

## Easy-On-The-Pocket Europe: Money-Saving Tips For Affordable Travel Abroad

(NAPSA)—Don't let the current sluggish economy extinguish your dreams of spending your hard-earned vacation time discovering Europe this year. Whether you're anticipating your maiden voyage or a return to a favorite vacation spot, planning ahead and researching all the options makes it easy to take in the European sites and culture while sticking to a budget.

### When to Go

Get the biggest bang from your vacation bucks by traveling during Europe's five-month off-season (November 1 to March 31). Prices plummet in resort hotels and in tourist cities such as Venice or Florence. Off-season travel has practical advantages; other than cheap airfare and plentiful budget accommodations, the reduced crowds allow one to get a taste of a truly authentic Europe.

### Booking Your Travel

In his newest book, *The Travel Detective*<sup>1</sup>, travel expert Peter Greenberg indicates saving money on airfare to Europe can be as easy as finding what he calls "secret flights." These flights are published on regular flight itineraries, but few people know they exist because they are on international airlines such as Singapore Airlines or Royal Jordanian rather than the more frequently travelled domestic carriers. You can save big on a flight from New York to Frankfurt by booking your travel with these airlines. Flying from Los Angeles to London? Try Air New Zealand and you might just save a bundle.

If you decide to travel during the prime tourist season, Greenberg suggests university dormitories, youth hostels and private apartments as low-cost options. Youth hostels have gone considerably upscale and many offer private rooms for a fraction of the cost of a hotel room.

### Travel "Insurance"

Nothing can spoil a relaxing vacation like losing your wallet or falling ill thousands of miles from home. Luckily, resources are available to help you to safeguard yourself against common problems



when traveling abroad. Western Union's free consumer brochure, *World Travel Tips*, offers important information for travelers, including tips and guidelines for saving money and seeking medical advice abroad. To obtain a copy, write to: World Travel Tips, c/o MS&L, 79 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016 or e-mail requests to [westernunion@msslpr.com](mailto:westernunion@msslpr.com).

### Shopping

It's only natural to bring souvenirs of your travels back home with you—just be sure to keep the following shop-smart tips in mind:

- Be aware that taxes, such as the VAT or Value Added Tax, can add 3 to 25 percent to the purchase price. While you usually cannot avoid paying the VAT up front, you can often have the tax refunded after you leave the country. Be sure to research the refund procedures and policies for each country you intend to visit prior to leaving.

- In many European countries, particularly those bordering the Mediterranean, negotiation on the price of goods is appropriate and expected. Shop around and find out what locals pay; prices can vary from vendor to vendor at the same outdoor bazaar.

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