



# Teacher's Guide for Educational Travel



*INSPIRATION OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM*



**Hammock Expeditions, LLC**  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
[www.HammockExpeditions.com](http://www.HammockExpeditions.com)  
[www.STEMStudyTours.com](http://www.STEMStudyTours.com)





A warm welcome to our valued teachers!

I would like to personally thank each of you for supporting our educational programs and take a moment of your time to share some details that we feel might enhance your trip. At Hammock Expeditions we strive to provide the highest levels of customer service and believe that sharing as much information as possible prior to your tour is of the utmost importance, allowing you to plan for your most successful trip yet. That said, we hope the following information will help you to prepare. We sincerely hope that your pupils enjoy a trip of a lifetime and that you have an experience that is the best ever!


In this document, we have tried to list items that we feel you need to be aware of to assist in planning and operating your upcoming tour as well as adding a few hints and tips we have picked up over the years. Of course, we are always here for any questions and to help in any way. If you ever need assistance, you need only to ask. We are here to help.

*If I may ever be of personal service to you, please do not hesitate to call upon me.*

Thank you for being our guest! We sincerely appreciate your business and will work hard to ensure this is your best school tour.

Warmest Regards,

*Michele*

Michele Hammock   
**Hammock Expeditions, Founder**  
USA: 984.223.9866  
E: [michele@stemstudytours.com](mailto:michele@stemstudytours.com)



**Hammock Expeditions, LLC**  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
[www.HammockExpeditions.com](http://www.HammockExpeditions.com)  
[www.STEMStudyTours.com](http://www.STEMStudyTours.com)



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Before You Travel	PG	4
Travel Dress Code		6
Travel Protection / Insurance		6
Flight, Luggage & Airline Meal Information		8
European Ferry Crossing / Passport Control		9
Passport / Identification Requirements for Travel		9
Arrival Into the USA from Abroad		11
Your Itinerary		11
While Traveling		11
On Tour		13
Evening & Excursion Activities		16
Loss of Passport		17
Accommodations		19
Meals		21
Your Ambassador Team		23



**Hammock Expeditions, LLC**  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
[www.HammockExpeditions.com](http://www.HammockExpeditions.com)  
[www.STEMStudyTours.com](http://www.STEMStudyTours.com)



## Before You Travel

We understand that the biggest part of your job as a Trip Leader is the work required before you even set foot out the door. To assist, below are some tips that we feel might assist you in planning your perfect tour.

- If you require destination information or visual aids to assist in your presentation to parents, please let us know. We will be happy to assist wherever possible to make sure you are set up for success.
- To research current exchange rates, we suggest that you visit the following link: [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com). This will give you the most up to date exchange rates for your global travels.
- Please note that many destinations do not offer currency exchange services and currency should be exchanged **prior** to departing on your trip, or at the airport upon arrival. Credit cards are widely accepted in destinations and most have ATM cash dispensers for emergency funds via credit card or debit card.
- Please note that many suppliers, including some hotels and equipment rental vendors, require a credit card deposit upon arrival. Trip Leaders will need to have a physical card on hand as suppliers will not accept card numbers without viewing the actual card. The owner of the card will need to be present for use. Some suppliers will pre-authorize funds on the card for full deposit amounts while others only keep the card on file in case of incident. Each traveling school should be prepared to offer a credit card deposit if required.
- We strongly recommend discontinuing use of mobile phones or using “Wi-Fi-only” settings to protect your group from unexpected data fees if you are traveling internationally. While it may be possible to use your mobile phone internationally, charges tend to be expensive. We therefore recommend you contact your network provider to understand these charges before you travel. Calling cards may also be available and if desired, you should purchase these prior to travel.
- We suggest that you bring a copy of your entire **travel insurance policy** with you, **photocopies of passports**, and a copy of every passenger’s **medical release form**. If you do not have a school Medical Release Form, please find a sample copy on our website, under the Teacher’s Library tab.
- Ask us about waivers (Release of Liability) that may be required for rental equipment and activities, to ensure you are set up for success. A good rule of thumb is to expect each supplier to require a waiver of some variety.
- Check [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) for the weather forecast of your destination area.
- For traveling ease, many Trip Leaders like to have a specific shirt or uniform worn by all party members. This makes the group easily identifiable, especially while traveling.
- If group members wear glasses or contact lenses, bring an extra pair packed in hand luggage in case of loss or damage. A suggestion for wearers of contact lenses is for the user to pack a small amount of solution in hand luggage (please check current Airport Security regulations concerning carrying liquids in hand luggage) in case it is needed during flight. We generally find that people who wear contact lenses prefer to take these out during longer flights as the aircraft typically creates a dryness which can bother the eyes.



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
[www.HammockExpeditions.com](http://www.HammockExpeditions.com)  
[www.STEMStudyTours.com](http://www.STEMStudyTours.com)



- Pack a simple ‘first aid’ kit as suggested in your school’s trip guidelines. Include over-the-counter medicines, sunscreen, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, first aid supplies, insect repellent and a copy of your group travel/health insurance. For a more complete list, please visit [CDC Pack Smart](#).
- Research your destination for recommended travel vaccines. Although you will not want to advise your parents on specific requirements in case these may change, we suggest referring them to the CDC website for individual research. Most importantly, have individuals talk to their family physician for guidance and recommendations related to health concerns. [CDC Travel Vaccines](#)
- Instruct students to keep all prescription medication in original containers and bring a photocopy or upload a picture of the current prescription so they can be more easily replaced if lost.
- Apply early for passports. Personally check to make sure you are updated on the most recent compliance laws for traveling under a passport as this task falls under the school’s responsibility. Additionally, please check to ensure you are in compliance with Visa requirements as these will vary by the individual nationality of each passenger traveling.
- Pack an electricity adaptor for appliances. Items may include electric shavers, hairdryers, camera and phone chargers and other small devices you may wish to carry. (Note: North American destinations run on 110V; most European destinations run on 220V.) It is best to purchase these prior to travel as adaptors may not be accessible in your destination.
- Research checked luggage allowances for flights as they vary by airline and are subject to change. We suggest Trip Leaders refer to the website of the carrier shown on your final Itinerary for the latest up-to-date allowances.
- Prepare a ‘packing list’ to help students know what not to forget. Please make sure that if traveling to a winter destination, students should bring **snow boots** specifically for winter conditions and not just athletic shoes. **Instruct guests to pack insect repellent and sunscreen whenever applicable.**
- Please make sure to print off copies of your Passenger Information in case a copy is needed.
- Although we understand some Leaders have an opportunity to bring their immediate family on the trip, please be aware that we cannot assist in booking childcare on your behalf as this is not a service that our group contacts may assist with. If you desire childcare arrangements, the best practice is to contact the individual hotel/resort via telephone and determine if they have programming available and the associated costs. You will need to make formal reservations independently for these services.
- If for any reason you opt to change or add services that may result in increased fees within 30-days of travel, please be advised that we will require a Credit Card payment **before** we may implement changes. This may include items such as passenger name changes, addition of activities and/or transportation over the original package, or other changes implemented by you.



**Hammock Expeditions, LLC**  
 51 Hillcrest Way  
 Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
 P: 984.223.9866  
[www.HammockExpeditions.com](http://www.HammockExpeditions.com)  
[www.STEMStudyTours.com](http://www.STEMStudyTours.com)



## Travel Dress Code

We understand that while on tour, students want to feel relaxed and comfortable and we completely appreciate this. We do request though, that you specifically discuss a travel dress code with your students and their parents prior to travel. While forms of casual dress vary in different parts of the world, we need to be respectful to the culture we are visiting, not necessarily to what is considered appropriate in your home country.

As an example, in most all countries, it is considered disrespectful to wear shorts that are so short, that young ladies are not effectively covered. While we don't want to make any specific statements, we do want to ensure that all dress is always respectful. If you are traveling to Mexico, Costa Rica or other Latin American countries, this is even more important. If you are traveling to a beach destination, make sure swimsuit wear is appropriate and conservative. Your attention to this and discussion among your students and parents is sincerely appreciated. If on tour and something is not appropriate, we have asked our Ambassadors to specifically speak to you, the Trip Leader, so the student's clothing choice may be changed prior to continuing the tour.

We sincerely appreciate your help with this. We always want our schools showcased in the very best light and dressing appropriately will go a long way in international cultural relations.

## Travel Protection / Insurance

All traveling parties are required to carry travel protection. To assist and as a convenience, we have partnered with a well-known and widely used travel insurance company called Trip Mate which you are happy to use if you would like. The choice is completely yours on who you would like to use, we just mandate that a travel protection plan is in place prior to the time of travel. Unfortunately though, Trip Mate is only available to groups departing from the USA. If you are departing from outside the USA, please let us know if you need a recommendation. A copy of your policy must be submitted prior to travel.

During our student/staff registration, passengers may elect the travel protection plan as determined by their group. Two plans are available: F560S is for the "standard" travel plan and F560E is for the "enhanced" travel plan. Before making a decision, please review the differences in plan options and if you have specific questions, contact the insurance provider directly. Please know that while we are happy to offer travel protection to you during our registration process, we do not sell, nor operate, travel insurance. **Best Practice:** If selecting Trip Mate travel protection, the best practice is to mandate the "standard" plan be purchased by all group members and then allow independent parents to upgrade to the "enhanced" plan if desired.

Many times, we get asked why insurance is necessary. It's a great question! Let us try to explain a few examples of why we require it and why it is necessary:

- As travel operators, we take responsibility for booking independent elements of your trip – your flights, hotels, transportation, activities, meals, etc. We work hard to pull this all together but there are some instances when things aren't movable even though we absolutely try. A good example of this is flights. We had a group in Costa Rica a few years back and the trip went beautifully. The group were in route back to the airport to fly home and ran into a huge traffic delay due to an accident on the only highway to get them where they needed to go. The delay caused them to miss their return flight and their airline was not able to reticket them on a later flight as the delay had nothing to do with them (airline) specifically, and they had held those seats for the group, blocking other passengers to be able to purchase them. Because the group had travel insurance, their insurance company set them up with an added night's lodging, meals, extra transportation and a



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
www.HammockExpeditions.com  
www.STEMStudyTours.com



revised flight to travel back home on the following day. If the group would not have had travel insurance coverage, the parents and school would have been paying independently for last minute flights, hotels and meals. Although no one's 'fault', these things do happen and can easily happen anywhere in the world. By ensuring you have travel protection, we are ensuring you will hopefully not be at a monetary loss for items outside of anyone's immediate control.

- What if your group were all ready to go, but a student is also involved in sports and a few days before the trip was scheduled to depart, she breaks a leg and her doctor will not allow her to travel? What happens in this circumstance? All funds have been paid to us and we have in turn paid them out to our suppliers to reserve the tour. Does the parent or school just lose the funds altogether? With travel protection, that parent would generally get a refund based on the insurance policy that was purchased. We would never want anyone to be out of pocket financially, especially for something they weren't able to participate in. Having travel protection will ensure you and your parents are protected financially.
- At one of the activities on tour when your group is ice skating, or flying in a wind tunnel, a student twists an ankle. Or, let's face it, just trips and falls accidentally. You get them to the hospital but how do you pay for the hospital bill? Especially when you're in a completely different country? You contact your travel insurance provider and let them negotiate and pay the medical facility directly. At times you'll be asked to make payment and then get reimbursed, but your insurance company is guiding you every step of the way so you are covered. What happens if the doctor explains that it is a serious break and the student requires different airline seating to extend their leg during a flight? Travel protection will not only take care of this from an administrative standpoint, but they will also usually cover the costs. What if it is a severe injury and the student's parents are needed to fly over to assume responsibility for their injured child? The insurance company has that covered, too.
- You are traveling internationally, arrive and get to the hotel, and find out that a student has lost their passport. You frantically contact the coach company and the airport, but zero luck in finding it. A replacement is needed urgently. This means a trip to an embassy which generally means a flight for 2 people (student plus a staff member), transportation costs, extra hotel costs, on and on. And you miss the planned activities on top of this. Dependent upon your plan, travel protection will generally reimburse you for unexpected costs such as these.
- What happens if you fly all the way to a different country, only to realize that out of your 58 bags, only 5 actually arrived (this happened to a group who was flying from London to Los Angeles with us)? Everyone needs toiletries, perhaps some clothing, and other items to tide them over until the bags arrive on the following day, if they do arrive. What if the airlines break one of your suitcases and a new one is required before you can travel home? All of these little needs add up and are generally covered by your travel protection plan.

There are so many elements that can unexpectedly pop up that are generally covered by travel protection. We hope this helps to explain why it is necessary and mandated for all groups. Please always ensure your policy has a travel cancellation protection component, a trip interruption component, and also a medical component. **Although a bit more expensive, we strongly suggest an "enhanced" or "cancel for any reason" policy.** Read your policy thoroughly and ask questions about what it does, and does not, cover so you are aware. Not every policy covers all instances. And make sure to bring a copy when you are on your trip (best practice is for any adult traveling with you to be able to access it in case of need). A little protection goes a long way.



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
[www.HammockExpeditions.com](http://www.HammockExpeditions.com)  
[www.STEMStudyTours.com](http://www.STEMStudyTours.com)



**We also seriously recommend one travel protection supplier that covers everyone as opposed to individual companies for each participant.** An example of why this is important is if you needed to rebook an element of your tour as in the first example above. You would have to be on the phone with all the individual companies trying to make individual changes which would not only be a nightmare from a time standpoint, but then you might have children being booked without adult supervision and a variety of issues. **One supplier is always best.**

Before going off to make a policy purchase, talk to your school administration. Many times, schools already have a travel protection policy in place and no new travel policy is needed. At times, schools may just get a rider placed on their existing policy that will extend to cover the trip insurance needed. We do not want you to go to an extra expense, but we do want to make sure you are protected. We want to serve you for a very long time, and we wouldn't be doing our duty if we allowed you to travel without trip protection.

## Flight Information, Luggage & Airline Meals

If traveling via flight, please know that your specific flight details are generally available approximately 60-days prior to departure. Please also understand that although we always try to ensure your preferences are achieved, we may only guarantee that flights are ticketed as per the general itinerary noted (departure from a general area – i.e. London or New York; not Heathrow or JFK specifically). Additionally, to keep costs in line, we do not usually contract for direct flights as a standard practice. If you prefer to ensure a direct flight, please discuss this with your Travel Advisor before your flights are booked. In most cases, if a direct flight is requested and available, additional fees will be assessed by the airlines.

Please also be aware that although airlines will give us general routes and timings, these are not guaranteed until approximately one week prior to travel when final tickets are issued. Airlines reserve the right to make changes to layover cities, timings and flight numbers until final tickets are issued. This said, if we are able to let you know specific flight details earlier than normal, please understand that these may change up to the time of travel as they are at the discretion of the airlines. The airlines are also responsible for deciding how long of layover times will be required in specific cities and a variety of other factors.

Baggage weight and size restrictions vary and are subject to change. Please check your group ticketing details for the most up-to-date information as these do tend to change frequently. We also suggest that you have all passengers weigh their baggage prior to embarking on their trip.

Please understand that in most all cases, if traveling domestically, **checked baggage costs are not included and are the direct responsibility of the trip participant.** Fees will be required to be collected from each passenger at airport check-in, both outbound as well as inbound. If traveling internationally, some airlines include the cost of a single checked bag while others do not. Please ask us and we will obtain all details but until your airline is confirmed, please ensure that all passengers are prepared to pay for baggage costs independently.

If flying internationally, please understand that flights within the USA and Europe are virtually all non-catered or buy-on-board options. Any catering provided will be snack catering only. International flights, if over a specific amount of flight time, are generally catered – although this does exclude some carriers such as Westjet and IcelandAir. Please ask us.

Please note that although we will submit your requests for specific meals to our airline partners, they may not always be available. If on an international catered flight and a member of your party has a request for a meal preference, **please reiterate this at check-in.** Be advised that dietary requests apply only to international transatlantic legs and do not apply to internal/domestic flights. As an example, if you have a connecting flight



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
www.HammockExpeditions.com  
www.STEMStudyTours.com





in North America and have a specific dietary request, the best practice is to **purchase a meal option prior to boarding** but after passing through security. Also, please note that on the majority of our internal USA/Canada connecting flights, service is generally limited to drinks (coffee, tea, soft drinks) only. In most instances, these are free of charge. If in Europe, many times beverages are available for purchase only.

Please note that if a member of your party suffers from a nut allergy, **airlines do not offer a 'nut-free flight.'** If a member of your party has a specific allergy or dietary concern, please know that these may not be guaranteed. ***BEST PRACTICE: Always purchase a suitable meal option prior to boarding to ensure your group member has something they will be able to eat without issue.***

## European Ferry Crossing / Passport Control

If traveling by ferry between Europe and the UK, all passengers should be awake with shoes on (also access to coats in case of inclement weather) and in possession of their own passport before arrival at the port of Calais. The UK Borders Agency has mandated that all passengers disembark the coach for passport inspections. As long as all passengers are fully awake and in possession of their own documents, this will make the transition through the port easier.

Groups are also only permitted to travel on their 'booked' sailings times. Therefore, when traveling, please consult your bus driver for the best times to ensure an easy transfer as these may vary from what is shown on your itinerary due to current road circumstances. All groups should arrive no more than 2-hours prior to their booked sailing time.

## Passport/Identification Requirements for Travel

In order for passenger information to be passed quickly to the airlines, coach companies, ferry companies and border security agencies, parents are required to enter all information related to your group's booking directly into a link we provide for trip registration, waiver collection and payment. This is the MOST IMPORTANT part of the pre-travel work. Please alert parents to only include full legal names, including middle names. Please also know that the waiver is mandated. A parent will not be able to set up finance tasks without acknowledgement of all legal documents mandated. Parents should double-check all information entered as it will be forwarded to the airline or other agency with which your group is traveling exactly as it is entered.

Failure to provide full legal names (no nicknames) and associated passport information of all group members by the required date can result in the travel suppliers releasing any unnamed seats from your booking. Any errors in the information provided, including the misspelling of names as per the passenger's passport/ID card can result in the levy of a charge and in some cases, necessitate re-ticketing. The fees for re-ticketing vary by supplier but can be in excess of \$300 / £200 per ticket. Any charges levied due to incorrect documentation or information not being received by us by the required timescales will be passed onto your school.

For dual nationals, where one of the nationalities held is USA, the passenger **must travel on their USA Passport**. For anyone born in the USA and traveling into the USA but not holding a USA passport, a visitor's visa must be obtained, or they will generally be denied entry into the USA.

In addition to ensuring that all passport requirements are met, persons traveling from abroad and into the USA and Canada (not USA nor Canadian citizens) must apply online prior to travel:



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
www.HammockExpeditions.com  
www.STEMStudyTours.com



**FOR TRAVEL INTO USA:**

<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>

**FOR TRAVEL INTO CANADA:**

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp>

If you hold a valid USA passport and are traveling into Canada, you do not need an ETA at this time. If members in your party hold passports other than USA, they will be required to submit an ETA filing. For more information, visit the Canada [Help Center](#).

All visiting passengers eligible for travel to the USA from abroad under the Visa Waiver Program must receive online approval a minimum of **72-hours** prior to departure. The Visa Waiver Program offers entry without the need for a visa to travelers from selected countries. The current list of countries covered can be found on the websites shown above. Boarding/entry on arrival may be denied if you have not received approval. Application takes just a few moments; please ensure that you have your passport in hand when logging in. **You can print the final page for your records – we recommend that you do.**

IMPORTANT: If you get a new passport after receiving approval (lost/stolen/expired) you **MUST** re-apply as the document details will have changed. You will not be able to travel without your approval matching the details shown in your passport.

ALL PASSENGERS TRAVELING FROM ABROAD INTO THE USA OR CANADA MUST HAVE AN APPROVAL CODE 72-HOURS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE IN ORDER TO BOARD THE PLANE. FAILURE TO DO SO MAY RESULT IN DENIED BOARDING OR ENTRY. APPROVAL DOES NOT GUARANTEE ENTRY AT CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION. IT IS UP TO ALL GROUPS TO ENSURE THAT EACH PASSENGER HAS COMPLETED THE FORM AND RECEIVED THE NECESSARY APPROVAL BEFORE TRAVEL. HAMMOCK EXPEDITIONS WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY REPATRIATION CHARGES INCURRED DUE TO DENIED ENTRY.

**Best Practice:** *If traveling into the USA or Canada from abroad, have computers/printers set up for a parents' evening where everyone can apply in your presence, so you may take note of all authorizations. OR have each passenger bring in a copy of their approval confirmation well in advance of travel.*

We hope the above information clarifies the requirements you must fulfill in order to secure your travel and avoid unnecessary delays and problems at the airport. We strongly suggest Trip Leaders, at the launch of their tour, ensure parents and guardians understand the guidelines and ensure their son/daughter has the appropriate valid passport requirements.

## Arrival into the USA from Abroad

Some groups find it challenging when passing through USA Customs & Immigrations. The biggest challenge is, at times, the officers may try to split up groups which leaves unaccompanied minors being unsupervised. We have brought this to the attention of the US Customs and Border Patrol agency and they have suggested the following advice for easing potential issues when entering the USA:

*Various airports of entry have airport employees assisting with travelers and directing them to the appropriate lines for processing. They will refer travelers to the shortest lines in efforts to expedite the entry processing which may result in groups being split up. **However, you may chose to remain together having all your group fall in a line and proceed together and let the airport employee know that you would like all to remain together.** If for any reason you are ever dissatisfied during your CBP processing, please ask to speak with the CBP Professionalism Service Manager (PSM) or the Chief Officer on duty. A supervisor is always available to address your concerns during CBP processing.*



**Hammock Expeditions, LLC**  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
[www.HammockExpeditions.com](http://www.HammockExpeditions.com)  
[www.STEMStudyTours.com](http://www.STEMStudyTours.com)



## Your Itinerary

Your Itinerary is the day-by-day schedule of daily activities, times, transfers, meals and excursions. This document will be custom-tailored specifically for your group and may change several times before it is finalized. Please note that our individual suppliers (equipment suppliers, activity providers, hotels and restaurants) make the final authorization as to times and dates of activities scheduled. While we will convey your specific requests, these may not always be accommodated. Your final Itinerary will be finalized and sent to you in advance of travel. You may expect to receive this document a minimum of 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE providing that changes are not occurring with your booking. The completion of your Itinerary depends on the successful submission of all required documents and payments being submitted for all passengers.

Your Itinerary will have two tabs which can be found at the bottom of the electronic document. The first tab will have the day-by-day itinerary and scheduling for your group. The second tab will contain key details such as the name, address and contact details for your hotel(s) and motorcoach provider, emergency contact numbers and other key information. Please be sure to check for and print the second tab to be sure you have this critical information available at all times.

## While Traveling

If you get delayed in transit, please immediately notify us by dialing our main office telephone (001) 984.223.9866. If after hours, this phone will be diverted to our Duty Manager. We will then alert your Ambassador, hotel and transportation as to your status. If you do not make us aware, your transportation and/or rooms could be in jeopardy so contact us once you have information.



- Please do not lock your luggage as the lock will be removed or broken by security checkers. If a lock is required, use a special "Transportation Safety Administration" (TSA) approved lock which can be opened by airport staff using special tools without damaging your lock.
- For hand/cabin luggage, please consult your individual airline websites for weight and size restrictions. Additionally, some airports have very specific regulations regarding sizing and allowances, so we encourage you to check with the departure airport's website as well (London Gatwick specifically). Trip guests should also be reminded about duty-free limits for customs declarations on international flights.
- If traveling domestically in the USA or Canada or from one European destination to another, we recommend that you arrive at the airport at least 2-hours before the scheduled time of departure. If traveling internationally, 3-hours is requested for all groups.
- Our team will use their best endeavors to secure pre-seating and group seating for your flight if available. Unfortunately, some airlines do not have the processes to make this a reality and therefore this cannot be guaranteed. Please reiterate any specific requirements to the reservations desk when checking-in and appreciate that your request has been submitted. Unfortunately, it is up to the airlines as to whether the requests are implemented.
- Meals are generally only provided by the airline on transcontinental flights; however, most airlines (including low-cost carriers) offer the facility to buy snacks and drinks on board. Please be advised



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
www.HammockExpeditions.com  
www.STEMStudyTours.com



that some airlines only accept payment by credit card, and most Icelandic carriers often only accept Euros. Please enquire during check-in or at the gate to determine if your group should purchase food items prior to boarding.

- If a member of your party requires medicine to be packed in carry-on luggage and taken on-board the aircraft, please remember these simple rules: a) Ensure all medication is in its original container with a full pharmaceutical label. b) Bring a Doctor's note specifying the medication prescribed, whom it is prescribed for, and contact information for the Doctor. c) If the medicine is in liquid form, ensure it meets specified regulations for carry-on purposes. At the time of this documentation, specifications include limitations on both size/quantity as well as placing the liquid in a clear, quart-sized, plastic sealable bag. Please consult your airline's website for the most up-to-date regulations concerning carry-on items.
- Make sure your entire party washes their hands frequently. Talk to your students about the reasoning behind this and that the best way to prevent illness is frequent handwashing with soap and water.
- As mentioned in the pre-travel segment, please remember that if a member of your party suffers from an allergy or medical/dietary condition limiting what they may be able to consume, ***the best practice is to purchase a suitable meal option prior to boarding a flight.***
- When traveling internationally, all groups will be required to clear Customs and Immigrations at their first point of entry. Most baggage will be through-checked to your final destination however will require Customs clearance upon arrival.
- Please note that luggage assistance is not included as part of your tour. Each member of your party will need to be able to carry/pull their own baggage. This will include loading and unloading the luggage on the coach used to transport your group, and also to/from hotel rooms.
- Upon arrival in your destination, the majority of our groups will be personally met by a Meet & Greet representative from your transportation company. This will generally be someone assigned to your airport and not the Ambassador assigned to serve your school. Your representative will assist you by directing you to the applicable baggage area, contacting your transportation, assisting you with lost bag claims and anything else necessary prior to departure from the airport. Please check your final Travel Itinerary for arrival arrangements.
- If you encounter lost baggage while traveling, it is imperative that you report any lost bags **prior to departing from the airport**. Please retain the information as to whom you spoke with, any identification and/or claim numbers, baggage descriptions and where follow-up communication should be directed. In most circumstances, lost baggage will be returned directly to your accommodation although this will be dependent upon your airline's policy with regards to lost luggage. The address and contact numbers for your hotel can be found on the 2<sup>nd</sup> tab of your Travel Itinerary. Once at your hotel, please advise your Ambassador of your missing baggage so they are aware. Generally, items may be traced via the airline website as well as by phone. The website is more productive whereas phone communication may take an extended period of time. **Please note that your Ambassador will not be able to trace missing baggage on your behalf and your leadership team are responsible for any required calls.** Lost bags often take up to 48-hours to be returned or



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
[www.HammockExpeditions.com](http://www.HammockExpeditions.com)  
[www.STEMStudyTours.com](http://www.STEMStudyTours.com)



longer. We strongly advise Trip Leaders are aware of the insurance coverage for such events and have a plan in place in the event luggage is lost.

## On Your Tour

- Please note that as a general rule, we have a 10:00 PM curfew for all students to be in their bedrooms and a 10:30 PM 'no-noise' curfew. We will need your help to ensure that we assist the hotel by complying with these objectives. If for any reason your group arrives at the hotel later than this time, we ask that all parties be considerate of other guests and go quietly to hotel rooms. ***A best practice is for adults to have a rotating schedule to walk hallways periodically. Another solid practice is to have adults stationed on each floor when coming in late from an evening activity.***
- **Groups traveling from abroad into North America:** Due to alcohol laws, please be aware that for Trip Leaders to purchase alcoholic beverages, all adults must have a proper form of government identification with their date of birth and photograph in their possession. Most outlets will not serve adults even though you are clearly of an adult age unless you can present valid photo identification. A valid passport will serve as legal identification.
- **Groups traveling from abroad into North America:** At no time should students be in possession of, or attempt to purchase, alcohol - ever. This is a **major** crime and is punishable by law. Any adult found guilty of serving a student alcohol or purchasing it for them also faces mandatory punishment. Please ensure your students are aware that this is a very tough violation and it is taken very seriously by law enforcement authorities. In the USA, the legal age to consume alcohol or have it in possession is 21 years of age. In Canada, it varies by province and ranges from 18 to 19 years of age-dependent upon location. In Mexico, the legal drinking age is 18.
- **Groups traveling abroad from North America into Europe:** Please be aware that most European nations do not view alcohol regulation in the same light that many Americans do. In many European families, children grow up drinking alcoholic beverages at an early age. Please recognize this cultural difference and make sure you alert waitstaff that your students are to be given no alcoholic beverages. At times, students do try other methods to discover possibilities so please remain alert and enforce the 'No Alcohol' rule for students on tour.
- Although tipping is discretionary, it is customary to tip service providers. Service personnel that generally receive tips for performing service functions include wait staff in restaurants for "pay on own" meals, hotel bell staff if utilized, housekeepers, bus drivers, local guides, tour ambassadors and others who work in a service capacity on behalf of your group. For suggested customary tipping practices, please ask us.



**If you find that you would prefer to have gratuities for your Driver and Ambassador included in the cost of your tour, please alert us and we can happily add this in and disburse payment.**

Please note that all pre-planned meals noted in your itinerary **do not require tipping**. If you have a motorcoach driver with your group for an extended period of time, *the best practice is to 'pass the hat' at the end of the tour to give your driver a suitable gratuity.*




Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
www.HammockExpeditions.com  
www.STEMStudyTours.com



Below is a chart of standard tipping rates for ‘good’ service. If traveling to China, Africa or other locations, please consult us as tipping considerations vary by country.

<b>TIPPING CONSIDERATIONS</b>	
Hotel Bellmen / Valet	\$1 per bag if service is used
Bartenders	\$1 per 1 - 2 beverages
Motorcoach / Shuttle Drivers	\$2 per person, per day or \$100 per day collectively
Tour Ambassador (Tour Director)	\$5 per person, per day
Local / National Guides	\$5 per person, per day
Ski School Instructors	\$5 per person, per day of service
Dive Instructors / Boat Crew	\$10 - \$20 per 2-tank dive for certified divers, \$50 - \$75 for diving instruction/certification

In some locations, such as Costa Rica, you will also have the luxury of having a National Guide assisting our groups. In cases such as these, we would suggest you budget for \$10 a day for gratuities, per person traveling, to split between your motorcoach driver (\$2 per day, per person,) the National Guide (\$4 per day, per person) and your personal Ambassador (\$4 per day, per person).

- We realize that Trip Leaders may wish to have time to themselves and we encourage you to do so. Take advantage of the destination’s adult spots and have fun! We do ask though that someone is always dedicated to the supervision of the students and that you understand that at no time may an Ambassador, hotel staff member or other staff assist in supervision of your students. This is necessary during all times in the hotel as well as during day and evening activities. It’s easy for students to get excited and we know that you, as professional teachers, will want to ensure that students are kept orderly at all times. Please alert your Ambassador as to which adult and room number should be contacted on a daily basis in the event of any disruption.
- It is very important that you, as responsible teachers, ensure you are **discussing use of sunscreen and bug repellent directly with your students**. While our team will touch on this during our Welcome & Safety Meeting, it is important **that you make it your responsibility** to regularly review this directly with your students and ensure their compliance. If anyone in your party needs to purchase additional supplies, please alert your ambassador who can determine appropriate sources for purchase. With so many unknown possibilities, we want to make sure you are always able to help your students protect themselves from harm. 
- For contact during the tour, we suggest downloading and using WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger. These are free-of-charge platforms and can be accessed through the internet. Please alert your Ambassador if you have a group page set up so they may also be in contact if needed.
- Please note that we must place student oversight responsibility with your staff. *A best practice is to have a rotating shift of adults to assist with any student needs* – from injury, to sickness, etc. Your Ambassador cannot take responsibility for care or supervision of students at any time.
- If rental equipment is an “included” part of your tour it will be provided for your group based upon your specific itinerary. At that time, some suppliers may request a credit card imprint from an adult to serve as a security deposit against loss or damage. The amount required may vary based upon your destination and supplier. Please be prepared to have a credit card ready.



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
 51 Hillcrest Way  
 Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
 P: 984.223.9866  
[www.HammockExpeditions.com](http://www.HammockExpeditions.com)  
[www.STEMStudyTours.com](http://www.STEMStudyTours.com)



- Please pay special attention to the timings listed for functions on your Itinerary as it is necessary for your group to be punctual at all times. As many destinations have multiple groups in attendance, **if your group is tardy, your reservation may be forfeited**. Please alert your Ambassador if you expect to encounter any delays during your weekly scheduling, so that they may pass this information to other groups, their Ambassadors, and other staff. We appreciate your punctuality!
- If during the course of your tour, equipment is lost or damaged, your credit card may be charged for replacement or you will be required to submit cash funds to cover the loss. Please check the terms and conditions of your travel insurance to determine if these charges may be appropriate for reimbursement and what paperwork will be required to support your insurance claim.
- If at any time you have concerns over your group's instruction, activities, meals, accommodation or other factors of your tour, we ask that you please bring this to the attention of your Ambassador **immediately**. This allows us an opportunity to work on your behalf and try to resolve the issue. We value this opportunity to rectify the situation. If we are made aware, we can usually assist you.
- Please note that your scheduled meals and activities are not considered 'private' and may incorporate other groups or individuals in your destination. If you desire private functions solely for your group, please enquire with us to identify applicable pricing structures for private events.
- If you are traveling on any of our Event Weeks, please understand your school will be mixed with pupils from other schools and locations. If small teams are required, as they are at Johnson Space Center, **your group will be intermixed with other schools to form teams**. The purpose of the event is to collaborate and participate with other schools and students. If you do not wish to do this, you will need to book on a non-event date. Even then though, your school may be alongside another school, however your students will not be intermixed on multi-school teams. If you have any questions, please ask us! If you are booked for an event, get ready for an amazing experience!
- If your group is scheduled for an airport departure in the afternoon or evening hours, you will be required to vacate your hotel rooms, clear your bill with the hotel, and store your luggage after breakfast and before the stated "check-out time". This allows the hotel time to prepare for guests arriving on the same day as your departure. We always request that hotels offer complimentary luggage storage whenever possible but may not guarantee it. If a fee is required, *the best practice is to ask for a single room to have a late check-out and store all baggage in that room*. This alleviates multiple bag storage fees and most hotels are able to extend a late check-out to a single room.
- If you find that a party member has lost a specific item during the trip that you are unable to recover while visiting, *the best practice is to contact the location directly for follow-up*. Unfortunately, Tour Ambassadors are only in the area for the duration of your trip, so they are generally not local nor able to assist you after your group has departed. *The best practice is for the Trip Leader to contact the destination via telephone and request the Lost & Found extension*. From there, the staff responsible for this area will be able to check and let you know if items have been located and determine applicable costs for mailing the item(s) back to your school. You may find the telephone number and website of your hotel located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> tab of your itinerary. In most cases, you should be able to give a credit card directly to the vendor to cover any additional fees required for postage.



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
 51 Hillcrest Way  
 Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
 P: 984.223.9866  
[www.HammockExpeditions.com](http://www.HammockExpeditions.com)  
[www.STEMStudyTours.com](http://www.STEMStudyTours.com)



- If you have sustained an injury during your tour which requires enhanced airline services (seat type change, delayed flight, or other special circumstance), please note that this **must be handled by a member of the teaching staff directly with your travel insurance company**. While we would like to assist, our contract with airlines is for group seating requirements only and does not allow us to change any individual detail. All requests for services are handled by your insurance company who work directly with the airlines to secure your needs as per your Doctor's advice. Please ensure you receive appropriate documentation from the medical facility which you may then send to your insurance company to assist in a speedy transaction for reimbursement.
- If due to an injury you require additional medical assistance such as counseling, psychotherapy, physiotherapy or any other type of treatment, this must be facilitated through your insurance company directly. Your insurance experts will locate and make appropriate appointments as per your specific coverage. If your insurance does not allow coverage for these specific types of needs, they may still direct you as to local resources. Please note that your Ambassador may not execute this detail on your behalf.

## Evening & Excursion Activities

We know that you like to keep your students busy and to help, we offer a variety of trips with different evening activities available. In most cases, we are also able to add-on activities. If you would like to do this, talk to our Operations staff who can let you know activities available in the area you are visiting. Please note that we only suggest options that are suitable for groups and not individual persons. If an activity does not offer group programming, this will not be offered however you may feel free to explore booking it from an independent standpoint. If you do this, please ensure that when making reservations, you include your Ambassador. We urge you to take the time to explore the destination's offerings independently so you have a good feel for other potential activities which may be newly added or not originally listed. Please also be aware that some activities are weather dependent and may not be available upon arrival. There may also be other activities that, due to your dates of travel, may not be available as they are offered seasonally.

Please note that during evening activities it will be especially important to provide constant supervision to your students. During fun activities such as mini-golf, laser tag, wind tunnel rides and a variety of others, students get excited because they are usually having such a good time. Adult supervision will be necessary to ensure that all students are mindful, and behavior is at its best. Most activities will require adult participation so plan to be involved! If your students are bowling, we ask that you bowl too. Our suppliers always comment on the outstanding behavior of our groups so thank you for making this commitment.

If, during the course of the activity, your students generate trash, we ask that you please form a litter patrol and ensure the property is left as it was found. We know that you will not want to leave a property in poor condition, so we encourage you to assign this oversight task to a responsible party.

If you are planning to have in-house activities, please note that most hotels will impose a fee for conference room rental. Rental arrangements need to be pre-arranged in order to be secured. Once you have alerted us to your needs, we will inquire about availability and costs on your behalf. You will then have an option to move forward with booking these or decline.

Please note that if you do reserve activities in advance, even if you decide not to participate or use the facilities, you are still responsible for the associated fees if they have been reserved. This is because once reserved, it blocks other parties from being able to book the facility and the property management will need to collect the



**Hammock Expeditions, LLC**  
 51 Hillcrest Way  
 Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
 P: 984.223.9866  
[www.HammockExpeditions.com](http://www.HammockExpeditions.com)  
[www.STEMStudyTours.com](http://www.STEMStudyTours.com)





confirmed rate as they have held the space/activity specifically for your group. While our team will always try to work on your behalf to assist in negotiations, a reduction or cancellation of fees may not always be available. This applies to activities that are pre-booked, conference room rental fees, transportation that may have been pre-reserved and any other activities that have been 'confirmed' at your specific request.

Finally, we know that you have some evenings that you just need to take it easy but still want to do a little 'entertaining' for your students! Here are some good ideas for possible evenings in your hotel:

- |                         |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ◆ School Olympics       | ◆ Snowman Building Contest      |
| ◆ Conservation Debate   | ◆ Poetry Slam                   |
| ◆ Talent Contest        | ◆ In-Room Movies Night          |
| ◆ Quiz Night            | ◆ Pajama Party                  |
| ◆ Bingo                 | ◆ Charades                      |
| ◆ Heads Up / Game Night | ◆ Evening Hike (with headlamps) |

## Loss of Passport

Every year we have travelers who inadvertently lose their passports causing stress, time and hassle for our Trip Leaders. The replacement process is not usually an easy one, so we wanted to share this with you to make sure everyone is 'in the know.' Our hope is that this may assist in putting strong procedures in place, so your valuable time is not spent chasing details and instead, spent on fun with your students!

### **Best Practice:**

- Make a photocopy of each passport that is clear and easy to view. Check the actual copy to make sure it is not too light/dark or unreadable. In addition to your copy, each student should also keep a photocopy of their own passport in their hand luggage.
- If an international visitor and traveling from abroad into the USA/Canada, all passengers should bring a photocopy of their ESTA/ETA authorization in their carry-on luggage in case of need.
- Upon arrival at your departure airport, students should be broken into small groups of 10 or less with one teacher assigned to each set of students for passport collection. Immediately following boarding (if not before), passports should be collected by the teacher responsible and placed in a sealed/closable bag.
- During your international flight, passengers should use their passport photocopy to gather the information necessary to fill out any required immigration forms. Many students forget their passport and leave it on the plane.
- When preparing to enter Customs & Immigrations, students should gather in their small pre-assigned groups. Teachers should again pass out the passports for each individual student. The teacher responsible for the small group should enter the Customs & Immigrations queue first and when finished, wait for his/her students on the other side to immediately collect all passports. The passports should not be given out again until the return journey home.
- Upon arrival at the hotel, teachers should place all passports in a safety deposit box or the hotel safe until it is time to return home. Please check with your Ambassador upon arrival to determine what facilities are available at your accommodation.



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
www.HammockExpeditions.com  
www.STEMStudyTours.com



- On return home, follow the reverse procedures.

If a passport is lost, please understand the following procedures which will be required to be activated for replacement:

1. Any lost passports should be reported immediately to your Ambassador.
2. A Police Report will be requested by the Consulate. Please file a formal report and retain the copy which will be needed for the consulate office, boarding a flight for the replacement appointment, as well as for potential insurance reimbursement of travel fees.
3. Once reported, our team will locate the nearest Consulate office and initiate an appointment request. Please be advised that Consulate offices are not open on weekends so a midweek appointment will usually be made. This most often results in a missed day of activities.
4. One adult and the student will be required to travel to the Consulate to apply for a replacement passport. Please be advised that dependent upon the passport issuer, this may be a challenging process as not all Embassies have offices in key cities.
5. If flights to the Consulate are required, the Tour Leader will be required to make flight reservations for the student and adult traveling. Monetary expense can be a significant amount dependent upon where you are located. Flight reservations may usually be made on a hotel computer. The credit card used to purchase the flights must be the adult that travels with the student as tickets may not be purchased using an independent party's credit card within 48-hours of travel. The adult traveling will need to ensure that the credit amount required for the tickets will be available for use on the card.
6. The party will be responsible for all transportation fees to/from the hotel, the airport and the Consulate for both the student as well as the accompanying adult.
7. If under the age of 18, a letter must be written and signed by BOTH parents granting their permission for the adult accompanying the student to seek a replacement passport on behalf of the child. This usually must be notarized and requires both parents' signatures. A copy of the parents' passports or identification cards, plus a copy of the child's birth certificate should accompany the parents' letter. Please be aware that even if the child's parents live in different parts of the world or one is traveling, or they are no longer married, both parents' notarized signatures are usually required for replacement. If one parent is deceased, a death record may be requested.
8. The child must be transported to a location to get two passport pictures. This can generally be accomplished via taxi/uber from a local operator.
9. The cost to replace a passport varies by country but generally ranges from \$150 to \$200 and must be paid at the time of the appointment. Please plan on a cash payment as many Consulate locations will not accept credit cards.
10. If a flight is required, each person traveling will be required to show picture identification to pass through security to board the aircraft. If this is not available, please make sure to bring your photocopy of the passport, the police report showing it has been lost/stolen, as well as all



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
www.HammockExpeditions.com  
www.STEMStudyTours.com



documents. Arrive early and speak to the Officer in charge to ensure that boarding will be allowed without an official identification card. Be prepared to show all documentation, **including your appointment confirmation at the Consulate** to the Officer assisting you to expedite any potential issues. Have our telephone number handy in case of need.

11. Travel insurance may cover all or some of the costs associated with replacement of a lost passport. We urge Trip Leaders to review their insurance policy prior to travel to understand what will be covered and which documents will be required in the event of such a claim.
12. In the event activities are required to be forfeited for the student and teacher accompanying him/her due to travel required, please be advised that refunds may not be issued. Please check with your insurance company to determine if scheduled activities may be eligible for reimbursement.

*Minimizing the risk of a lost passport will go a long way in ensuring the overall success and smooth operation of your trip.*

## Accommodations

- Please note that all chargeable hotel items, including telephone calls, movies and other purchases must be settled prior to hotel departure. You will want to review this with your group. If you would like to activate room charging, a credit card or cash deposit should be left with the front desk for authorization. Additionally, if you wish to add-on any additional components, activities, snack or meal services, or other purchases that are not pre-packaged for your tour, all fees must be paid to the hotel at the time of ordering.
- Many facilities have a swimming pool available for your group's use. Please note that in most cases, **lifeguards are not on duty**. If a member of your party is not a certified lifeguard and you wish to have one present, please alert your Ambassador once in resort. They will be able to determine if lifeguards may be available for hire and the appropriate fees for hiring. If your school mandates use of a lifeguard, we highly recommend having a member of your staff certified prior to travel.
- When it comes time to leave your hotel at the end of your tour, we ask that you schedule an appropriate time slot with the Front Desk staff to walk the rooms utilized by your group with a hotel staff member and clear your folio of any outstanding charges that may be imposed for damages. As a general rule, most Trip Leaders schedule this walk approximately 1-hour prior to the actual departure from the property. Your Ambassador will assist you with scheduling of this appointment if you so desire.
- To avoid any unnecessary room damage fees, we suggest inspecting each guest room for damage which may have occurred prior to your group's arrival. All occupants of each room should take a few moments to inspect the room and record any deficiencies / damage. This information should then be shared with the front desk and photocopied, to be referenced during the post-tour room inspection, prior to check-out.
- Please ensure you document any rooming preference requests to us and we, in turn, will provide them to your hotel. If a hotel is not aware of your preferences, they will not be able to block your rooming correctly. Common requests are boys and girls grouped together but on different floors, everyone on a single floor with gender breakouts on one side of the hall, teacher rooms placed on



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
www.HammockExpeditions.com  
www.STEMStudyTours.com



the outside of the student rooms, etc. The rooming requests will be submitted to the hotel with all requests shown but please do understand, we may not guarantee that all requests will be able to be honored. This includes having rooms in one specified area of a hotel, on a single floor or multiple floors, or close together. Accommodation suppliers try to schedule these according to specific requests however they cannot control the rooming arrangement of guests that are already in-house prior to your arrival.

- Many hotels impose a key replacement fee when a key has been lost. Please check with your specific hotel for details. If a replacement fee is required, this must be paid by the room occupants prior to departure.
- For student rooming, standard practice for obtaining best rates includes ensuring maximum occupancy of each guest room. A standard student room for most North/Central American hotels is a room with two beds which will sleep four students. Bed spaces may be of any size and also include pull-out and roll-away units when necessary. In European hotels, many hotel rooms are able to supply single beds for individual use in multi-passenger rooms (i.e. rooms that sleep 4 – 8 students).
- For adult rooming, standard practice is to have a single sleeping space (bed) for each adult. If a couple is married or notated as a 'partner,' a larger bed may be used for two persons. Bed spaces may be of any size and also include pull-out units.
- Please note that all room configurations are a direct reflection of your booking request and quoted price. If rooms need to be added due to boy/girl mix or alteration in teaching staff, in most circumstances your quote will also change to reflect added room requirements. Please help to make us aware of any changes at your very earliest convenience so we may ensure that your accommodation property has additional rooming available for your group.
- Most accommodation partners are able to provide our groups with safety deposit boxes and in some cases, in-room safes to store your valuables. At times, there are fees to utilize these features. *We strongly recommend collection and storage of all student passports to guard against potential loss.* Please request assignment of safety deposit boxes from the Front Desk Staff upon arrival. Also, please be aware that during busy times, your school may only be allocated a single or small number of boxes due to the number of guests in the hotel.
- Some hotel properties may require a pre-authorization of funds via credit card or a cash deposit prior to check-in for security purposes. Please ensure you have a credit card available for security deposit purposes.
- If traveling to Europe, please be advised that as a general rule, European hotels do not release group rooming until a day or two prior to arrival. While we understand that this is trying at best, please understand that we will make you aware of your specific rooming via email as soon as we receive it from your hotel.

## Meals

Please be aware that meals will often not be identical to the type of meals you may be used to. Following are some notes and tips we'd like to share and items to be aware of:



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
www.HammockExpeditions.com  
www.STEMStudyTours.com



- In Europe, breakfasts are typically ‘continental’ and consist of breads, cheeses, fruits and meats. In the Americas, breakfasts are usually sweet in taste and consist of items such as pancakes, French toast, eggs, potatoes, pastries, etc. As this might be different to what is usually consumed by your students, we recommend that if they would like to have different items, these are purchased independently.
- Please note that most tours do not offer a choice in meal plans. If you have a serious issue, please contact us when initially setting up your trip and we will be happy to assist if we are able to do so.
- **We always try to ensure that a specific option is available for group members listed as vegetarians.** Generally, only the quantity listed in your registration documents is prepared. If additional students wish to change to a vegetarian option after arrival, please contact your Ambassador who will consult the culinary team with your requests.
- **Please note that ‘vegan’ and ‘organic’ food options are not usually available in group menu options. As in the case with food options on flights, if you have someone who cannot consume standard group menu options due to preferences or food allergies, the best practice is to purchase an independent meal for them. Please contact us to determine which meals can be accommodated and which may need to be purchased independently.** Different countries and cities have different dining plans so while it may be simple to find Vegan food in New York, it may not be widely offered in a different area of the country. As with any group tour, our group options take advantage of the local cuisine offered at the best pricing for overall student consumption and are set up to serve ‘the group’. In some instances, this means we do not have the ability to cater to individual needs.
- If your group is set up to participate in a pizza night, please understand that in most locations, pizzas include cheese. When we order pizzas for your group, we will try to also include at least one pizza with no cheese if a request is shown within your dietary requirements. Pizzas are ordered for the entire group’s consumption and are not ordered per passenger. If an additional option is needed for an individual passenger, please understand it is your responsibility to bear any additional fees required.
- If adults who are traveling with a group wish to purchase alcoholic beverages or if any group member desires an option that is not included in the standard meal plan, the school is welcome to have these added but also must be responsible for full payment at the time service is rendered.
- General breakfast times range from 7 AM to 8 AM and dinner times from 6 PM to 8 PM. This will vary dependent upon activities scheduled for the group. Please note that while you may request change, most suppliers are limited in flexibility. Once a specific time has been set, culinary and service personnel are all scheduled around the time indicated. Please speak to your Ambassador directly if you need to request a time change.
- In some destinations, a boxed dinner meal is provided on the day of arrival, and in some cases, no meal is included on arrival. This is due to varying arrival times. We do not want to charge you for something you will not be able to use. If your group is scheduled for a boxed sandwich meal, it allows you to take meals back to individual rooms after a long day of travel if desired. If no meal is scheduled and you would like to add on an option once your flight timings are confirmed, simply let



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
 51 Hillcrest Way  
 Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
 P: 984.223.9866  
[www.HammockExpeditions.com](http://www.HammockExpeditions.com)  
[www.STEMStudyTours.com](http://www.STEMStudyTours.com)



us know and we will be happy to seek options for you. If you do not add on an option and are arriving late, we suggest purchasing items prior to departing the airport if needed. In some cases, you may ask your bus driver to make a stop at a fast-food restaurant for you, but please be aware that what has been booked is a direct airport-to-hotel transfer so a stop may not be available.

- If your departure from a destination falls in the early morning hours, please check your Itinerary to determine if a breakfast will be available for your group. We do apologize but often it is just not possible to arrange breakfasts in the very early hours.

## Your Ambassador

The “Hammock Expeditions Difference” means more than just incredible destinations, awesome trips and competitive pricing. In our quest to provide our clients with the highest levels of service and personalization, we offer a dedicated, **Personal Tour Ambassador** with each tour. Your Ambassador’s role is to provide immediate assistance and to act as liaison between the group and each element of the trip – hotel, transportation, activities, and so on. As highly trained service professionals, Ambassadors deliver outstanding customer service, handle special requests and assist in emergency situations. Many of our Ambassadors form long-lasting relationships with the groups they serve and are requested by those groups year after year. The comfort and convenience of having an Ambassador with your group at all times, combined with the ongoing, dedicated support of our Operations office, means that traveling has never been easier.



**Please note that your Ambassador is not a ‘local guide’ nor should they be considered one.** Your Ambassador is highly trained in specific operations and is placed in their role to serve as a liaison and management tool representing both your school’s interest as well as the overall interests of our Company. The direct oversight of the scheduled itinerary including ensuring your room accommodations are correct and meet your satisfaction, that meals served are adequate for your group needs, instructors are on time and classes progress accordingly, and most importantly, injury protocol and emergency management operations, all combine to create the key focus of your personal Ambassador. Your Ambassador may or may not have had the privilege of working in your destination before and should not be considered as having a wealth of local knowledge. If you have specific questions that relate to the area you are visiting, please feel free to enquire and your Ambassador will seek out an answer. In most extra long-haul destinations (China, Africa, New Zealand, Peru, etc.), a local representative is also paired with your group to be able to serve as a local guide. If you also have an interest in securing additional resources, please let us know and we will be happy to make inquiries providing you with applicable rates for specialized experts.

A few more points for your consideration....

- Please note that your Ambassador is here to serve you and to ensure you receive the highest level of service. If you come across any area which requires assistance, please immediately notify your Ambassador so that he or she may initiate a plan for rectification.
- One of the ways we measure progress is by requesting your feedback. We ask for you to assist us by filling in a short 1-page report approximately 3-days into your journey. This report gives us a good picture of your experience and allows us time to identify and repair potential problems. The report is a simple multiple-choice check-off document with room for you to share comments if you so desire. At the end of your trip, we will also ask for your overall feedback on an End-of-Trip Report.



Hammock Expeditions, LLC  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
www.HammockExpeditions.com  
www.STEMStudyTours.com



This will be emailed to you upon your return, and as always, we greatly value your response and comments. We then use your specific feedback to continue to build great experiences!

- Please note that while your Ambassador may have a personal vehicle available to them, they may not transport any group member at any time due to liability reasons. This includes errands, shopping, or trips to medical facilities. Your Ambassador may also not purchase goods or supplies on your behalf. This includes alcohol purchases for adult party members. All destinations have means of public transportation which may include area shuttles/trolleys/taxis and we urge you to use these modes of transport. If a member of your party is hospitalized, please check directly with your insurance company to ascertain which types of transportation are covered under your policy which will enable you to determine the best way to transport your staff members.
- In the event of an emergency, your Ambassador's duty is to stay with the group and carry on with normal tour operations. We realize that you, as the Trip Leader, or a member of your staff, will wish to either remain at the medical facility or visit frequently. During this time your Ambassador will stay with the remainder of the group to ensure the success of your tour for other members.
- Please note that your Ambassador may never supervise any child or group of children with your party. This includes time spent in hotel facilities, swimming areas, activity locations, shopping facilities or even if a child is ill or injured. We know that you have already pre-planned alternative actions for situations such as these and appreciate this. Our goal is to serve your group and we may not enter into a situation where any Ambassador is placed in the role of an individual caretaker.
- Your Ambassador is here to serve your school group in all capacities however they may only communicate requests and may not be held responsible for the individual supplier's lack of availability to move, change or reschedule any events or activities. While your Ambassador will always try to accommodate requests, in the end it is the supplier's final decision as to whether they may make time or activity changes.
- Although we realize that not being able to have mobile service in some areas may be challenging, we ask that you do not request to use your Ambassador's personal mobile phone as these are not company-issued. A best practice is to purchase a suitable mobile plan prior to travel to ensure coverage.

We welcome all feedback concerning our Ambassador Team! If you have an immediate concern, please contact us at your earliest convenience. We very much appreciate your direct communication; call or email us for questions and/or feedback!

*Michele*

Michele Hammock 

**Hammock Expeditions, Founder**

E: [michele@STEMstudytours.com](mailto:michele@STEMstudytours.com)



**Hammock Expeditions, LLC**  
51 Hillcrest Way  
Bluffton, SC 29909 USA  
P: 984.223.9866  
[www.HammockExpeditions.com](http://www.HammockExpeditions.com)  
[www.STEMStudyTours.com](http://www.STEMStudyTours.com)

