

Regional Directory

CONTENTS

Accommodation	1095
Activities	1098
Children	1099
Climate Charts	1100
Courses	1100
Customs	1100
Dangers & Annoyances	1101
Discount Cards	1102
Electricity	1103
Embassies & Consulates	1103
Gay & Lesbian Travellers	1103
Insurance	1104
Internet Access	1104
Legal Matters	1104
Maps	1105
Media	1105
Money	1105
Photography, Video & DVD	1108
Post	1108
Solo Travellers	1108
Telephone	1108
Time	1109
Tourist Information	1109
Travellers With Disabilities	1109
Visas	1109
Volunteering	1110
Weights & Measures	1110
Women Travellers	1110
Work	1110

Readers should note there are two types of directories in this book: the Regional Directory and individual country directories. The Regional Directory serves as a comprehensive resource for the whole of Western Europe. The country directories appear at the end of each country chapter and are a roundup of specific details pertaining to that country. Some subjects will be covered in both directories (eg general accommodation options are outlined in this Regional Directory, but prices are covered in the country directories). Though you should look at both directories for information, they cross-reference each other, making it easier to find what you're looking for.

ACCOMMODATION

The cheapest places to stay in Europe are camping grounds, followed by hostels and accommodation in student dormitories. Cheap chain hotels are popping up in the northern half of Europe, but guesthouses, *pensions*, private rooms and B&Bs have much more character and are often good value. Self-catering flats and cottages are worth considering with a group, especially if you plan to stay somewhere for a while. During peak holiday periods accommodation can be hard to find, and unless you're camping it's advisable to book ahead. Even camping grounds can fill up, especially in or around big cities.

Accommodation listings in this guide have been ordered by price, from cheapest to most expensive (ie budget to top end), and all prices quoted include private bathroom facilities unless otherwise stated (the exceptions to this are the France and Austria chapters). See the country directories for more details about local accommodation.

B&Bs & Guesthouses

There's a huge range of accommodation above the hostel level. In the UK and Ireland myriad B&Bs are the real bargains in this field, where you get bed and breakfast in a private home. In some areas every second house will have a B&B sign out the front. In other countries similar private accommodation – though often without breakfast – may go under the name of *pension*, guesthouse, *gasthaus*, *zimmer frei*, *chambre d'hôte* and so on. Although the majority of guesthouses are simple affairs, there are more expensive ones where you'll find bathrooms and other luxuries.

With B&Bs especially, make certain that they are centrally located and not in some dull and distant suburb.

Camping

Camping is immensely popular in Western Europe (especially among Germans and the Dutch) and provides the cheapest accommodation. There's usually a charge per tent

RESERVATIONS

Cheap hotels in popular destinations (eg Paris, London, Rome) – especially the well-run ones smack in the middle of desirable or central neighbourhoods – fill up quickly. It's a good idea to make reservations as many weeks ahead as possible, at least for the first night or two. An email or a three-minute international phone call to reserve a room (followed, if necessary, by written confirmation and/or deposit) is a lot cheaper and less frustrating than wasting your first day in a city looking for a place to stay.

If you arrive in a country by air and without a reservation, there is often an airport accommodation booking desk, although it rarely covers the lower strata of hotels. Tourist offices often have extensive accommodation lists, and some will go out of their way to find you something suitable. In most countries the fee for this service is very low and, if accommodation is tight, it can save you a lot of running around. This is also an easy way to get around any language problems. Agencies offering private rooms can be good value; staying with a local family doesn't always mean that you'll lack privacy, but you'll probably have less freedom than in a hotel.

Sometimes people will come up to you on the street offering a private room or a hostel bed. This can be good or bad – there's no hard-and-fast rule – but just ensure that before you commit you negotiate a clear price and make sure that it's not way out in a dingy suburb somewhere. As always, be careful when someone offers to carry your luggage; they might relieve you of more than the load off your back.

or site, per person and per vehicle. The national tourist offices often provide booklets or brochures listing camping grounds all over their country. See p1102 for information on the Camping Card International.

In large cities, most camping grounds will be some distance from the centre. For this reason camping is most popular with people who have their own transport. If you're on foot, the money you save by camping can quickly be eaten up by the cost of commuting to/from a town centre. You may also need a tent, sleeping bag and cooking equipment, though not always. Many camping grounds rent bungalows or cottages accommodating two to eight people.

Camping other than at designated camping grounds is difficult; there are not many places in Western Europe where you can pitch a tent away from prying eyes, and you usually need permission from the local authorities (the police or local council office) or from the owner of the land (don't be shy about asking – you may be pleasantly surprised by the response).

In some countries, such as Austria, the UK, France and Germany, free camping is illegal on all but private land; in Greece it's illegal altogether. This doesn't prevent hikers from occasionally pitching their tent for the night, and they'll usually get away with it if they have only a small tent, are discreet, stay only one or two nights, take

the tent down during the day and do not light a campfire or leave rubbish. At worst, they'll be woken up by the police and asked to move on.

Hostels

Hostels offer the cheapest (secure) roof over your head in Western Europe, and you don't have to be a youngster to use them. Most hostels are part of the national Youth Hostel Association (YHA), which is affiliated with **Hostelling International** (HI; www.hihostels.com) – formerly called the IYHF (International Youth Hostel Federation). The name change was done, in part, to de-emphasize the youth aspect.

Technically, you're supposed to be a YHA or HI member to use affiliated hostels, but you can often stay by paying an extra charge that will usually be set against future membership. Stay enough nights as a nonmember and you automatically become a member.

In Bavaria, Germany, the strict maximum age for anyone staying in a hostel, except group leaders or parents accompanying a child, is 26. However, most countries don't adhere to an age limit despite the 'youth' in their name – although at times there might be a €3 surcharge for geezers over 26.

To join the HI you can ask at any hostel or contact your local or national hostelling office. The HI website has links to all national hostel organisations.

At a hostel, you get a bed for the night plus use of communal facilities, which often includes a kitchen where you can prepare your own meals. You are usually required to have a sleeping sheet; simply using your sleeping bag is not permitted. If you don't have your own approved sleeping sheet, you can usually hire or buy one. Hostels vary widely in character, but the growing number of travellers and increased competition from other forms of accommodation, particularly the emergence of private 'backpacker hostels', have prompted many places to improve their facilities and cut back on rules and regulations. Increasingly, hostels are open all day, strict curfews are disappearing and 'wardens' with sergeant-major mentalities are becoming an endangered species. In some places you'll even find hostels with single and double rooms. Everywhere the trend is moving toward smaller dormitories with just four to six beds.

If you have a credit or debit card you now can book HI hostel rooms up to six months in advance through the website.

PRIVATE HOSTELS

There are many private hostelling organisations in Europe and hundreds of unaffiliated backpacker hostels. Private hostels have fewer rules (eg no curfew, no daytime lockout), more self-catering kitchens and a much lower number of large, noisy school groups. They often also have a much more party-friendly attitude.

However, whereas HI hostels must meet minimum safety and cleanliness standards, facilities vary greatly in private hostels. Dorms in some private hostels, especially in Germanic countries, can be co-ed.

The following websites are recommended as resources for hostellers; all of them have booking engines, helpful advice from fellow travellers and excellent tips for novice hostellers.

Hostel Planet (www.hostelplanet.com)

Hostels.com (www.hostels.com)

Hostelz (www.hostelz.com)

Hotels

Above the B&B and guesthouse level are hotels, which at the bottom of the bracket may be no more expensive than the B&Bs or guesthouses, while at the other extreme are luxury five-star properties. You'll often

find inexpensive hotels clustered around the bus and train station areas, which are always good places to start hunting, however, these areas can be charmless and scruffy. Look for moderately priced places closer to the interesting parts of town.

Check your hotel room and the bathroom before you agree to take it, and make sure you know what it's going to cost – discounts are often available for groups or for longer stays. Ask about breakfast; sometimes it's included, but other times it may be obligatory and you'll have to pay extra for it. If the sheets don't look clean ask to have them changed right away. Check where the fire exits are.

If you think a hotel room is too expensive ask if there's anything cheaper; often hotel owners may have tried to steer you into more expensive rooms. In fact you can sometimes find affordable rooms in some of Europe's famous old hotels simply by asking. They may be in the attic or have a weird shape but can be great value. In southern Europe in particular, hotel owners may be open to a little bargaining if times are slack. It is common practice for business hotels (usually more than two stars) to slash their rates by up to 50% on Friday and Saturday nights when business is dead. Save your big hotel splurge for the weekend.

Rental Accommodation

Rentals can be advantageous for families travelling together or those staying in one place for at least one week. You have the freedom of coming and going when you like without worrying about curfews and strict checkout times, plus a feeling of coming 'home' after a hard day of sightseeing. All rentals should be equipped with kitchens (or at least a kitchenette), which can save on the grocery bill and allow you to peruse the neighbourhood markets and shops, eating like the locals do. Some are a little more upmarket with laundry facilities, parking pads, daily maid services and even a concierge.

Check with local tourist offices in individual country chapters for a list of rental properties or try the following websites, just a few of scores: www.holiday-rentals.com, www.vacations-abroad.com, www.homelidays.com and www.holidayhavens.co.uk.

BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

Resorts

From foreboding Irish mansions to grand Swiss hotels, Western Europe has its fair share of luxury resorts, where travellers can enjoy memorable experiences. As noted above, ask about deals and rooms cheaper than the average. Travellers might find ski resorts in mountainous towns in Germany, France and Switzerland somewhat 'less' expensive, as they are as common as hotels in major cities.

University Accommodation

Some university towns rent out student accommodation during holiday periods. This is very popular in France and the UK as universities become more accountable financially.

Accommodation will sometimes be in single rooms (more commonly in doubles or triples) and may have cooking facilities. Inquire at the college or university, at student information services or at local tourist offices.

ACTIVITIES

Europe offers countless opportunities to indulge in more active pursuits than sightseeing. The varied geography and climate supports the full range of outdoor pursuits: windsurfing, skiing, fishing, hiking, cycling and mountaineering. For local information see the individual country chapters.

Boating

Europe's many lakes, rivers and diverse coastlines offer a variety of boating options unmatched anywhere in the world. You can houseboat in France, kayak in Switzerland, charter a yacht in Greece, hire a catamaran in the Netherlands, row on a peaceful Alpine lake, join a Danube River cruise from Amsterdam to Vienna, rent a sailing boat on the Côte d'Azur or dream

away on a canal boat along the extraordinary canal network of Britain (or Ireland, or France) – the possibilities are endless. See individual country chapters for more details.

Cycling

Along with hiking, cycling is the best way to really get close to the scenery and the people, keeping yourself fit in the process. It's also a good way to get around many cities and towns.

Much of Western Europe is ideally suited to cycling. In the northwest, the flat terrain ensures that bicycles are a popular form of everyday transport, though rampant headwinds often spoil the fun. In the rest of the region, hills and mountains can make for heavy going, but this is offset by the dense concentration of things to see. Cycling is a great way to explore many of the Mediterranean islands, though the heat can get to you after a while.

Popular cycling areas among holiday-makers include the Belgian Ardennes, the west of Ireland, much of the Netherlands, the coasts of Sardinia and Puglia, anywhere in the Alps (for those fit enough), and the south of France.

If you are arriving from outside Europe, you can often bring your own bicycle along on the plane. Alternatively, this guide lists many places where you can hire one.

See p1116 for more information on bicycle touring, and the Getting Around sections in individual country chapters for rental agencies and tips on places to go.

Hiking

Keen hikers can spend a lifetime exploring Western Europe's many exciting trails. Probably the most spectacular are to be found in the Alps and the Italian Dolomites, which are crisscrossed with well-marked trails; food and accommodation are available along the way in season. The equally sensational Pyrenees are less developed, which can add to the experience as you often rely on remote mountain villages for rest and sustenance. Hiking areas that are less well known but nothing short of stunning are Corsica, Sardinia and northern Portugal. The Picos de Europa range in Spain is also rewarding and Scotland's West Highland Way is world renowned.

The **Ramblers' Association** (☎ 020-7339 8500; www.ramblers.org.uk) is a charity that promotes long-distance walking in the UK and can help you with maps and information. The British-based **Ramblers Holidays** (☎ 01707-331133; www.ramblersholidays.co.uk) in Hertfordshire offers hiking-oriented trips in Europe and elsewhere.

For shorter day-hikes, local tourist offices are usually excellent resources. Just ask. Examples of questions that yielded directions for excellent walks include 'Where can I walk and see windmills?' in the Netherlands, and 'Where can I get deep into the forest?' in the Black Forest in Germany.

Every country in Western Europe has national parks and other interesting areas or attractions that may qualify as a hiker's paradise, depending on your preferences. Guided hikes are often available for those who aren't sure about their physical abilities or who simply don't know what to look for. Read the Hiking information in the individual country chapters in this book and take your pick of the alternatives presented.

Skiing

In winter, Europeans flock to the hundreds of resorts located in the Alps and Pyrenees for downhill skiing and snowboarding, though cross-country skiing is very popular in some areas.

A skiing holiday can be expensive once you've added up the costs of ski lifts, accommodation and the inevitable après-ski drinking sessions. Equipment hire (or even purchase), on the other hand, can be relatively cheap if you follow the tips in this guide, and the hassle of bringing your own skis may not be worth it. As a rule, a skiing holiday in Europe will work out about twice as expensive as a summer holiday of the same length. Cross-country skiing costs less than downhill since you don't rely as much on ski lifts.

The skiing season generally lasts from early December to late March, though at higher altitudes it may extend an extra month either side. Snow conditions can vary greatly from one year to the next and from region to region, but January and February tend to be the best (and busiest) months.

Ski resorts in the French and Swiss Alps offer great skiing and facilities, but are also

the most expensive. Expect high prices, too, in the German Alps, though Germany has cheaper (but far less spectacular) options in the Black Forest and Harz Mountains. Austria is generally slightly cheaper than France and Switzerland (especially in Carinthia). Prices in the Italian Alps are similar to Austria (with some upmarket exceptions like Cortina d'Ampezzo), and can be relatively cheap given the right package.

Possibly the cheapest skiing in Western Europe is to be found in the Pyrenees in Spain and Andorra, and in the Sierra Nevada range in the south of Spain. Both Greece and Scotland also boast growing ski industries – Greece is particularly good value. See the individual country chapters for more detailed information.

For comprehensive reports on ski conditions, try www.onthesnow.com.

Windsurfing & Surfing

After swimming and fishing, windsurfing could well be the most popular of the many water sports on offer in Europe. It's easy to rent sailboards in many tourist centres, and courses are usually available for beginners.

Believe it or not, you can also go surfing in Europe. Forget the shallow North Sea and Mediterranean, and the calm Baltic, but there can be excellent surf, and an accompanying surfer scene, in southwest England and west Scotland (wetsuit advisable!), along Ireland's west coast, the Atlantic coast of France and Portugal, and the north and southwest coasts of Spain. See the individual country chapters for more detailed information.

CHILDREN

Successful travel with young children requires some careful planning and effort. Don't try to overdo things; even for adults, packing too much sightseeing into the time available can cause problems. And make sure the activities include the kids as well – balance that day at the Louvre with a day at Disneyland Paris. Include children in the trip planning; if they've helped to work out where you will be going they will be much more interested when they get there. Europe is the home of *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Cinderella*, *King Arthur* and *Tintin*, and is a great place to travel with kids. Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children*, by

Cathy Lanigan (with a foreword by Maureen Wheeler), is an excellent source of information.

Most car-rental firms in Europe have children's safety seats for hire at a nominal cost, but it's essential that you book them in advance. The same goes for highchairs and cots (cribs); they're standard in most restaurants and hotels but numbers are limited. The choice of baby food, formulas, soy and cow's milk, disposable nappies (diapers) and the like is good in most Western European supermarkets.

CLIMATE CHARTS

For general advice on when to travel in Western Europe, see p27. Our climate charts (right) provide a snapshot of Western Europe's weather patterns.

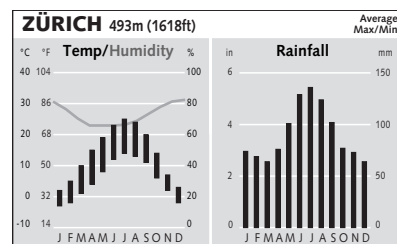
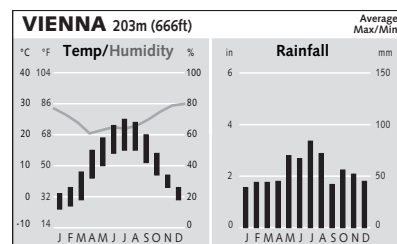
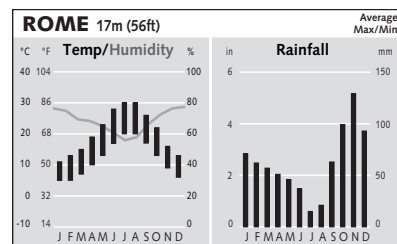
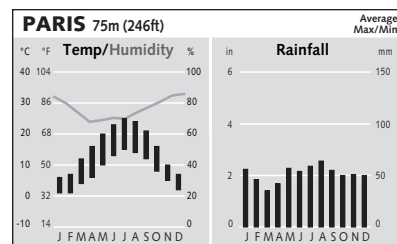
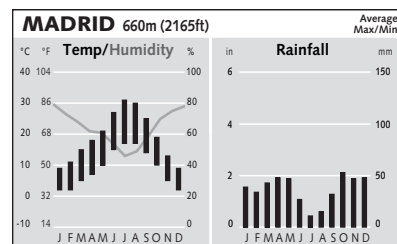
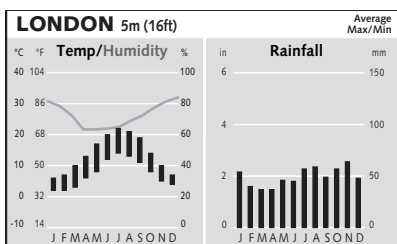
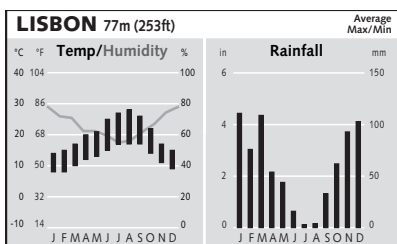
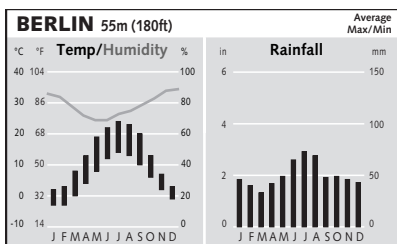
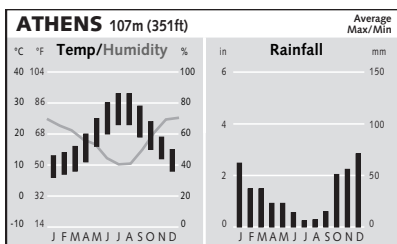
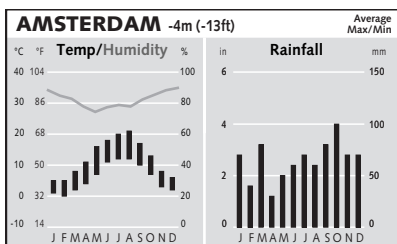
COURSES

If your interests are more cerebral, you can enrol in courses in Western Europe on anything from language to alternative medicine to organic farming. Language courses are available to foreigners through universities or private schools, and are justifiably popular since the best way to learn a language is in the country where it's spoken. The individual country chapters in this book give pointers on where to start looking for courses. In general, the best sources of detailed information are the cultural institutes maintained by many European countries around the world; failing that, try the national tourist offices or embassies. Student exchange organisations, student travel agencies and organisations such as the YMCA/YWCA and HI can also put you on the right track. Ask about special holiday packages that include a course.

CUSTOMS

Duty-free goods are no longer sold to those travelling from one EU country to another. For goods purchased at airports or on ferries *outside* the EU, the usual allowances apply for tobacco (200 cigarettes, 50 cigars or 250g of loose tobacco), alcohol (1L of spirits or 2L of liquor with less than 22% alcohol by volume; 2L of wine) and perfume (50g of perfume and 0.25L of *eau de toilette*).

Do not confuse these with duty-paid items (including alcohol and tobacco)



bought at normal shops and supermarkets in another EU country, where certain goods might be more expensive. (Cigarettes in France, for example, are cheaper than in the UK.) In this case the allowances are more than generous: 800 cigarettes, 200 cigars or 1kg of loose tobacco; 10L of spirits (more than 22% alcohol by volume), 20L of fortified wine or apéritif, 90L of wine or 110L of beer; and unlimited quantities of perfume.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

On the whole, you should experience few problems travelling in Western Europe – even alone – as the region is well developed and relatively safe. But do exercise common sense. Whatever you do, don't leave friends and relatives back home worrying about how to get in touch with you in case of an emergency. Work out a list of places where they can contact you or, best of all, phone home now and then or email.

Also, leave a record (ie a photocopy) of your passport, credit and ATM cards and other important documents someplace safe. If things are stolen, replacement is much easier with the vital details available.

Drugs

Always treat drugs with caution. There are a lot of drugs available in Western Europe, sometimes quite openly (eg in the Netherlands), but that doesn't mean they're legal. Even a little harmless hashish can cause a great deal of trouble in some places. See p1104 for details.

Don't even think about bringing drugs home with you either: if you have what energetic customs officials may think are 'suspect' stamps in your passport (eg Amsterdam's Schiphol airport), they may well decide to take a closer look. And drugs sent through the mail can result in arrest for the recipient.

Theft

Theft is definitely a problem in Europe, and nowadays you also have to be wary of other travellers. The most important things to guard are your passport, papers, tickets and money – in that order. It's always best to carry these next to your skin or in a sturdy leather pouch on your belt. Train-station lockers or luggage-storage counters

are useful places to store your bags (but *never* valuables) while you get your bearings in a new town. Be very suspicious about people who offer to help you operate your locker. Carry your own padlock for hostel lockers.

You can lessen the risks further by being careful of snatch thieves. Cameras or shoulder bags are an open invitation for these people, who sometimes operate from motorcycles or scooters and expertly slash the strap before you have a chance to react. A small daypack is better, but watch your rear. Be very careful at cafés and bars; loop the strap around your leg while seated.

Pickpockets are most active in dense crowds, especially in busy train stations and on public transport during peak hours. A common ploy is for one person to distract you while another zips through your pockets. Beware of gangs of kids – either dishevelled-looking or well dressed – madly waving newspapers and demanding attention. In the blink of an eye, a wallet or camera can go missing.

Be careful even in hotels; don't leave valuables lying around in your room.

Parked cars containing luggage and other bags are prime targets for petty criminals in most cities, particularly cars with foreign number plates and/or rental-agency stickers. While driving in cities, beware of snatch thieves when you pull up at the lights – keep doors locked and windows rolled up high.

In case of theft or loss, always report the incident to the police and ask for a statement. Otherwise your travel-insurance company won't pay up.

A word of warning – fraudulent shopkeepers have been known to quickly make several charge slip imprints with your credit card when you're not looking, and then simply copy your signature from the one that you authorise. Try not to let your card out of sight and always check your statements upon your return.

If you will be travelling for a while, you might consider having a trusted person at home who can go online to check your bank account from time to time. Identity thieves can steal your details and loot your account. Prompt action can stop this and get you restitution. (One main reason not to do this yourself from Internet cafés is

that spyware that can record keystrokes – and thus your account login details – is all too common.)

Scams

See the individual chapters for scams by country. Generally, be aware of shopkeepers in touristy places who may short-change you. Also there are continuing reports of people being gassed on night trains heading to Eastern Europe. The best thing to do here is lock the door and leave the window open a bit to keep the thieves and sleeping gas at bay.

DISCOUNT CARDS

Camping Card International

The Camping Card International (CCI) is a camping ground ID that can be used instead of a passport when checking into a camping ground and includes third party insurance. As a result, many camping grounds offer a small discount (usually 5% to 10%) if you sign in with one.

CCIs are issued by automobile associations, camping federations or sometimes on the spot at camping grounds. In the UK, RAC issues them to their members for UK£6.50.

Senior Cards

Museums and other sights, public swimming pools and spas, and transport companies frequently offer discounts to retired people/old-age pensioners/those over 60 (slightly younger for women).

Make sure you bring proof of age; that suave signore in Italy or that polite Parisian mademoiselle is not going to believe you're a day over 39.

European nationals aged 60 and over can get a Railplus Card. For more information see p1121.

Student & Youth Cards

The **International Student Travel Confederation** (ISTC; www.istc.org) issues three cards for students, teachers and under-26s, offering thousands of worldwide discounts on transport, museum entry, youth hostels and even some restaurants. These cards are: the ISIC (International Student Identity Card), the ITIC (International Teacher Identity Card) and the IYTC (International Youth Travel Card). You can check the full list of discounts and where to apply for the cards

on the ISTC website. Issuing offices include **STA Travel** (www.statravel.com).

For under-26s there's also a specific European card, the Euro<26. For information check out www.euro26.org.

ELECTRICITY Voltages & Cycles

Most of Europe runs on 220V, 50Hz AC. The exceptions are the UK, which has 240V, and Spain, which usually has 220V but sometimes still has the old 110V or 125V, depending on the network (some houses can have both). Some old buildings and hotels in Italy (including Rome) might also have 125V. All EU countries were supposed to have been standardised at 230V by now, but like many things in the EU this is taking longer than anticipated.

Check the voltage and cycle (usually 50Hz) used in your home country. Most appliances that are set up for 220V will handle 240V without modifications (and vice versa); the same goes for 110V and 125V combinations. It's always preferable to adjust your appliance to the exact voltage if you can (some modern battery chargers and radios will do this automatically). Just don't mix 110/125V with 220/240V without a transformer (which will be built into an adjustable appliance).

Several countries outside Europe (such as the USA and Canada) have 60Hz AC, which will affect the speed of electric motors even after the voltage has been adjusted to European values. CD and tape players (where motor speed is important) will be useless, but things like electric razors, hairdryers, irons and radios will be fine.

Plugs & Sockets

The UK and Ireland use chunky, three-pin square plugs. Most of the Continent uses the 'europlug' with two round pins. Greece, Italy and Switzerland use a third round pin in a way that the two-pin plug usually (but not always in Italy and Switzerland) fits. If your plugs are of a different design, you'll need an adaptor. Get one before you leave since the adaptors available in Europe usually go the other way. If you find yourself without one, however, a specialist electrical-supply shop should be able to help.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

See the individual country directories for the addresses of embassies and consulates.

As a tourist, it is vitally important that you understand what your own embassy (the embassy of the country of which you are a citizen) can and cannot do. Generally speaking, it won't be much help in emergencies if the trouble you're in is remotely your fault.

Remember that you are bound by the laws of the country that you are in. Your embassy will show little sympathy towards you if you end up in jail after committing a crime locally, even if such actions are legal in your own country.

In genuine emergencies you might get some assistance, but only if other channels have been exhausted. For example, if you need to get home urgently, a free ticket home is exceedingly unlikely as the embassy would expect you to have insurance. If you have all your money and documents stolen, it might assist with getting a new passport, but a loan for onward travel is almost always out of the question.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

In cosmopolitan centres in Western Europe you'll find very liberal attitudes toward homosexuality. Belgium, the Netherlands, and (believe it or not) Spain have legalised full same-sex marriages. The UK offers civil partnerships granting all or most of the rights of marriage, while France, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland offer limited-rights partnerships.

London, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, Madrid and Lisbon have thriving gay communities and pride events. The Greek islands of Mykonos and Lesbos are popular gay beach destinations.

The following websites are useful: **Damron** (www.damron.com) The USA's leading gay publisher offers guides for lesbians and gays to world cities. **Gay Journey** (www.gayjourney.com) A mish-mash of gay travel-related information, including lists of gay-friendly hotels in Europe.

International Lesbian and Gay Association (www.ilga.org) Campaigning group with some country-specific information on homosexual issues (not always up-to-date) and a conference calendar.

Spartacus International Gay Guide (www.spartacusworld.com) A good male-only directory of gay entertainment venues in Europe and the rest of the world.

See individual country chapters for more organisations, as well as gay and lesbian venues. For ages of consent, see right.

INSURANCE

It's foolhardy to travel without insurance to cover theft, loss and medical problems. Start by seeing what your own insurance covers, be it medical, homeowners or renters. You may find that many aspects of travel in Western Europe are covered. You may also find gaping holes. If you need to purchase coverage, there's a wide variety of policies, so check the small print. Some policies specifically exclude 'dangerous activities', which can include scuba diving, motorcycling, winter sports, adventure sports or even hiking. Some pay doctors or hospitals directly, but most require you to pay upfront, save the documentation and then claim later. Some policies also ask you to call back (reverse charges) to a centre in your home country, where an immediate assessment of your problem is made. Check that the policy covers ambulances or an emergency flight home.

The policies handled by **STA Travel** (www.statravel.com) and other student travel agencies are usually good value. In the UK, the website **Money Supermarket** (www.moneysupermarket.com) does an automated comparison of 450 partner policies and comes up with the best for your needs.

For health insurance see p1123; see p1118 for details on car insurance.

Worldwide cover to travellers from over 44 countries is available online at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services.

INTERNET ACCESS

As broadband access in homes becomes common in Western Europe, the number of Internet cafés is shrinking. You'll still usually find them in tourist areas and around big train stations. Otherwise you may end up at online gaming parlours where you can compose an email asking for money from home or bragging about the incredible deal you got on a new frock while boys blast aliens all around you. Costs average about €3 per hour. When in doubt ask at a tourist office, it's a top question after 'where are the toilets?'

Hostels, hotels and other accommodation usually have some sort of access. This

can range from a computer in the corner to wireless (wi-fi) access in every room. Note that the latter can sometimes cost €30 or more.

In general wi-fi (WLAN in Germany) access is best the further north in Western Europe you go. But it can be found in all countries, from cute cafés to train stations to libraries. If you have your own laptop with a wi-fi card, just open it up and see what signals are out there. Often you'll find access is through large providers such as **t-mobile** (hotspot.t-mobile.com), which charge €6 or more per hour.

To find wi-fi hot spots, try sites such as www.jiwire.com.

LEGAL MATTERS

Most Western European police are friendly and helpful, especially if you have been a victim of a crime. You are required by law to prove your identity if asked by police, so always carry your passport, or an identity card if you're an EU citizen.

Ages of Consent

The age of consent for heterosexual and homosexual intercourse is generally between 14 and 16 across Europe, although some countries such as Ireland and Northern Ireland have a higher age limit of 17 for certain types of sex. You can generally purchase alcohol (beer and wine) between 16 and 18 (usually 18 for spirits), but if in doubt, ask. Although you can drive at 17 or 18, you might not be able to hire a car until you reach 25 years of age.

Illegal Drugs

Narcotics are sometimes openly available in Europe, but that doesn't mean they're legal. The Netherlands is most famed for its liberal attitudes, with 'coffee shops' openly selling cannabis. However, even here, it's a case of the police turning a blind eye. Possession of cannabis is only decriminalised not legalised (apart from medicinal use). Don't take this relaxed attitude as an invitation to buy harder drugs; if you get caught, you'll be punished.

Equally, in Belgium, the possession of up to 5g of cannabis is legal but selling the drug isn't, so if you get caught at the point of sale you could be in trouble. In Portugal, the possession of *all* drugs has been de-

criminalised. Once again, however, selling is illegal.

Britain downgraded cannabis from a Class B to a Class C drug several years back. If you are caught, you will probably just be given an informal, on-the-spot warning and have your drugs confiscated. However, police can still arrest users, especially if they are caught smoking in public, in front of children or get aggressive when confronted.

Switzerland has gone the other way. It was moving towards decriminalisation but then had a last-minute legal about-face. Some people still smoke pot openly, but if police decide to enforce the law you'll face up to a Sfr400 fine just for possession of cannabis. Spain and Italy have also tightened their cannabis laws recently.

If in any doubt, err on the side of caution. For your own safety, don't even think about taking drugs across international borders.

Smoking

Cigarette smoking bans have been progressively introduced across Europe since 2004. Countries that now prohibit smoking in bars and restaurants include Ireland, Italy, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Smoking at railway stations or on public transport is banned in the Netherlands, Switzerland and Spain. Further bans are expected in England and Germany in 2006 and 2007, while the Netherlands is creating nonsmoking areas in restaurants and bars (possibly including 'coffee shops' selling cannabis!). So with such change afoot, ask before lighting up.

MAPS

Good maps are easy to find in Europe and in bookshops beforehand. Lonely Planet publishes plastic-coated, full-colour maps to Western European cities including Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, Dublin, London, Paris, and Rome.

Road atlases are essential if you are driving or cycling. Leading brands are **Freytag & Berndt** (www.freytagberndt.com), **Hallwag, Kümmmerly + Frey** (www.kuemmerly-frey.ch) and **Michelin** (www.michelin.com).

Maps published by European automobile associations such as Britain's **AA** (www.theaa.com) and Germany's **ADAC** (www.adac.de) are usually excellent and sometimes free if

membership of your local association gives you reciprocal rights.

Tourist offices are another good source for (usually free and fairly basic) maps.

MEDIA Newspapers & Magazines

Keeping up with the news in English is obviously no problem in the UK or Ireland. In larger towns in the rest of Western Europe you can buy the excellent *International Herald Tribune*, as well as the colourful but superficial *USA Today*. Among other English-language newspapers widely available are the *Guardian*, the *Financial Times* and the *Times*. Also readily available are *Newsweek*, *Time* and the *Economist*.

Radio & TV

Close to the Channel you can pick up British radio stations, particularly BBC's Radio 4. There are also numerous English-language broadcasts – or even BBC World Service and Voice of America (VOA) rebroadcasts on local AM and FM radio stations. Otherwise, you can pick up a mixture of the BBC World Service and BBC for Europe on medium wave at 648kHz AM and on short wave at 1296kHz, 6195kHz, 9410kHz, 12095kHz (a good daytime frequency), 15485kHz and 17640kHz, depending on the time of day. BBC Radio 4 broadcasts on long wave at 198kHz. VOA can usually be found at various times of the day on 7170kHz, 9530kHz, 9690kHz, 9760kHz, 11825kHz, 15165kHz, 15205kHz, 15335kHz and 15580kHz.

Cable and satellite TV are common in hotels. CNN International and Eurosport can be found throughout Western Europe, as can BBC World and other networks.

MONEY

For security and flexibility, diversify your source of funds. Carry an ATM card, credit card, cash and possibly travellers cheques. See p1101 on carrying money safely.

ATMs

Every country in this book has international ATMs allowing you to withdraw cash directly from your home account, and this is the most common way European travellers now access their money. However, you should always have a back-up option, as

THE EURO

A common currency, the euro is used in 12 EU states: Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. New EU member states in Eastern Europe might join the so-called 'euro zone' in 2007 or 2008. Denmark, Britain and Sweden have held out against adopting the euro for political reasons.

The euro has the same value in all EU member countries. The euro is divided into 100 cents. There are seven euro notes (five, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 euros) and eight euro coins (one and two euros, then one, two, five, 10, 20 and 50 cents). One side is standard for all euro coins and the other side bears a national emblem of participating countries.

some readers have reported glitches with ATMs in individual countries, even when their card worked elsewhere across Europe. In some remote villages, ATMs might be scarce, too.

You will have problems if you don't have a four-digit PIN number – check with your bank. If your card is rejected, try again in a few hours' time. Make sure you bring your bank's phone number, and if your card fails again, call them.

When you withdraw money from an ATM the amounts are converted and dispensed in local currency. However, there will be fees (see opposite). If you're uncertain, ask your bank to explain.

Finally, always cover the keypad when entering your PIN and make sure there are no unusual devices attached to the machine, they can copy your card's details or cause it to stick in the machine. If your card disappears and the screen goes blank before you've even entered your PIN, don't enter it – especially if a 'helpful' bystander tells you to do so. If you can't retrieve your card, call your bank's emergency number as soon as possible.

Cash

Nothing beats cash for convenience...or risk. If you lose it, it's gone forever and very few travel insurers will come to your rescue. Those that do will limit the amount to somewhere around €300 or £200.

If flying into Western Europe from elsewhere you'll find ATMs and currency exchanges in the arrivals area of the airport.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are handy for major purchases such as air or rail tickets, and offer a lifeline in certain emergencies.

Visa and MasterCard/Eurocard are more widely accepted in Europe than Amex and

Diners Club; Visa (sometimes called Carte Bleue) is particularly strong in France and Spain. There are, however, regional differences in the general acceptability of credit cards. In the UK, for example, you can usually flash your plastic in the most humble of budget restaurants; in Germany some restaurants don't take credit cards. Cards are not widely accepted off the beaten track.

To reduce the risk of fraud always keep your card in view when making transactions; for example, in restaurants that do accept cards, pay as you leave, following your card to the till. Keep transaction records and either check your statements when you return home, or set up an online login to manage your account while still on the road.

Like ATM cards, banks have loaded up credit cards with hidden charges for foreign purchases. Cash withdrawals on a credit card almost always are a much worse idea than using an ATM card due to the fees and high interest rates. And purchases in currencies different from home are likely to draw various currency conversion surcharges that are simply there to add to the bank's profit. These can run up to 5% or more. Your best bet is to check these things before leaving and try to use a card that offers the best deal. The website www.flyertalk.com has a forum called 'Best Card for Foreign Exchange', which has many useful tips.

International Transfers

International bank transfers are good for secure one-off movements of large amounts of money, but they might take three to five days and there will be a fee (about £25 in the UK, for example). Be sure to specify the name of the bank, plus the sort code and address of the branch where you'd like to pick up your money.

In an emergency, it's quicker and easier to have money wired via **Western Union** (www.westernunion.com) or **MoneyGram** (www.moneygram.com). All are quite costly.

Moneychangers

In general, US dollars and UK pounds are the easiest currencies to exchange in Western Europe. Get rid of Scottish and Welsh pounds before leaving the UK; nobody outside Britain will touch them.

Most airports, central train stations, big hotels and many border posts have banking facilities outside regular business hours, at times on a 24-hour basis. Post offices in Europe often perform banking tasks, tend to be open longer hours, and outnumber banks in remote places. While they always exchange cash, they might balk at handling travellers cheques that are not in the local currency.

The best exchange rates are usually at banks. *Bureaux de change* usually – but not always – offer worse rates or charge higher commissions. Hotels are almost always the worst places to change money.

Taxes & Refunds

Sales tax applies to many goods and services in Western Europe (although the amount – 10% to 20% – is already built into the price of the item). Luckily, when non-EU residents spend more than a certain amount (around €75) they can usually reclaim that tax when leaving the country.

Making a tax-back claim is straightforward. First, make sure the shop offers duty-free sales. (Often a sign will be displayed reading 'Tax-Free Shopping'.) When making your purchase ask the shop attendant for a tax-refund voucher, filled in with the correct amount and the date. This can be

used to claim a refund directly at international airports, or be stamped at ferry ports or border crossings and mailed back for a refund.

None of this applies to EU residents. Even an American citizen living in London is not entitled to rebate on items bought in Paris. Conversely, an EU passport holder living in New York is.

Tipping

Tipping has become more complicated, with 'service charges' increasingly being added to bills. In theory, this means you're not obliged to tip. In practice, that money often doesn't go to the server and they might make it clear they still expect a gratuity.

Don't pay twice. If the service charge is optional remove it from the bill and pay a tip. If the service charge is not optional, don't tip.

Generally waiters in Western Europe tend to be paid decent wages. For more details about tipping see the individual country chapters.

Travellers Cheques

As travellers cheques have been overtaken in popularity by international ATMs it's become more difficult to find places that cash them.

That said, having a few travellers cheques can be a good back-up. If they are stolen you can claim a refund, provided you have a record of cheque numbers, but it is vital to store these numbers away from the cheques themselves. Amex and Thomas Cook travellers cheques are reliable brands, while cheques in US dollars, British pounds or euros are the easiest to cash. When changing them, ask about fees and commissions as well as the exchange rate.

MINIMISING ATM CHARGES

When you withdraw cash from an ATM overseas there are several ways you can get hit. Firstly, most banks add a hidden 2.75% loading to what's called the 'Visa/Mastercard wholesale' or 'interbank' exchange rate. In short, they're giving you a worse exchange rate than strictly necessary. Additionally, some banks charge their customers a cash withdrawal fee (usually 2% with a minimum €2 or more). If you're really unlucky, the bank at the foreign end might charge you as well. Triple whammy. If you use a credit card in ATMs you'll also pay interest – usually quite high interest – on the cash withdrawn.

Most experts agree that having the right bankcard is still cheaper than exchanging cash directly. If your bank levies fees, larger, less frequent withdrawals are better.

PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO & DVD

Photography

Those of you using a digital camera should check that you have enough memory to store your snaps – a 256MB card will probably be enough. If you do run out of memory space your best bet is to burn your photos onto a CD. Increasing numbers of processing labs and Internet cafés now offer this service (it helps to have your own USB cable as some cameras use oddball connections and the place may not have a card reader). Some places provide a USB on request, but be warned that many of the bigger chain cafés don't let you plug your gear into their computers, meaning that it's back to plan A – the CD.

If you are travelling with a laptop you can download your own pictures and with a wi-fi connection be quickly posting your images online or emailing them to jealous friends and loved ones. There you are, topless on the Mediterranean for the world to see – almost in real time. You can also often send your photos out via Internet cafés.

If you're using film, your destination will dictate what film to take or buy locally. In places like Ireland and Britain, where the sky is often overcast, photographers should bring higher-speed film (eg 200 ISO). For southern Europe (or northern Europe under a blanket of snow and sunny skies) slower film is the answer (100 ISO or lower).

Film and camera equipment are available everywhere in Western Europe, but shops in larger cities and towns have a wider selection.

Lonely Planet's *Travel Photography*, by Richard I'Anson, is a helpful guide to taking the pictures you've always wanted.

Video

Properly used, a video camera can give a fascinating (or often mind-numbing) record of your holiday. Unlike still photography, video means you can record scenes like countryside rolling past the train window. Make sure you keep the batteries charged and have the necessary charger, plugs and transformer for the country you are visiting. In most countries it is possible to obtain video cassettes easily in large towns and cities. And do us just one favour – stop taping long enough to view your scene outside of the tiny monitor.

DVD

European DVD discs and players are formatted for the PAL (Secam in France) TV system as opposed to the NTSC system used in the USA and Japan.

DVDs are encoded with a regional code (for America and Canada this is 1, for Europe and South Africa 2 and for Australia and New Zealand 3). If you buy a disc in Europe check that its code corresponds with that of your DVD player at home as a player coded 1 or 3 will not play a disc that is coded 2. A way round this is to look for universally compatible players and discs carrying a 0 code.

POST

From major European centres, airmail typically takes about five days to North America and about a week to Australasian destinations, although mail from such countries as Greece is much slower. See the individual country chapter for local costs.

Poste restante services, where friends and family can write to you care of the main post office, are still offered, but email has rendered these largely obsolete. Express services such as **DHL** (www.dhl.com) are best for essential deliveries.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

There are few dangers travelling solo throughout Western Europe, but women should take extra precautions (see p1110). Be aware that accommodation places can charge higher single supplement fees, and you might find you're not at the best table in restaurants as a lone diner. Hitchhiking is risky and not recommended at all, particularly for single travellers.

TELEPHONE

You can ring abroad from almost any phone box in Europe. Public telephones accepting stored-value phonecards (available from post offices, telephone centres, newsstands and retail outlets, see opposite) are virtually the norm now; in some countries (eg France) coin-operated phones are almost impossible to find. Many people also use Internet cafés or places aimed at immigrants to make cheap calls home. Treat your hotel phone and its often hidden and outrageous rates the same way you'd treat a thief.

Mobile Phones

Travellers can rent (or purchase) phones with international capabilities. GSM cellular phones are compatible throughout all the countries in Western Europe, but prices vary according to hiring companies.

Phone Codes

For individual country and city area codes see the Fast Facts box at the start of each country chapter.

Toll-free numbers throughout Western Europe generally have an ☎ 0800 prefix (also ☎ 0500 in Britain). You'll find toll-free emergency numbers (ambulance, fire brigade, police) under Telephone in the country directories.

Phonecards

For most calls from public phones you're usually better off with a local phonecard. Reverse-charge (collect) calls are often possible, but not always. From many countries, however, the Country Direct system lets you phone home by billing the long-distance carrier you use at home (at rates usually higher than a local phonecard). The numbers can often be dialled from public phones without even inserting a phonecard. Calls made using a credit card are almost always very expensive.

TIME

Most of the countries covered in this book are on Central European Time (GMT/UTC plus one hour), the same time used from Spain to Poland. Britain and Ireland are also on GMT/UTC and Greece is on East European Time (GMT plus two hours).

Clocks are advanced on the last Sunday in March one hour for daylight-saving time, and set back on the last Sunday in October. During daylight-saving time Britain and Ireland are GMT/UTC plus one hour, Central European Time is GMT/UTC plus two hours and Greece is GMT/UTC plus three hours.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist offices in Western Europe are common and almost universally helpful. They can find accommodation, issue maps, advise on sights and activities and help with more obscure queries such as 'Where can I wash my clothes?'

Country chapters in this book list national and regional tourist offices. You'll also find the details for the local office in almost every city and town.

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Cobbled medieval streets, 'classic' hotels, congested inner cities and underground metro systems make Western Europe a tricky destination for people with mobility impairments. However, the train facilities can be okay, and some destinations boast new tram services or lifts to platforms. The following websites can help with specific details.

Accessible Europe (www.accessibleurope.com) Specialist European tours with van transport. Prices start at about €500 for four days.

Lonely Planet message board (thornetree.lonelyplanet.com) Share experiences on the Travellers With Disabilities branch.

Mobility International Schweiz (www.mis-ch.ch) Good site listing 'barrier-free' destinations in Switzerland and abroad, plus wheelchair-accessible hotels in Switzerland. Sadly, only partly in English. Address English emails to info@mis-ch.ch.

Mobility International USA (www.miusa.org) Publishes guides and advises travellers with disabilities on mobility issues.

Rolliday (www.rolliday.net) This house-exchange programme also includes lists of accessible (to varying degrees) camp sites, youth hostels and hotels in Europe – some properly tested and given a stamp of approval.

Royal Association for Disability & Rehabilitation (www.radar.org.uk) Publishes a comprehensive annual guide, *Holidays in Britain & Ireland – A Guide for Disabled People*.

Society for the Advancement of Travelers with Handicaps (www.sath.org) Reams of information for travellers with disabilities.

VISAS

A visa is a stamp in your passport or on a separate piece of paper permitting you to enter the country in question and stay for a specified period of time.

Most readers of this book, however, will have very little to do with visas. With a valid passport you should be able to visit Western European countries for up to three months, provided you have some sort of onward or return ticket and/or 'sufficient means of support' (money).

In line with the Schengen Agreement there are no passport controls at borders

between Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and most recently, Switzerland. Think of this zone as one country in terms of your three-month stay. It won't work to try to stay in each of the countries for three months. So if you are planning to stay in Western Europe for longer than three months, make certain that you leave the Schengen zone before your 90 days are up (say by a jaunt to the UK or the Czech Republic) and then return, getting a new entrance stamp in your passport.

Border procedures between EU and non-EU countries can still be thorough, though citizens of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA don't need visas for tourist visits to any Schengen country or the UK. For additional details, see the Visa section of the directories in the country chapters.

For those who do require visas, it's important to remember that these will have a 'use-by' date, and you'll be refused entry after that period has elapsed. It may not be checked when entering these countries overland, but major problems can arise if it is requested during your stay or on departure and you can't produce it.

VOLUNTEERING

If you want to gain greater European insight, a short-term volunteer project might seem a good idea. However, most voluntary organisations levy high charges for airfares, food, lodging and recruitment (from about US\$300 to US\$1000 per week) making such work costly. Let's face it, Western Europe is fairly well off so the need for volunteers from abroad is low.

One exception is **WWOOF International** (www.wwof.org), which helps link volunteers with organic farms in Germany, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Denmark, the UK, Austria and Switzerland. A small membership fee (€10 to €30) is required to join the national chapter and occasionally an extra administration fee is charged to send you a list of farms looking for additional hands. In exchange for your labour, you'll receive free lodging and food.

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

The metric system is in use throughout Western Europe. However, in Britain non-

metric equivalents are common (distances continue to be given in miles and beer is sold in pints not litres).

Continental Europe shows decimals with commas and thousands with full stops (for numbers with four or more digits the French use full stops or spaces).

There's a metric conversion chart on the inside front cover of this book.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Women travellers, in general, will find Western Europe relatively enlightened and shouldn't often have to invent husbands that will be back any minute. If you do find yourself in an uncomfortable situation or area, leave, or pipe up and make a racket. In parts of Spain, Italy and Greece you may find men more aggressive in their stares or comments.

WORK

Working in Europe is not always straightforward. Officially, an EU citizen is allowed to work in any other EU country, but the paperwork can be complicated for long-term employment. Other nationalities require special work permits that can be almost impossible to arrange, especially for temporary work.

However, that doesn't prevent enterprising travellers from topping up their funds by working in the hotel or restaurant trades at beach or ski resorts or teaching a little English – and they don't always have to do this illegally.

The UK, for example, issues special 'working holiday' visas to Commonwealth citizens who are aged between 17 and 30, valid for 12 months' work during two years (see www.ukvisas.gov.uk). Your national student exchange organisation might be able to arrange temporary work permits to several countries.

Seasonal Work in Western Europe

Work Your Way Around the World, by Susan Griffith, gives practical advice, as does *Summer Jobs Abroad*, edited by David Woodworth.

Remember, if you find a temporary job, the pay might be less than that offered to locals. Typical tourist jobs (picking grapes in France, washing dishes in Alpine resorts,

working at a bar in Greece) often come with board and lodging. The pay is essentially pocket money, but you'll have a good time partying with other travellers.

Starting points include:

Jobs in Europe (www.jobs-in-europe.net) Contains links to hundreds of organisations looking to employ Europeans and non-Europeans (with the correct work permits, of course).

Jobs in the Alps (www.jobs-in-the-alps.com) Mainly service jobs like chambermaids, bar staff and porters. Some linguistic skills required.

Natives (www.natives.co.uk) Summer and winter resort jobs and various tips.

Picking Jobs (www.jobs-in-the-alps.com) Includes some tourism jobs, too.

Season Workers (www.seasonworkers.com) Ski resort work and summer jobs; also has English teaching jobs.

Transport in Western Europe

CONTENTS

Getting There & Away	1112
Air	1112
Land	1114
Sea	1115
Getting Around	1115
Air	1115
Bicycle	1116
Boat	1117
Bus	1117
Car & Motorcycle	1117
Hitching	1120
Public Transport	1120
Tours	1120
Train	1120

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

national airlines based in Europe and key carriers elsewhere that serve Europe.

- Aer Lingus** (EI; www.aerlingus.com)
- Air Canada** (AC; www.aircanada.ca)
- Air France** (AF; www.airfrance.nl)
- Air New Zealand** (NZ; www.airnz.com)
- Alitalia** (AZ; www.alitalia.com)
- American Airlines** (AA; www.aa.com)
- Austrian Airlines** (OS; www.aaa.com)
- BMI** (BD; www.flybmi.com)
- British Airways** (BA; www.britishairways.com)
- Cathay Pacific** (CX; www.cathaypacific.nl)
- China Airlines** (CI; www.china-airlines.com)
- Continental Airlines** (CO; www.continental.com)
- Delta Air Lines** (DL; www.delta.com)
- Iberia** (IB; www.iberia.com)
- Japan Airlines** (JL; www.jal-europe.com)
- KLM Royal Dutch Airlines** (KL; www.klm.nl)
- Lufthansa** (LH; www.lufthansa.com)
- Malaysia Airlines** (MH; www.malaysiaairlines.com.my)
- Northwest Airlines** (NW; www.nwa.com)
- Qantas** (QF; www.qantas.com.au)
- Singapore Airlines** (SQ; www.singaporeair.com)
- South African Airways** (SA; www.flysaa.com)
- Swiss International Air Lines** (LX; www.swiss.com)
- TAP Air Portugal** (TP; www.tap-airportugal.pt)
- Thai Airways International** (TG; www.thaiairways.com)
- United Airlines** (UA; www.unitedairlines.nl)
- Virgin Atlantic** (VS; www.virgin-atlantic.com)

Tickets

An air ticket alone can gouge a great slice out of anyone's budget, but you can reduce the cost by digging for discounted fares. Stiff competition has resulted in widespread discounting.

For long-term travel there are plenty of discount tickets that are valid for 12 months, allowing multiple stopovers with open dates. For short-term travel, cheaper fares are available by travelling midweek, staying away at least one Saturday night or taking advantage of short-lived promotional offers.

You may choose to use a travel agent for your tickets to Western Europe but you will often have to pay a surcharge for this service. But if you have complicated plans, lots of questions or just need some hand-holding you may find an agent very worthwhile. Some travel agencies charge rock-bottom prices, but beware of back-alley operators. You may decide to pay more by opting for the safety of a better-known travel agent. Companies such as STA Travel, which has offices worldwide, are not going to disappear overnight and they offer good prices to most destinations.

Consider your eventual itinerary when looking for tickets. Some cheap fares may be on airlines that require one or more connections. For the same money or just a bit more you may be able to fly nonstop, saving yourself hours of travel time. It also pays to watch for ads for tickets to Europe –

chances are if one airline is offering cheap fares, they all are. And beware of hidden fees that can add hundreds to the cost of your ticket. British carriers in particular are adept at advertising bargain fares with huge and hidden fuel and other surcharges.

COURIER FLIGHTS

Courier tickets are a great bargain if you're lucky enough to find one. You get cheap passage in return for accompanying packages or documents through customs and delivering them to a representative at the destination airport. You are permitted to bring along a carry-on bag, but that's often all. Be aware that this type of ticket is usually very restricted, so check carefully before purchasing.

Most courier flights only cover the major air routes. They are occasionally advertised in newspapers, or you could contact air-freight companies listed in the phone book.

The **International Association of Air Travel Couriers** (IAATC; www.courier.org) offers access to its website and booking service for US\$45.

INTERNET

Buying tickets to Western Europe is easily done via the web, which allows seemingly

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Part of the adventure is figuring out how to get to Western Europe, and in these days of severe competition among airlines there are plenty of opportunities to find cheap tickets to a variety of gateway cities.

Options for reaching Western Europe by land or sea are pretty limited. International strife has led to the closure of most land routes from Asia, while watery options are limited to the luxury *Queen Mary 2* from the USA and freighters from various ports worldwide.

AIR

Major gateways to Western Europe include airports in London, Paris, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Munich and Rome. However, with connections you can reach dozens of airports across the continent. Once in Europe you can take advantage of discount carriers to get around (see p1115).

For details on airports, see the relevant sections of the country chapters.

International Airlines

Almost every international airline serves Europe. The following are the main inter-

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & climate change

Pretty much every form of motorized travel generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the USA will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon offset schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, support the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com/climatecare.

endless price and schedule comparisons. Individual airlines sites often have fares you won't find elsewhere. In particular look for web-only discounts. If you have the luxury of time, start your search many months before you plan to go and once you have a sense of the going rates you'll know when you see a really good deal.

Of course, checking a variety of airline websites can soon become tedious. That's where the convenience of travel websites can be unmatched.

Websites that can be useful include the following (many have branches specific to countries, eg for Australia add .au to the address). For other useful sites, see the geographic-specific listings below.

Expedia (www.expedia.com) Full service.

Hotwire (www.hotwire.com) Full service.

Kayak (www.kayak.com) Excellent site that checks both airline and discount websites.

Orbitz (www.orbitz.com) Full service with the widest range of fares.

Priceline (www.priceline.com) Full service.

Travelocity (www.travelocity.com) Full service.

SECOND-HAND TICKETS

You'll occasionally see advertisements on youth-hostel bulletin boards and in newspapers for second-hand tickets. That is, somebody purchased a return ticket or a ticket with multiple stopovers and now wants to sell the unused portion of the ticket. Unfortunately, these tickets are worthless as the name on the ticket must match the name on the passport of the person flying.

STUDENT & YOUTH FARES

Full-time students and people under 26 sometimes have access to better deals than other travellers. The better deals may not always be cheaper fares but can include more flexibility to change flights and/or routes. You have to show a document proving your date of birth, a valid International Student Identity Card (ISIC) or an International Youth Travel Card (IYTC) when buying your ticket and boarding the plane. See www.istc.org for more information.

From Africa

Rennies Travel (www.renniestravel.com) and **STA Travel** (www.statravel.co.za) have offices throughout Southern Africa. Check their websites for branch locations.

From Asia

STA Travel proliferates in Asia:

Bangkok (☎ 02-236 0262; www.statravel.co.th)

Hong Kong (☎ 2736 1618; www.statravel.com.hk)

Japan (☎ 03 5391 2922; www.statravel.co.jp)

Singapore (☎ 6737 7188; www.statravel.com.sg)

Another resource in Japan is **No 1 Travel** (☎ 03 3205 6073; www.no1-travel.com); in Hong Kong try **Four Seas Tours** (☎ 2200 7760; www.fourseastravel.com/english).

From Australia

For the location of STA Travel branches call ☎ 1300 733 035 or visit www.statravel.com.au. **Flight Centre** (☎ 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au) also has offices throughout Australia. For online bookings, try www.travel.com.au.

From Canada

Travel Cuts (☎ 800-667-2887; www.travelcuts.com) is Canada's national student travel agency. For online bookings see p1113 with a .ca in place of .com.

From New Zealand

Both **Flight Centre** (☎ 0800 243 544; www.flightcentre.co.nz) and **STA Travel** (☎ 0508 782 872; www.statravel.co.nz) have branches throughout the country. The site www.travel.co.nz is recommended for online bookings.

From USA

STA Travel (☎ 800-781-4040; www.statravel.com) is found across the USA. Many discount travel agents are known as consolidators (although you won't see a sign on the door saying 'consolidator'). San Francisco is the ticket consolidator capital of America, although good deals can be found in Los Angeles, New York and other big cities. Consolidator tickets are good for unsold seats unloaded by the airlines. They are usually heavily restricted: no changes permitted of any kind.

For online booking, see p1113.

LAND

You can easily get to Western Europe from the rest of Europe by road, bus or train. Things become more complicated as you get further away, however.

It is possible to get to Western Europe by rail from Central and eastern Asia, but count on spending at least eight days doing

it. Four different routes wind their way to Moscow: the Trans-Siberian (9297km from Vladivostok), the Trans-Mongolian (7860km from Beijing) and the Trans-Manchurian (9001km from Beijing) all use the same tracks across Siberia but have different routes east of Lake Baikal; the Trans-Kazakhstan (another Trans-Siberian line) runs between Moscow and Urumqi in northwestern China. Prices vary enormously depending on where you buy the ticket and what is included – advertised 2nd-class fares cost around UK£600 from Beijing to Moscow.

There are countless travel options between Moscow and Western Europe. Most people will opt for the train, usually to Berlin or Vienna. Lonely Planet's *Trans-Siberian Railway* is a comprehensive guide to the route with details of costs, highlights and travel agencies that specialise in the trip.

SEA

Mediterranean Ferries

There are many ferries crossing the Mediterranean between Africa and Western Europe. The ferry you take will depend on your travels in Africa, but the options include: Spain–Morocco, France–Morocco, France–Tunisia, Italy–Tunisia. There are also ferries between Greece and Israel via Cyprus.

Ferries are often filled to capacity in summer, especially to/from Tunisia, so it's advisable to book well in advance if you're taking a vehicle across. See the Transport section in the relevant country chapters for more information.

Passenger Ships & Freighters

Cunard's **Queen Mary 2** (www.cunard.com) sails between New York and Southampton 20 times a year; the trip takes six nights each way and costs under US\$3000 for two people in a standard double cabin. Deals abound.

A more adventurous alternative is as a paying passenger on a freighter. Freighters are far more numerous than cruise ships and there are routes to Western Europe from all continents. Passenger freighters typically carry six to 12 passengers (more than 12 would require a doctor on board) and, though less luxurious than dedicated cruise ships, give you a real taste of life at sea.

Schedules tend to be flexible and costs are around US\$100 a day. **Strand Travel** (www.strandtravel.co.uk) is a good source of info.

GETTING AROUND

Travel within most of the EU, whether by air, rail or car, is made easier owing to the Schengen Agreement, which abolished border controls between member states. All travellers must still carry a passport; there are two passport-control lines – EU and non-EU nationals. This was designed to speed up entries for EU nationals. Britain, Ireland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein are the only EU countries currently outside the agreement.

Budget airlines are revolutionising the way people cover long distances in Europe. However, hopping a plane deprives you of the fun of travelling by train and the cultural experiences of navigating train stations.

AIR

Getting around Western Europe by air has exploded in popularity during the past few years thanks to the proliferation of discount carriers and cheap fares. It is possible to go from London to Berlin at times for under €30. These sorts of fares are common, and more interestingly, dozens of tiny airports across Europe now boast airline service, so that a trip to Italy doesn't mean choosing between Milan and Rome, but rather scores of airports up and down the boot.

It is now possible to put together a practical itinerary that might bounce from London to the south of Spain to Florence to Amsterdam in a two-week period; all at an affordable price and avoiding endless train rides.

But with cheap fares come many caveats. First, some of the barebones carriers are just that. Discount leader Ryanair prides itself on nonreclining seats, nonexistent legroom and nonexistent window shades. At some of its far-flung airports any customer service will also be nonexistent. Scores of other discount airlines are following this model.

A second caveat involves the airports. If you really want to go to Carcassonne in the south of France, then getting a €20 ticket from London will be a dream come true. But if you want to go to Frankfurt in Germany and end up buying a ticket to 'Frankfurt-Hahn', you find yourself at a small airport 70km west of Frankfurt and two hours away by bus.

In this book you will find dozens of airports with air service. Check their websites

for information on the latest service details to the airport.

Airlines in Western Europe

Although many people first think of budget carriers when they consider a cheap ticket in Western Europe, the older established airlines such as British Airways and Lufthansa are also worth considering. They often have competitive airfares and serve major airports close to main destinations. See p1112 for a list that includes these carriers.

Major budget carriers in Western Europe are listed below. All have excellent websites showing maps with their ever-changing web of services. See the country chapters for scores of smaller airlines with more limited service.

Air Berlin (www.airberlin.com)

Easyjet (www.easyjet.com)

Ryanair (www.ryanair.com)

Virgin Express (www.virgin-express.com)

The best place to buy cheap airline tickets is over the internet. In fact many airlines only sell their cheapest tickets over the net. Various websites compare fares across a range of airlines within Europe. One of the best is www.skyscanner.net, which gets results from mainstream and discount carriers.

Air Passes

The three major airline alliances (listed below) each offer various schemes where you can purchase flights within Europe if you fly to Europe with one of the member carriers. Typically these cost about US\$65 to US\$100 per flight.

OneWorld (www.oneworld.com)

Sky Team (www.skyteam.com)

Star Alliance (www.staralliance.com)

BICYCLE

A tour of Western Europe by bike may seem like a daunting prospect but help is at hand. The **Cyclists' Touring Club** (CIC; ☎ 0870 873 0060; www.ctc.org.uk) is based in the UK and offers its members an information service on all matters associated with cycling (including cycling conditions, detailed routes, itineraries and maps).

The key to a successful trip is to travel light. What you carry should be largely determined by your destination and the type of trip you're taking. Even for the shortest and most basic trip it's worth carrying the tools necessary

for repairing a puncture. Other things you might want to consider packing are spare brake and gear cables, spanners, Allen keys, spare spokes of the correct length and strong adhesive tape.

Wearing helmets is not compulsory but is advised. A seasoned cyclist can average about 80km a day, but this depends on the terrain and how much you are carrying.

For more information on cycling, see p1098 and the Activities section of individual country chapters.

Purchase

For major cycling tours it's best to have a bike you're familiar with, so consider bringing your own rather than buying on arrival. If you can't be bothered with the hassle, there are plenty of places to buy in Western Europe (shops sell new and second-hand bicycles or you can check local papers for private vendors).

Rental

It is easy to rent bicycles in Western Europe and you can often negotiate good deals. Rental periods vary. Local tourist offices will carry information on rental outlets. Occasionally you can drop the bicycle off at a different location so you don't have to double back on your route.

Transporting a Bicycle

If you want to bring your own bicycle to Western Europe, you should be able to take it with you on the plane relatively easily. Check with the airlines for details before you buy your ticket as each one has different policies.

Within Western Europe, bikes can sometimes be brought with you onto a train, subject to a small supplementary fee. See the Transport section in the individual country chapters.

Fast trains can rarely accommodate bikes: they might need to be sent as registered luggage and may end up on a different train from the one you take. This is often the case in France and Spain. Eurostar charges UK£20 to send a bike as registered luggage on its routes. You can transport your bicycle with you on Eurotunnel through the Channel Tunnel.

The UK-based **Bike Express** (☎ 01642-251 440; www.bike-express.co.uk) is a coach service where cyclists can travel with their bicycles. It runs

in the summer in the UK, France, Italy and Spain, with pick-up/drop-off points en route.

BOAT

Several ferry companies compete on all the main ferry routes, and the resulting service is comprehensive but complicated. The same ferry company can have a host of different prices for the same route, depending upon the time of day or year, the validity of the ticket or the length of your vehicle. It is worth planning (and booking) ahead where possible as there may be special reductions on off-peak crossings and advance-purchase tickets. Most ferry companies adjust prices according to the level of demand (so-called 'fluid' or 'dynamic' pricing), so it may pay to offer alternative travel dates. Vehicle tickets usually include the driver and a full complement of passengers.

Major ferry routes for users of this book include the thicket of services between Britain and France as well as routes between Italy and Greece. See the relevant chapters for details.

Rail-pass holders are entitled to discounts or free travel on some lines. Food on ferries is often expensive (and lousy), so bring your own when possible. It is also worth knowing that if you take your vehicle on board, you are usually denied access to it during the voyage.

BUS

Buses sometimes have the edge in terms of costs, but are generally slower and less comfortable than trains and at times not as cheap or quick as airlines. Europe's biggest network of international buses is provided by a group of bus companies that operates under the name of **Eurolines** (www.eurolines.com). There are a lot of services and it is possible to travel very far for under €100.

See the Transport section in the individual country chapters for more information about long-distance buses.

Bus Passes

Eurolines' various affiliates offer scores of national and regional bus passes. See the country chapters for details as well as the Eurolines website.

Busabout (☎ UK 020-7950 1661; www.busabout.com) operates buses that complete set circuits

around Europe, stopping at major cities. You get unlimited travel per sector and can 'hop-on, hop-off' at any scheduled stop, then resume with a later bus. Buses are often oversubscribed, so prebook each sector to avoid being stranded.

Departures are every two days from April to October, or May to September for Spain and Portugal. The circuits cover all countries in continental Western Europe, and you can pay to add on Greece, Scandinavia and/or a London-Paris link.

Passes allowing you to cover a lot of territory start at under US\$500.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Travelling with your own vehicle allows increased flexibility and the option to get off the beaten track. Unfortunately, cars can be inconvenient in city centres when you have to negotiate one-way streets or find somewhere to park amid a confusing concrete jungle. Eurotunnel (see p414) transports cars through the Channel Tunnel.

Automobile Associations

Perish the thought of ever breaking down in some remote rural village in the Pyrenees or the isolated Irish countryside. But it happens. Should you find yourself in a predicament, you can contact the local automobile association for emergency assistance. It can provide a variety of road-side services such as petrol refills, flat-tyre repair and towing, plus predeparture information such as maps, itineraries and even accommodation reservations. Check with the main motor-touring association in your home country for coverage options.

Campervan

A popular way to tour Europe is for three or four people to band together to buy or rent a camper van. London is the usual embarkation point. Some good British publications and websites to check out for camper van purchases are **Loot** (www.loot.com), **TNT magazine** (www.tntmag.co.uk/uk) and **AutoTrader** (www.autotrader.co.uk).

Some second-hand dealers offer a buy-back scheme when you return from Europe, but we've received warnings that some dealers don't fully honour the refund commitments. Buying and reselling privately is more advantageous if you have the time.

Camper vans usually feature a fixed high-top or elevating roof and two to five bunk beds. Apart from the essential gas cooker, professional conversions may include a sink, fridge and built-in cupboards. Prices and facilities vary considerably and it's certainly worth getting advice from a mechanic to see if you are being offered a fair price. Getting a mechanical check (from UK£40) is also a good idea. Once on the road you should be able to keep budgets lower than backpackers using trains, but don't forget to set some money aside for emergency repairs.

The main advantage of going by camper van is flexibility. Transport, accommodation and storage are all taken care of. Unfortunately, the self-contained factor can also prove to be one of the downsides. Conditions can get very cramped, tempers can become frayed and your romantic, hippy-style trail may dissolve into the camper van trip from hell.

Driving Licence

Proof of ownership of a private vehicle should always be carried (a Vehicle Registration Document for British-registered cars) when touring Europe. An EU driving licence is acceptable for driving throughout Europe.

Many non-European driving licences are valid in Europe. Some advise carrying an International Driving Permit (IDP), but this costly multilingual document sold by national auto clubs is rarely necessary – especially to rent a car.

Fuel

Fuel prices can vary enormously from country to country (though it's always more expensive than in North America or Australia) and may bear little relation to the general cost of living. Ireland's Automobile Association maintains a good web page of European fuel prices at www.aaroadwatch.ie/eupetrolprices.

Unleaded petrol and diesel is available across Western Europe.

Hire

The big international rental firms will give you reliable service and a good standard of vehicle. Usually you will have the option of returning the car to a different outlet at the end of the rental period. Rates vary widely but expect to pay somewhere between €25

and €70 per day. Prebook for the lowest rates – if you walk into an office and ask for a car on the spot, you will pay more. For really good deals, pre-pay for your rental. Fly/drive combinations and other programmes are worth looking into. Major companies include:

Avis (www.avis.com)

Budget (www.budget.com)

Europcar (www.europcar.com)

Hertz (www.hertz.com)

Brokers can cut hire costs. The UK's **Holiday Autos** (☎ 0870 400 0010; www.holidayautos.com) has low rates and offices or representatives in over 20 countries, or try **Autos Abroad** (☎ 0870 066 7788; www.autosabroad.co.uk). In the USA, **Kemwel Holiday Autos** (☎ 877-820-0668; www.kemwel.com) has many deals.

No matter where you rent, it is imperative to understand exactly what is included in your rental agreement (collision waiver, unlimited mileage etc). Make sure you are covered with an adequate insurance policy. And Americans should take note: less than 4% of European cars have automatic transmissions, so if you need this, you'll pay more than double for your car.

The minimum rental age is usually 21 or even 23, and you'll need a credit card.

Motorcycle and moped rental is common in such countries as Italy, Spain, Greece and the south of France.

Insurance

Third party motor insurance is compulsory in Europe if you are driving your own car (rental cars usually come with insurance). Most UK motor insurance policies automatically provide this for EU countries. Get your insurer to issue a Green Card (which may cost extra), an internationally recognised proof of insurance, and check that it lists all the countries you intend to visit. You'll need this in the event of an accident outside the country where the vehicle is insured. Also ask your insurer for a European Accident Statement form, which can simplify things if the worst happens. Never sign statements you can't read or understand – insist on a translation and sign only if it's acceptable.

It's a good investment to take out a European motoring-assistance policy, such as the AA Five Star Service or the RAC European Motoring Assistance. Expect to pay

about UK£50 for 14 days' cover, with a 10% discount for association members. Non-Europeans might find it cheaper to arrange international coverage with their national motoring organisation before leaving home. Ask your motoring organisation for details about free services offered by affiliated organisations around Western Europe.

Every vehicle travelling across an international border should display a sticker showing its country of registration. There's also a variety of rules for mandated equipment. In the UK, contact **RAC** (☎ 0870 5533 533; www.rac.co.uk) or **AA** (☎ 0800 085 7240; www.theaa.com) for more information.

Motorcycle Touring

Western Europe is made for motorcycle touring, with good-quality winding roads, stunning scenery and an active motorcycling scene. The weather is not always reliable though, so make sure your wet-weather gear is up to scratch. The wearing of helmets for rider and passenger is compulsory everywhere in Western Europe. See country chapters for additional rules.

On ferries, motorcyclists can sometimes be squeezed in without a reservation, although booking ahead is certainly advisable during peak travelling periods.

Take note of local customs about parking motorcycles on footpaths (sidewalks). Though this is illegal in some countries, the police usually turn a blind eye as long as the vehicle doesn't obstruct pedestrians. Don't try this in Britain – your feeble excuses to traffic wardens will fall on deaf ears.

If you are thinking of touring Europe on a motorcycle, try contacting the **British Motorcyclists Federation** (☎ 0116-284 5380; www.bmf.co.uk) for help and advice. An excellent source of information for travellers interested in more adventurous biking activities can be found at **Horizons Unlimited** (www.horizonsunlimited.com).

Purchase

Britain is probably the best place to buy as second-hand prices are good and, whether buying privately or from a dealer, the absence of language difficulties will help you establish exactly what you are getting and what guarantees you can expect in the event of a breakdown.

Some good British papers to check out for vehicle purchases are **Loot** (www.loot.com), **TNT**

magazine (www.tntmag.co.uk/uk) and **AutoTrader** (www.autotrader.co.uk).

Bear in mind that you will be getting a car with the steering wheel on the right-hand side in Britain. If you want left-hand drive and can afford to buy new, prices are usually reasonable in Greece, France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Paperwork can be tricky wherever you buy, and many countries have compulsory road-worthiness checks on older vehicles.

Road Conditions

Conditions and types of roads vary across Western Europe, but it is possible to make some generalisations. The fastest routes are four- or six-lane dual carriageways/highways, ie two or three lanes either side (motorway, autobahn, autoroute, autostrada etc). These roads are great for speed and comfort but driving can be dull, with little or no interesting scenery. Some of these roads incur expensive tolls (eg in Italy, France and Spain) or have a general tax for usage (Switzerland and Austria), but there will usually be an alternative route you can take. Motorways and other primary routes are almost always in good condition.

Road surfaces on minor routes are not perfect in some countries (eg Greece), although normally they will be more than adequate. These roads are narrower and progress is generally much slower. To compensate, you can expect much better scenery and plenty of interesting villages along the way.

Road Rules

Motoring organisations can supply members with country-by-country information about motoring regulations, or they may produce motoring guidebooks for general sale.

With the exception of Britain and Ireland, driving is on the right.

Take care with speed limits, as they vary from country to country. You may be surprised at the apparent disregard of traffic regulations in some places (particularly in Italy and Greece), but as a visitor it is always best to be cautious. In many countries, driving infringements are subject to an on-the-spot fine. Always ask for a receipt.

European drink-driving laws are particularly strict. The blood-alcohol concentration (BAC) limit when driving is between 0.05% and 0.08%, but in certain areas it can be zero

percent. See the individual country chapters for more details on traffic laws.

HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe in any country in the world, and we don't recommend it. Travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a small but potentially serious risk. People who do choose to hitch will be safer if they travel in pairs and let someone know where they plan to go. Single women should never hitch.

Don't hitch from city centres; take public transport to suburban exit routes. Hitching is usually illegal on motorways – stand on the slip roads or approach drivers at petrol stations and truck stops. Look presentable and cheerful and make a cardboard sign indicating your intended destination in the local language. Never hitch where drivers can't stop in good time or without causing an obstruction. At dusk, give up and think about finding somewhere to stay. If your itinerary includes a ferry crossing (for instance, across the Channel), it might be worth trying to score a ride before the ferry rather than after, since vehicle tickets sometimes include all passengers free of charge.

It is sometimes possible to arrange a lift in advance: scan student notice boards in colleges, or contact car-sharing agencies. Such agencies are particularly popular in Germany (*Mitfahrzentrale*; see p481).

PUBLIC TRANSPORT Bus & Metro

Most Western European cities have excellent public transport systems with some combination of subways, trains, trams and buses. Service is usually comprehensive. Major airports generally have fast train or subway links to the city centre. See the country chapters for more information.

Taxi

Taxis in Western Europe are metered and rates are high. There might also be supplements (depending on the country) for things such as luggage, the time of day, the location from which you boarded and for extra passengers. Good public transport networks make the use of taxis all but unnecessary, but if you need one in a hurry they can usually be found idling near train stations or outside big hotels.

Lower fares make taxis more viable in such countries as Spain, Greece and Portugal. Don't underestimate the local knowledge that can be gleaned from taxi drivers. They can often tell you about the liveliest places in town and know all about events happening during your stay.

TOURS

Package tours, whether tailor-made or bog-standard, cater for all tastes, interests and ages. See your travel agent or look in the small ads in newspaper travel pages. The internet is also an excellent resource to find unusual tours that might not receive media or trade attention.

Specialists include **Ramblers Holidays** (☎ 017 07-331133; www.ramblersholidays.co.uk) in Britain for hiking trips and **CBT Tours** (☎ 800-736-2453; www.cbttours.com) in the USA for bicycle trips.

Young revellers can party on Europe-wide bus tours. **Contiki** (www.contiki.com) and **Top Deck** (www.topdecktravel.co.uk) offer camping or hotel-based bus tours for the 18 to 35 age group. Both companies sell tours to customers worldwide.

For people aged over 50, **Saga Holidays** (www.sagaholidays.com) offers holidays ranging from cheap coach tours to luxury cruises and has cheap travel insurance.

TRAIN

Trains are a popular way of getting around: they are comfortable, frequent and generally on time. The Channel Tunnel makes it possible to get from Britain to continental Europe using the **Eurostar** (www.eurostar.com). See country chapters for more details.

For many people, travel in Europe would not be travel in Europe without trains. But note that the traditional image of compartments with little wine bottle holders and various characters roaming the corridor is being replaced by fast and modern trains that are more like especially comfortable versions of airliners. Diners have mostly been replaced by snack bars or trolleys, although most people buy their food before boarding.

In the south, train fares are quite cheap. In the north, fares can be more expensive but there are many deals. See the country chapters for details.

Every national rail company has a website with a vast amount of schedule and fare

information. For international details, the German national railroad **Deutsche Bahn** (www.bahn.de) has excellent schedule and fare information in English for trains across Europe. The website **The Man in Seat 61** (www.seat61.com) has good train descriptions and details.

If you plan to travel extensively by train, you might enjoy the *Thomas Cook European Timetable*, which gives a cleverly condensed listing of train schedules and indicates where supplements apply or where reservations are necessary. The timetable is updated monthly and is available from **Thomas Cook** (www.thomascookpublishing.com) outlets and bookshops in the UK (online elsewhere in the world).

Paris, Brussels, Frankfurt, Munich, Milan and Vienna are important hubs for international rail connections. See the relevant city sections for details and budget ticket agents.

Note that European trains sometimes split en route in order to service two destinations, so even if you know you're on the right train, make sure you're in the correct carriage too.

Tickets

When weighing up ticket options consider the many cheap ticket deals offered by the railways. These include advance-purchase reductions, one-off promotions or special circular-route tickets. Normal international tickets are valid for two months, and you can make as many stops as you like en route; make your intentions known when purchasing and inform train conductors how far you're going before they punch your ticket.

Fast Trains

Western European trains (outside of Greece and Portugal) are fast, frequent and often comfortable. High-speed networks (300km per hour or more) continue to expand and have given the airlines major competition on many routes. The internal TGV and ICE networks in France and Germany respectively are comprehensive and are excellent ways to get around. The AVE network in Spain and Italy's own high-speed network are growing fast. **Eurostar** (www.eurostar.com) links London to Brussels and Paris in about two hours. **Thalys** (www.thalys.com) links Paris with Brussels, Amsterdam and Cologne. In 2009 a new line will open linking Paris to Frankfurt via Strasbourg.

Slower but still reasonably fast trains that cross borders are called EuroCity (EC). It is

a good idea (sometimes obligatory) to make seat reservations at peak times and on certain lines.

Overnight Trains

The romantic image of the European night train is becoming a lot less common with the popularity of budget airlines. However, you can still find a good network of routes from the north to Italy.

Couchette bunks are comfortable enough, if lacking a bit in privacy. There are four per compartment in 1st class or six in 2nd class. A bunk costs around UK£15 for most international trains, irrespective of the length of the journey.

Sleepers are the most comfortable option, offering beds for one or two passengers in 1st class, and two or three passengers in 2nd class. Charges vary depending on the journey, but they are significantly more expensive than couchettes.

Rail Passes

Shop around, as pass prices can vary between different outlets. Once purchased, take care of your pass as it cannot be replaced or refunded if lost or stolen. European passes get reductions on Eurostar through the Channel Tunnel and on certain ferry routes (eg between France and Ireland). In the USA, **Rail Europe** (☎ 877-257-2887; www.raileurope.com) sells all sorts of rail passes.

EURAIL

There are so many different passes to choose from and such a wide variety of areas and time periods covered that you should have a good idea of your itinerary before purchasing one. These passes can only be bought by residents of non-European countries, and are supposed to be purchased before arriving in Europe.

Eurail passes are valid for unlimited travel on national railways and some private lines in the Western European countries of Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland (including Liechtenstein), plus several more neighbouring ones.

Eurail is also valid on some ferries between Italy and Greece. Reductions are given on some other ferry routes and on river/lake steamer services in various countries.

The Eurailpass is the standard pass for travellers 26 years and over. It provides unlimited 1st-class travel only: 15 days to three months costs US\$605 to US\$1703. This is the best pass for those who want to spend most of their time on trains.

The Eurailpass Flexi is also for travellers 26 and over. It offers 1st-class travel for any chosen days within a two-month period: 10/15 days US\$715/940. This is a better option for most people.

The Eurailpass Youth pass offers the same options as the standard Eurailpass, but for those aged under 26 years, and for 2nd-class travel only. Passes cover periods from 15 days to three months for US\$394 to US\$1108. This is the classic backpacker's pass.

The Eurailpass Youth Flexi offers the same options as the standard Eurailpass Flexi, but for those aged under 26, and for 2nd-class travel only: 10/15 days for US\$465/611.

Two to five people travelling together can get a 'saver' version of all passes mentioned above, saving about 15%.

Also for non-Europeans is the Eurail Selectpass, which gives buyers the option of choosing which countries it covers and for how long. Options are myriad and can offer significant savings over the above passes if, for example, you are only going to three or four countries.

EURODOMINO

There is a Eurodomino pass for some of the countries covered in the Inter-Rail pass (see right), and it's worth considering if you're homing in on a particular region (however in a major blow to budget travellers, France, Italy and Spain have left the scheme). These passes are sold in Europe to European residents. Adults (travelling 1st or 2nd class) and those under 26 can opt for three to eight days valid travel within one month. An example

is unlimited 2nd-class travel in Germany for three days for UK£140.

INTER-RAIL

These passes are available to European residents of more than six months standing (passport identification is required). Terms and conditions vary slightly from country to country, but in the country of origin there is a discount of around 50% on the normal fares.

The **Inter-Rail pass** (www.interrailnet.com) is split into eight zones. In Western Europe, Zone A is Ireland; C is Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland; E is Belgium, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands; F is Portugal and Spain; and G is Greece, Italy and Italy–Greece ferries. The other zones cover Scandinavia and parts of Eastern Europe. This pass is not valid on some high-speed services.

The Inter-Rail pass is available in two classes: adult and youth (under 26). Prices for any one zone for 16 days are UK£215/145; two zones for 22 days UK£295/205; and the all-zone global pass for one month UK£405/285. This is the classic European backpacker's pass.

NATIONAL RAIL PASSES

If you're intending to travel extensively within one country, check what national rail passes are available as these can sometimes save you a lot of money; details can be found in the individual country chapters.

Security

You should be quite safe travelling on most trains in Western Europe, but it pays to be security conscious nonetheless. Keep an eye on your luggage at all times (especially when stopping at stations) and lock compartment doors at night.

Health

CONTENTS

Before You Go	1123
Insurance	1123
Recommended Vaccinations	1123
Further Reading	1123
In Transit	1123
Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)	1123
In Western Europe	1123
Availability of Health Care	1123
Environmental Hazards	1124
Sexual Health	1124

BEFORE YOU GO

We recommend you carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses, and take your optical prescription with you. Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

INSURANCE

If you're an EU citizen, the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC; available from most health centres or, in the UK, from post offices or online at www.ehic.org.uk) covers you for most medical care. EHIC will not cover you for nonemergencies or emergency repatriation. Citizens of other countries should find out if there is a reciprocal arrangement for free medical care between their country and the country visited. If you do need health insurance, strongly consider a policy that covers you for the worst possible scenario, such as an accident requiring an emergency flight home. Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures. The former option is generally preferable, as it doesn't require you to pay out-of-pocket costs in a foreign country.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

No jabs are necessary for Western Europe. However, the WHO recommends that all travellers should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, regardless of their destination.

FURTHER READING

Health Advice for Travellers is an annually updated leaflet by the Department of Health in the UK, available free at post offices and online at www.dh.gov.uk. It contains some general information, legally required and recommended vaccines for different countries, and reciprocal health agreements. *Lonely Planet's Travel with Children* includes advice on travel health for younger children.

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The main symptom of DVT is swelling or pain in the foot, ankle, or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs it may cause chest pain and breathing difficulties. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, contract and relax the leg muscles while sitting, drink plenty of fluids, and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

IN WESTERN EUROPE

AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH CARE

Good health care is readily available and for minor illnesses pharmacists can give valuable advice and sell over-the-counter medication. They can also advise when more specialised help is required and point you in the right direction. The standard of dental care is usually good; however, it is sensible to have a dental check-up before a long trip.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Altitude Sickness

Most people are affected to some extent by lack of oxygen at high altitudes (over 2500m). Symptoms of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) usually develop during the first 24 hours at altitude but may be delayed up to three weeks. Mild symptoms include headache, lethargy, dizziness, difficulty sleeping and loss of appetite. AMS may become more severe without warning and can be fatal. Severe symptoms include breathlessness, a dry, irritative cough (which may progress to the production of pink, frothy sputum), severe headache, lack of coordination and balance, confusion, irrational behaviour, vomiting, drowsiness, and unconsciousness. There is no hard-and-fast rule as to what is too high: AMS has been fatal at 3000m, although 3500m to 4500m is the usual range.

Treat mild symptoms by resting at the same altitude until recovery, usually a day or two. Paracetamol or aspirin can be taken for headaches. If symptoms persist or become worse, however, *immediate descent is necessary*; even 500m can help. Drug treatments should never be used to enable further ascent.

Diamox (acetazolamide) reduces the headache of AMS and helps the body acclimatise to the lack of oxygen. It is available only on prescription. Those who are allergic to sulfonamide antibiotics may also be allergic to Diamox.

In the UK fact sheets are available from the **British Mountaineering Council** (www.thebmc.co.uk; 177-179 Burton Rd, Manchester, M20 2BB).

Heatstroke

Heatstroke occurs after excessive fluid loss and inadequate replacement of fluids and salt. Symptoms include headache, dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration is already hap-

pening by the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink sufficient water to produce pale, diluted urine. Replace lost fluids by drinking water and/or fruit juice, and cool the body with cold water and fans. Treat salt loss with salty fluids such as soup or Bovril, or add a little more table salt than usual to foods.

Hypothermia

The weather in Europe's mountains can be extremely changeable at any time of year. Proper preparation will reduce the risk of getting hypothermia. Even on a hot day the weather can change rapidly; carry waterproof garments and warm layers, and inform others of your route.

Hypothermia starts with shivering, loss of judgment and clumsiness. Unless re-warming occurs, the sufferer deteriorates into apathy, confusion and coma. Prevent further heat loss by seeking shelter, warm dry clothing, hot sweet drinks and shared bodily warmth.

Insect Bites & Stings

Mosquitoes are found in most parts of Western Europe. They may not carry malaria but can cause irritation and infected bites. Use a DEET-based insect repellent.

Sand flies are found around Mediterranean beaches. They usually cause only a nasty itchy bite but can carry a rare skin disorder called cutaneous leishmaniasis.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Contraception, including condoms, is widely available in Western Europe; however, emergency contraception may not be. The **International Planned Parent Federation** (www.ippf.org) can advise about the availability of contraception in different countries. When buying condoms, look for a European CE mark, which means they have been rigorously tested.

Language

CONTENTS

Dutch	1125
French	1126
German	1128
Greek	1129
Italian	1131
Portuguese	1133
Spanish	1135

This language guide offers basic vocabulary to help you get around Western Europe. For more extensive coverage of the languages included in this guide, pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's *Western Europe Phrasebook*.

DUTCH

PRONUNCIATION

Vowels

a	short, like the 'u' in 'cut'
a, aa	long, like the 'a' in 'father'
au, ou	pronounced somewhere between the 'ow' in 'how' and the 'ow' in 'glow'
e	short, as in 'bet', or like the 'er' in 'fern' (with no 'r' sound)
e, ee	long, like the 'ay' in 'day'
ei	as in 'vein'
eu	like the 'u' in 'fur', with no 'r' sound
i	short, as in 'it'
i, ie	long, like the 'ee' in 'meet'
ij	like the 'ey' in 'they'
o	short, as in 'pot'
o, oo	long, as in 'note'
oe	like the 'oo' in 'zoo'
u	short, similar to the 'u' in 'urn'
u, uu	long, like the 'u' in 'flute'
ui	similar to the sound of 'er-y' in 'her year' (with no 'r' sound) or, if you're familiar with it, like the 'eui' in the French <i>fauteuil</i>

Consonants

ch, g	like the 'ch' in the Scottish <i>loch</i> ; it's like a hiss produced by tightening the tongue against top of the throat
j	like the 'y' in 'yes'

ACCOMMODATION

hotel	<i>hotel</i>
guesthouse	<i>pension</i>
youth hostel	<i>jeugdherberg</i>
camping ground	<i>camping</i>
Do you have any rooms available?	<i>Heeft U kamers vrij?</i>
How much is it per night/per person?	<i>Hoeveel is het per nacht/per persoon?</i>
Is breakfast included?	<i>Zit er ontbijt bij inbegrepen?</i>

single room	<i>eenpersoons kamer</i>
double room	<i>tweepersoons kamer</i>
one night	<i>één nacht</i>
two nights	<i>twee nachten</i>

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello.	<i>Dag/Hallo.</i>
Goodbye.	<i>Dag.</i>
Yes.	<i>Ja.</i>
No.	<i>Nee.</i>
Please.	<i>Alstublieft/Alsjeblieft.</i>
Thank you.	<i>Dank U/je (wel).</i>
You're welcome.	<i>Geen dank.</i>
Excuse me.	<i>Pardon.</i>
Sorry.	<i>Sorry.</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>Spreekt U/Spreekt je Engels?</i>
How much is it?	<i>Hoeveel kost het?</i>
What's your name?	<i>Hoe heet U/je?</i>
My name is ...	<i>Ik heet ...</i>

EMERGENCIES – DUTCH

Help!	<i>Help!</i>
Call a doctor!	<i>Haal een dokter!</i>
Call the police!	<i>Haal de politie!</i>
Go away!	<i>Ga weg!</i>
I'm lost.	<i>Ik ben de weg kwijt.</i>

SHOPPING & SERVICES

a bank	<i>een bank</i>
the market	<i>de markt</i>
the newsagents	<i>de krantenwinkel</i>
the pharmacy	<i>de drogist</i>
the post office	<i>het postkantoor</i>
the stationers	<i>de kantoorboekhandel</i>
the tourist office	<i>de VVV/het toeristenbureau</i>
What time does it open/close?	<i>Hoe laat opent/sluit het?</i>

SIGNS – DUTCH

Ingang	Entrance
Uitgang	Exit
Informatie/ Inlichtingen	Information
Open	Open
Gesloten	Closed
Kamers Vrij	Rooms Available
Vol	Full/No Vacancies
Politiebureau	Police Station
Verboden	Prohibited
WC/Toiletten	Toilets
Heren	Men
Dames	Women

I'd like to hire a car/
bicycle. *Ik wil graag een auto/fiets
huren.*
I'd like a one-way/
return ticket. *Ik wil graag een enkele reis/
een retour.*

1st class *eerste klas*
2nd class *tweede klas*
left luggage locker *bagagekluis*
bus stop *bushalte*
tram stop *tramhalte*
train station *treinstation*
ferry terminal *veerhaven*

Directions

Where is the ...? *Waar is de ...?*
Go straight ahead. *Ga rechtdoor.*
Turn left. *Ga linksaf.*
Turn right. *Ga rechtsaf.*
near/far *dichtbij/ver*

FRENCH

PRONUNCIATION

Most letters in French are pronounced more or less the same as their English counterparts. Here are a few that may cause some confusion:

j like the 's' in 'leisure', eg *jour* (day)
c before **e** and **i**, like the 's' in 'sit'; before **a**, **o** and **u** it's pronounced as English 'k'. When underscored with a 'cedilla' (ç) it's like the 's' in 'sit'.
r pronounced from the back of the throat while constricting the muscles to restrict the flow of air
n, m where a syllable ends in a single **n** or **m**, these letters are not pronounced, but the vowel is given a nasal pronunciation

ACCOMMODATION

the hotel *l'hôtel*
the guesthouse *la pension (de famille)*
the youth hostel *l'auberge de jeunesse*
the camping ground *le camping*

Do you have any
rooms available? *Est-ce que vous avez des
chambres libres?*
How much is it per
night/per person? *Quel est le prix par
nuît/par personne?*
Is breakfast
included? *Est-ce que le petit déjeuner
est compris?*

EMERGENCIES – FRENCH

Help! *Au secours!*
Call a doctor! *Appelez un médecin!*
Call the police! *Appelez la police!*
Leave me alone! *Fichez-moi la paix!*
I'm lost. *Je me suis égaré/e.*

for one person *pour une personne*
for two people *pour deux personnes*
for one night *pour une nuit*
for two nights *pour deux nuits*

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello. *Bonjour.*
Goodbye. *Au revoir.*
Yes. *Oui.*
No. *Non.*
Please. *S'il vous plaît.*
Thank you. *Merci.*
You're welcome. *Je vous en prie.*
Excuse me. (to get
someone's attention) *Excusez-moi.*
Sorry. (forgive me) *Pardon.*
Do you speak
English? *Parlez-vous anglais?*
How much is it? *C'est combien?*
What's your name? *Comment vous appelez-vous?*
My name is ... *Je m'appelle ...*

SHOPPING & SERVICES

a bank *une banque*
chemist/pharmacy *la pharmacie*
the ... embassy *l'ambassade de ...*
market *le marché*
newsagents *l'agence de presse*
post office *le bureau de poste*
a public telephone *une cabine téléphonique*
stationers *la papeterie*
the tourist office *l'office de tourisme/le syndicat
d'initiative*
What time does it
open/close? *Quelle est l'heure de
ouverture/fermeture?*

TIME, DAYS & NUMBERS

What time is it? *Quelle heure est-il?*
today *aujourd'hui*
tomorrow *demain*
yesterday *hier*
morning *matin*
afternoon *après-midi*

Monday *lundi*
Tuesday *mardi*

SIGNS – FRENCH

Entrée	Entrance
Sortie	Exit
Renseignements	Information
Ouvert	Open
Fermée	Closed
Chambres Libres	Rooms Available
Complet	Full/No Vacancies
(Commissariat de) Police	Police Station
Interdit	Prohibited
Toilettes, WC	Toilets
Hommes	Men
Femmes	Women

Wednesday *mercredi*
Thursday *jeudi*
Friday *vendredi*
Saturday *samedi*
Sunday *dimanche*

1 *un*
2 *deux*
3 *trois*
4 *quatre*
5 *cinq*
6 *six*
7 *sept*
8 *huit*
9 *neuf*
10 *dix*
100 *cent*
1000 *mille*

TRANSPORT

When does the (next)
... leave/arrive? *À quelle heure part/
arrive le (prochain) ...?*
boat *bateau*
bus (city/intercity) *bus/car*
tram *tramway*
train *train*

left luggage (office) *consigne*
timetable *horaire*
bus stop *arrêt d'autobus*
train station *gare*
ferry terminal *gare maritime*

I'd like a ... ticket. *Je voudrais un billet ...*
one-way *aller simple*
return *aller retour*
1st-class *de première classe*
2nd-class *de deuxième classe*

TIME, DAYS & NUMBERS

What time is it? *Hoe laat is het?*
today *vandaag*
tomorrow *morgen*
yesterday *gisteren*
in the morning *'s morgens*
in the afternoon *'s middags*

Monday *maandag*
Tuesday *dinsdag*
Wednesday *woensdag*
Thursday *donderdag*
Friday *vrijdag*
Saturday *zaterdag*
Sunday *zondag*

0 *nul*
1 *één*
2 *twee*
3 *drie*
4 *vier*
5 *vijf*
6 *zes*
7 *zeven*
8 *acht*
9 *negen*
10 *tien*
11 *elf*
100 *honderd*
1000 *duizend*

TRANSPORT

What time does
the ... leave/arrive?
(next) *Hoe laat vertrekt/arriveert de ...?*
boat *(volgende)
boot*
bus *bus*
tram *tram*
train *trein*

I'd like to hire a car/ bicycle. *Je voudrais louer une voiture/ un vélo.*

Directions

Where is ...? *Où est ...?*
Go straight ahead. *Continuez tout droit.*
Turn left. *Tournez à gauche.*
Turn right. *Tournez à droite.*
near/far *proche/loin*

GERMAN

PRONUNCIATION

Unlike English or French, German has no real silent letters: you pronounce the **k** at the start of the word *Knie* (knee), the **p** at the start of *Psychologie* (psychology), and the **e** at the end of *ich habe* (I have).

Vowels

As in English, vowels can be pronounced long, like the 'o' in 'pope', or short, as in 'pop'. As a rule, German vowels are long before one consonant and short before two consonants, eg the **o** is long in *Dom* (cathedral), but short in *doch* (after all).

a short, like the 'u' in 'cut' or long, as in 'father'
au like the 'ow' in 'vow'
ä short, as in 'cat' or long, as in 'care'
äu like the 'oy' in 'boy'
e short, as in 'bet' or long, as in 'obey'
ei like the 'ai' in 'aisle'
eu like the 'oy' in 'boy'
i short, as in 'it' or long, as in 'marine'
ie as in the 'brief'
o short, as in 'not' or long, as in 'note'
ö like the 'er' in 'fern'
u as in 'pull'
ü similar to the 'u' in 'pull' but with lips stretched back

Consonants

Most German consonants sound similar to their English counterparts. One important difference is that **b**, **d** and **g** sound like 'p', 't' and 'k', respectively when word-final.

b as in 'be'; as 'p' when word-final
ch as in Scottish *loch*
d as in 'do'; as 't' when word-final
g as in 'go'; as 'k' when word-final
j like the 'y' in 'yet'

EMERGENCIES – GERMAN

Help! *Hilfe!*
Call a doctor! *Holen Sie einen Arzt!*
Call the police! *Rufen Sie die Polizei!*
Go away! *Gehen Sie weg!*
I'm lost. *Ich habe mich verirrt.*

qu as 'k' plus 'v'
r can be trilled or guttural, depending on the region
s as in 'sun'; like the 'z' in 'zoo' when followed by a vowel
sch like the 'sh' in 'ship'
sp, st as 'shp' and 'sht' when word-initial
tion the 't' is pronounced as the 'ts' in 'its'
v like the 'f' in 'fan'
w like the 'v' in 'van'
z like the 'ts' in 'its'

ACCOMMODATION

hotel *Hotel*
guesthouse *Pension, Gästehaus*
youth hostel *Jugendherberge*
camping ground *Campingplatz*
Do you have any rooms available? *Haben Sie noch freie Zimmer?*
How much is it per night/person? *Wieviel kostet es pro Nacht/Person?*
Is breakfast included? *Ist Frühstück inbegriffen?*

a single room *ein Einzelzimmer*
a double room *ein Doppelzimmer*
one night *eine Nacht*
two nights *zwei Nächte*

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Good day. *Guten Tag.*
Hello. *Grüss Gott.* (in Bavaria and Austria)
Goodbye. *Auf Wiedersehen.*
Bye. *Tschüss.* (informal)
Yes. *Ja.*
No. *Nein.*
Please. *Bitte.*
Thank you. *Danke.*
You're welcome. *Bitte sehr.*
Sorry/Excuse me. *Entschuldigung.*
Do you speak English? *Sprechen Sie Englisch?*
How much is it? *Wieviel kostet es?*
What's your name? *Wie heissen Sie?*
My name is ... *Ich heisse ...*

SHOPPING & SERVICES

a bank *eine Bank*
the chemist/ pharmacy *die Apotheke*
the ... embassy *die ... Botschaft*
the market *der Markt*
the newsagents *der Zeitungshändler*
the post office *das Postamt*
the stationers *der Schreibwarengeschäft*
the tourist office *das Verkehrsamt*
What time does it open/close? *Um wieviel Uhr macht es auf/zu?*

TIME, DAYS & NUMBERS

What time is it? *Wie spät ist es?*
today *heute*
tomorrow *morgen*
yesterday *gestern*
in the morning *morgens*
in the afternoon *nachmittags*

Monday *Montag*
Tuesday *Dienstag*
Wednesday *Mittwoch*
Thursday *Donnerstag*
Friday *Freitag*
Saturday *Samstag, Sonnabend*
Sunday *Sonntag*

0 *null*
1 *eins*
2 *zwei/zwo*
3 *drei*
4 *vier*
5 *fünf*
6 *sechs*
7 *sieben*
8 *acht*
9 *neun*
10 *zehn*
11 *elf*
12 *zwölf*
13 *dreizehn*
100 *hundert*
1000 *tausend*

TRANSPORT

What time does ... (leave/arrive)? *Wann (fährt ... ab/ kommt ... an)?*
the boat *das Boot*
the bus (intercity) *der (überland) Bus*
the tram *die Strassenbahn*
the train *der Zug*

SIGNS – GERMAN

Eingang *Entrance*
Ausgang *Exit*
Auskunft *Information*
Offen *Open*
Geschlossen *Closed*
Zimmer Frei *Rooms Available*
Voll/Besetzt *Full/No Vacancies*
Polizeiwache *Police Station*
Verboten *Prohibited*
Toiletten (WC) *Toilets*
Herren *Men*
Damen *Women*

What time is the next boat? *Wann fährt das nächste Boot?*
I'd like to hire a car/ bicycle. *Ich möchte ein Auto/Fahrrad mieten.*
I'd like a one-way/ return ticket. *Ich möchte eine Einzelkarte/ Rückfahrkarte.*

1st class *erste Klasse*
2nd class *zweite Klasse*
left luggage locker *Schliessfächer*
timetable *Fahrplan*
bus stop *Bushaltestelle*
tram stop *Strassenbahnhaltestelle*
train station *Bahnhof (Bf)*
ferry terminal *Fährhafen*

Directions

Where is the ...? *Wo ist die ...?*
Go straight ahead. *Gehen Sie geradeaus.*
Turn left. *Biegen Sie links ab.*
Turn right. *Biegen Sie rechts ab.*
near/far *nahe/weit*

GREEK

ALPHABET & PRONUNCIATION

Pronunciation of Greek letters is shown in the table on p1130 using the closest similar-sounding letter in English.

Letter Combinations

Some pairs of vowels are pronounced separately if the first has an acute accent (eg **á**), or the second has a dieresis (eg **ï**). All Greek words of two or more syllables have an acute accent indicating where the stress falls.

ei, oi **i** like the 'ee' in 'feet'
ai **e** as in 'bet'

EMERGENCIES – GREEK

Help!	<i>voithia!</i>
Call a doctor!	<i>fonakste ena yatro!</i>
Call the police!	<i>telefoniste tin astinomia!</i>
Go away!	<i>fighe/dhromo!</i>
I'm lost.	<i>eho hathi</i>

ου	u	like the 'oo' in 'mood'
μπ	b	as in 'be'
	mb	as in 'amber' (or like the 'mp' in 'ample')
ντ	d	as in 'do'
	nd	as in 'bend' (or like the 'nt' in 'sent')
γκ	g	as in 'go'
γγ	ng	like the 'ng' in 'angle'
γξ	ks	as in 'yaks'
τζ	dz	like the 'ds' in 'suds'

The suffix of some Greek words depends on the gender of the speaker, eg *asthmatikos* (masculine) and *asthmatikya* (feminine), or *epileptikos* (m) and *epileptikya* (f).

ACCOMMODATION

a hotel	<i>ena xenothohio</i>
a youth hostel	<i>enas xenonas neoitos</i>
a camping ground	<i>ena kamping</i>

I'd like a ... room.	<i>thelo ena dhomatío ...</i>
single	<i>ya ena atomo</i>
double	<i>ya dhio atoma</i>

How much is it per person/night?	<i>poso kostizi ya ena atomo/vradhi?</i>
for one night	<i>ya mia nichta</i>
for two nights	<i>ya dhio nichtes</i>
Is breakfast included?	<i>simberilamvanete to proiono?</i>

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello.	<i>yasu</i> (informal)
	<i>yasas</i> (polite/plural)
Goodbye.	<i>andio</i>
Yes.	<i>ne</i>
No.	<i>okhi</i>
Please.	<i>sas parakalo</i>
Thank you.	<i>sas efaristo</i>
That's fine/You're welcome.	<i>ine endaksi/parakalo</i>
Sorry/Excuse me.	<i>signomi</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>milate anglika?</i>

THE GREEK ALPHABET

Greek	English	Pronunciation
A α	a	as in 'father'
B β	v	like the 'v' in 'vine'
Γ γ	gh/y	like a rough 'g', or like the 'y' in 'yes'
Δ δ	dh	like the 'th' in 'then'
E ε	e	as in 'egg'
Z ζ	z	as in 'zoo'
H η	i	like the 'ee' in 'feet'
Θ θ	th	like the 'th' in 'throw'
I ι	i	like the 'ee' in 'feet'
K κ	k	as in 'kite'
Λ λ	l	as in 'leg'
M μ	m	as in 'man'
N ν	n	as in 'net'
Ξ ξ	x	as in 'taxi'
O ο	o	as in 'hot'
Π π	p	as in 'pup'
Ρ ρ	r	slightly trilled 'r'
Σ σ/ς	s	as in 'sand' (ς at the end of a word)
T τ	t	as in 'to'
Υ υ	i	like the 'ee' in 'feet'
Φ φ	f	as in 'fee'
Χ χ	kh/h	like the 'ch' in Scottish <i>loch</i> , or as a rough 'h'
Ψ ψ	ps	like the 'ps' in 'lapse'
Ω ω	o	as in 'lot'

How much is it?	<i>poso kani?</i>
What's your name?	<i>pos sas lene/pos legeste?</i>
My name is ...	<i>me lene ...</i>

SHOPPING & SERVICES

Where is a /the ...?	<i>pu ine ...?</i>
bank	<i>mia trapeza</i>
... embassy	<i>i ... presvia</i>
market	<i>i aghora</i>
newsagents	<i>to efimeridhon</i>
pharmacy	<i>to farmakio</i>
post office	<i>to takhidhromio</i>
tourist office	<i>to ghratio turistikon pliroforion</i>

What time does it open/close?	<i>ti ora aniyi/klini?</i>
--------------------------------------	----------------------------

TIME, DAYS & NUMBERS

What time is it?	<i>ti ora ine?</i>
today	<i>simera</i>
tomorrow	<i>avrio</i>
yesterday	<i>hthes</i>
in the morning	<i>to proi</i>
in the afternoon	<i>to apoyevma</i>

SIGNS – GREEK

Εισοδος	Entrance
Εξοδος	Exit
Πληροφορίες	Information
Ανοικτο	Open
Κλειστο	Closed
Αστυνομικός Τμήμα	Police Station
Απαγορεύεται	Prohibited
Τουαλέτες	Toilets
Ανδρων	Men
Γυναικων	Women

Monday	<i>dheftera</i>
Tuesday	<i>triti</i>
Wednesday	<i>tetarti</i>
Thursday	<i>pempti</i>
Friday	<i>paraskevi</i>
Saturday	<i>savato</i>
Sunday	<i>kiryaki</i>

1	<i>ena</i>
2	<i>dhio</i>
3	<i>tria</i>
4	<i>tesera</i>
5	<i>pende</i>
6	<i>eksi</i>
7	<i>epta</i>
8	<i>okhto</i>
9	<i>enea</i>
10	<i>dheka</i>
11	<i>edeka</i>
100	<i>ekato</i>
200	<i>dhiakhosia</i>
1000	<i>khilya</i>

TRANSPORT

What time does the ... leave/arrive?	<i>ti ora fevyi/ftani ...?</i>
boat	<i>to plio</i>
bus (city)	<i>to leoforio (ya tin poli)</i>
bus (intercity)	<i>to leoforio (ya ta proastia)</i>
tram	<i>to tram</i>
train	<i>to treno</i>

I'd like a ... ticket.	<i>tha ithela isitirio ...</i>
one-way	<i>horis epistroti</i>
return	<i>me epistroti</i>
1st-class	<i>proti thesi</i>
2nd-class	<i>dhefteri thesi</i>

left luggage	<i>horos aposkevton</i>
timetable	<i>dhromologhio</i>
bus stop	<i>i stasi tu leoforiu</i>

Directions

Go straight ahead.	<i>pighenete efthia</i>
Turn left.	<i>stripste aristera</i>
Turn right.	<i>stripste dheksya</i>
near/far	<i>konda/makria</i>

ITALIAN

PRONUNCIATION

Vowels

Vowels sounds are generally shorter than English equivalents:

a	as in 'art', eg <i>caro</i> (dear); sometimes short, eg <i>amico/a</i> (friend)
e	short, as in 'let', eg <i>mettere</i> (to put); long, as in 'there', eg <i>vero</i> (true)
i	short, as in 'it', eg <i>inizio</i> (start); long, as in 'marine', eg <i>vino</i> (wine)
o	short, as in 'dot', eg <i>donna</i> (woman); long, as in 'port', eg <i>ora</i> (hour)
u	like the 'oo' in 'book', eg <i>puro</i> (pure)

Consonants

The pronunciation of many Italian consonants is similar to that of their English counterparts. Pronunciation of some consonants depends on certain rules:

c	like the 'k' in 'kit' before a , o and u ; or the 'ch' in 'choose' before e and i
ch	like the 'k' in 'kit'
g	like the 'g' in 'get' before a , o , u and h ; or the 'j' in 'jet' before e and i
gli	like the 'lli' in 'million'
gn	like the 'ny' in 'canyon'
h	always silent
r	a rolled 'rr' sound
sc	like the 'sh' in 'sheep' before e and i ; or 'sk' before a , o , u and h
z	like the 'ts' in 'lights', except at the start of a word, when it's pronounced as the 'ds' in 'suds'

Word Stress

Word stress generally falls on the second-last syllable, as in *spa-ghet-ti*, but when a word has an accent, the stress falls on that syllable, as in *cit-tà* (city).

ACCOMMODATION

hotel	<i>albergo</i>
guesthouse	<i>pensione</i>
youth hostel	<i>ostello per la gioventù</i>
camping ground	<i>campeggio</i>

EMERGENCIES – ITALIAN

Help!	<i>Aiuto!</i>
Call a doctor!	<i>Chiama un dottore/medico!</i>
Call the police!	<i>Chiama la polizia!</i>
Go away!	<i>Vai via!</i>
I'm lost.	<i>Mi sono perso/a (m/f)</i>

Do you have any rooms available?	<i>Ha delle camere libere/ C'è una camera libera?</i>
How much is it per night/per person?	<i>Quanto costa per la notte/per ciascuno?</i>
Is breakfast included?	<i>È compresa la colazione?</i>

a single room	<i>una camera singola</i>
a twin room	<i>una camera doppia</i>
a double room	<i>una camera matrimoniale</i>
for one night	<i>per una notte</i>
for two nights	<i>per due notti</i>

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello.	<i>Buongiorno. (pol)/Ciao. (inf)</i>
Goodbye.	<i>Arrivederci. (pol)/Ciao. (inf)</i>
Yes.	<i>Sì.</i>
No.	<i>No.</i>
Please.	<i>Per favore/Per piacere.</i>
Thank you.	<i>Grazie.</i>
You're welcome.	<i>Prego.</i>
Excuse me.	<i>Mi scusi.</i>
Sorry. (excuse me/ forgive me)	<i>Mi scusi/Mi perdoni.</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>Parla inglese?</i>
How much is it?	<i>Quanto costa?</i>
What's your name?	<i>Come si chiama?</i>
My name is ...	<i>Mi chiamo ...</i>

SHOPPING & SERVICES

a bank	<i>una banca</i>
chemist/pharmacy	<i>la farmacia</i>
the ... embassy	<i>l'ambasciata di ...</i>
market	<i>il mercato</i>
newsagents	<i>l'edicola</i>
post office	<i>la posta</i>
stationers	<i>il cartolaio</i>
tourist office	<i>l'ufficio di turismo</i>

What time does it open/close?	<i>A che ora (si) apre/chiude?</i>
--------------------------------------	------------------------------------

TIME, DAYS & NUMBERS

What time is it?	<i>Che ora è?/Che ore sono?</i>
today	<i>oggi</i>

tomorrow
yesterday
morning
afternoon

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
100
1000

TRANSPORT

When does the ... leave/arrive?

boat
ferry
bus
tram
train

bus stop
train station
ferry terminal

1st class
2nd class
left luggage
timetable

I'd like a one-way/ return ticket.

I'd like to hire a car/ bicycle.

Directions

Where is ...?
Go straight ahead.
Turn left.
Turn right.
near/far

domani
ieri
mattina
pomeriggio

lunedì
martedì
mercoledì
giovedì
venerdì
sabato
domenica

uno
due
tre
quattro
cinque
sei
sette
otto
nove
dieci
undici
cento
mille

A che ora parte/ arriva ...?
la barca
il traghetto
l'autobus
il tram
il treno

fermata dell'autobus
stazione
stazione marittima
prima classe
seconda classe
deposito bagagli
orario
Vorrei un biglietto di solo andata/di andata e ritorno.
Vorrei noleggiare una macchina/ bicicletta.

Dov'è ...?
Si va sempre diritto.
Giri a sinistra.
Giri a destra.
vicino/lontano

SIGNS – ITALIAN

Ingresso/Entrata	Entrance
Uscita	Exit
Informazione	Information
Aperto	Open
Chiuso	Closed
Camere Libere	Rooms Available
Completo	Full/No Vacancies
Polizia/Carabinieri	Police
Questura	Police Station
Proibito/Vietato	Prohibited
Gabinetti/Bagni	Toilets
Uomini	Men
Donne	Women

PORTUGUESE**PRONUNCIATION**

Portuguese uses masculine and feminine word endings, usually '-o/-a' respectively – to say 'thank you', a man will therefore use *obrigado*, a woman, *obrigada*.

Vowels

a	short, like the 'u' in 'cut'; long, like the 'ur' in 'hurt'
e	short, as in 'bet'; long, as in 'there'
é	short, as in 'bet'
ê	long, like the 'a' in 'gate'
i	short, as in 'it'; long, as in 'see'
o	short, as in 'pot'; long as in 'note' or like the 'oo' in 'good'
ô	long, as in 'note'
u	like the 'oo' in 'good'

Nasal Vowels

Nasalisation is represented by an 'n' or an 'm' after the vowel, or by a tilde over it, eg ã. The nasal 'i' exists in English as the 'ing' in 'sing'. You can practise by trying to pronounce vowels while holding your nose, as if you had a cold.

Diphthongs

au	like the 'ow' in 'now'
ai	like the 'ie' in 'pie'
ei	like the 'ay' in 'day'
eu	like 'e' followed by 'w'

Nasal Diphthongs

Try the same technique as for nasal vowels. To say *não*, see if you can pronounce 'now' through your nose.

ão	nasal 'ow' (owng)
ãe	nasal 'ay' (eing)
õe	nasal 'oy' (oing)
ui	similar to the 'uing' in 'ensuing'

Consonants

c	as in 'cat' before a , o or u ; like the 's' in 'sin' before e or i
ç	like the 'c' in 'celery'
g	as in 'go' before a , o or u ; like the 's' in 'treasure' before e or i
gu	as in 'guest' before e or i
h	not pronounced when word-initial
nh	like the 'ni' in 'onion'
lh	like the 'lli' in 'million'
j	like the 's' in 'treasure'
m	not pronounced when word-final – it simply nasalises the previous vowel, eg <i>um</i> (oong), <i>bom</i> (bõ)
qu	as 'k' before e or i ; elsewhere as in 'queen'
r	when word-initial, or when doubled (rr) within a word it's a harsh, guttural sound similar to the 'ch' in Scottish <i>loch</i> ; in the middle or at the end of a word it's a rolled 'r' sound. In some areas of Portugal it's always strongly rolled.
s	as in 'so' when word-initial and when doubled (ss) within a word; like the 'z' in 'zeal' when between vowels; as 'sh' when it precedes a consonant, or at the end of a word
x	like the 'sh' in 'ship', the 'z' in 'zeal', or the 'x' in 'taxi'
z	like the 's' in 'treasure' before a consonant or at the end of a word

Word Stress

Word stress is important in Portuguese, as it can affect meaning. It generally occurs on the second-to-last syllable of a word, though there are exceptions. In words with a written accent, the stress always falls on that syllable.

ACCOMMODATION

hotel	<i>hotel</i>
guesthouse	<i>pensão</i>
youth hostel	<i>pousada da juventude</i>
camping ground	<i>parque de campismo</i>

Do you have any rooms available?	<i>Tem quartos livres?</i>
---	----------------------------

EMERGENCIAS – PORTUGUESE

Help!	<i>Socorro!</i>
Call a doctor!	<i>Chame um médico!</i>
Call the police!	<i>Chame a polícia!</i>
Go away!	<i>Deixe-me em paz! (pol)/ Vai-te embora! (inf)</i>
I'm lost.	<i>Estou perdido/a. (m/f)</i>

How much is it per night/per person? *Quanto é por noite/por pessoa?*

Is breakfast included? *O pequeno almoço está incluído?*

a single room *um quarto individual*

a twin room *um quarto duplo*

a double room *um quarto de casal*

for one night *para uma noite*

for two nights *para duas noites*

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello. *Bom dia.*

Goodbye. *Adeus.*

Yes. *Sim.*

No. *Não.*

Please. *Se faz favor.*

Thank you. *Obrigado/a. (m/f)*

You're welcome. *De nada.*

Excuse me. *Com licença.*

Sorry. (forgive me) *Desculpe.*

Do you speak English? *Fala Inglês?*

How much is it? *Quanto custa?*

What's your name? *Como se chama?*

My name is ... *Chamo-me ...*

SHOPPING & SERVICES

a bank *um banco*

a chemist/pharmacy *uma farmácia*

the ... embassy *a embaixada de ...*

the market *o mercado*

the newsagents *a papelaria*

the post office *os correios*

the stationers *a tabacaria*

the tourist office *o (posto de) turismo*

What time does it open/close? *A que horas abre/fecha?*

TIME, DAYS & NUMBERS

What time is it? *Que horas são?*

today *hoje*

tomorrow *amanhã*

yesterday *ontem*

morning
afternoon

manhã
tarde

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday

segunda-feira
terça-feira
quarta-feira
quinta-feira
sexta-feira
sábado
domingo

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
100
200
1000

um/uma (m/f)
dois/duas (m/f)
três
quatro
cinco
seis
sete
oito
nove
dez
onze
cem
duzentos
mil

TRANSPORT

What time does the ... leave/arrive?
boat
bus (city/intercity)
tram
train

A que horas parte/ chega ...?
o barco
o autocarro/a camioneta
o eléctrico
o comboio

bus stop
train station
timetable

paragem de autocarro
estação ferroviária
horário

I'd like a ... ticket.
one-way
return
1st-class
2nd-class

Queria um bilhete ...
simples/de ida
de ida e volta
de primeira classe
de segunda classe

I'd like to hire ...
a car/bicycle

Queria alugar ...
um carro/uma bicicleta

Directions

Where is ...?
Go straight ahead.

Onde é ...?
*Siga sempre a direito/
Siga sempre em frente.*

Turn left.
Turn right.
near/far

Vire à esquerda.
Vire à direita.
perto/longe

SIGNS – PORTUGUESE

Entrada	Entrance
Saída	Exit
Informações	Information
Aberto	Open
Fechado	Closed
Quartos Livres	Rooms Available
Posto Da Polícia	Police Station
Proibido	Prohibited
Empurre/Puxe	Push/Pull
Lavabos/WC	Toilets
Homens (h)	Men
Senhoras (s)	Women

SPANISH**PRONUNCIATION****Vowels**

An acute accent (as in *días*) generally indicates a stressed syllable and doesn't change the sound of the vowel.

e	as in 'met'
i	as in 'marine'
o	as in 'or' (without the 'r' sound)
u	as in 'rule'; the 'u' is not pronounced after q and in the letter combinations gue and gui , unless it's marked with a diaeresis (eg <i>argüir</i>), in which case it's pronounced as English 'w' (see Consonants below)
y	

Consonants

b	a cross between English 'b' and 'v'
c	a hard 'c' as in 'cat' when followed by a , o , u or a consonant; like the 'th' in 'thin' before e and i
ch	as in 'church'
d	as in 'do' when word-initial; elsewhere like the 'th' in 'then'
g	as in 'get' when word-initial and before a , o and u ; elsewhere much softer. Before e or i it's a harsh, breathy sound, similar to the 'h' in 'hit'
h	silent
j	a harsh, guttural sound similar to the 'ch' in Scottish <i>loch</i>
ll	like the 'lli' in 'million'; some pronounce it rather like the 'y' in 'yellow'
ñ	a nasal sound, as in 'ni' in 'onion'

EMERGENCIAS – SPANISH

Help!	<i>¡Socorro!/¡Auxilio!</i>
Call a doctor!	<i>¡Llame a un doctor!</i>
Call the police!	<i>¡Llame a la policía!</i>
Go away!	<i>¡Váyase!</i>
I'm lost.	<i>Estoy perdido/a. (m/f)</i>

q	like the 'k' in 'kick'; q is always followed by a silent u and is combined only with the vowels e (as in <i>que</i>) and i (as in <i>qui</i>)
r	a rolled 'r' sound; longer and stronger when initial or doubled
s	as in 'see'
v	the same sound as b
x	like the 'ks' sound in 'taxi' when between vowels; like the 's' in 'see' when it precedes a consonant
y	at the end of a word or when standing alone (meaning 'and') it's pronounced as the Spanish i . As a consonant, it's somewhere between the 'y' in 'yonder' and the 'g' in 'beige', depending on the region.
z	like the 'th' in 'thin'

ACCOMMODATION

hotel	<i>hotel</i>
guesthouse	<i>pensión/casa de huéspedes</i>
youth hostel	<i>albergue juvenil</i>
camping ground	<i>camping</i>

Do you have any rooms available? *¿Tiene habitaciones libres?*

How much is it per night/per person? *¿Cuánto cuesta por noche/por persona?*

Is breakfast included? *¿Incluye el desayuno?*

a single room	<i>una habitación individual</i>
a double room	<i>una habitación doble</i>
a room with a double bed	<i>una habitación con cama de matrimonio</i>
for one night	<i>para una noche</i>
for two nights	<i>para dos noches</i>

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello.	<i>¡Hola!</i>
Goodbye.	<i>¡Adiós!</i>
Yes.	<i>Sí.</i>
No.	<i>No.</i>
Please.	<i>Por favor.</i>
Thank you.	<i>Gracias.</i>

SIGNS – SPANISH

Entrada	Entrance
Salida	Exit
Información	Information
Abierto	Open
Cerrado	Closed
Habitaciones Libres	Rooms Available
Completo	Full/No Vacancies
Comisaría	Police Station
Prohibido	Prohibited
Servicios/Aseos	Toilets
Hombres	Men
Mujeres	Women

You're welcome.	<i>De nada.</i>
I'm sorry.	<i>Lo siento/Discúlpeme.</i>
Excuse me.	<i>Perdón/Perdóneme.</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>¿Habla inglés?</i>
How much is it?	<i>¿Cuánto cuesta?/¿Cuánto vale?</i>
What's your name?	<i>¿Cómo se llama?</i>
My name is ...	<i>Me llamo ...</i>

SHOPPING & SERVICES

a bank	<i>un banco</i>
chemist/pharmacy	<i>la farmacia</i>
the ... embassy	<i>la embajada ...</i>
the market	<i>el mercado</i>
newsagents	<i>el quiosco</i>
stationers	<i>la papelería</i>
the post office	<i>los correos</i>
the tourist office	<i>la oficina de turismo</i>
What time does it open/close?	<i>¿A qué hora abren/cierran?</i>

TIME, DAYS & NUMBERS

What time is it?	<i>¿Qué hora es?</i>
today	<i>hoy</i>
tomorrow	<i>mañana</i>
yesterday	<i>ayer</i>
morning	<i>mañana</i>
afternoon	<i>tarde</i>

Monday	<i>lunes</i>
Tuesday	<i>martes</i>
Wednesday	<i>miércoles</i>
Thursday	<i>jueves</i>
Friday	<i>viernes</i>
Saturday	<i>sábado</i>
Sunday	<i>domingo</i>

1	<i>uno, una</i>
2	<i>dos</i>
3	<i>tres</i>

4	<i>cuatro</i>
5	<i>cinco</i>
6	<i>seis</i>
7	<i>siete</i>
8	<i>ocho</i>
9	<i>nueve</i>
10	<i>diez</i>
11	<i>once</i>
100	<i> cien/ciento</i>
100	<i> cien/ciento</i>
1000	<i> mil</i>

TRANSPORT

What time does the next ... leave/arrive?	<i>¿A qué hora sale/llega el próximo ...?</i>
boat	<i>barco</i>
bus (city/intercity)	<i>autobús, bus/autocar</i>
train	<i>tranvía</i>

I'd like a ... ticket.	<i>Quisiera un billete ...</i>
one-way	<i>sencillo/de sólo ida</i>
return	<i>de ida y vuelta</i>
1st-class	<i>de primera clase</i>
2nd-class	<i>de segunda clase</i>

left luggage	<i>consigna</i>
timetable	<i>horario</i>
bus stop	<i>parada de autobuses</i>
train station	<i>estación de ferrocarril</i>

I'd like to hire ...	<i>Quisiera alquilar ...</i>
a car	<i>un coche</i>
a bicycle	<i>una bicicleta</i>

Directions

Where is ...?	<i>¿Dónde está ...?</i>
Go straight ahead.	<i>Siga/Vaya todo derecho.</i>
Turn left.	<i>Gire a la izquierda.</i>
Turn right.	<i>Gire a la derecha/recto.</i>
near/far	<i>cerca/lejos</i>



Also available from Lonely Planet:
Western Europe Phrasebook

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'