

✈️ Easy travel for EU citizens

There are no longer frontier controls at the borders between more than half the EU countries. Passports or ID cards are no longer needed, and flights between them are treated as domestic flights.

This is thanks to the so-called Schengen Agreement, which is part of EU law. The full Schengen members are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden (but not Ireland and the United Kingdom) plus Iceland and Norway (which are not EU members).

The 10 countries that joined the EU in 2004 are not yet fully part of the Schengen area. You will therefore need a valid passport or ID card to travel to those countries and to Ireland and the United Kingdom.

However, as an EU citizen it is always prudent to carry your passport or ID card when travelling in the EU as spot checks can happen if public order or national security so require.

When entering or leaving the EU at the external borders you will need a valid passport or ID card.



Some temporary restrictions still apply on cigarettes and tobacco bought in the new EU member states by residents of other EU countries.

✈️ Cross-border payments

Thanks to EU rules, withdrawing euro from a cash machine, making a card payment or a bank transfer in euro (up to €12 500) now costs the same wherever you are in the EU.

🛒 Shopping

There are no limits on what you can buy when you travel between EU countries, as long as it is for personal use and not for resale. Taxes (VAT and excise) are included in the price you pay and no further tax is due in any other EU country.

🚬 Buying tobacco and alcohol

To determine whether the tobacco and alcohol you buy when visiting other EU countries are for personal use, each country can set guide levels. If you exceed these levels, you may be asked to prove that the goods are intended for personal use and to justify their purchase. The guide levels are generous. For instance, you can bring home from another country 800 cigarettes, plus 90 litres of wine and 110 litres of beer without questions being asked.

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🚗 Motor insurance

When travelling in the EU, your car insurance will automatically provide, at no extra cost, the minimum cover (third-party liability) required by law. This also applies to Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. If you have comprehensive insurance at home, check whether the full cover extends to travelling in other countries.

You do not need a green card when travelling in the EU but it serves as internationally recognised proof of insurance, making it easier to claim compensation if you have an accident. If you do not take a green card with you, you should carry your certificate of insurance.

Your insurer can give you a European accident statement form, a standard document that makes it easier to make a declaration on the spot if you have an accident in another country.

🚗 Drive safely

In all EU countries, you must wear seatbelts in both the front and back of the car.

Remember to drive on the left in Cyprus, Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom.

The speed limit is generally 110, 120 or 130 km/h on motorways and 50 or 60 km/h in built-up areas.

Using a mobile phone while driving increases the risk of a fatal accident five times over. It is either explicitly or implicitly forbidden in all EU countries. In some countries, the use of hands-free devices is tolerated.

The maximum permitted blood alcohol level varies between 0.2 mg/ml and 0.9 mg/ml in most countries. But others apply zero tolerance and allow no alcohol in the blood while driving.

💰 Pay as you go

There are toll roads in many countries including Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom. Visitors using Austrian motorways and 'A' roads must possess and display a toll label or vignette on their vehicle. These can be bought at all major border crossings into Austria and at larger petrol stations. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia have a similar system of a sticker affixed to the windscreen.

🛂 Visitors from outside the EU

If you are not a citizen of an EU country you will need a valid passport to enter the EU.

Nationals of 33 countries do not need a visa to visit the EU for three months or less. These include Bulgaria and Romania, due to join the EU in 2007, and Croatia (a candidate country) — as well as Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the United States.

If your visa is from a country in the Schengen area, you can travel to the other Schengen countries as well without additional formalities. If you have a valid residence permit from a Schengen country, it is equivalent to a visa. You may need a national visa to visit Ireland, the United Kingdom and the new EU countries.

💶 The euro

The euro is the currency of more than 300 million people in Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. The symbol for the euro is €.

The euro is used also in Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City.

Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom are not currently using the single currency. The 10 countries that became EU members in 2004 are committed to adopting the euro but none will be ready to do so until at least 2007.

Some retail outlets in countries outside the euro area accept payment in euro as well as the national currency, but they are not legally obliged to do so.

🚗 Driving licence

A valid driving licence from any EU country is valid throughout the EU. In some countries, in addition to carrying a valid driving licence, you will need to have your vehicle registration document with you.

Minimum age limits for hiring a car are not fixed at EU level and can vary between 20 and 23. There may also be maximum age limits, which are generally between 65 and 75.

🌸 Consumer protection

As a consumer, you are protected by basic laws that apply no matter what EU country you are in. These cover things such as uniform food safety standards and detailed rules on food labelling and advertising. EU law provides specific protection on package holiday deals and timeshare property schemes. Practical information and support in bringing complaints against traders in other EU countries can be found through the network of European consumer centres (europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/map.htm)

🌸 Look for the flower

Look for the flower, the EU eco-label, on everyday consumer goods from detergents to textiles to help you find greener products. For a list of eco-labelled products, visit www.eco-label.com You can now also use the flower to find an environmentally friendly hotel, bed-and-breakfast or youth hostel.

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Travelling in Europe

Europe: a continent with thousands of years of history, a rich and diverse cultural heritage and some of the world's most beautiful scenery — so much for the traveller to discover and explore, and all this made easier by the European Union (EU).

The 25 countries of the Union stretch across the continent from the Arctic Circle to the Mediterranean Sea and from the west coast of Ireland to the eastern edge of Finland or Cyprus. You can cross many borders within the EU without passport or baggage checks and the euro makes it easier to shop around for bargains. A single market of 457 million people brings wider choice and lower prices.

You have easy access to healthcare, if required, and pets need no longer be left at home. If you drive, your driving licence and motor insurance issued in one EU country are valid in all the others. And you can use your mobile phone everywhere.

🗣️ Languages

Europe is rich in languages. The main language families are Germanic, Romance, Slav, Celtic and Baltic. The EU institutions have 20 official languages, but there are many other lesser-used ones.

Many Europeans speak at least one other language besides their mother tongue but, during your travels in Europe, try using a few phrases of the local language when talking to local people. It will add colour to your experiences. Start with a 'Good morning':

Czech	Dobré rano	Italian	Buongiorno
Danish	God morgen	Latvian	Labrit
Dutch	Goedemorgen	Lithuanian	Labas rytas
English	Good morning	Maltese	L-Ghodwa t-Tajba
Estonian	Tere hommikust	Polish	Dzień dobry
Finnish	Hyvää huomenta	Portuguese	Bom dia
French	Bonjour	Slovak	Dobré ráno
German	Guten Morgen	Slovene	Dobro jutro
Greek	Kalimera	Spanish	Buenos días
Hungarian	Jó reggelt	Swedish	God morgon

✈️ Flying

Creating a single European market in air transport has lowered fares and increased the choice of carriers and services for passengers.

EU rules also safeguard passenger interests. These include certain rights concerning flight information and reservations, delays and cancellations, compensation if you are refused boarding because of overbooking, or in the case of accident or difficulties with package holidays.

✈️ Security in airports

Avoid the delay and inconvenience of having something confiscated by airport security by making sure you are not travelling with prohibited articles. EU-wide lists of items that are not allowed in the cabin and baggage hold on flights from EU airports have been agreed. Authorities have to provide this information to passengers before check-in, so look out for it in the check-in area.

🏥 Access to healthcare

If you are an EU national, you can get free or reduced-cost healthcare in the case of illness or accident during a visit to any EU country, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland. Since June 2004, a European health insurance card has been introduced to facilitate access to healthcare in the EU and to speed up the reimbursement of costs. It is replacing the E111 form which remains valid during the changeover period.

Only publicly funded health treatment is included in this scheme for the moment and each country has its own rules for public medical provision. In some, treatment is free, in some you pay part of the cost, in others you have to pay the full cost and then claim a refund. So keep all your bills, prescriptions and receipts.

💊 Medicines

Take your prescription with you if you are carrying prescribed medicines. Do not exceed the quantities needed for your personal use during your trip, as large quantities of drugs can create suspicion.

🚰 Bathing water

Strict standards are set for bathing water throughout the EU. Bathing water is regularly monitored and an annual European Commission report shows bathing water quality improving all the time.

📞 If things go wrong

The same number can be used to contact the emergency services in any EU country: just dial 112.



🎭 Culture

The EU supports and contributes to many cultural projects and events taking place across Europe. Each year, it designates a cultural capital of Europe. Cork in Ireland was the choice for 2005. It is followed in 2006 by Patras in Greece, while the joint culture capitals for 2007 are Luxembourg and Sibiu (Romania).

Europe's calendar is crowded with festivals and special events in music, art, theatre, dance and film. Check with national tourist offices for details of what is on when you are travelling.

📞 Phoning without borders

There is just one prefix for making international telephone calls anywhere in the EU. It is 00. Country codes for phone calls:

A	Austria	43	FIN	Finland	358	M	Malta	356
B	Belgium	32	GB	United Kingdom	44	NL	Netherlands	31
CY	Cyprus	357	GR	Greece	30	P	Portugal	351
CZ	Czech Republic	420	H	Hungary	36	PL	Poland	48
D	Germany	49	I	Italy	39	S	Sweden	46
DK	Denmark	45	IRL	Ireland	353	SK	Slovakia	421
E	Spain	34	L	Luxembourg	352	SLO	Slovenia	386
EST	Estonia	372	LT	Lithuania	370			
F	France	33	LV	Latvia	371			

The country abbreviations are those used on motor vehicles.

📱 Mobile phones

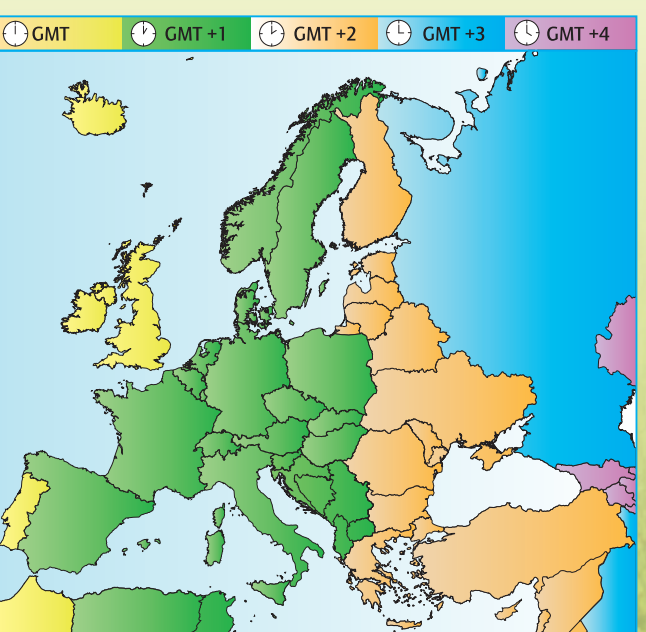
You can use your mobile phone anywhere in Europe and in many other countries thanks to the EU's GSM technical standard. Before travelling, however, contact your service provider to make sure that your phone is enabled for international roaming. The costs will depend on your provider. There can be charges for receiving calls abroad both for you and the caller.



⚡ Electricity

All Europe has 230 volt, 50 cycle alternating current. Cyprus, Ireland, Malta and the UK have square three-pin plugs but, in general, all other EU countries have two-pin plugs. These may vary but you should be able to use your appliances, such as hairdryers and shavers, anywhere. Simple adapter plugs can usually be bought in airports and tourist resorts.

🕒 Time zones



🐾 Travelling with pets

A pet passport was introduced in 2004 making it easier to travel with pets. All cats and dogs will need one, and it will be accepted across the EU as proof that a pet has received the anti-rabies vaccination. However, Ireland, Malta, Sweden and the United Kingdom also require proof that the vaccination has been effective. The necessary tests must be carried out at least six months prior to travel to Ireland, Malta and the UK and 120 days beforehand in the case of Sweden.

An electronic microchip will be introduced by 2012 to allow easy identification of the animal. In the meantime, an identification tattoo can be used except in Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom, where a microchip is already required.