important parts of these trips is the ability to be flexible. Because we are all traveling for nine days, each person must make sure they are being respectful, polite, and kind every second of our trip. These trips are very fast paced and can make people grumpy, but before you know it, you will be home and longing for another chance to see these great sights. So, it is of the highest importance to have every person, adult and kid, be a good group member at all times and if any issues do arise, please let Jason or Matthew know so they can deal with it accordingly. Rooming adjustments may have to be made as we get our rooming assignments from EF daily so be flexibly about rooming too.

Pre-Departure Tips/Information

Departure Meeting: Sunday, June 8th at 3pm we are having a departure meeting at the MMS Multi-Purpose Room. All travelers and their parents must attend to collect their at-home departure packets and their traveling departure packets. This meeting is mandatory and will be our last all group gathering and Q and A session before we meet in Spokane the following morning. Please also bring your packed luggage that night so we can tag it and weigh it.

Meeting at the Spokane Airport: All travelers must be at the Spokane Airport, Delta Terminal, by **4:00am on Monday, 6/9** to meet the group and to receive their tickets. Please make carpool/hotel arrangements accordingly. We will all get ticketed together at that time.

Returning home: We will return to the Seattle Airport on June 18th. Then we will collect our luggage, load a bus, and drive back to MMS. Once we near Moscow, your child will call you for a ride home. Expect that your traveler will be exhausted by this point in time, so please be ready for a pick up. Estimated pick up time 8 pm on 6/18, but wait for the official call in case we are ahead or behind schedule.

Flights and hotel information: See the attached sheet for flights and hotel specifics. Also know that the airlines will provide you a ticket with a seat number. Plan on being spread out all over the plane and the airline expects you to be in the seat that you are ticketed.

Weather: It should be sunny and warm, so dress appropriately. Also, please check the weather before you depart at www.weather.com.

Clothing: The dress code on these trips is always casual and comfortable but make sure to dress so that you don't attract too much unwanted attention with revealing clothing. Dress for the hot weather, and bring good walking shoes, as we'll be on our feet a lot. We suggest always having good close-toed shoes (not flip flops) or very sturdy/grippy sandals, for any outdoor adventure days. You'll probably want to bring some nicer outfits for our included dinners and evening events. Bring your bathing suit, just in case we end up having a pool! Please don't wear expensive jewelry or watches, as you could be a target for petty theft. As always check out our packing list on our website at <http://globalxpeditions.weebly.com/>.

Packing: Only bring a carry-on and pack light. Not only will a carry-on lessen your chance of missing a flight connection, but we do not want to wait around for lots of bags, which can take additional time, especially if a bag goes missing. Know what you can/can't bring on board: www.eftours.com/student-tours/travel-preparation/packing/baggage.aspx. Bring any prescription medicines, in their original containers, that you need and your camera with extra batteries. Pack snacks and some light food to keep on your person at all times, you never know when you are going to need a snack break during our busy travel days. Also, once again, see our packing list for more specifics on what you should and should not pack. Don't forget your passport! You are all ticketed based on how your name appears on your passport ... if you forget your passport, you cannot go on this trip! All passports will be collected and kept by the travel leaders during the tour.

Money: Both France and Spain use the Euro, so you will need to exchange money. Once we arrive in Madrid we will all go directly to ATM machines and withdraw money together; ATM's always ensure the best exchange rate, even if there is a small international exchange fee. Please call your bank before you depart to let them know that you will be using your card(s) abroad, otherwise they might put a block on your account. You should also ask them about international ATM fees. Before we depart, you can ask one of the larger banks in the area to get you some local currency if you would like, but since we hit up an ATM in the airport as a group immediately upon arrival it is probably more convenient to just do it with the group at the airport. We recommend that you budget \$500 of spending money while abroad to cover lunches, gifts, extra excursions, etc. Lastly, always know the current exchange rate before you travel; check out <http://www.xe.com/>.

Tippling: *Do not tip while on this tour!* Jason and I have already built in the tips into the cost of this tour and you have already paid for tips. We, and EF, will disperse the tips to our drivers, tour guides, waiters, etc. accordingly. Again, do not tip while on the tour, we will take care of all of that for you.

Gifts: Often times when you travel, it is encouraged to pack gifts or small items from your home country to give to guides/host families/etc. This is not necessary for EF tours. Our guides truly prefer our cash tips as a gesture of appreciation. Since space is limited for packing, please do not worry about bringing extra items for our people on the ground.

Electricity: While traveling internationally, it is not uncommon for different places to use different voltage/plugs/sockets/etc. than the U.S.'s 110-120 volt system. If you want to be safe when using your devices feel free to purchase a converter pack and different outlet adapters. These can be found at Wal-Mart or a similar store, and are usually cheaper sold as a set that includes converters and adapters for

any outlet in the entire world; something you can use on future travel adventures. Do not wait until the last week to purchase these items... sometimes the stores do run out of things so plan ahead.

Phones/Calling Home/Internet: With global phones becoming more popular, they can be a great way to contact loved ones while traveling abroad but be careful. If you do not properly turn off your data plans, you can be charged a massive overage international fee. Before using your cell phones make sure you talk to your phone provider to see if they have any specific deals, either calling or texting, for your specific travel destination. You can also always use your wireless devices to email home whenever Wi-Fi is present. Calling cards are another option, but can be a challenge to figure out while abroad. Please practice using a calling card with your traveler before we depart to prevent confusion while traveling. While on tour Rebecca will be updating a travel blog for our group daily (pending internet availability) and that is the best way to keep track of us while traveling. Check out her blog at <http://holabonjour2014.blogspot.com/>. We (Matthew and Jason) will send out an email to everyone on Matthew's email list to let all family members back home know that we made it to our travel destination. If you have an emergency while we are traveling please follow the protocol sheet that we will provide to you in the departure packet. Matthew's email will be checked daily (if possible), but it is not to be used for parents to contact and check in with their kids.

Language: English is widely spoken in the major cities and within the tourism industry all over the world. But as you move out into the countryside, Spanish and French becomes more prevalent. EF will provide us with all needed translations and our tour guides will also speak English. We do, however, always encourage our travelers to attempt to communicate in the native language of the country. It is very polite to learn at least basic vocabulary of the country in which you are traveling.

Time Change: Madrid is 9 hours ahead of Moscow in time, so be prepared for the time change adjustment. We recommend you always sleep when you have down time because when we are moving we are going to be moving fast.

Sharing Photos: Once we return home we will make sure everyone has the opportunity to share their great photos with the other travelers. Using a website called Photobucket, we will create an account for everyone to share, exchange, and enjoy each other's photos (it's free).

Dietary concerns and food allergies: If you require any special meals or have specific dietary/medical needs, please make sure that you have contacted EF directly. Also, make sure you have shared those with your travel leaders and the airlines (they provide special meal options too).

Closing: We know this is going to be a great trip filled with lots of laughter and smiles! Please don't hesitate to call or email us prior to the trip with any questions.

Good luck on organizing your last few travel items! **We have our next meeting on May 19th**, please make sure to have **your three color copies (Front to Back) of your Passport and medical insurance card(s)** with you that night so we can complete the travel booklets before we depart on our trip.

Matthew and Jason

PS. *Our last ropes course and team building day is Saturday, May 31st from 9-3pm on Paradise Ridge.
Make sure you are ready for a day of pre-travel fun!!!*