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Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

European Summer Vacation Tips

By John Foley

Europe is where it all started. And Europe is where many Americans end up for spending their summer vacations.

One very important aspect of spending your summer vacation in Europe is the budget. An European tour can be expensive. The air tickets alone, from a major American city to a major European airport can cost you about \$1200. But if you are quick enough to catch budget deals on the Internet, you could possibly get the same ticket for under \$400.

During the trip itself, too, you shall need to think outside the box and venture off the beaten path. If you're traveling on a tight budget, a package tour may not always be what you are looking for. If you plan your movements carefully enough, it is possible to get a 10-day tour within \$1000, airfare included.

But where are you going to go? It makes good sense to read up on a few travel-and-tourism books before visiting this continent, since this place is so soaked in history.

Of course you should see Rome and the other famous cities of Italy. After all, the Rome is one of the bedrocks on which Western civilization was founded. The great basilikas of these cities, and specially the Sistine Chapel in Rome are some of the most famous architectural wonders of the world. You should specially see the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, which has a gigantic illustration by Michelangelo, one of the greatest artists the world has ever seen.

But do not be so overwhelmed by Rome neglect that you neglect the other fine Italian cities. Florence and Milan host some of the best artworks of the European Renaissance. Venice is famous for its buildings and museums, as well as its vast network of canals that serve as roads and highways in this city. A leisurely gondola ride along a typical Venetian waterway can be an experience of a lifetime. And don't forget to get your fill of the fantastic Italian cuisine - after all, these are the people who gave us pizza and spaghetti!

Greece is even older than Italy, in terms of civilization. And later influences from Persia (now Iran) and

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Turkey have given rise to an interesting culture that's a curious blend of East and West. Visit some of the oldest cradles of human civilization in Athens, Thebes and Sparta. The temple of Parthenon on the hilltop in Athens is one of the most often photographed architectures of the world.

France is the land of art and music, painting and literature. There was a time when Moulin Rouge and other famous public houses of Paris would be absolutely filled with world-famous painters and artists. Taste the fine wines from the south of France, and feel free to catch a little nap in a roadside open-air café after your lunch. It's common practice - the Latinate countries value their afternoon siesta more than love or money. Do not miss the castle of Bastille, and the Versailles palace, the royal seat of the kings of the Bourbon dynasty.

The university towns of Germany and Austria will be attractive to those who are of a serious and academic temperament. But both of these countries, as also Switzerland, offer very beautiful landscapes and an Alpine experience. Some of the world's best ski resorts are located in Switzerland.

Spain and Portugal, twin countries of the Iberian Peninsula, are some of the oldest colonizing powers in modern history. The whole continent of South America was dominated by them at one time, and all countries there still speak either of these two languages. Visit the mother countries and their ancient heritage, and also taste their famous wines and great food. Incidentally, port wine comes from the Portuguese city of Oporto, and Sherry was originally a Spanish drink.

Wherever you go, be sure to plan well ahead and carry a lexicon with you. Americans are typically monolingual, but Europe speaks many languages. Prepare yourself so that you can at least ask for food, water and shelter in four or five different native tongues.

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Making Summer Friendships Last

By Deborah Shelton

Summertime isn't just about getting dirty, staying up all night, playing in the rain, and going off to camp—It's about meeting new people. Follow these tips to turn your vacation acquaintances into lifelong friends.

1. Summer Memory Book

Make the summer last forever by preserving memories in a special book. Fill the plastic sleeves of a photo album with photos, ticket stubs, sections of road maps from summer trips, and other mementos.

When you're finished, exchange memory books with your closest summer buddy.

2. Picture Postcards

Keep in touch with vacation friends by sending picture postcards. Scan summer photos and print them on cardstock paper, 4 per page. Use scissors to cut individual cards. On the blank side, include your friend's address, your return address, and a postage stamp. Don't forget to write a cool message!

3. Pen Pal Club

Start your own pen pal club! Swap addresses with your new friends and make a commitment to keep in touch. Be creative— don't limit yourself to writing letters. Send an inexpensive gag gift every so often, or an audiotape letter. Send lists of your favorite things. For instance, one month send your pen pals a list of your 20 favorite movies, and then compare your lists.

No matter how you decide to keep in touch, don't let summer friendships end when summer ends.

Deborah Shelton is a mother, freelance writer, and author of the brand new book, "The Five Minute Parent: Fun & Fast Activities for You and Your Little Ones." Visit Deborah's website for more family-friendly ideas:

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