



LAST-MINUTE EUROPE TOUR SAVINGS

Save 30% over do-it-yourself

If your impulse says see Europe but your wallet says wait, the US Tour Operators Association advises that taking a tour can save you 30% over making the same arrangements yourself this summer.

“By negotiating long term contracts with hotels and other suppliers, and by buying bulk air fares, tour operators are able to pass the savings on to travelers,” says Bob Whitley, USTOA president. “Purchasing a tour also means that someone else has done all the leg work for you, saving you hours of planning emails and phone calls,” he adds. Whitley points out that, if budget is a main consideration and you can wait until later in the year, you can save at least an additional 10% by touring in the low season.

Below are three last-minute sample selections with comparisons of what it would cost to make the same arrangements on your own. Comparable tours are valid throughout the summer, and in many cases, through the fall. Prices are per person, based on high season. For comparison purposes hotel prices are per person, based on two persons sharing (half the room price).

7 night Rome Tour from \$2,549 with air

Travelers save nearly \$1,100 (\$1,073) – or 30% on Go-Ahead’s air-inclusive Rome tour. Price includes round trip air transportation from New York, Newark or Washington, DC, 7 nights at Hotel Universo, daily buffet breakfast and services of a tour director, transfers, service charges, tipping and baggage handling.

If purchased on your own, comparable prices would be::

Alitalia Airfare (used by Go Ahead) \$1717

7 nights accommodation Hotel Universo \$1657

Transfers, hotel service charges, tips, baggage handling, local taxes \$ 248

Total: \$3622*

*does not include tour director services or daily breakfast buffet, which increases the savings

Low season savings would be \$900, or 35%.more. Price is valid through August 9, 2008

10 nights Ireland: from \$2897 with air (tax/fees up to \$314 additional)

Travelers can save nearly \$1100 – or 28% -- over doing it yourself on Brendan Worldwide Vacations' 10-night Grand Tour of Ireland. Package price includes round trip air fare New York – Dublin, accommodations in 4 and 5 star hotels, sightseeing, daily breakfast, afternoon tea, 7 dinners, transportation in luxury motorcoach, a tour director, airport transfers, taxes and tips.

To replicate the same itinerary on your own would cost \$3990. On your own tour costs would break down approximately:

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\$1200 Hotels
\$900 Airfare: \$900 (excludes taxes)
\$40 Transfers
\$270 Sightseeing
\$505 Meals
\$150 Tips and charges
\$825 Car rental
\$100 Car parking
Total: \$3,990

Save an additional 10% by traveling during low season. Above prices are valid through August 1, 2008.

Two Week Multi-Country Tour: from \$2,990 with air from New York

Save approximately \$1,500 -- or over 30% -- on Image Tours' 15-day "Heart of Europe" Summer Special tour covering 7 western European countries (Holland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Italy Switzerland and France). The fully escorted tour includes air fare to Amsterdam with departure from Paris, hotel accommodations, transportation within Europe, 22 meals, sightseeing, tips and service charges. Depending on departure city, air inclusive price can range up to \$3,540.

The same itinerary, if purchased on your own, would cost approximately as follows:

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Hotel Accommodation: \$1280
Airfare: \$1,400
Transfers: \$500 (based on car rental, insurance & parking fees.
Sightseeing: \$200
Meals: \$900
Tips and service charge: \$200
Total: \$4,480

The special is valid until sold out. Travel during low season and net an additional 15% savings.

More Information

For more information visit the USTOA web site – www.ustoa.com, or www.ustoa.travel - where you can search USTOA member tour operators by destination served, as well as by activity and even by your vacation personality. USTOA members have met the travel industry's highest standards, including participating in the USTOA Travelers Assistance Program, which among other things, requires each company to set aside \$1 million to protect consumers in case the company goes out of business.

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Media note: Comparison information was supplied by each corresponding company, and was correct at the time of writing.