



Travel Tips 2016

what you should know to get ready to go to Lourdes

PASSPORTS

- A valid passport is required for international travel.
- Passports must be valid 6 months beyond travel dates.
- For detailed information: 1-877-487-2778 or visit on-line: www.travel.state.gov
- New US passport book: \$135 (\$110 + \$25)
- Applications are processed in 4 - 8 weeks.
- Express passports in 2 - 30 days with a late-expedite fee.
- To Apply: complete and sign DS-11 form, have two identical 2" x 2" color passport-quality photos, bring proof of citizenship and proof of identity to be presented in person.



TRAVEL DOCUMENT DELIVERY

- A convenient travel neck wallet with the travel itinerary, luggage tags and airline e-ticket confirmation is mailed to all pilgrims the week of departure.
- Family members traveling together will receive all travel documents in one packet sent to the same address.

SAFEGUARDING TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- The travel neck wallet is provided to secure documents throughout travel safeguarding against lost tickets, boarding passes and passports. Please wear the neck wallet en route.
- Keep your passport and money in a safe and concealed place within your room throughout your stay at Lourdes.



Transportation Security Administration

3-1-1 Liquids Carry-On Rule (Must declare formula or medications exceeding 3.4 oz.)
Liquids of 3.4 oz. or less must be presented in a one-quart clear bag; 1 per passenger.

→ CONNECTING FLIGHTS REQUIREMENT: 3 Hours Between Connecting Flights

Travelers purchasing flights from their home city airports to connect to our Air France flights must arrive **3 hours before** international departure and must allow **3 hours after** arrival in the US before connecting flight departures to home.

→ Airport Check-In Time Requirements: Late Arrivals Can Be Denied Boarding

Passengers should arrive **at the ticket counter—not just at the airport**—one hour before domestic travel departure and three hours before international travel. Please allow for sufficient wait time for check-in and security screening.

▲ DELTA Connecting Flights & Bags

→ Air France partner Delta Airlines is the preferred airline for connecting travel. Other airlines will not assist misconnected passengers to France on alternative flights.

→ Sky Team Partners allow luggage to be checked from home departure cities through to Lourdes and back again.

→ Airlines charge fees for checked baggage on connecting flights to our Air France departure; call airlines for costs.

→ Air France allows ONE checked bag without fee. We strongly urge everyone to **check only one piece of luggage** and to bring only one carry-on bag of medications and overnight necessities.

→ Baggage weight limit: 50 pounds (strictly enforced)

→ Baggage dimensions limit: 62 in (height+length+width)

→ Carry-on: 45 linear inches= 21x13x9 in & 26 pounds.

→ Lourdes water must be in checked baggage on the return flight. Please allow sufficient **empty space and weight** in luggage on the way over to provide for water packed on the return.



Miles, Seats and Meals

→ Group passengers earn **25% of miles** if they belong to Air France Flying Blue or Delta Sky Miles frequent flyer programs. If you are a member of one of these programs, present your membership card at group check-in to receive your miles.

→ Specific **seating assignments** are never guaranteed for group passengers prior to departure. Air France reserves block seats for groups and assigns seats on departure day at check-in subject to availability and plane configuration. The group can switch seats to allow family/friends together.

→ Special dietary **meals**, such as diabetic, celiac, salt-free, dairy-intolerant or vegetarian should be ordered thirty days prior to departure through the Lourdes Volunteers office.

For your comfort, and safety, we urge all pilgrims to walk about the aircraft and stretch frequently during international flights to avoid deep vein thrombosis (blood clots) from the lack of movement for several hours in flight. Plan to rest during the flight and avoid caffeine prior to travel.

\$ Dollars and Euros €

- A debit card for cash withdrawals and a credit card for purchases assures the most favorable exchange rate.
- Euro CASH is required for café or gift shop purchases of less than 20€ which is the standard credit card minimum.
- Travelers checks are not widely accepted or easily cashed.

Currency Exchange

- US dollars can be exchanged for a percentage or service fee at banks or some AAA offices before departure or at the Currency Exchange in the Paris or Lourdes airports.

Cash

- ATM withdrawals are the easiest way to access Euros in France at the best available exchange rate. ATM machines are available in Lourdes and in the Paris and Pau airports.
- Each bank (the French bank and your bank at home) will charge a transaction fee for every withdrawal.

ELECTRICAL ADAPTERS & TRANSFORMERS

- ✦ The European electrical system operates on 220 current with a greater voltage fluctuation than US 110.
- ✦ American appliances need an adapter *and* a transformer.
- ✦ Dual Voltage appliances, adapters and transformers can be purchased at AAA, Radio Shack, Staples or on line.

FOOD and SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS

The meal and shared dining experience is significant in France and punctuality for meals is important. Pilgrimage food is institutional fare, *NOT* fine French cuisine!

Breakfast is French bread and hot beverages in France. The largest meal of the day is noon dinner and a lighter supper at 7:00 p.m. Coffee and tea are only available at breakfast. Accueil food offers family-style meals of meat or fish, a starch, vegetables and simple dessert. Special medical dietary needs can be accommodated and supplemented.

Volunteers are offered choices, but special dietary meals are not provided. Soda, wine and beer are at an extra cost.

LOURDES WATER: BOTTLING AND PACKING FOR HOME

Glass and plastic bottles with Lourdes images are easily available in shops outside the Sanctuaries beginning at 50¢ each. Lourdes Water must be packed inside checked luggage. Lourdes water containers cost 2-5 € and hold 2-25 pounds of water.



TELEPHONES

- Remove unknown caller blocks to receive calls from Europe at home.
- Order international phone plans on your home and/or cell phones and cancel the plan after your return.
- Purchase phone cards in France for international calls to US.
- 7,50 € phone cards are needed to use French pay phones.



INTERNET ACCESS

- Services are not readily accessible. Internet cafés are available in town about a 20 minute walk uphill.
- Some hotels offer free wireless internet access within their lobbies.
- An “English-friendly” local bistro offers free computer use with internet access to patrons on a first-come-first served basis for limited personal use.

Eating Out In Lourdes

- French and local cuisine is offered at nearby restaurants in Lourdes. Meal prices are 10-30€ with tip per person not including wine or dessert.
- French pastries and ice cream are a special treat well worth the calories and the cost! Bistros and cafés are accessible nearby offering luscious desserts and French coffees for 4-7€.

Around Lourdes

- The town of Lourdes is about a 20 minute up hill walk from the Grotto.
- A bus departs every 20 minutes from St. Joseph's Gate up to town and the train station for 2-3 €.
- The Chateau Forte is open daily with elevator access; admission is 6€.
- Bartres is ten minutes by public bus at 6€ or taxi at 12-20€ each way.

Shopping

- Airport duty-free provides tax-free shopping for perfumes, colognes and French food products.
- Rosaries and religious souvenirs are available at multiple shops lining the streets outside the Sanctuaries.
- Lourdes French Market is in the town center open daily 7:30 - noon with fresh foods, wines, flowers, local delicacies and regional goods.



Paris & Nevers

- Paris is 5 hours by train or 9 hours by car. Delta/Air France will allow a limited number of passengers to pre-arrange an on-your-own stopover in Paris. Fees apply.
- St. Gildard Convent in Nevers, the novitiate home to St. Bernadette where she remains incorrupt, is about nine hours by car or accessible by train from Paris in about 2-3 hours.

Travel & Medical Insurance: Insurance is mandatory. The Travel Guard Group Protection Policy covers cancellation, trip interruption, baggage delay or loss and uncovered medical expenses. This plan does cover pre-existing conditions.

Changing Time Zones

- France is six hours ahead of the Eastern time zone.
- Avoid caffeinated products prior to and during travel.
- Be prepared for travel fatigue. Be patient with yourself and others as brain function remains in the past time zone!
- To better adjust to the 6 hour time change—stay up! Eat and sleep in the new time zone schedule from the first day.
- Make efforts to fight fatigue on arrival day by keeping active. Only nap *if you must* and are able to easily get up again after a short rest and not require a full nights sleep.

→ Traveling with Prescription Medications

- R** Prescription medications must be in their original containers and in your carry-on bag with you in flight.
- Photocopies of original narcotic prescriptions should be carried separately from prescribed narcotic medications.
 - Medications requiring refrigeration can be cooled by ice replenished in flight. Dry ice is not allowed in transport.
 - Intravenous fluids are considered body fluids and are not subject to liquid limits, but must be declared with a script.
 - Consult your prescribing physician for instructions to adjust medications for a six hour time difference.

→ Traveling with Syringes and Needles



- TSA requires Lourdes Volunteers to declare all syringes prior to travel. Syringes and medications are required to be accompanied by a prescription.
- ALL medication and syringes to be used throughout travel and pilgrimage, plus an additional two week supply are to be carried aboard and NOT packed in checked baggage.
 - Carry wipes, gloves and all supplies with the syringes.
 - A luggage tag should be attached to all medical supply carry-on bags with contact and travel information inside.

→ Traveling with Medical Devices



- Durable medical equipment is not considered as baggage and does not affect the luggage limits by either weight or number of pieces of checked bags.
- Travelers with durable medical equipment must notify Lourdes Volunteers to advise Air France prior to ticketing.
 - Durable medical goods should be carried on board and not placed in checked baggage to avoid the risk of baggage loss or delay during connections and travel.
 - Portable oxygen concentrators are best for travel and while on pilgrimage.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSABILITY AROUND & ABOUT LOURDES

On average 20% of the pilgrims who do not use a wheelchair back home will need a wheelchair while in Lourdes. Lourdes is in the Pyrenees Mountains with a hilly terrain, inclines and limited elevator service throughout the Sanctuary.



In Our Chair

- Manual wheel chairs are available from the Sanctuary for use during pilgrimage while in Lourdes.
- Companion and Caregiver volunteers can be arranged to assist pilgrims using a wheelchair during their stay in Lourdes.



In Your Chair

- Exact wheelchair measurements are needed for cargo hold access.
- All motorized wheelchairs must be disengaged for flight.
- Luggage tags are provided for each removable piece of a wheelchair for easier identification by the airlines.



Airport Assistance

- Wheelchair assistance is available throughout travel, including gate to seat transfers.
- Wheelchairs are NOT reunited to travelers in Paris between connecting flights. Air France travel chairs are provided for travelers' use.



Motorized Wheelchairs

- Wet and dry cell battery operated wheelchairs **MUST BE pre-approved by Air France for international transport.**
- 110 volt battery chargers must use a quality converter to safely recharge at 220 voltage while in France.

IN A VOITURE

Unique to Lourdes, these rickshaw-like transports are available to hospitalities for use inside the Sanctuary.

Volunteers are trained to assist pilgrims both in and out of voitures and to their desired destination.



Wheelchair users who do not require any assistance at home may need support with the steep ramps and hilly terrain at Lourdes.

Lourdes Weather: An Umbrella and Warm Coat or Short Sleeves and Sunscreen!



SPRING High 70s / Lo 30s
Traditional spring rains can bring variable warm or cold mountain temperatures.



SUMMER High 90s/ Lo 40s
Hot days and cooler nights with occasional warm rains to cool the summer heat.



FALL High 70s / Lo 30s
Variable autumn climate with waning warm days, cooler nights and rain.

What to Wear

Modesty and Comfort Please!

Europeans dress more formally: less jeans, tee-shirts, sneakers or flip-flops.

Appropriate and modest clothing to visit a holy place and attend Holy Mass in Church:

- NO shorts, short skirts, sleeveless or low-cut tops or open midriff.
- Volunteers are to wear:
Hospitalité Dress Code *or*
Pilgrimage Service Dress Code
- Comfortable shoes are a must!

How to Pack

Less is Really More!

- Pack all you might need for 24-48 hours, including medications, in a carry-on bag not to be checked-in.
- Plan to dress in layers adjustable to changing weather with coordinated clothing or mix-and-match outfits.
- Roll clothing to avoid fold marks and prevent the need for ironing.
- Allow room in luggage for Lourdes water and souvenirs to bring home.
- Pack all toiletries in one bag to easily carry into a shared bathroom.

What NOT to Bring

Too Much Stuff!

- highly expensive valuable cameras or costly electronic equipment
- heirlooms or personal valuables
- metal nail files
- pocket knives
- scissors or corkscrews
- lighters or matches
- anything that can be misconstrued as a weapon
- disorganized carry-on with excessive electronics and wires

Packing an EMERGENCY TRAVEL KIT Inside Your Carry-On

Create a small separate emergency pack containing a passport copy, two passport photos, emergency contact information, Lourdes Volunteers phone numbers, prescription drug list, antibiotics, credit card and small amount of Euros and Dollars.

PACKING LIST SUGGESTIONS

Daily Needs

- comfortable shoes or sneakers (second pair not worn on plane)
- wrist watch or pocket watch
- 3-5 complete changes of clothing
- underclothes and socks
- warm sweater, scarf and socks
- jacket (that fits over the sweater)
- rain coat and hat
- robe and slippers
- 2 required uniforms (volunteers)
- personal needs items
- woolite/febreeze/wrinkle release
- travel alarm with spare battery
- travel umbrella
- gloves

Toiletries & More

- towel, washcloth and pillowcase
- electrical adapter / transformer
- shower shoes
- soap, shampoo and hair products
- blow dryer (dual voltage preferred)
- razors or shaver
- deodorant
- nail clippers or emery board file
- vitamins, aspirin, cough drops, etc.
- band-aids
- moist towelettes
- sunscreen and sunglasses
- moisturizer / lotion
- travel tissues

Possible Needs

- health insurance cards
- prescription medications
- medical equipment and supplies
- antibiotics (if usual/possibly needed)
- sugar substitute packets
- healthy snacks (for delays and waits)
- address book or prepared addressed labels to mail postcards home
- business cards or address labels to share with new pilgrimage friends
- plastic zip bags to contain liquids
- French-English dictionary
- camera and batteries
- prayer book or journal and pen
- chewing gum (for flights)