

# BREKKE'S TRAVEL TIPS

This document is designed to answer some of the most commonly asked questions.  
PLEASE READ CAREFULLY



## PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Please ensure your travel documents are up to date. U.S. citizens are required to carry a valid passport book when traveling outside the United States. Passports and visas are the responsibility of each client. Depending on the country, your passport must be valid for three to six months after your return date. To avoid issues, Brekke Tours recommends compliance with the six month validity period. If your passport is not valid, you may not be allowed to board your international flight. Passengers should check with the appropriate foreign consulate for entry and validity requirements. A visa is not required for Scandinavia or Western Europe for stays of less than 3 months. For further information visit the following websites: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) or [www.usps.com/passport](http://www.usps.com/passport)

## PHYSICAL EXPECTATIONS

Brekke's Scandinavian escorted tours include some moderate physical activity; while most tours are leisurely, you can expect to walk short distances each day, sometimes over uneven terrain such as cobblestones. You will also need to be able to climb the steps in and out of the bus. Restrooms can be located in lower levels of buildings and there may be no elevators – so please be aware of this issue. If assistance is needed, we ask that you bring a qualified and physically able companion to assist you. You can choose to opt-out of activities while on tour (we leave that at your discretion), however, during certain activities, such as transferring between trains, boats, etc., all passengers must partake.

## TRAVEL CHECKLIST

Important things to do before you go:

- Read your travel documents
- Verify your travel documents and confirmations for accuracy
- Keep travel documents in a safe place and available for days of travel
- Make sure your passport is up to date (we recommend it be valid for at least 6 months after your return)
- Leave a copy of your passport, flight itinerary and hotel list with a friend or relative in case of an emergency
- Notify your bank and/or credit card company you will be traveling to avoid credit cards being blocked
- If you booked your flights independently from Brekke Tours, please provide us with your flight details
- If you have dietary restrictions, please reconfirm these requests 2-3 weeks before departing the U.S.
- If you are planning to pack a CPAP Machine in your carry-on, send required information to Brekke Tours 2-3 weeks before departing the U.S.
- Check cell phone international usage and rates with your provider before departing
- Fill out Brekke Tours' luggage tags with your complete name and address
- Put a hold on mail and newspapers
- Arrange for a friend or relative to water plants, take care of pets and/or check mail

# AT THE AIRPORT



## MINNEAPOLIS/ ST. PAUL AIRPORT

If you are arriving into Mpls / St. Paul Airport with an international departure on Icelandair, Icelandair is located in Terminal 2. Most domestic flights serve Terminal 1, thus passengers using multiple tickets will need to claim and transport their luggage to Terminal 2. Free transportation is provided via Light Rail Transit between the two terminal buildings. A Special Needs Shuttle is also offered as an alternative for the elderly, people with physical disabilities and families with young children.

For transfers between terminals: <http://www.mspairport.com/directions/ground-transportation/light-rail-transit>

For assistance: <https://www.mspairport.com/airport/accessibility>

## LUGGAGE

On our Escorted Tours, we allow 1 suitcase and carry-on bag per person (backpack or tote bag). Luggage handling at hotels is provided (where available) for 1 suitcase, thus your luggage will be delivered & picked up at your room at the beginning & end of your stay.

On our Escorted Tours, we do provide 2 luggage tags per person, thus please put a tag on your large suitcase and carry-on. You may also want to put a label with your name, address and phone number inside your luggage in case your tag becomes separated.

Most airlines do allow 1 free piece of checked luggage on international flights. If you have any domestic tickets booked in conjunction with your international flight, the airlines may charge a baggage fee.

Typically your checked luggage can weigh up to 50 pounds and the dimensions cannot exceed 62 inches. A standard large roller bag is what we recommend using on your trip. For your carry-on, typically the weight cannot exceed 22 pounds and the dimensions should not go over 45 inches (l+w+h).

Because luggage fees and restrictions vary from airline to airline, please contact your airline directly for more information.

- Delta (DL) / [www.delta.com](http://www.delta.com) / 1-800-323-2323
- United Airlines (UA) / [www.united.com](http://www.united.com) / 1-888-674-4680
- Icelandair (FI) / [www.icelandair.com](http://www.icelandair.com) / 1-800-223-5500
- Scandinavian Airlines (SK) / [www.flysas.com](http://www.flysas.com) / 1-800-221-2350

Please note: Most airport regulations require that travelers handle their own luggage through customs, so test the weight of your luggage; you should be able to lift and comfortably transport it for short distances.

## MEETING YOUR TOUR DIRECTOR

Upon arrival in Scandinavia, after claiming your luggage and clearing customs, your tour director (carrying a Brekke sign) will meet you outside the customs area and direct you to the appropriate transportation. Transfers to/from the hotel will be provided in conjunction with the group flights (please see your Escorted Tour Travel Documents for flight information).

**Other Flight Arrangements:** If you have purchased a land only package or if the arrival/departure time of your flight does not coincide with the group transfers, you are responsible for your own transfer to/from the hotel. Independent arrival transfers can be purchased locally. Depending on your arrival airport, you may choose from the airport bus, train or taxi. Please note a taxi may also be needed from the train/bus station to the hotel. You will meet your tour director at the welcome dinner on the night of arrival.

*For Land Only Tour Participants: If you would like to transfer with the group to the airport for your departure, please inform your tour director.*





# ON THE PLANE

## SEAT ASSIGNMENTS

Seat assignment requests are based on the best available at the time of your reservation. Airlines have the right to change seat assignments at their discretion. Not all itineraries are available for advanced seat assignment, and may be reserved for airport check-in only.

Please note that groups seats are assigned at the discretion of the airline. Brekke Tours cannot guarantee specific seating requests. Seat numbers may not be advised until check-in at the airport or departure gate.

## STAYING COMFORTABLE ON BOARD

Below are some tips to help prevent discomfort and jet lag on long flights:

- To help adjust to new time zones, just after take-off, set your watch to the time zone of your destination; however, remember that if you change your watch before you leave, you may have some confusion if you have a layover in a different time zone—make sure you know how long you have between flights to avoid missing a connection.
- Bring a toothbrush, and anything else which isn't a liquid or a gel, that you need to help freshen up before getting off the plane.
- Wear loose fitting clothing. Wear comfortable shoes and try not to take them off as feet occasionally swell during long flights.
- When possible, walk up and down the aisle to stretch your limbs and get your blood circulating. Participate in the in-flight exercise video, should your flight provide one. These are designed to help with body circulation and reduce fatigue.
- Drink plenty of water on the plane. Avoid alcohol, caffeine and carbonated drinks.
- Avoid wearing contact lenses in flight because cabin air tends to dry them out.
- If you tend to get airsick, drink a small bottle of ginger ale before boarding and pack a newspaper in your carry-on bag. The ginger ale will help calm your stomach and so will the smell of the newspaper.

## MEALS ON BOARD

Please check with your specific carrier for meals served on board international or domestic flights.

Some carriers only offer food for purchase on international flights. For instance, no meals are complimentary in economy class on board Icelandair international flights, but food is available for purchase.

## STAY INFORMED

You may wish to download the mobile app for each airline you are flying on which will allow you to be notified of delays, schedule changes, or cancellations as soon as they occur.



# MONEY MATTERS

## CURRENCY

Please note that Scandinavia is moving towards a cash-free society and that some venues and hotels will no longer will accept cash.

Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Iceland each have their own currency known as the kroner. In Finland, they use euro. The currencies of the five countries are not interchangeable.

The easiest place to exchange your money is at your arrival airport. Your tour director will assist you with locating an exchange desk or ATM upon your arrival in Scandinavia.

We recommend using a credit card while in Scandinavia as major credit cards (Visa and Mastercard) are honored at hotels, stores, and restaurants, and also accepted in taxis. Most credit card companies charge a foreign transaction fee on purchases made abroad, thus please check directly with your credit card company for details before departing.

Please contact your credit card company or bank before you depart to notify them of your travel dates so that they will anticipate charges being made outside of your hometown and do not suspend your cards for what may appear to them to be “suspicious” charges. We also recommend making a photocopy of the front and back sides of your cards to leave behind with someone at home who can assist you in the event your cards are misplaced, lost or stolen.

ATMs are readily available in larger cities. We don't recommend taking traveler's checks.

For specific locations of ATM machines, please visit:

- Cirrus ATM network: [www.mastercard.com](http://www.mastercard.com)
- Plus ATM network: [www.visa.com](http://www.visa.com)



## TIPPING, SERVICE CHARGES, & TAXES

Tipping is becoming more customary in the Scandinavian countries, thought often at a lower percent. When dining independently, a small gratuity is expected, 5% - 10%. A service charge may already be included in the bill. If you are in doubt at an establishment, ask the server if a service charge is included. Taxi drivers are not tipped in Iceland or Finland. In Norway, Denmark and Sweden, drivers should be given a few extra kroner, i.e., even out the total kroner amount of the taxi fare.

Gratuities to the tour director, guide and driver are left to the discretion of the tour members and are therefore not included in the tour cost. Tipping in the local currency is preferred. If your tour director is based in the US, they would appreciate tips in USD rather than local currency. If you have been satisfied with their services, we suggest the following per person amounts as appropriate:

- Local city guide: NOK 35 – 55 / SEK 35 – 55 / DKK 20 – 35 per tour (\$3-5)
- Tour bus driver: NOK 45 – 65 per day (\$4-6)
- Tour director: NOK 65 – 110 per day (\$6-10)

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## ELECTRIC CURRENT

The world runs on two types of 110/125V or 220/240V. North American devices run on 110/125V electricity while the majority of the world runs on 220/240V.

The electric current in Scandinavia is 220 volt. Prongs on the wall outlets differ from those in the US and Canada, thus to operate small travel appliances, such as irons, hair dryers, or electric shavers, current converters and adapters are required. Most tech gadgets (mobile phones, tablets, etc.) are dual voltage and do not require a power converter. For dual voltage devices, you will only need an adapter while traveling in Scandinavia.

Because outlets are often recessed, we advise bringing a converter with a corresponding adapter. Most large chain stores (Target / Wal-Mart / Amazon) carry these products.

Please note: A power adapter is the plug only. A power converter is needed for converting power on an electrical appliance (curling iron, flat iron, rollers, etc). Most hotels in Scandinavia will have an iron and hair dryer available.



## CELLPHONES

To communicate with your family, friends, and if needed your Tour Director, we recommend that you and your family/friends download “Whats App” which utilizes Wi-Fi to route your calls/text messages through the Internet instead of your cellular connection.

To place calls from a US number to Scandinavia: Dial 011 (international access code), country code (Norway: 47, Sweden: 46, Denmark: 45, Finland: 358, Iceland: 354) and number.

## CLIMATE

The climate in Scandinavia is very similar to that in the northeastern United States, though rarely as hot in the summer or as cold in the winter. Average day-time temperatures in Fahrenheit for June, July, and August range from high 40’s to mid 60’s depending on your region of travel. It’s always a good idea to check the weather forecast before you depart.

## HOTEL ROOMS

Rooms in Scandinavian hotels may have twin beds, a double bed or day beds. Although triple rooms may be requested, please be advised that conditions may be crowded, as Scandinavian hotel rooms tend to be smaller than American standards.

Hotel bathrooms may also be smaller. Many times showers are compact, and sometimes determining how to turn on the hot water can be confusing. If that’s the case, some hotels actually post instructions next to the shower.

Please be advised that hotel rooms are normally not available until after 2:00 pm. An additional hotel night may be purchased should you wish to secure immediate occupancy upon your arrival.

Please also be advised that not all hotels in Scandinavia will have elevators and some hotels may not have air-conditioning.

## TAX REFUNDS

Tax refunds are available to tourists with a minimum purchase amount which can vary by country. You can identify participating stores by the TAX FREE logo.

Cash refund offices/service desks can be found at various exits from the country, such as at airports or on board ferries and cruise ships.

When you go to request your refund on departure, make sure you have the following:

- Goods Purchased
- Receipts of goods purchased
- Global Refund Forms
- Your Passport



## WI-FI

Wireless Internet is widely available at hotels but there may be a fee for use. Most hotels will also have a lobby computer for guest use.



# PACKING CHECKLIST & TIPS

## ENJOY YOUR VACATION BY PACKING RIGHT:

### TRAVEL INFO

- Passport book
- Airfare e-ticket receipts / airfare itinerary
- Additional travel vouchers (if applicable)
- Travel insurance information (if applicable)
- Money: credit & debit cards / cash

### CLOTHING

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Multi-weather jacket (with removable lining)
- Raincoat
- Pajamas
- Pants / jeans / slacks / capris
- Shirts
- Sweaters / Fleece
- Socks and undergarments
- Swim wear and gym wear (some hotels have spas, pools and gyms)

### TOILETRIES

- Washcloths (typically not found in hotels)
- Toothpaste
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Soap
- Hair products
- Lotion
- Sunscreen
- Ziploc bags for wet items
- Feminine products
- Razor/shaving gel

### ACCESSORIES/MISC

- Money belt, neck wallet or hidden pocket
- Sunglasses
- Hat
- Scarf and gloves
- Collapsible umbrella or poncho
- Refillable water bottle
- Small daypack
- Sewing kit
- Snacks, mints, gum

### MEDICAL

- Prescription from doctor for unexpected refills (medications do not have to be transported in pharmacy container)
- Reading glasses/case
- Contact lenses
- Ear plugs
- Band-aids / First aid kit
- Pain relievers & antacids
- Allergy & motion sickness medications
- Insect repellent

### ELECTRONICS

- Cell phone / charger
- Tablet / charger
- Laptop / charger
- Headphones
- Converter or adapter plugs
- Camera / charger
- Extra memory card / batteries

## PACKING TIPS:

- Bring medium-weight clothing that can be layered based on the day's weather and/or activities.
- A raincoat with removable lining is a good choice for summer visitors. A coat is necessary in fall, winter and spring.
- Casual clothes are appropriate for sightseeing and touring, as well as dining in the hotels. Some tour participants choose to bring dress slacks / skirts for dinner, but this is optional.
- Comfortable walking shoes are recommended for sightseeing and touring.
- Pack your shampoo, conditioner, soap and other liquids in Ziploc bags in case the lid comes open.
- Bring a small bit of soap to hand wash any items you may want to re-wear while traveling.
- Pack a couple of days before you actually leave. This will give you a chance to hopefully catch anything you may have missed.
- Pack some snacks to take along with you – granola bars, trail mix, etc. You can then use this space to bring home the items you've purchased along the way.
- If you are traveling with someone, put some of your clothing in their luggage and some of their clothing in your suitcase in case one bag is delayed or gets misplaced.
- Pack at least one change of clothing in your carry-on bag in the event your luggage is delayed.