



## **Helpful Tips on Booking Private Group Tours**

At smarTours, our private group tour consultants are here to make not only your dream trip a reality, but make it easy for you to plan and manage all the details. To help even more, we've outlined some useful tips and advice that prepare you for the booking process and highlight how to make your trip successful and memorable!

### **Simplicity**

The key to making group travel a resounding success is simplifying as much as you can. For example, when possible, we recommend using one departure airport for the entire group. This creates less of a burden upon arrival, as everyone will arrive together at the same time. Another aspect to consider is optional group activities—while we can bring you on unique tailored experiences, we also encourage selecting optional excursions that appeal to most of the group, making it easy for everyone to join together for fun, shared experiences. Planning this way also streamlines pricing for you and the group.

### **Knowing & Embracing Your Group**

Understanding the group as individuals and as a whole is essential. What are their required needs for travel—any allergies or mobility issues? What is the age group and desired pace for the tour? What specific interests does the group have? How travel savvy is the group? All these questions should be addressed to ensure everyone is comfortable, there's no surprises or difficulties, and the group's interests and needs are incorporated.

### **Collect Accurate Information**

The last thing you want happening when you're checking in at the airport is someone not being able to get their boarding pass because their name was misspelled and is different from what's on their passports. When we begin collecting all the travelers information, make sure you have double checked each person's information to match what is exactly on their passport so the airline ticket is valid. It's also critical to have accurate information for visa issuing at your destination, airline tickets for internal flights within foreign countries, check-in at hotels, and name checking when driving across borders.

### **Ensure Passport Validity**

It's crucial that everyone has valid passports that are not expired or set to expire in less than six months following your return date. Check in with group members who don't frequently travel to make sure they have up-to-date passports. Additionally, it's also sometimes required to have multiple blank pages available in your passport. So, if any avid travelers are joining your group, make sure they have a few blank pages left in their passport!

### **Take a Trip to Your Doctor**

Just like you would check the oil in your car before a road trip, it's always good to check in with your physician and make sure you're healthy and ready for travel. We recommend everyone in your group does this at least a week out before departing on the tour. It also gives them the opportunity to refill prescriptions, get medicine they might need for traveling, and receive any required or suggested vaccines.

### **Take Advantage of Travel Insurance**

We highly recommend that everyone in the group obtains travel insurance because even the best made plans can go awry. Your trip is an investment that should be protected and insurance goes a long way if anything happens during travel in a foreign country. It also helps if you need to cancel your trip at the last minute for medical reasons, your luggage is lost, your flight schedule changes and you incur expenses for accommodation, etc. It's always best to play it safe and not let any inconveniences ruin this trip of a lifetime!

### **Be Proactive & Respect Deadlines**

It's never too early to start preparing for your trip, even if that means starting with a calendar that includes deadlines for payments, collecting information, and even obtaining visas. Get your group proactive about all the items they need to have in order for the trip. Make sure they're taking care of their passports if need be, scheduling doctor visits, booking any connecting flights, and even reading up on the destination so they become more prepared in regards to climate, food, etc.—especially in places that are more exotic.

We hope with these insightful tips you can better understand the aspects of planning and preparing for private group travel. There's a lot to think about and get ready for, but this provides a great jump start. And, as always, our consultants are here to provide you with guidance and expertise so that your trip with friends, colleagues, or loved ones goes off without a hitch!

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