

Travel Tips from TOUCH Delegations

MONEY

- Besides what you are taking in cash, plan to take about 15 \$1 bills and 5-10 \$5 bills in USD. This is helpful for tipping, taxi, etc. Be aware though that many Ukraine businesses do not accept USD.
- Go to your bank and get NEW bills, not old ones with tears, ink marks, and old styles. Don't wait until the last week. Banks don't always have crisp currency on hand.
- Ukrainian currency is in Hryvnia (UAH). As of May 2016, the exchange is about 25 UAH to 1 USD. Inflation is rampant- for many years this was 8 UAH to 1 USD
- A calculator is handy for figuring out the money exchange.
- Call your bank and your credit card company and let them know where you're going and for how long to avoid concerns about stolen cards.
- Optional: Take some currency for Hungary or countries other than Ukraine that you will be visiting. You'll need to order from your bank ahead of time. Hungary also uses Euros.
- Use a money belt or neck pouch for most of your cash, plane ticket and passport.
- An OSU Credit Union debit card will work in Hungary, but NOT in Ukraine. However, an OSU Credit Union credit card with a pin will work in both countries for a cash advance. (Bill Smart 2013)

FLIGHTS

- Boost your immune system with rest, vitamins, etc. before you depart.
- Pack small toiletries, an extra set of clothes & underwear, snack, book, camera on your carry-on.
- Direct flight from PDX to Amsterdam is fastest way to get to Europe from Oregon.
- Amsterdam to Budapest flights are available quite a few times daily.
- Chew gum on take-off and landing. Helps keep ears open from the pressure changes.
- Keep well hydrated. Drink lots of water. Use caffeine and alcohol with meals only, they dehydrate you, as do carbonated drinks.
- Keep airflow nozzle in the plane away from your face and top of head to avoid germs/too much air.
- Get up and move around to stimulate blood flow to legs, every hour when not sleeping.
- On long flights try to sleep at least 3 hours using blindfolds, neck pillow, earplugs. Remove shoes and replace with socks/slippers, prop feet with carry-on to ease blood flow to feet. Bring extra earplugs.
- Get a blanket & pillow at beginning of flight. They run out sometimes.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing; layer to allow for temperature shifts.
- Carry protein snacks, low sugar types-nuts, cheese, and jerky. They help the effects of jet lag.
- Melatonin may work to alleviate jet lag for many.
- Reasonably priced trip insurance is available through AAA. (Els Lofgren 2013)

PHONE CALLS/INTERNET

Hotel Atlant has internet but it is a little sketchy at times. There are other places where you can get the internet in the city.

- Bring phone numbers and email addresses of those you may want to contact while on trip.
- You can purchase a cell phone and card while in Ukraine but it only works in that country.
- Cell phones or tablets for FaceTime or Skype as long as the WiFi is working at Hotel Atlant.
- From Randy Killen, April 2016: You can buy a SIM card in Ukraine for your phone and be able to use the network there. Your phone has to be unlocked by your carrier here in the states. It also means that your phone has to be paid for, not paying a month to month fee for it any more. You can purchase from your carrier international plans. I have AT&T and I can buy a \$30 plan that will give me unlimited text, 120MB of data, and \$1 per minute calling. Not the best, but unlimited text is nice. I presume that Verizon has a similar plan. T-Mobile has the best international plans. I believe that you don't have to pay any more for international. It is included with your monthly fee.

FOOD AND WATER

- Bottled water without gas is available at stores near Hotel Atlant. Ask for no-gas water.(nyet gasu)
- Take a filter if you want to use the water in your hotel room. Do not drink directly.
- Do not drink or brush your teeth using the faucet water in your hotel room. Purchase a bottle of water.

TIPPING

Tipping is more common in Ukraine than it was a few years ago. Many establishments expect a tip on the average of about 5-10 percent. In a more upscale restaurant or facility, you will find that tipping is closer to 15% of the total bill. There are times and establishments that will include the tip in the bill so make sure to check before you over tip. If you are unsure if the tip is included as the waiter or the manager for assistance. <http://ukrainianguide.com/do-you-tip-in-the-ukraine>

TRAINS, BUSES AND TAXIS

- The cost of the Airport Minibus at Ferihegy Airport in Budapest into any hotel in Budapest is about \$15 per person one way. The drive is usually about 30 minutes.
- Cost of a train ticket Budapest to Cop (Uzhhorod) was \$40-50 RT and about \$20-25 one way. (2015)
- Taxis around Uzhhorod are usually no more than \$1-4. Hailing a taxi on the street will end up more expensive than if you ask the hotel receptionist to call a taxi to come to the hotel. A taxi to the Chaslivtsi Orphanage is under \$10. Bus service is also available.
- Good website for trains: <https://www.mavcsoport.hu/en>

PACKING

- Suitcases should have wheels.
- Consider taking suitcases that can “nest” so you only have to carry one back in case you are taking extra things over to distribute or get an “extra” one from a thrift store that you can leave there.
- Try packing like items in separate small bags. Helps to find things and easier for security.
- Plastic garbage bag is nice to have for anything wet, dirty, etc.
- It is very reasonable to have your clothing cleaned by the maids at Atlant. They are very prompt.
- As a precaution- remember moist towelettes, Kleenex, hand sanitizer, toilet paper.
- For international flights, you are allowed only 1 free checked suitcase, no more than 50 pounds.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Take prescriptions in original bottles and a paper copy of prescription.
- Have medications, zinc and/or vitamin C for colds.
- Put supplements in checked bags.
- Take a sink stopper for doing hand laundry and a laundry line to help things dry more quickly.
- Check your hairdryer to see if you can switch the voltage. You may need a converter as well as an adapter. Atlant Hotel and many other hotels in Uzhhorod have hairdryers in the bathrooms.
- Mark will bring antibiotics and a syringe in case of sickness and need for blood testing there.
- Bring a smaller bag or fanny pack to use when you are in Uzhhorod or for day trips while traveling.
- Bring business cards complete with your name, phone number, address and email. You can make your own business cards from a template sheets that are available at office supply stores.
- It's nice to take a few gifts to have in case you are invited to someone's home for dinner. You can also purchase flowers or gifts in Uzhhorod at the stores and outdoor markets.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

Exchange rates: <http://www.exchangerate.com> (click on countries not listed)

General Information:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/up.html> (lots of facts about Ukraine)

<http://www.wunderground.com/global/UR.html> (weather information, scroll down to Uzhhorod)

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en.html>

http://uazone.net/Ukraine_Tips.html (leads to many other websites)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uzhhorod>

Ukrainian language/Culture:

<http://www.amesiowa.us/Ukraine/Ukraine.htm>

<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/ukrainian.htm>

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