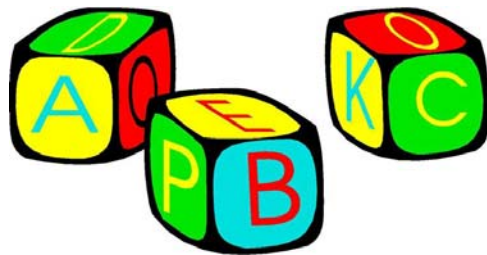


**ABC's**  
*of the*  
**AMR Travel Club**



*“Back to Basics”*

## ***"Travel teaches us how to see"***

This document is intended to give you some insight into the AMR Travel Club and various, common topics. Much of the information included will be helpful for any trip you may take; however, some of it applies only to the Travel Club trips. In any case, you should find the information helpful and informative.

Be sure to log onto our website – [www.amrtvl.com](http://www.amrtvl.com)  
periodically for updated information.

Please keep in mind as you prepare for your trip that the AMR Travel Club individual working with you is a ***volunteer***. That person is not paid to help you but does it because of his or her love of travel. Everything he or she does for you is on their own time. Please take a moment to say "*Thanks!*"

Traveling is wonderful. You see a whole new world and learn so much about the places and the people in it.

***"My favorite trip is always the last one I was on."***

# A

- **Airfare** - Air transportation is not included in the price of the AMR Travel Club tour unless specifically stated. You are either retired from or work for the airline, and we assume you will want to take advantage of your airline benefits whenever possible. Remember – “jetnet is your friend,” so use it to find and plan your flights. **It is also your responsibility to arrive on time for your tour**, or maybe even the day before to get over jet lag. The important thing is to be creative and *always* have back-up plans and tickets on other carriers – ID90s, ZEDs, etc.
- **AAdvantage Awards** – If you have accumulated AAdvantage miles, you may be able to use them for confirmed travel on a tour. Plan as far in advance as possible and contact the American Airlines AAdvantage Reservations department for your desired dates and flights. Or, go to [www.aa.com](http://www.aa.com) for more information.
- **A/C** - Air conditioning is not always available, or may be seasonable in some countries. Many hotels in Europe and Asia provide fans instead of air conditioning. Most of our Club trips are offered during the off-season which means air conditioning may not be available when you are there.



- **ATM and DEBIT Cards** - These cards usually offer the best way to convert your dollars into foreign currency in most parts of the world and they usually offer a better exchange rate. Check with your bank before you go for availability, and possible fees that may apply. Also be sure to advise your bank what countries you will be traveling in, and know your personal identification number (PIN), as most international keypads have only numbers.



# B

- **Be on Time (or get left behind!)** – When your guide gives you a specific time to return or to be somewhere, **be there and be on time**. Being late is not only rude, it can put the entire group behind schedule.



- **Bus Driver** - They do a great job so let them know you appreciate them by a friendly word, and by tipping them appropriately at the end of the tour. (*Also see "Tipping"*)
- **Backup Plans – HAVE THEM and BE PREPARED!** This is very simple to do *before* you go, but difficult once you leave home. Alternatives are essential should weather, strikes, or cancelled flights occur. Be prepared with alternate travel routes, ID90s, ZEDs, trains or even information on nearby hotels. You may also want to consider buying confirmed tickets.
- **Books** - Consider buying a guidebook telling you all you need to know about your destination. If it's small enough, you may want to take it with you. If it is large or borrowed, make copies of the pages you want to bring along and then discard them as you go. Having knowledge of your destination enhances the enjoyment of your trip.
- **Beggars** – These people may be pickpockets so be aware and be careful.

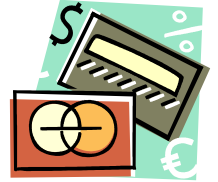


## C

- **Courtesy** - We are guests in our host country. Please be open to their culture, do not be critical, and don't expect everything to be as it is in the U.S. Learning "please and thank you" in their language is a nice thing to do and will be appreciated. In many other countries it is expected that you say "*hello*" when entering a shop and "*goodbye*" when leaving. Americans do not usually do this so they think we are rude if we don't. Try it and you will be surprised how well you are treated. And remember – don't be the "ugly American."
- **Confirmed Airline Tickets** – You may prefer to purchase confirmed airline tickets for your travel. If so, be sure to check with the trip coordinator BEFORE you confirm your flight reservation(s) to ensure adequate ground transportation time or you may have to make your own arrangements to meet the tour.

- **Cancellation Policy** - The cancellation policy of each trip is different. This policy is based upon restrictions from the tour company. Check with your trip coordinator as soon as possible if there is a chance that you might not be able to go. This may allow others to travel in your place.

- **Credit Card** - Payments to the Travel Club can be made using your credit card by following the links to PayPal on this website. Since we are charged a fee to use this service, we must pass that fee along to you. **There will be a 3% service charge** for each use of a credit card.



- **Credit Cards on the Road** – Credit cards work great in major cities around the world, but always have backup cash just in case. It's a good idea to inform your credit card company of your travel plans, and to verify if fees apply for international charges. And leave those department store cards at home!

- **Cell Phones** - Check with your cell phone provider regarding usage in other countries. You may also consider purchasing a calling card.

- **Currency** – Be sure to obtain some local currency before you leave your destination airport. If you need a taxi or a bottle of water, this will come in handy.



- **Cyber/Internet Cafes** – Internet cafes are usually available in most international destinations which makes it easy to check your email and/or flights in jetnet. Your host hotel may also have internet access. Keep in mind that keyboard configurations may vary by destination.

## D

- **Departure Taxes** - Many countries have departure taxes that you must pay when you leave their country. Some countries even impose an arrival fee. You are responsible for knowing and having the funds to pay. This information may also be available online for that specific country.

- **Denied Travel/Participation** – This is a difficult yet necessary topic. In the past, some Travel Club members have caused problems on trips which in turn, negatively impacted the rest of the group. Thus, any member or guest who does this could be subject to denied participation on future Travel Club trips.
- **Dietary Restrictions** - If you have dietary restrictions, notify your tour coordinator as soon as possible. Know what you can and cannot eat and what trips you may not be able to participate in. And, if you just don't like foreign food, you might want to pack a lot of Granola bars! You may also want to have your restrictions written in the local language to use in restaurants.
- **Deposits** - A deposit of \$100 is required for each trip. A minimum \$50 of this deposit is non-refundable. Deposits may **not** be transferred from one trip to another. (Also see “**Cancellation Policy**”)
- **Dress** - Please dress conservatively and comfortably. In many countries, shorts are not acceptable and shoulders must be covered to enter churches or holy temples. Men should also remove hats when entering public buildings. Try to dress to blend in with the local people and do not draw attention to yourself or that you are an American or an AA employee. Leave the “U.S. Flag” or “AA” shirt or cap at home!
- **Detective** - Be a detective. Open every drawer, look under every bed and behind every door including the bathroom for items you may have left behind. Returning items forgotten or left behind is virtually impossible. Good detectives leave nothing behind!
- **Discounts** - Many travel discounts are available. Sometimes the best discount is not the airline employee or travel industry rate. Check for AAA rates and AARP rates as well.
- **D3 Travel** - We know it can be difficult at times to travel with D3 guests so plan accordingly. Sometimes this may mean adding a few more days at the beginning or end of the trip.





- **Dues** – Current membership is required for everyone planning a trip with the AMR Travel Club. Your expiration date is calculated on a rolling year and not on a calendar year. For more information, click the “Membership” tab on the site.

## E

- **Emergency Numbers** - Carry emergency numbers with you and leave your destination information with someone back home. If an emergency does occur and you have to leave the tour, **make sure your trip leader knows your plans.**
- **Electricity** - Electricity is not the same in every country. If in doubt, check it out. Personal appliances used at your home may not work outside of the United States. You may want to take a converter AND an adapter with you.



- **Exchange Bureaus** - Avoid one-rate exchange bureaus. Places that show only one rate are hiding something. Usually that “something” is an excessive profit margin. Every rip-off exchange desk at every border crossing, casino and nightclub in Europe shows only one rate. Consider using airport exchange booths as they may waive the exchange fee with your airline ID.

## F

- **Free Time** - Some travelers want free time to rest or explore on their own, while others want optional trips to fill down time and are willing to pay extra for this option. The Travel Club tries to accommodate the group *when possible*. If you choose not to participate in the group itinerary, you must advise your trip leader *as soon as possible*.

- **Friends and Family** - On most trips you are able to take family and friends with you. If they occupy an additional room, they will need to pay an additional fee. If they occupy your room, there is no additional fee. Additionally, friends and family who are not booked on the original tour **MAY NOT** join the group at the destination.

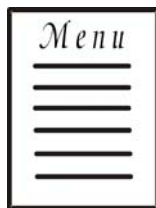
- **First Aid** - You should always pack basic first aid needs, special medications, etc. in your carry-on bag. Anti-bacterial hand gel and or wipes are always a good idea as well.



- **Film** – If you still shoot with 35mm film, don't pack it in your checked luggage. It may be ruined by going through the x-ray machines at the airports. It is expensive to purchase outside of the U.S. so plan to carry plenty with you. Lead film bags are also good to have - especially when traveling to foreign countries.



- **Feedback** - You may be asked for your feedback after a trip. Please let us know what you liked and what you would like to see improved.



- **Food** - If you prefer American food, please travel on domestic trips. If you are dining in an international country, be open to their culture and menu offerings and don't complain. Food is a great way to learn another culture.
- **Foreigners** - Remember that **you** are the foreigner when traveling to other countries!

- **Foreign Money** - Don't get ripped off! Know the exchange rate before you go and take a cheat sheet if needed. Also, exchange booths do not accept coins for conversion, so if you do not spend your coins before returning home, consider leaving them in a UNICEF envelope on the plane to help children around the world.



## G

- **General Information** - Lots of information is available on the web about the countries you will be visiting. Do an internet search and find out a little about the places you are going to visit before you go. This will make your trip much more enjoyable.



- **Group Travel** - All of our trips are planned as *group* travel. We also try to have a group meeting prior to departure with the participants of each trip.



## H

- **Hotels** – Remember - everything is bigger in the U.S. and that goes for hotel rooms as well. Rooms in the U.S. are usually much larger than rooms in other parts of the world. While comfortable, do not expect hotels outside of our country to be the same as at home. Think of them as “cozy” instead. Besides, how much time will you be spending in the room anyway?! The star ratings are also not the same as in the U.S. A 3\* in one place may mean a 2\* some place else. And meals offered at the host hotel often make our package price more affordable and convenient, so keep this in mind when traveling on a trip.
- **Hairdryers** - Those of us with hair may need these and while some hotels provide them, some do not. If this is important to you, you may want to consider a dual voltage hairdryer with adapters for the countries you are visiting.



## I



- **Itinerary** - **Do not try to change the itinerary.** It is set before departure and cannot be changed as we have negotiated the best value for our Travel Club dollar.  
*Thank you* for your cooperation!

- **Insurance** – Although optional, it is *your responsibility* to obtain insurance if this is a concern for you. We do highly recommend that you consider coverage should something unforeseen occur.

# J

- **Jet Lag** - Jetlag symptoms vary with the individual and the time of arrival. One suggestion is to stay awake until an early local bedtime to adjust to the time zone as soon as possible. You may also consider planning a good walk in that jet lag hates fresh air, daylight and exercise! And, if it doesn't work for you this time, try something else next time!
- **Jetnet** – This is your friend for all non-rev travel including ZED fares. Be sure to USE it!



# K

- **Kids** - Most of our trips are not appropriate for young children and are designed for adults only; thus the minimum age is usually 16 years or older for Travel Club trips. Check with the trip coordinator *prior to sign up* if you have any questions.

# L

- **Language** - Please don't presume that people you meet in your host country will speak English. Most people working in tourist hotels and attractions will have some knowledge of English but not all. Bring a small phrase book that has a pronunciation key and give it a try. It's amazing how much people in other countries appreciate the effort.
- **Liability Waiver** - **You must read and agree** to the Club Liability Waiver prior to signing your trip application. It can be found on this website on the "Forms" and "Trips" pages. This is required before being confirmed on a trip and your signature on the trip application will designate your agreement.
- **Luggage Size** - Most tour companies have luggage restrictions similar to airline requirements. We therefore encourage packing light. We suggest you only take one suitcase and one small carryon.



- **Low Cost Airlines** – Several low-cost carriers operate internationally and may offer an option for cities that American does not serve. Search the internet for these possibilities. Sometimes, their fares are less expensive than ZED fares.
- **Low Maintenance** - We **LOVE** traveling with these people! They pack light, never complain, are always ready to go, and are always on time!
- **Local Guides** –These are professional guides with specialized expertise in a specific city or region that guide you on a sightseeing tour. A small tip is appropriate. (Also see “**Tipping**”)
- **Land Tour** - Most of our trips are **LAND PACKAGES** only. This means that the tour usually begins at the hotel you will be staying at on the first night of arrival. Sometimes transfers may be included from the airport to your hotel. Check your itinerary for information. If a transfer is offered and you decide not to use it either by arriving at a different airport or at a different time, no refund will be made. **You must also advise your trip coordinator** prior to departure.

## M

- **Manners** - Good manners are always appreciated. Manners include being on time for bus and tour departures and being polite to those in our host country.
- **Moneybelt** - If you don't already have one, get one. It is an excellent item to wear around your waist and carry your valuables in. Operate with a day's spending money in your pocket so the money belt will not have to be visible during a day of shopping/dining. Suggestions for items to be kept in your moneybelt: passport, railpass, driver's license, credit cards, ATM or debit card, cash, and important phone numbers. A plastic baggie will also keep these items dry. A money belt is your key to peace of mind. The best moneybelts are those that fit inside your clothes. The large ones (fanny packs) on the outside of your clothes can be dangerous as all thieves assume that this is where your valuables are.
- **Medical** - None of us want to get sick away from home but this can happen. If it does, please inform your trip leader, and pursue treatment through the hotel or tour guide. Do not sign up for any trip that might put your health at risk if you have medical problems.



- **Membership** - The AA employee must be a member of the AMR Travel Club to participate. Please click "Membership" for more information and to find the current membership form.
- **Meals** - Meals included are listed on your itinerary and usually are noted as (B)(L)(D). In this particular scenario, it would mean that breakfast, lunch and dinner are included. Also, many meals are planned at the hotel. Dinners are usually "fixed" menus and choices may be limited. This GREATLY reduces the cost of the trip. If you prefer to eat elsewhere, plan to do so on your own. No refund can be given for meals not taken with the group. (Also see "**Dietary Restrictions**")
- **Mobility** – Many of our trips are physically challenging, so we suggest that you carefully review the itineraries prior to selecting a trip. Please ensure that the trip is suitable for your physical abilities. Countries abroad do not recognize the "Americans with Disabilities Act" (ADA) and may not be able to accommodate special needs. Contact the trip coordinator if you have questions.



## N

- **Non-Reving** - You most definitely want to have alternate routes in mind, or other airline arrangements as a back up. Arriving a day ahead often allows you to be rested and gives you peace of mind. (Also see "**Back Up Plans**" and "**ZED Fares**")

## O

- **Open Minded** and flexible - If you travel with a great attitude, you'll have a great trip and so will others! Travel is an adventure, and has become a very complicated process, so get plenty of rest so you'll be ready to enjoy.
- **Optional Tours** – These are not included in the price of the tour and may be available for an additional fee.
- **Organize** - Be sure to have all your travel documents organized before you go and keep them with you. **Do not** place them in checked luggage!

# P

- **Passport** - As a safety precaution, make a copy of your passport to keep in your carry-on luggage and leave another copy at home. If you lose your passport, it's much easier to have it duplicated. Also be sure the expiration date on your passport is more than SIX MONTHS from your departure date. For more information, check the U.S. Department of State's website.



- **Phones** - Calls from your hotel are usually expensive so you may want to purchase a prepaid phone card. You may also check with your local cell phone company regarding cell phone usage outside the U.S.

- **PayPal Payments** - The Club is assessed a 3% service charge by PayPal for each transaction. Accordingly, we pass this fee on to you for trip payments when you use your credit card through PayPal.



- **Payments** – If you are paying by check, be sure to make it out to “AMR Travel Club” and forward it to the trip coordinator at the address listed on the website for that particular trip.

- **Packing** - Pack Light – Pack Right. Remember when traveling to other countries, escalators and elevators may not be available and every bag you take, you may have to carry a great distance including up many flights of stairs.

Carry-on rules now vary from airline to airline and country to country. In addition to your essentials, you may consider packing a day's worth of clothing in your small carry-on bag.



Obviously, packing will also vary according to the destination but you really don't need to take seven outfits for a three or four day trip. And, we don't care if you wear the same thing over and over, because others certainly will be too! For more packing tips, check out **ricksteves.com**.

- **Pickpockets** - These people can be anywhere. Protect your valuables, keep items out of sight, and keep them secured. Keep everything you don't want to lose under your clothing and anything you can afford to lose in your pockets! You may also want to consider purchasing a money belt or “hidden pocket” for under your clothing.



- **Prescription Drugs** - Leave all of your prescriptions in the original bottles in order to "prove" they are prescribed by your doctor and keep all essential medications in your carry-on luggage. Be sure to review [www.TSA.gov](http://www.TSA.gov) for more information.



- **Photography** – Be sure to pack enough supplies – extra batteries, film, and/or memory cards. These items can be hard to find in some locations and can be very expensive.

- **Payment Dates** – Once you are confirmed on a tour, your trip coordinator will advise you of payment deadlines. Prompt payment is required to ensure our timely payment to the tour company is also met. Thank you!

## Q

- **Questions** – are welcomed and encouraged. Please contact a Travel Club volunteer and we'll do our best to answer!

## R

- **Rental Cars** - Thieves target tourists' cars, so don't leave anything of value in view in a parked car. And, always, always inspect the car thoroughly before leaving the lot. Make sure all scratches and dents are noted or you may be paying for them upon your return. European rental agencies are notorious for this. Consider taking photos of the car before and after.
- **Refunds** - Refunds are rare; please see "**Cancellation Policy.**"
- **Responsibility** - Although your volunteer coordinator will try to help you with your trip, it is ultimately your responsibility to finalize your own trip details. Please remember that the volunteer is giving up much of their free time so do not expect the same as a "paid" guide or travel agent would provide. Remember to let them know you appreciate them! While on the subject, it is also your responsibility *to arrive on time for your tour.*



- **Roommates** - We will let you know if others are looking for a roommate and will give you their contact info when possible; but the decision to travel as roommates is completely up to you and the other person.
- **Ripped Off** - If you have been a victim, American Embassies or Consulates are located in major international cities and they are there to help American citizens in trouble.

## S

- **Safety** - Always be aware of your surroundings. Do not dress conspicuously or bring attention to yourself or to your group. Attire, shoes, buttons or bags that clearly identify you as an American should not be worn. Precautions should be taken no matter what country you are visiting.



- **Shoes** – Shoes should always be comfortable, safe and appropriate for the destination(s) you are visiting.
- **Scams** – Here are a few to be aware of:
  - The "slow count" - Clerks will slowly count your change back, or with odd pauses, hoping the hurried tourist will be confused
  - Beggars can be pickpockets
  - Being jostled in a crowd while thieves are pawing your pockets
  - Fake police - **Never** give your wallet or passport to anyone
  - Young thief gangs, gypsies or children begging while your purse or wallet is being rifled
  - One person "accidentally" spilling something on you and the other "good samaritan" comes to your aid only to rob you
- **Single Supplement** - Most of our trips require a single supplement if you desire your own room. The supplement varies from trip to trip, so please check with the trip coordinator. Please note that some trips do not have a single supplement option available.
- **"See"** - On your itinerary, this means the tour bus will drive by the site so that you can see it, and you probably will not stop.



- **Sightseeing Tour** - A local city guide may accompany passengers on a tour of a city or site.



- **Snacks** - Consider taking a few items as “munchies.” Small items such as M&M's, gum or other fun treats work well in zipper baggies.

- **Stay with the Group** – Don't wander off, and be considerate of the rest of the group. Tours are timed and done so to keep on schedule. *Let your trip leader or tour guide know if you leave the tour.*

## T

- **Tipping** - Tipping is not only appreciated but expected. Tips should be given for tour guides, tour bus drivers, on cruises and often for waiters as is customary worldwide. For consistency and convenience to you, on most of our trips, tips will be collected in advance of your trip and distributed appropriately. You will be advised by the trip coordinator of the applicable amount.
- **Triple Rooms** - Most of the time when you share a triple room, you will receive a reduced rate. However, this is not always the case. Every tour is different so be sure to ask your trip coordinator.
- **Travel Advisories** – It is your responsibility to research your destination. For more information, visit the U.S. State Department's website.
- **“Time to Explore and Discover”** - On your itinerary, this means that you have free time to do what you want to, whether it is taking a nap or hiking to the top of the Eiffel Tower one more time!
- **Transfers** - Transportation to/from the airport to your hotel or city center may or may not be provided. Check your itinerary carefully.



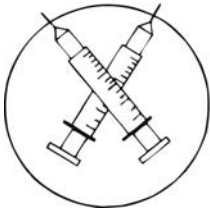
## U

- **Umbrella** - Always bring an umbrella - you will be glad you did! You might even want to consider a small, disposable poncho as well.



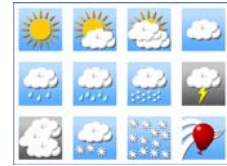
# V

- **Visa** - Some countries require US citizens to apply for visas. The visas are an additional fee you must pay to that country. You are responsible for having the correct documents for travel. For more information, visit the U.S. State Department's website.
- **"View"** - On your itinerary, this means that you may have a photo opportunity or a brief stop.
- **"Visit"** - On your itinerary, this means the tour bus will stop and the group will visit a specific location.



- **Vaccinations** - Vaccinations may be required for certain destinations. Your personal doctor is the best authority on what is recommended.

# W



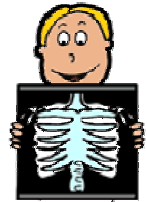
- **Weather** - It is your responsibility to check the weather forecast before you go and to pack accordingly.
- **Washcloth** - If this is important to you, please bring face or wash cloths with you as most hotels outside of the U.S. do not provide them.
- **WC** - This stands for Water Closet or toilet. In many places, WCs are staffed and attendants expect to be tipped a small amount.
- **Water** - Be sure to be safe. Some taps, like those on trains, are not for drinking. Read signs carefully, and if in doubt, don't. Bottled water is usually available in most parts of the world, and in some locations, you may even consider brushing your teeth with bottled water... *trust us!* Research your destination for more information.



- **Waiver** – **You must read and agree** to the Club Liability Waiver prior to signing your trip application. It can be found on this website on the “Forms” and “Trips” page. This is required before being confirmed on a trip and your signature designates your agreement.
- **Waitlist** - If the trip you would like to go on is full and you are still interested in going, you must still submit a trip application; but you will not submit the deposit until you are confirmed. You will be notified if space becomes available and full payment for the trip may be required at that time. Club membership must also be current.

## X

- **X-rays** – If using film, x-ray machines can wreck all of your vacation photos. Carry the film with you and do not put it in your checked luggage. Consider buying a lead bag to protect your film.



## Y

- **You** – You are an important part to the success of each trip! We also appreciate your participation and membership in the Club which allows us to award valuable annual scholarships to AMR employees and dependents. Thank YOU for being a part!



## Z

- **ZED** – ZED fares can be accessed through Jetnet on the “Travel” page as “GoZED” and “FlyZED.” ZED fares are low cost stand-by fares on other airlines with pricing based on zones or mileage. ZED fare tickets are also refundable if not used.

# Happy Trails

*Once I'm on my chosen trip, I'll make the best of it, no matter what happens. Nothing is always perfect. It may rain at a beach resort, the pillows may be lumpy, the shower may be just a trickle. If I wanted things exactly like I had at home, I would have stayed there!*

*Maintain a sense of humor and be creative. Enjoy people watching, participate in cafe life, or just spend time learning to value a new culture. Sometimes travel is just an attitude of adventure.*