



## **SBV Tours & Maldwyn Travel Enterprises (MTE) Q & A and FACT SHEET**

### **AN INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL SOCCER TRAVEL WITH SBV Tours and Maldwyn Travel Enterprises LLC**

When you decide to take your team abroad, SBV Tours and MTE and its agents will help you make it an experience that everyone who participates will remember for a lifetime.

This is a simply Q&A Guide & Fact Sheet to help you as a group leader, parent and/or player or family member or supporter to best prepare for your trip of a lifetime! We've tried to cover all the situations and questions you will face most frequently.

We suggest you read it first, then refer to it as needed as you prepare your group for departure, and while you are abroad. (Please do not hesitate to ask any additional questions you may have).

In basic format, here are what most potential travelers want to know upfront in order to make their decision or to make their trip and unbelievable experience:

1. **Where does SBV Tours & MTE take groups on Tour to?** Basically to wherever you want to go, but primarily:
  - \* **THE UK:** ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND & IRELAND
  - \* **MAINLAND EUROPE:** SPAIN, ITALY, GERMANY, HOLLAND, FRANCE (or wherever you request)
  - \* **BRAZIL:** Sao Paolo, Rio De Janeiro
2. **How much does an average trip cost?**
  - 8 day tours start at \$1595
  - 10 day tours start at \$1995 (dependent on inclusions, destinations and type of tour)

#### **Is airfare included?**

No, but SBV Tours & MTE can arrange all of your flight for you. We use a consolidator to find the best group rate and schedule for you and your group. However we do not mandate that you take the tour flight with us, allowing you to arrange your own group flight if you wish or purchase individual flights or use frequent flyer miles.

**THE SBV TOURS and/or MTE GROUP FLIGHT OPTION:** Once the group has made a decision to hold a presentation evening and have enough interest in the tour, we either give an estimate of what the group flight might cost or we provide you with an actual group flight cost and schedule (we can only provide this 11 months or less out from time of travel as airline schedules are not published until that time).

The group or individuals within the group do not have to take the group flight. There is some flexibility!

The group can opt to find their own group flights. However to constitute a group flight, the group must have at least 10 travelers taking that flight option. Otherwise individual tickets would have to be purchased.

Individuals within the group can either opt to take the group flight option or find their own flight (though the internet, an agent, directly with the airline or by using frequent flyer miles). **However** – if an individual makes their own flight arrangements and those arrangements do not tie into the group flight option, those individuals have to make their own plans to meet up with the group at their own cost.

Should any individuals or families want to use the group flight option but deviate somewhat i.e. fly out before the group or return after the group (to explore further, meet family, or head to France for example), then this can be done either through the group contract or SBV Tours and MTE will make arrange those flights separately.

The benefit of traveling on the group flight option:

- \* The team travel as a team (this is part of the trip, the experience and as a great team bonding or getting to know you opportunity)
- \* Keeps the group together from start to finish from a logistical point of view
- \* The coaches flight is covered by SBV Tours & MTE
- \* SBV Tours and MTE can go in a reserve/hold the group space up to 11 months in advance
- \* The cost of the flight is built into the overall tour cost and therefore payments can be spread across the payment plan with no interest charged.

**3. When would you travel?**

All SBV Tours and MTE groups tailor a tour to suit their travel plans; be it the dates and days they travel, where they travel to, how long they go for, what exactly they see and do, how many games they play and how they approach the payments and/or any fundraising. SBV Tours & MTE packages are made by you for you!

**4. How do you factor tryouts into the equation i.e. what if I get cut from my team?**

If a player is cut from their team and no longer wishes to participate in the tour, then if a replacement player or travelers is found, SBV Tours & MTE will refund that player in full

**5. What if my child travels alone?**

Any player or minor traveling alone then a TRAVEL CONSENT FORM is completed giving responsibility for that traveler to another parent or adult or the group leader/coach/rep – this form can be found on the team tour webpage. This is a common occurrence and should not deter anybody from sending their player of a great tour! The group and players are taken care of 24 hours per day, every day while they are 'on tour'.

**6. What if my team doesn't have enough players to travel?**

If a team doesn't get enough players to commit to travel, then SBV Tours & MTE will do all it can to help with that process either by getting other local players to commit or offering the tour up to other players through their vast network who are interested in traveling and playing (but do not have a team to play for or travel with). Alternatively, SBV Tours and MTE obtains guest from host clubs in the countries visiting to make up the numbers so that games can be played.

**7. Do I need to take out travel insurance?**

SBV Tours and MTE strongly recommends that every traveler take out travel insurance to safeguard their trip and their money. There are many travel insurance companies to choose from and SBV Tours and MTE suggest that travelers shop the internet to get the best offers and premiums

**8. Do you offer a payment plan?**

**REGISTRATION PROCESS & PAYMENT PLAN:** Every traveler must complete the registration documents (PRINTED CLEARLY), be it a player, parent, supporter or coach.

Until we have online registration we will continue to use these forms.

Once the tour price is fixed and the flight price confirmed, SBV Tours & MTE will notify the groups via a welcome letter and explanation of the payment process. Basically the overall tour cost is divided by the number of months between paying an initial deposit and 30 to 60 days prior to travel. Those amounts can be paid in a variety of ways. Travelers have the option to pay via credit card, cheque (check) or money order or in cash on or about the payment dates specified. However if they communicate with the SBV Tours and MTE staff, then can change the amounts and dates they pay any amount in should they so wish.

The three main payment deadlines are:

1. The deposit date
2. The flight balance date (usually those taking a SBV Tours or MTE group flight have to have paid in the flight amount 3 months (90 days) in advance
3. The final balance (usually 30 – 60 days) prior to travel

If groups undertake some fundraising and wish to mail payments in periodically or on the set deadline dates, they can do so (so long as they note who the payments should be allocated to and the exact amounts).

Monthly invoice/statements are emailed out to each traveler with a tour update so that travelers can keep track of their accounts and payments.

**SBV TOURS & MTE IN SPECIFICS:**

**1. THE ROLE OF A GROUP LEADER**

- A successful trip abroad begins at with an organized Group Leader or Coach. The Group Leader is the liaison between your group and SBV Tours & MTE.
- Group members should notify you of any changes in individual plans, and you should then contact us immediately so that we can make the proper arrangements.
- A group leader does not have to be in charge of every little detail but has to be sure everyone is doing his or her assigned job.
- It is a good idea to create a long-range calendar. When are payments due? When to apply for passports and permission to travel forms? How often should the group get together prior to departure? A master calendar, distributed to everyone at the start of your planning, can prevent many last-minute glitches.
- Sometimes the group leader is also the coach. If that's the case, try to involve other parents in the planning process.

- If the group leader is a non-soccer person, it's important for him or her to communicate directly with the coach. That way both will be on "the same wavelength" regarding the goals/objectives of the trip, the emphasis on soccer, and the expectations and demands placed on the players.
- HOWEVER, whether the group leader is a coach or not, it's important he or she involves the players from the start. After all, it's their trip. They should know from the outset exactly what's expected of them: how much they'll be training, how many hours they'll spend fundraising, and what other obligations they'll have as part of this wonderful International Soccer Travel opportunity.
- Also the role of the parents should be clearly understood well before departure. Are they traveling simply as tourists, or are they chaperons? Will they be required to supervise activities, help with equipment, deal with all the youngsters or only their own -- or are they simply to watch and cheer?
- SBV Tours & MTE will also communicate with the group as a whole regularly, providing updates, payment schedules, flight options and continuously update the groups "TOUR WEB PAGE"

**A question often asked:**

Can travelers take side trips whenever they wish, or must they always remain with the group? Every group must answer those questions in its own way, as it sees fit -- but the group leader must raise them before the group departs, preferable in time for parents to think about, and clearly define, their own roles on the trip. It also important to communicate expectations of the trip and trip logistics with the parents. Communicate and let parents know what accommodations are like, what transportation is included, what meals are included and most importantly, parents must understand the trip is first and foremost for the players and athletes and that the sport program should take precedent on the trip. By communicating these items in advance with parents you will alleviate complaints from parents while on the trip.

**A. INVOLVING PARENTS AND HANDLING THEIR REQUESTS**

- A Group Leader should involve parents in the planning of an International soccer tour, right from the start. It's a big undertaking, and the more people working on it the better. Parents can provide good ideas, can ease the workload on all, and can help prepare everyone for a great experience. Parents can perform a great deal of logistical work but always, of course, under the supervision of the group leader.

**Suggested Committees for parents to consider would include:**

**Budget:**

A group of parents should sit down and work out a logical, realistic budget for the entire trip. Besides the obvious expenses of airfare, ground transportation, meals and lodging (all part of the SBV Tours & MTE contract), the budget should address gifts and uniforms, gratuities for guides and bus drivers, any additional meals not included in the package, cancellation penalties (individual and group), supplemental insurance policies, emergency expenses and the payment schedule.

**Gifts:**

In Europe, Asia and South America, it is customary to exchange pennants or sports pins before each game. It's helpful to carry easily packable souvenirs from your city, state or region to give to people you meet who are particularly helpful or friendly. A good resource to order/purchase pennants or gifts is Sports Pins International: [www.sportpins.com/](http://www.sportpins.com/)

**Transportation to and from the U.S. airport:**

Always a good idea to talk this through as a group or with other travelers to gauge the best and most effective ways of getting to and from airport pre and post tour.

**Publicity:**

An International soccer tour is a great opportunity to get some good exposure for your group in your local papers, TV Stations and on social media. We recommend appointing a person to contact press outlets prior to the trip and post pictures and updates of the trip on social media outlets.

**Paperwork:**

This includes United States or Canadian Youth Soccer Federation permission to travel forms, medical forms, lists passport numbers and other important soccer travel documents (instructions on how to do this is included in this guide).

**Uniforms and equipment:**

Some teams traveling internationally purchase warm-ups, travel bags, and travel shirts or jackets (these not only look nice, they help keep the group together). And don't forget balls and medical kits.

**Education:**

This committee can help teach the participants (prior to departure) a few things about the countries they will be visiting on their soccer tour (geography, history, customs, language, etc.). The team tour webpage will also be a great resource for the group in this regards!

***Some ADDITIONAL Tips ☺ for a smooth tour:***

- Players take their cues from adults. If coaches, parents and chaperons complain about minor items -- unfamiliar food, no ice, different electrical currents -- then players will also. A group leader should make certain all negative adult comments are made only to other adults, behind closed doors.
- That goes for major philosophical differences too. If one group of parents want to take everyone sightseeing one day, while another group feels the team needs to practice or rest, solve those differences on your own, apart from the players. (A compromise is always best: an early practice, followed by a few hours of touring.)
- As situations arise, the group leader should deal with them honestly and directly. A discussion before you go should cover many issues, but some may not arise until you are actually overseas -- for example, a parent wants to have dinner with one player and a friend while the rest of the team eats in a dormitory dining room. In that case, the group leader should make a decision after hearing all sides -- in private.
- It cannot be emphasized enough that good relations between the group leader and other adults begin before you depart, with a clear discussion of rules, roles and expectations.

## **B. WHAT TO BRING**

Here is a basic checklist of things to bring. You may want to add or delete items, depending on your group's needs and desires:

- Passport - VERY IMPORTANT: Most countries now require travelers to have a passport that is valid more than 90 days after your trip return date. If your passport expires within 90 days of your trip return date you should apply for a new one ASAP.
- Cash to exchange upon arrival or credit card to withdraw money from an ATM machine
- Money conversion chart
- Pocket money (US \$100.00 - US \$150.00 per week)
- Tennis Shoes and other shoes (comfortable shoes to walk in)
- Socks
- Extra screw-in cleats or shoes for turf fields or both
- Practice shorts and t-shirts
- Athletic tape
- Camera/phone
- Dark and light uniform set
- Shin guards
- Alarm clock
- Watch
- Extra jerseys and t-shirts for trading
- Toothpaste and toothbrush
- Shampoo and soap
- Dress slacks and shirt
- Everyday clothes, including shorts, jeans and shirts
- Plastic bags (for wet or dirty clothes)
- Towels
- Deodorant
- Rain gear
- Warm jacket
- Small detergent packs
- Air freshener for rooms at schools if the group is staying in a school
- Playing cards
- Prescriptions and medications, including glasses/contact lens
- Foldable travel bag (to be used as an extra bag)
- Clothesline (for drying clothes)
- Electrical adapters and converters (consider packing as many battery-operated electronics as possible, as converters can be expensive to buy and heavy to carry)
- Chargers for your cell phone, camera, video camera, and laptop
- Hairdryer, compatible to International voltage.
- Headphones for watching movies on your electrical devices (laptop, iPad or airplane)

### **Group leaders should consider packing these items for the soccer tour:**

- Balls (each player should take a deflated ball with them for practices, training sessions and pre game warm ups)
- Medical kit
- Pennants
- Gifts for hosts and other helpful people
- Airline tickets
- List of passport numbers (with a photocopy)
- Emergency phone numbers/contact information (for the destination and North America)
- Itinerary
- Permission to travel and medical forms
- Extra "group" money
- Guidebooks, maps and directions

**NOTE:** frequent travelers follow a simple rule, "If you don't need it, don't bring it!"

### **C. EXPECTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

Youths do not have the same experience and knowledge of adults. They often approach an International soccer tour from a different perspective than older travelers do. Some of their preconceptions, expectations and questions may surprise us, or seem trivial -- but the following queries and statements are voiced often by the players.

#### ***"How do I stay in touch with family and friends back home"***

In this day and age it is easier than ever to stay in touch with family and friends back home with cell phones, e-mail, internet and social media, so losing touch with people doesn't have to be an issue. Options to keep in touch with family members back home include cell phones (contact your service provider for options for international call plans), E-mail and internet (many accommodations will have public computers and many destinations will have internet cafes. Facetime, Viber, Whatsapp – all great options to stay in touch. However, encourage players to travel with open minds, free to discover things on their own.

#### ***"What about the language barrier?"***

Reassure your players that many International people are familiar with the English language. Your players will not starve or be stranded. However, some players think that everyone abroad speaks perfect English. They don't! Encourage each player to learn such simple things as numbers, "Good morning", "Thank you" and (of course!) "Where is the bathroom?" Don't worry about sounding silly; attempting a conversation in the listener's native tongue is more important than sounding perfect. All over the world, people appreciate visitors who try to speak their language.

#### ***"I won't like the food."***

Some food will be very familiar; some will be similar to what they're used to, but prepared differently; other food will be unfamiliar. Most players on a Challenger World Tours trip in fact, have had their taste buds opened to new, exciting food. But prepare your players for certain differences. In many of our International Soccer Travel destinations, breakfasts are smaller than in the U.S. (in many places it consists of sliced meats and cheese, yogurt and fruit). Lunches are bigger, and dinners lighter. They will find familiar fast-food restaurants -- but the group leader who steers his group away from the familiar as much as possible is doing them a great service.

### ***"Don't drink the water."***

Occasionally, a player's digestive system will react to new water. Bottled water - with bubbles and without - is readily available too. Ice, however, is less available in most places than Americans are used to. Drinks are often served at room temperature. Please note that meals are typically served with tap water and many times beverages such as bottled water, juice and sodas are not included with the meals.

### **D. THE ALCOHOL QUESTION**

"There's no drinking age."

You should inform your players that every country (and many restaurants and cafes) has its own regulations concerning the sale of alcohol. In addition, you as a group leader should discuss and develop "Codes of Conduct" prior to departure. These codes can cover alcohol; how much freedom each player will have (for example, "No player may go off by himself; always travel in pairs") and lights out -- all of which relate, in some way, to the issue of alcohol.

One of the most vexing problems for group leaders involves alcohol. Europeans and South Americans hold different attitudes about alcohol than many Americans. In some countries there are no rules prohibiting youngsters from drinking, while in other nations the legal age is lower than in the U.S. You will find that youngsters are easily served abroad in bars and restaurants; some tournaments even have beer tents open to players.

Your alcohol policy depends, of course, on your particular group's age, makeup and community standards. This policy should be decided upon in advance by you as group leader, in consultation with the other adults, and should be communicated clearly to all group members -- including parents not accompanying the team -- prior to your departure from the States.

Bear in mind, however, that alcohol is a "big deal" to many American youngsters, and its ease of availability will be attractive to them. Be prepared for "testing" behavior; it is a rare team on which the issue never arises, in one form or another. The groups that have the least trouble with it are the ones that have thought it through beforehand.

## **2. MONEY TIPS**

- First, contact your bank to inform them you will be traveling out of the country so the bank does not freeze your credit or ATM cards. Be sure to get a list of International phone numbers (particular to the soccer travel destination visiting) to call in the event of loss.
- ATM's are readily available in most of our International Soccer Travel destinations and are a good source to get cash.
- If possible, always carry ATM cards or credit cards, not cash. Cash cannot be replaced if lost or stolen; also, banks and money-changing agencies often pay better exchange rates on credit card purchases or getting cash at an ATM machine. We do recommend you change some money prior to departure so you have some cash of the local currency on hand upon your arrival in your international destination. Of course, you should carry small amounts of cash, for small purchases to get you by the first day or two.
- Tourist attractions are referred to in the tournament or excursion information sheets. The time available during tournaments to visit attractions will depend on the game schedule and on the results of your team(s). Admission fees for sights are usually not included. We advise you to collect at the beginning of the tour i.e. \$ 75.00 per person to pay for these admission fees (and/or tips for bus drivers and guides). This will save you a lot of time collecting fees at the last minute.





- Charge cards, such as Visa, Master Card and American Express, are widely accepted abroad at stores, hotels and restaurants (though not at most discount stores).
- Please be aware that American and Canadian banks pay lower exchange rates (compared with those abroad), and will add additional service charges if you change money in the U.S. and Canada in advance, that is why we recommend you only do this for a small amount to get by the first day. Airport banks in Europe pay excellent rates, and will usually be open when your flight lands.
- Since in most countries you are charged a transaction fee each time you exchange money, the best rule of thumb is to limit your number of transactions.
- Your goal should be to cover your expenses without running out of money, and without having much leftover foreign currency. (Don't forget, many exchange agencies will not convert coins.)
- Protect your valuables! A money belt or neck pouch is a good idea, especially for novice travelers like youngsters. But no matter what type of bag your players use, they should never wear it out in plain sight.



### **3. PERMISSION TO TRAVEL FORMS AND RELEASES**

U.S. Soccer and FIFA require that every team traveling outside the United States apply for permission to travel. This is a FIFA requirement that U.S. Soccer is bound to follow as an affiliated member of the international governing body of the sport. FIFA directs the Federations to be involved whenever a team is crossing an international border or hosting a team from abroad so that Federations can ensure the validity of the games being played and also to make certain that the rules of the game are being applied uniformly across the globe. In addition to this, in some cases your U.S. Soccer affiliated member might have insurance coverage for your team when giving permission to travel. The following general rules apply in regards to insurance coverage through USYS/state federations or US Club Soccer when getting permission to travel internationally (information confirmed from USYS as well as US Club Soccer):

- In the case of teams applying through a state soccer association which is insured by Bollinger: No insurance will be included when teams travel internationally.
- In the case of teams applying through other state soccer associations: Some will include insurance
- In the case of US Club Soccer teams: The US Club Soccer accident policy would be in force, but it is always difficult paying accident claims for overseas providers. US Club recommends that the clubs buy a travel accident plan for all the members of their trip.

The procedure for applying for permission to travel is as follows:

- Complete the US Soccer forms and submit back to US Soccer. The forms include the following:
- A completed Application for Foreign Travel (TAPP) approved by an organization affiliated with U.S. Soccer. The application submitted MUST include the signature by a U.S. Soccer affiliated organization (bottom right of the page). Organizations affiliated with U.S. Soccer include: Charter State Associations, United States Adult Soccer Association (USASA), United States Youth Soccer (USYS), American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO), US Club Soccer, Soccer Association for Youth (SAY), United Soccer Leagues (USL), U.S. Power Soccer Association, United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA). Please click the following link to download this form.  Application For Foreign Travel
- A completed application form for participating in an international match or competition. It is in addition to the U.S. Soccer Application for Foreign Travel. Please click the following link to download this form.  Application\_form\_for\_participating\_in\_an\_international\_match\_or\_competition.pdf

- A completed Travel - Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act. Please click the following link to download this form.  Travel TED
- A copy of the Official Team Roster which includes all players and team officials, certified by the appropriate registrar. The roster submitted MUST include the signature by the appropriate registrar.
- Applicable fee of \$50.00 per team made payable to U.S. Soccer Federation. This can be submitted via check or credit card. Click on the following link to download a Credit Card Authorization Form.  CREDIT\_CARD\_AUTHORIZATION\_FORM.pdf
- A copy of the official brochure, pamphlet, invitation or other applicable material of the game or tournament host. Comments Premier International Tours: If your team participates at an international tournament, please attach the tournament information sheet; if your team plays games only, please attach our tour confirmation.
- After receipt of the signed forms, please submit all signed and filled-out forms and processing fee to US Soccer at AGaribay@ussoccer.org and you must copy in Steven Davies from Challenger World Tours on this e-mail, [sdavies@challengersports.com](mailto:sdavies@challengersports.com) , so Challenger World Tours can verify with U.S. Soccer that your team is traveling.
- Please note the application and information must be received by U.S. Soccer no later than thirty (30) days prior to the first scheduled match.
- It is also advisable, for your own protection as a group leader, to ask all parents to sign a general release and medical release form. Upon request we can e-mail you an example of such a form.
- Canadian teams should consult their local provincial association about what, if any, travel forms are needed.

Click on the following links for **Parental Consent Forms** for minor's to travel unaccompanied by either parent:

[Click here for a Parental Travel Consent form](#)

## 5. PASSPORTS AND VISAS

- VERY IMPORTANT: Most countries now require travelers to have a passport that is valid more than 90 days after your trip return date. If your passport expires within 90 days of your trip return date you should apply for a new one ASAP.

**For passport information and procedures to apply for a passport please visit:**

- Everyone traveling in your group must have a valid passport from their country of citizenship. United States passport applications are available at U.S. clerical courts, local passport offices and some post offices.
  - US Passport website: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/apply.html>
- A valid passport is required for U.S. citizens to enter Argentina. U.S. citizens do not need a visa for visits of up to 90 days for tourism or business.
- Brazil also require Visas from US and Canadian citizens. For information on how to apply for a Visa please visit:
  - Visa for Brazil website: <https://brazil.travisa.com/>
- Application for a passport must be done in person. The following documents are necessary:
- Evidence of citizenship by certified copy of the applicant's birth or naturalization certificate. Certified copies of birth certificates are available through offices in the capital of the state of birth (exact addresses are available at all passport application sites).

- Current identification including physical description or photograph and signature, such as a driver's license or student identification card.
- Two recent 2x2 inch identical color photographs, full face on a plain background. The applicant must be in street clothes, without dark glasses.
- Passport fees vary for adults and minors and whether you are applying for a passport for the first time or just renewing a passport. Check the following link for passport fees:
- <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/passports/information/fees.html>
- The passport will be mailed to the applicant. Processing of the application takes a minimum of four to six weeks; spring is a particularly busy time. Therefore, it is important to apply as soon as possible, especially if the applicant needs to obtain a certified copy of the birth certificate.
- Certain countries (ex. Brazil) also require entrance visas especially if you are not an American citizen. If you are not an American citizen you need to call you country consulate or the passport agency to be sure you have all the proper visa documents before departure.

**For Canadian teams traveling abroad, please visit the following websites for information about applying for/renewing a Canadian passport as well as obtaining a Visa to visit Brazil or China:**

- Renewal of Canadian Passports: <http://www.ppt.gc.ca/cdn/ren.aspx>
- Tourist Visa Requirements by country for Canadians: <http://www.ppt.gc.ca/vo-ot/visas.aspx?lang=eng>
- Consulate General of Brazil in Toronto: [http://www.consbrastoronto.org/visa\\_tourist.php](http://www.consbrastoronto.org/visa_tourist.php)
- Consulate General of Brazil in Vancouver: <http://consbrasvancouver.org/visas.html>

## **6. FLIGHT TRAVEL SUGGESTIONS**

- All the Overseas Airlines strongly advise that all groups departing for international trips from North America arrive at the airport at least three hours before departure time.
- In most cases, your group will not have pre-assigned seats for your flights. This is why it is important for your group to arrive early at the airport and check-in together. Some airlines allow the passengers in your group to check in on line and assign seats, but only 24 hours prior to departure. Check the travel documents you receive from Premier International Tours to see if you can check in on line.
- When you arrive together you will have your tickets arranged by the Airlines Ticket reservation employee. This will give your group a greater chance of everyone being seated together or at least very close in groups in the plane. If you have a special request, for example that a mother and daughter wants to sit together make this known at the reservation desk when checking in. In most cases they will honor all requests when possible.

**It is very important that your luggage will be well marked with:**

- Name
- Address
- City, State zip and telephone number with area code

A special mark of your own so that you will be able to recognize you own bag or suitcase right away.

- Remove any carry straps from the bags and place them inside the bags to prevent them from being caught on the many conveyor belts throughout the airports.
- All carry-on bags must meet the special requirements for bags; they cannot exceed 22" x 14" x 9". If the bag is over these requirements it is possible that the airline will not allow it to be carried onto the plane. Also be sure to follow TSA's 3-1-1 for carry-ons = 3.4 ounce (100ml) bottle or less (by volume) ; 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin.

**SBV Tours & MTE advises that each player should carry-on the following items:**

- Player's uniforms & Player's sport shoes
- Camera (and film if necessary) & MP3 Player/iPod/iPad or personal music listening or movie watching equipment
- Snacks (most shops abroad are not open during the evenings)
- Medications
- Please understand that these are suggestions and by no means do we state they are mandatory. These are just points that over the years we have found to be helpful to groups traveling on an International Soccer Tour.

**FIGHTING JET LAG**

- Traveling through time zones affects individuals both physically and mentally, and adapting well can make the difference between an easy start to a trip and a difficult one.

**You can help fight jet lag by:**

- Setting your watch to your destination's time zone as soon as you board the plane.
- Increasing fluid intake. Humidity in jet cabins is low, so prevent dehydration by drinking lots of fluids. Water and fruit juices are best; avoid alcohol, soda, coffee and tea.
- Exercising on the plane. Mild isometric exercises can relieve stiffness and boredom, and alleviate fatigue. Adjusting your sleeping patterns. If you will arrive in the morning, sleep as much as possible on the plane. If you are arriving in the evening, avoid napping.

**7. ACCOMMODATIONS AND FOOD**

You will no doubt find a variety of accommodations abroad. But wherever you stay, remember that you are guests; Foreign accommodations may vary slightly from similar accommodations in North America. The key to enjoyment is flexibility.

**Youth hostels:**

A youth hostel is not a hotel or sports center. Often, participants will be accommodated in more bedded rooms with bunk beds. Guests are expected to perform certain chores (for example, making beds and cleaning dormitories) by themselves. Guests are also expected to clear tables and pack their own lunches. Be certain to observe closing time rules.

**Schools and dormitories:**

Living in a school room during a soccer tournament is an exciting experience. The quarters are closed -- but they draw a team closer together, in a way no youth hostel or hotel experience can duplicate. One team per classroom is standard. Bedding is provided, but teams may be asked to set up rooms upon arrival, and clean them before departure. Because these are ordinary classrooms, showers may be located in another area of the school, and washroom facilities may be shared. The group leader should make certain that all players realize they are in a school, not a hotel, and that they are aware of all rules. Because of safety, schools might close a part of the day and after 24.00 hours (midnight).

**Sport center:**

A sport center, as mentioned in the previous section, is a unique experience. Sports center are similar to youth hostels or university dorms. Since your group will undoubtedly share the facility with other teams, possibly including other sports, you should welcome the chance to get to know other types of athletes from different countries. But be sensitive to their needs, including bedtimes.

**Hotels:**

European, South American and Asian hotels where groups are accommodated are mostly basic and not as big as hotels in North America, especially the rooms. They also may lack amenities many Americans are used to, such as air conditioning or ice machines. Seasoned travelers know how to get the most out of a trip by "going with the flow," and adapting to local customs and ways. Enjoy your hotel stay, and impress upon your athletes that they should learn to appreciate, rather than complain about any differences they notice. Where and when possible however, Challenger World Tours finds the best hotels for the budget it can, that has many of the amenities Americans are accustomed to.

**Food:**

- Although most food will be familiar to North Americans, some may be prepared differently. You may be surprised to find that European and South American breakfasts are "light"; lunches are often larger than in the U.S. and Canada, and dinner portions may be somewhat smaller. Water is not served routinely with meals, but may be available upon request. Ice is rare; soft drinks are often served at room temperature. Experience has shown that travelers who are adventurous with food have the best meals. Encourage your players to try different dishes -- and set a good example by doing so yourself.
- Athletes who are "picky" eaters may be encouraged to buy food themselves, at local stores. This helps them see another side of the soccer travel destination you are visiting, while avoiding the trap of trying to find familiar fast food outlets all over the continent.
- Check with your participants prior to the trip to see if anyone has any food allergies or special food requests, and communicate these with your Premier International Tours representative so they can communicate this with the local destination staff/tournament organizers.

**8. DEALING WITH LOCALS YOU WILL MEET**

You will meet many wonderful people on your international soccer tour, and your experiences with them will make for a memorable stay. Some of those people will be:

**A. BUS DRIVERS**

- SBV Tours & MTE uses motor coaches that are clean and comfortable. Bus drivers take a high degree of pride in their buses, as well as in the group they are transporting. Please reciprocate, by helping your driver keep his bus clean.
- Drivers are bound by regulations governing driving hours. This means, for example, that a 45-minute break must be taken every three hours.
- There are also limitations with regards to the use of the coach for local transport, especially on the transfer days (one destination to the other destination). Generally speaking, a driver can only work for a maximum of eight hours a day. Working hours commence when the coach is first driven in the morning irrespective of the amount of driving which is done afterwards. In general a driver will not be allowed to drive on the day before and after a journey through the night.
- A good relationship between you and your driver can add immeasurably to the success of your group's tour. Please help your players and chaperons understand that your bus driver is a professional, who deserves the utmost respect. If your relationship with your bus driver has been pleasant, it is fine to show your appreciation with a small tip (approximately \$5 per person per week). If you are dissatisfied with your driver, please let us know.
- You should only bring one suitcase per person and a bag which fits underneath your seat. The storage space in the bus is limited.

## **B. SBV Tours & MTE REPRESENTATIVES**

- SBV Tours & MTE representatives will assist you throughout your stay, at each destination.
- SBV Tours & MTE will help the group in all ways possible, but are not guides. They will have some knowledge of the areas visited and be able to give you some insight and advice, but for more details information, SBV Tours & MTE will hire professional guides to help you.
- While these multi-lingual representatives have plenty of experience dealing with soccer groups, do not be upset or angry if they do not attempt to solve requests or problems in an "American way". Sometimes they might misunderstand the nature of your request, or misinterpret a nuance; at other times a solution that might seem natural in the U.S. or Canada is unheard of, or impossible to achieve abroad. Part of the success of your trip will come from your ability as a group leader to communicate clearly and honestly with Premier International Tours representatives -- and to relay those communications back quickly and directly to your group members.

## **C. TOURNAMENT PERSONNEL**

- You may find tournament personnel who speak limited English outside of the UK. Their event, after all, involves a number of different nationalities, and Americans are simply one of many.
- Look on this not as an obstacle, but as a fun challenge. Communicate slowly and carefully, keeping in mind that International soccer teams and tournaments may be a bit different from the ones you are used to.

## **D. OPPOSING COACHES AND PLAYERS**

- Soccer is a universal language, so even if you cannot use words to communicate with opposing coaches and players, you can use your sport to build bridges across the ocean.
- Europeans and South Americans are very interested in American and Canadian soccer, yet may hold misconceptions about the level of play. Therefore you and your players should be aware that you are representing "United States or Canada Soccer"; they will judge the entire country on how well or poorly you play, perform and act. (Similarly, you will come away with an impression of Dutch, German, Italian or Brazilian soccer based on the few games you play against teams from those nations.)
- You can go a long way toward presenting a positive image of North American soccer by realizing that International soccer coaches do very little coaching from the sidelines. They are frequently puzzled by Americans who pace up and down, shouting instructions in fact, "coaching from the sidelines" is expressly forbidden by FIFA – take out this sentence. The role of a youth coach is less "important" abroad than in the U.S. or Canada, and International coaches often give their players a great deal of leeway on the field.
- Europeans and South Americans do care about ceremonies. You may be asked to pose for photographs before games; you certainly will be expected to exchange pennants, and perhaps small gifts (pens, pins, etc.). Being prepared for this part of a soccer game, and "getting into the spirit" of things, will help create a positive impression of American soccer for everyone you meet.
- ***AT THE END OF THE DAY REMEMBER YOU ARE "ON TOUR" TO HAVE AND TO REPRESENT YOUR TEAM, CLUB, STATE AND COUNTRY - SO TRY TO CONDUCT YOURSELVES ACCORDINGLY ☺ ITS NOT ABOUT THE WINNING, ITS ABOUT THE TAKING PART THAT COUNTS!***

## **E. CLINICS - TRAINERS/COACHES**

- If your group is participating in a clinic with international trainers/coaches provided through SBV Tours & MTE, you will have an especially enjoyable experience. These professionals will handle every aspect of your team's preparation.
- You or your coaches should feel free to suggest certain areas you'd like the trainers to work on -- but you should also recognize the value of having a trained professional coach assess your players' skill level, and design a curriculum for them. It's a rare opportunity for your players to have their talents and games analyzed objectively, and as a group leader you should strive to see that the trainer is able to go about his work without undue "interference" from coaches or chaperons.

## **F. OWNERS OF ACCOMMODATIONS**

- Many of the hotel or hostel accommodations SBV Tours & MTE uses are smaller, family-owned accommodations and therefore many times your group will come in contact with the owners of these accommodations. Your group should be respectful of the fact that these are the owners of the accommodations who care greatly about their "home" and they do not tolerate mis-behavior. If your group encounters a problem with any of these people your group should address this with the SBV Tours & MTE representative at the destination.

## **9. WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A FOREIGN TOURNAMENT**

- No matter how many tournaments you've been to in North America, nothing can prepare you for an International soccer event. It's a spectacle you and your players will never forget.
- To maximize these fantastic soccer opportunities, keep these ideas in mind:
- Check transportation arrangements, if included, with your driver every day. Your Premier International Tours bus will be very comfortable, and your driver should have directions to fields -- but if you are sharing a bus with another team, make certain you coordinate departure and pickup times with the other group leader.
- If you are not using a full time SBV Tours & MTE bus, you can -- at most summer tournaments -- make use of local transportation or shuttle service. This service includes transport to and from the sports ground and to and from the various program items. Sometimes this service is executed by public transport busses, trans or trains and sometimes by busses that the tournaments hire especially for this purpose.
- The types of fields used abroad vary widely. You'll see plenty of well-manicured grass pitches, but in some places (Germany, Spain and Sweden, for example) clay fields similar to tennis courts are popular. It's a good idea to ask beforehand what type of field will be used -- and if your team is unused to the surface, arrange a practice on it prior to your first game.
- Be certain you understand clearly all age categories, substitution rules, game durations, ball sizes, etc. The best way to do this is to read -- thoroughly -- all materials you are given by your SBV Tours & MTE representative, and at the tournament registration.
- Many International tournaments use a Jan. 1 cutoff birth date (written as "01/01"), and occasionally guest players are allowed. To eliminate problems, be sure you know all tournament regulations. If you have any questions, ask your SBV Tours & MTE agent before you depart.
- Europeans, Asians and South Americans enjoy ceremonies. Both teams line up before every match, shake hands and wave to the crowd. Captains are expected to exchange pennants.
- Many tournaments have dining facilities at fields or schools; some do not. Make sure you know about meal arrangements prior to your first game. If, like many American teams, your players enjoy water at games, you might consider buying bottled water at a convenience store prior to the game.

- The organizer checks identification carefully, and at many tournaments coaches exchange rosters. To facilitate this, carry a list of names, birth dates, jersey numbers and identification (e.g., player registration or your passport) to every game.
- Encourage your players to interact as much as possible with everyone they meet: opponents, referees, coaches, even spectators. Youngsters gain much more out of a trip abroad through contact with their teammates. The atmosphere of a soccer tournament is conducive to meeting new people and making new friends, and group leaders should do their utmost to encourage it.
- A group leader should recognize that too much soccer is not good, even on a "soccer trip." Work closely with your SBV Tours & MTE representative to plan sightseeing excursions and other non-soccer breaks. Follow their suggestions; many times a spur-of-the-moment idea turns into an outing that becomes one of the highlights of the entire trip!

#### **10. IF PROBLEMS ARISE**

- SBV Tours & MTE stands ready to help you whenever a minor snag - or an occasional larger glitch - occurs. The key to success is how creative, adaptable and unflappable you as a group leader, and your fellow chaperons, can become in the face of unforeseen circumstances.
- You, as group leader, should not be the only person with lists. Copies of everything (itinerary, contact names, etc.) should be distributed among all the adults.
- You should carry a contingency fund of \$ 75.00 - \$ 100.00 per person. This can be used for unexpected expenses -- and if there's money left over at the end, you can throw a great "free" dinner for everyone.
- Never let a player keep his/her ticket or passport any longer than necessary. In hotels, place them in a safe deposit box. Keep photocopies of all passports. If you lose a passport, contact the nearest U.S. consulate or embassy, where you can obtain a 90-day replacement within 24 hours.

#### **11. HEALTH AND SECURITY**

- We recommend you make sure your participants have medical coverage while traveling. Options include:
  - Contact your current health insurance company to see if they offer coverage abroad.
  - Purchase trip insurance coverage. SBV Tours & MTE sent your team contact information about group insurance plans to purchase for coverage abroad (webpage link). Consult your team contact for more information about this insurance and the coverage and costs.
- Tournaments will have trainers and medical staff on site at the fields in case of any injuries or if your players need minor treatment. If you are playing friendly/exhibition games, sometimes the opposing team will have medical staff available, but it is always a good idea to bring your own medical kit for treatment of injuries during any friendly/exhibition game.
- Should any player get sick or injured and require a trip to the hospital, consult the local tournament staff/representative or your SBV Tours & MTE tour guide/courier and they will help you get transportation to the hospital. Make sure upon arrival at any destinations you check where the nearest hospital is and you can do this via the internet or by asking the local tournament staff or your SBV Tours & MTE tour guide/courier.
- We always recommend that you travel in groups when sightseeing or exploring cities or towns, and try to have at least one adult chaperone with the group, even if they split up into smaller groups.
- Most of the accommodations will lock the doors at a certain time at night and will only allow guests to enter after these hours. Make sure you check these hours and make sure all of your participants are aware of these hours. Most hotels, youth hostels, sports centers will have security on hand and the schools will have staff on supervision 24 hours.



- Bring copies of your passport. If your passport gets stolen or lost you want to be sure that you can still get back into the country, or be able to prove your citizenship.
- Leave a copy of your passport. For extra backup, leave a copy of your passport at home or with someone you trust. Consider making an electronic copy you can store in your email account as well.
- Register with your embassy. If there's a problem in the country, this will make it easier for your government to contact you and get you to safety.

## **12. CELL PHONE/CALLING TIPS**

- Being able to use a cell phone while traveling abroad is a great way to stay in touch with family back home and communicate with group members while abroad. However, this can become very costly if not done properly and without doing some homework first. We recommend the following tips for cell phone use while traveling abroad to help avoid any major calling fees or data usage fees.
- Before you travel abroad, find out if your mobile phone will work abroad. Mobile telephone networks differ from country to country, and your phone may be incompatible with the networks where you are visiting. Also, if your phone works for voice calls, some other functions – such as sending and receiving mobile data or text messaging – might not work. Check with your mobile service provider before you depart.
- Check your roaming rates before traveling. For most U.S. customers, domestic service plans do not cover usage abroad. Rates may be much higher because of additional roaming fees on foreign mobile networks and may vary from country to country or network to network. Higher rates may apply to all of your phone's functions, including voice calls, voice mail, text messages, and Internet access. Ask your service provider about available options and international calling and data rate plans.
- If your phone is capable, consider buying a "SIM" card (the removable card used by some mobile handsets containing subscriber data and the phone's number) with a local number in the country you're visiting, effectively turning the handset into a local phone.
- You could also rent an inexpensive handset for the country you'll be visiting. You can rent it before you leave home or when you get to your destination. Consult your cell phone provider for options.
- You may save money by purchasing a calling card overseas.
- You may be able to rely entirely on wireline phones and wireline Internet access, perhaps including Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) calling. And by making mobile VoIP calls with your smartphone, you also may avoid voice roaming charges. VoIP sources include applications like Skype, WhatsApp or Viber.
- If you have a smartphone, uploading/downloading data using a Wi-Fi hotspot rather than a foreign mobile network may avoid data roaming charges. Use free Wi-Fi hotspots whenever possible. Check with your provider about Internet applications using Wi-Fi that may save you money.
- Turn off automatic downloads. Some phones and data services will automatically download data while the phone is on. Check with your provider or your phone's manufacturer to learn how to disable these automatic downloads. This will help you avoid unnecessary high data fees.
- Do not call mobile to mobile within foreign hotels. Use the hotel phones.
- Most hotels don't charge for incoming wireline calls, so pre-arrange a time to be in your hotel room for an incoming call from home.
- Be aware of the emergency calling number in the country you're visiting.

### **13. SIGHTSEEING**

- In addition to the sport program, which is the “backbone” of the trip, enjoying the sightseeing and local culture of the destinations you are in will provide memories of a lifetime as well.
- In most cases, a sightseeing program/option is included in the final itinerary SBV Tours & MTE sent to your team contact. In cases where your team is playing in a tournament, we recommend you plan your sightseeing after you know your game schedule. Many sightseeing suggestions/activities to do during tournaments are included in the tournament information sheet SBV Tours & MTE sent to your team contact. Please consult your team contact for this information and we recommend you discuss the sightseeing program with the group prior to the trip, and then discuss the sightseeing program upon arrival at your destination with your SBV Tours & MTE guide or tournament staff/representative.
- Please have your team contact consult SBV Tours & MTE for sightseeing recommendations and activities and SBV Tours & MTE can send your team contact sightseeing sheets for destinations or tournament information sheets for the tournaments which include sightseeing suggestions for the destination where the tournament takes place. In many cases, SBV Tours & MTE can also book sightseeing activities in advance of the trip if your group wishes.

Lastly, if you have further questions or need more insight then contact your SBV Tours & MTE agent. We are on hand 24/7 to help in any way possible to make your tour planning and your actual tour the most rewarding experience of your lives!

Many Thanks,

SBV Tours & MTE

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