



GENERAL INFORMATION GUIDE

**“A Must Read For
Your XL Sports Tour”**

XL Sports Tours

825 Courtland Street, Orlando, FL 32804

info@xltravel.com 781-210-7896 www.xlsportstours.com



YOUR XL SPORTS TOUR EXPERIENCE

Top Tour Tips

We hope you are as excited as we are about your upcoming tour. XL Sports Tours has put together what we feel is the ideal sports tour for you. To help you prepare for your time in the UK, the team at XL Sports Tours has put together a useful list of information, including details on everything from day one to your return home.

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1. What to Bring

Treat the tour as a regular vacation where the weather is unpredictable, even during the summer. **Please be sensible with packing and try to limit your main luggage to one bag** as coach space is limited and if you are visiting multiple countries the baggage allowance is lower on domestic/European flights.

Below are a few suggested items you may need in addition to regular packing and there are also a few obvious ones:



Suitable footwear for all playing surfaces and conditions.

Waterproofs, especially a jacket

Practice gear, laundry may be limited so have spare training items

Lunch **money**; roughly \$15 per day

Local currency/ATM Card

A smart casual outfit for evening dining

Bathing suit

Personal medication for asthma, headaches etc.

Deodorant, toothpaste and other personal hygiene items

A comfortable pair of walking shoes

Camera (in hand luggage)

Insurance documentation

Passport and Visa (when required – check directly with your Embassy)

Pen and paper, we encourage everyone to write a short journal each day

A sense of humor and tons of energy!

What not to bring?



Excess luggage
Valuable jewelry

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2. Payments

Payments are to be made online through your Personal Registration Page either by check or credit card. Checks should be made payable to **XL Travel** and sent to **XL Sports Tours, 825 Courtland Street, Orlando, FL 32804**. Credit card payments may be subjected to an additional charge.

Please ensure that all installments are received by the specified deadline dates. If we do not receive your payments on time your individual rights to travel or the overall tour cost may be affected. Airline tickets will not be distributed until the group has made all trip payments.

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3. Insurance

Personal medical and travel insurance is the responsibility of the traveler. Insurance is compulsory if you are traveling to play in a tournament. We recommend that you take out travel insurance whatever type of tour you are coming on.

Go to the My Tour tab at www.xlsportstours.com for further details on coverage and cost. If you decide to arrange your own insurance make sure to request a 'sports rider', which will cover any injury, sustained during a sporting event.

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4. Flights

You will fly as a team from an appropriate international airport. Your XL Sports Tours guides will be awaiting your arrival and will greet you as soon as you pass through customs at your final destination.

To travel internationally you need a passport. If you do not have one already it is advisable to start the application immediately as it can be a lengthy process. Your local Post Office will have all the details and appropriate forms, or you can find them online at http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html. It is possible to expedite the process for an additional fee, but XL Sports Tours strongly advises against leaving anything to the last minute.

Your tickets will usually be e-tickets so you do not need a paper copy. Your XL Sports Tours Coordinator will send you tickets 4 weeks before you travel (by email if they are e-tickets, or to your team leader if they are paper). **Once you receive your tickets please check the spelling of the full name** and let us know if there are any errors, as airlines are very strict with their security. When you complete the online registration process we ask for your name as it appears in your passport – this means your birth name, not abbreviations or shortened versions, as the airlines can be tough on this. There may be a charge for any incorrectly spelt names due to errors on the registration forms.

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5. First Day

Jetlag can affect some people more than others. We are very experienced on the effects of jetlag and schedule appropriate activities for your first day. Try to sleep on the flight on the way over so that you feel more refreshed when you arrive.

We advise that you pack your training gear and a small towel in your hand luggage. This prevents any difficulties with your activities if your checked luggage is lost and also means you can freshen up after the flight. We may not check in to the hotel until quite late on the first day so please prepare for a long day.

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If your tour is based in one country, you will have the same coach and driver for the duration. The coach is locked and secure when not in use. Please respect the coach and your driver, as you will be spending a lot of time together! Plastic bags are provided for trash. All personal belongings should be unloaded and taken to your room at the end of each day. All coaches have an onboard restroom.

There will be some days when we have to do a significant amount of traveling in order to reach the top sporting destinations. On these journeys we will have DVDs and your XL Sports Tours staff will entertain you with an endless stream of corny jokes (so it may be a good idea to pack your ipod!). There will be plenty of stops for bathroom breaks and snacks. Please see "17. Farewells" for details on tipping the driver.

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XL Sports Tours is proud of the reputation it has built up with many different quality hotels over the years. Our different package tiers offer different levels of hotel, but we are sure you will find each hotel suits your exact needs.

Please note that many of the hotels across Europe do not offer air conditioning due to the temperature climate.

Generally we place 2 people per room, however this may differ with your particular tour depending upon what is requested during the tour planning stage. This will be specified on your itinerary. Some hotels have options to accommodate 3 to a room. When you register you can specify your preferred roommate. Usually players over 14 years of age room together and parents are matched up based upon gender and age. The obvious benefits to this are that the trip is designed primarily as a **sports tour** and the players get the most out of the tour if they are able to bond with their teammates. However if requested you may share with your child.

Voltage in Italy is twice that of the USA (200V as opposed to 110V). If you are bringing personal electrical items such as a laptop or digital camera you will be able to charge the battery in the hotel using a simple **wall-socket converter**. These can usually be found in stores such as CVS Pharmacy or Walgreen's, and are often sold in the airport. Some electrical items such as hair dryers are not suitable for use on the higher voltage. A useful article to consult before you travel can be found at <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-are-the-electrical-voltage-differences-between-the-us-and-europe.htm>.

Most of our hotels offer internet services, usually at an extra charge. You can check online at the hotel's website when we send you the hotel confirmations. Please consult your XL Sports Tours guide for information about the nearest internet café where rates are much cheaper.

Once in the hotels we ask for impeccable behavior. It is important to act in a professional manner at all times and respect other guests as large groups stand out and behavior is closely scrutinized. **A curfew will be set for players on a daily basis** after consultation with your coaches. Anybody showing a serious lack of discipline will find himself or herself returning on an early flight. We are proud to have never faced this situation before, and hope it stays that way!

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Diet plays a huge role in the modern professional game. For most of the trips we pre-arrange appropriate meals with the hotel and local restaurants to ensure that you are eating healthily during the tour (not fast food). However, on occasions you may be 'treated' to a pizza party!

Please remember that **an integral part of your tour is experiencing different cultures.** This includes local cuisine, which will not be the same as your own meals. **Keep yourself fully hydrated on tour, taking every opportunity to drink plenty of water.**

If you have specific dietary requirements for medical reasons or suffer from any food-related allergies, please indicate so during registration or email info@xltravel.com with details.



We suggest a good amount for daily spending is the equivalent of U.S. \$35 per day. The only extra expenses during our tours are lunch, snacks and drinks and any personal expenses such as phone cards or souvenirs.

Many of the European countries use the Euro currency, but please check prior to your departure. A Euro can be subdivided into cents.

Most American credit cards are accepted internationally, but **please notify your credit card provider before you travel** to ensure that your card will work properly abroad. Another option, which provides extra safety is to buy prepaid debit cards, which can be used at most banks and ATM's.

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We advise that you purchase a phone card once you reach your destination country. This usually offers the most reasonable rate and cards are easily obtainable from local stores which your tour staff will escort you to. **To call the US from abroad, dial 001 followed by your area code and full number**

Hotel rates are very high for phone calls. It is much more affordable to use a phone card or speak to your XL Sports Tours Tour Director for more information on purchasing these.

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Most hotels offer a laundry service, but they tend to be an expensive luxury. You will find yourself very busy during your time on tour, and it is usually much easier to bring enough clothes to last the tour rather than relying on using the laundry service.

Your XL Sports Tours tour guides or the hotel concierge will be able to direct you to the nearest public Laundromat, which is far more reasonably priced than the hotel service.

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12. Sightseeing

Sightseeing listed on the itinerary is included and there will be plenty of cultural experiences to satisfy most people. However, we may also offer optional extra trips upon request from the group at an additional cost.

Remember your Camera to capture new lifelong memories.

There may also be times in the tour when you are given time to split into smaller groups and visit attractions that you want to see. In this case consult first with your guide to find out the best places to go and ways of getting around.

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13. Watching

Live events are a phenomenal part of the tour experience. The atmosphere is electric and you will find yourself caught up in the moment. These events **are very safe and secure**, with a high level of precautionary security throughout all the major stadiums that we visit.

During the event our advice is to remain in your seat and not to wear attire representing opposing teams, then sit back and enjoy the game! **It may get cold at some games, particular evening events, so take a warm jacket and scarf.** Try to watch the players who play your position and learn from their style of play – your guide may test you on it later!

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14. Training

Throughout your tour you will be participating in a number of training sessions. **Please bring appropriate training gear, including footwear for different surfaces.**

You may be training with professional coaches from some of the finest organizations in the country. You may also be lucky enough to train at the same facilities used by the professionals. These are once in a lifetime opportunities so make the most of them, but please respect that these are places of work for the club so do not disturb their privacy unless first invited to do so.

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Make sure you bring all of your kit with you. Each opposing team is selected to match your skill level as best we can. Sometimes games may be tough, so take the opportunity to learn from your opposition, celebrating victory and accepting defeat with the same grace.

It is a nice gesture to bring a small gift for the opposition, whether you choose to do this on an individual basis, or pool together to buy a team gift.

Occasionally games will be changed for reasons outside the control of XL Sports Tours, such as poor weather conditions or last minute cancellation by the opposition. It is also important to realize that the opposition teams commit their time and resources for the opportunity to play against an American team and as such we can be restricted to specific times and dates with games. **We reserve the right to adjust activities on the itinerary during the tour.** This will not take away from your tour – it is in fact beneficial as it often means adding something extra or making an improvement to the tour – so we ask for your patience and co-operation, and you will find you have a fantastic tour!

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Obviously you will already be aware that you are traveling to a country where the first language is not English. If you are able to converse in the local tongue, great, but if not do not panic. The majority of locals, particularly in areas popular with tourists, are able to speak English to reasonable levels. As well as this, XL Sports Tours will provide you with locally knowledgeable guides who are able to converse free in the language of the country. They will be happy to assist whenever needed, and maybe even teach you a phrase or two of your own!

Italian

- buon giorno
- arrivederci
- grazie
- si
- no
- mi scusi

USA

- hello
- goodbye
- thank you
- yes
- no
- Excuse me



During the tour our staff will keep your friends and family back home updated on your trip. The XL Sports Tours guides will send occasional '**tweets**' and **Facebook updates** and for some of the trip we will also have videographers capturing some of the action to upload to our **Vimeo XLTV channel**.

Keep track of the tour highlights by following XL Sports Tours in the following formats:



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You will find it difficult when your tour comes to an end and you have to leave your XL Sports Tours guides. Try to hold back the tears in the knowledge you will be able to do it all over again next year!

As a sign of your gratification, it is customary to tip your XL Sports Tours guides and the bus driver. Usually work on around **\$2 per day for the pool**, to be split between all the staff members.

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19. Emergency Contacts

Contact details for the tour directors will be provided in the final email before the group travels so that people back home are able to reach the group in case of an emergency. Hotel contact details are also provided on the itinerary.

UK Head Office: 011-44 203-004-8332

US Head Office: 1-781-210-7896

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