



OPERATIF!

Music Lovers Tours

'Festival Verdi! - La Scala - La Fenice!'

Packing Suggestions and Tips

NAME BADGE & LUGGAGE TAG

When you receive your Tour Package, you will find in the envelope the following:

- A Name Badge – Please wear this throughout our tour, even at the airports
- A green ribbon to tie on your case to help identify our group's luggage on baggage carousels and in hotel foyers.
- A luggage tag for your main suitcase. Please secure to the top handle (ie when your case is standing). This makes it easy for porters to run along and match rooms to names.
- A document wallet for plane tickets, etc
- Your airline ticket (ie the printed 'e' ticket which shows the flights for your trip)
- A Printed Itinerary & Packing Information

(Those joining us from outside Australia, we'll hand over your envelope when we see you!)

MAIN SUITCASE

On our tour 20kg is the maximum for your main suitcase. *(Try to leave home with your case weighing under 15kg ...You will buy things for sure!)* Emirates allow 30kg but coach drivers and porters will balk if bags weigh over 20kgs.

There is a limit of one suitcase per person for portage at the hotels. Your hand-luggage/ day pack is your responsibility to carry everywhere! *(make it compact and light!)*

Try a 'practice pack' then leave your case for a couple of days.. and unpack it. Do you REALLY need everything you've put in there?! 'Prune' and re-pack. Italy does have shops!

Buy one of the kits of little travel bottles and fill with shampoo etc ...or recycle your own small containers ie take a few and discard as you go! If you're not fussy about particular toiletries, use the hotel ones supplied. In our 4-5-star standard of hotel they are always nice.

CARRY-ON BAG/ HAND LUGGAGE

- You can take onboard the plane one carry-on bag which can weigh 7kg, but try to keep to 3 to 4 kg. Try to choose a bag or small back-pack which doubles as your day-pack during the tour. *(We like small day bags, ie soft backpack or shoulder bags, rather than a second small suitcase. If you take a case on wheels as hand-luggage...you (and your travelling companions) may find it a pain. It will be your job to carry it on and off the coach. They usually don't fit in overhead compartments and small cases can cause confusion if picked up and counted as someone's main piece of luggage.)* If you can't easily carry your hand-luggage onto the coach, pop it on the seat beside you..or above or at your feet, it's too cumbersome! If you can't carry it around all day...it's really not what you want. We can't stop you bringing a case as 'hand luggage' but it will be great if you don't! Our resounding advice is to TRAVEL LIGHT!!! Ladies *(in fact men too)* are allowed a hand-bag on the plane also, but it's better to just pack a small handbag for evenings out, leaving only one bag *(your small day bag)*, to manage on the plane.
- We suggest carrying a light jacket too, in case you get cold esp. at airports or arriving in Italy.

**** A Tip from Stewart !!**

INSIDE your carry-on bag for the plane, have a simple plastic shopping bag (from a clothing or similar shop). Into this, place the few essentials you'd like at your seat....A pen, moisturiser, extra mask, a book or crossword, passport details noted in a little notepad (for completing your arrival card on return to Australia.) If you have the things you want in your plastic bag you will avoid the need to jump up and down rummaging in over-head lockers! Similarly a 'soft' shopping bag can be useful on the Coach, to keep small 'over flow' items together eg Drink bottle, camera, sunscreen, which you may not need with you at every stop.

CABIN LUGGAGE RULES

- TRANSPORTING LIQUIDS

- LIQUIDS: Airlines are very strict regarding liquids in your carry-on luggage.
- ALL liquids, medicines/perfume/makeup/even lipstick in your cabin bag or handbag, must be contained in clear plastic, zip-seal bags that you can hold up for inspection if asked. (*Should you forget, plastic bags are usually available at the airport as you approach Security.*) We recommend putting all non-essential toiletries in your main luggage. If you put the bottles or tubes into plastic zip bags, there should be no leaks!
- Containers which can hold 100ml or more are NOT allowed in cabin luggage, (*even a half empty toothpaste tube!*)
- Exception: You can have essential liquid medicines, in your cabin bag but you need to carry a medical prescription and / or letter from your doctor to verifying what it is. . (*If you do take regular medication, whether in liquid or tablet form, always carry with you sufficient supply to last a few days....just in case your main luggage goes astray. Always carry a spare prescription too.*)

OTHER NO-NOs

- NO aerosol cans in hand luggage. (*It is permissible to have these in your main luggage, again, safely in a zip seal bag.*) Where possible, pump or roll-on products are preferable.
- No sharp objects...metal scissors, nail files etc in hand luggage. They will be taken from you.
- No spare loose batteries. The ones inside your phone/camera/laptop/I-pad are OK.

TOILETRIES / MEDICINES TO TAKE

- Vitamins and medicines should be in their original containers. Prescription medicines should, ideally, have a copy of your prescription with them. Bring enough medication to last the trip.
- a simple first-aid kit (band-aids, headache pills, Gastrolyte if you're prone to tummy bugs, pills for diarrhea. (*Gastrostop PLUS tablets...are great. They are mint flavoured and you can bite off half or a little bit if that's all you may need. They have an ingredient to stop the 'butterflies' too.*)
- sun screen (*roll on is good*) although we won't have much need on this tour.
- toiletries bag (Those that hang on a hook/ door knob are great space savers, esp if sharing)
- a sewing kit if you wish but hotels still have the little cards with various cottons and a needle
- insect repellent (roll on) 'only if you feel you are a target..
- sea-sickness tablets and /or wrist bands if you get motion sickness
- Travel washing liquid or liquid from your own laundry decanted into a small bottle.
- Zen Herbal Gel for Muscle pain is a tip or suggestion. It is marvellous stuff and when travelling, most of us get stiff or sore at some point (*after plane travel, funny pillows etc*). Get the tube (*not the spray*), which has an applicator nozzle that you just run over the sore bits! It's very convenient and really works! Be wary...it's reddish so you need to let it soak in before putting on your white T-shirt!

CLOTHING - GENERAL

For most of the time, dress will be casual and comfortable. You want to be able to walk around easily and enjoy the sights. Stewart loves his light cargo pants because of the pockets on the leg where you can secrete things pretty securely. A light jacket is always essential and for this tour, a heavier 'wind breaking' jacket for cooler days/nights as well. You won't need a big thick coat or jacket. A good tip is to plan to 'vestirsi alla cipolla' as the Italians say... (*literally...dress like an onion! ...in layers!!*)

GUIDELINES FOR CLOTHING TO PACK

- 4 or 5 pairs / sets of socks and underwear (*fast drying if possible*). You can use expensive hotel laundry services or the more cost effective 'quick wash in your room' technique. Things generally dry overnight or within 24 hours if not.
- 4 or 5 shirts / tops, mostly long sleeved but one or two in lightish fabric. Layers remember!
- A multi-purpose light jumper which is quite 'smart' or a nice 'wind-cheater'
- 2 - 3 pairs of pants or skirts and 1 pair of long shorts /'peddle pushers' for warmer days
- One or two nice pairs of pants/skirts for wearing to performances or to dinner.
- If ladies prefer dresses/ skirts as day wear, that's fine, as long as they allow easy movement.
- Swimsuit (ladies) / Ditto men...if you enjoy a swim. Some of our hotels will have pools
- 2 pyjamas/nighties (You will have dressing gowns/robes in most of our hotels.)
- A light rain jacket (a plastic golf jacket style is easy to crunch up into your day-pack) OR a plastic poncho if you can accept the fashion 'faux pas' !
- A nice jacket or two (men) for the opera and smarter dinners. It's good to pack a tie also. Something comparable for the ladies. (*Jennifer says she always takes black pants (in a fabric that doesn't crush) and a couple of dressier tops...to which you can add a jacket/scarf/wrap.)*
- A small hand-bag or clutch bag for going to the opera/ dinner
- A sensible hat to put in your day bag. Don't worry about fashion statements...just shade!

SHOES (*The most important item!!*)

- Bring sensible, comfortable 'jogger- style' walking shoes for daily wear. Some days you'll be on your feet a lot. Make sure they have good grip & support for walking on old cobbles and uneven surfaces. (*Jennifer took Stewart's advice some years back and went to a sports store for a proper fitting. She's suffered not one sore knee, back or ankle since!!*)
- A pair of solid walking sandals or similar is a great addition if you don't get cold feet and hate wearing covered shoes when the sun is shining. Good ones can be as comfy as joggers.
- Most of our hotels will supply scuffs/slippers for around the room...or going to the pool (*supplied with your bath robes*) so don't bring slippers unless they are a necessity for you.
- 1 dressier pair of flatish shoes for wearing to the opera / concerts / dinner. You **MUST** be able to safely walk 15 to 20 mins in them. This is no time for strappy sandals or stilettos !

MONEY BELT

- A money belt is advised, especially in Milan. If you lose everything except your cards and some cash, you can just go to the shops and replace it all. The reverse is not so easy! Wear your money belt tucked inside your clothing and keep a small amount of cash (for quick purchases on the go) in your day pack or a pocket that is not easily-accessed.
- Carry a credit card in your money belt, in case you see something irresistible or need to re-stock your cash reserve. (*Cash Cards have really fallen by the wayside....Your Credit Card is the simplest way to get money from ATMs when travelling.)*
- Use the hotel safe to store passports, reserve cash and ideally, a 'backup' Credit Card. You should have two cards in case one is lost or stops working. It happens!
- If you can ascertain the overseas 'help' line number for your card, take this with you too.

MONEY TO TAKE

We will use EURO in Italy and we suggest you get a mix of EURO cash notes before we go. You can order these from your bank or from currency exchange places like Travelex or Crown Currency which are at the big shopping centres.) 200 - 300 EUROpp would be fine to leave home with. However, if you don't have time to get cash, you can use an ATM when we get to Bologna on arrival afternoon.

**** A TIP** - When purchasing something in a foreign country and using a Credit Card, ask that your card be charged in the LOCAL currency. You may be charmingly offered the charge processed in AUD...This means you pay an unregulated exchange rate, with no right of redress later. It's far better to let official banks and rates on the day, take care of currency exchanges, rather than a shop! Also...do carry some cash with you when out and about. Often in Italy, you will find Eftpos machines at shops or restaurants are 'broken!' 'not so much in the North... but it still happens!

SUNDRIES

- A small notepad (and pen!) is invaluable... for changed meeting times, addresses, breakfast times or any other important information which arises. Keep one with you at all times! Noting each hotel's address and phone number is essential too...just in case you get lost. Similarly you will be given breakfast times on arrival at hotels and other meeting times or times for luggage out, throughout the tour. It's helpful if you note these when we tell you, especially if there's a time adjustment from what's on your itinerary. *(Of course, if you're a wiz at noting things with your phone, that's fine!)*
- A small back-pack/day bag, to hold water, light jacket, camera... when you're out and about.
- Cables for your phone and other electrical devices if you have them
- Adapter plug for above (In Europe it's generally a two pin plug for 220-240 volts.
NOTE: Some of the newer Korjo plugs can have pins which are too wide/thick for some European power-points. Have a good look and compare when buying and go for thinner pins if available!
- Camera and 2 or 3 memory cards *(don't keep everything on one card — rotate them)*
(Or just use your phone camera as so many do these days.)
- A Travel alarm clock. You will need it until you get onto local time. *(You can use hotel 'wake up' calls also of course... but sometimes...individual wake-ups can be missed!)*
- Earplugs. These are useful anywhere. Eye shades are good too if you like darkness to sleep.
- An inflatable or floppy neck cushion for flights is good for some people. They do stop your head falling forward when you sleep but can be bulky. Emirates provides everyone a little pillow and blanket and a 'comfort pack' with toothpaste and brush and sleeping socks.
- PERHAPS : a pair of in-ear or even the larger noise reduction head-phones to cut out noise and 'hum' on planes. *(Stewart likes them....Jennifer likes to hear what's going on!)*
- Eyeglasses / sunglasses / contacts if you use them. Never wear contacts on the plane.. !!!
- a mini torch and a folding travel umbrella
- A small travel jug/kettle is handy if you can't live without a cuppa before bed and room service is too slow/costly. Pack some tea/coffee and some little long-life milk capsules and you're set! Italian hotels often don't supply tea/coffee making facilities but increasingly they are putting a kettle in room. We'll have this information on your final itinerary.
- Our lovely hotels will have hair dryers so no need to bring yours from home. Mind you, Jennifer says some are like a baby's breath so if it's important to you, pop in a small travel one.
- Hotels will have irons and ironing boards if you need to press something yourself.
- There will be free Wi-Fi in all of our hotels. You will be given a password/ access code at check in *(another use for your little note pad)* or it will be in with your room key.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS/ ESSENTIALS

- Keep photocopies of your passport photo page in an inside pocket of your suitcase and leave one with the family member/friend who is your emergency contact at home in Australia.
- Also keep well hidden in your suitcase, details of your credit cards *(not the pin numbers!)*
- Keep your Travel Insurance details & the emergency phone number in your main luggage and

- carry the details noted on your small note pad (*just in case of an incident when your out.*)
- Take a variety of sizes of plastic 'mini-grip' / zip seal bags. These are handy for damp 'smalls' or swimmers that didn't dry ...also for holding small accessories like plugs/chargers, loose coins, memorabilia you collect along the way...entrance tickets, cards etc. They have a variety of uses.
 - addresses for postcards and/or emails home
 - small journal book (*if you like*) for writing notes for your travel memoirs !!
 - a few small, cheap gifts from home for when you meet folk worthy of a little thank you.
Even the cheap little kangaroos/koalas etc from 'trashy' shops can bring a smile and people are chuffed to receive them! We sometimes leave them for room cleaning staff on departure. Everyone has a child or grandchild somewhere who would treasure a little Koala!

WHAT WILL THE WEATHER BE LIKE?

The Weather? Who can guarantee or even accurately predict the weather these days. We can only go on the recent past and based on weather patterns, we *should* have average temperatures between 10 and 20 C during our tour and perhaps a day or two of rain. The weather last time we went was very kind and quite mild. We had lovely days most of the time and no rain! *We're aiming for a re-run!*

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:

You will have heard horror stories about pick-pockets and drive-by motor-cyclists who grab bags and ride off. These things do happen in major cities around the world but if you take reasonable precautions you will be fine. Just be alert and aware of who is next to you in crowded places. Never leave your bag hanging loosely or carry money or cards in easily accessible pockets. If you are carrying a bag over your shoulder, keep your arm over its opening. If you have a small backpack, carry it on the front of your body in crowded places, rather than on your back. If you make it difficult, the pick-pockets/opportunists will go to the next 'easy' target! (*We had someone lose her passport in the little market in sleepy Reggio Emilia....How? Wandering around with her handbag open, passport clearly visible no doubt....and taking photos !!*)

WATCH YOUR STEP!

Many footpaths are old and aside from cobbles, you may find gaping gutters, bits of pathway missing, and uneven surfaces. Be ever aware of where you are putting your feet, particularly when it's crowded and you can't see ahead or when admiring a spectacle you've suddenly spotted. It's so easy to forget to look where you're stepping and nursing a grazed knee or twisted ankle is no fun! Remember when crossing roads, that cars are driving on the opposite side to ours! Think and look before you step out!

BE PREPARED FOR ENJOYMENT, ENRICHMENT & EXPANSION (*..of mind AND waistline...!*)

If you do most of the above, we are certain you will enjoy a stress-free time away and return in good shape, with cherished memories of our tour and of your fun-loving, considerate travelling companions! Those of you sharing a room with a new friend will be a little apprehensive but we know that anyone attracted to our special tours will be a kind and giving soul. Respecting the needs of others as well as your own is the key to happy room-sharing and indeed to group travel.

Even with a partner or close friend, be ready to make an extra effort when you feel tired and 'frazzled' and try not to let it impact on others.

Rest if your body tells you it needs some downtime. We want you all to stay well! Do as the locals do and grab an afternoon rest when you can, especially after a late night. You should have been out walking daily before we leave, including hills, so that walking is not a shock to your system. The major parts of our tour are in areas which are very flat. BUT, we are spending a a lot of our time in the region known as 'the stomach of Italy'...Be warned! Try to drop a couple of kilos before we go if you need to! Finally, please do your best to ensure we all have a wonderful time away. Show consideration, care and a smiling face to those in our group and to those we meet along the way. Such simple graces are mostly appreciated and where they are not, smile all the more!!!

Jennifer & Stewart

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