**2015 Trip – Europe’s Mediterranean Coast**

**May 11th, 2015 – Suitcase Derby & Packing**

(only 33 days until we depart!)

* **General Business**
  + Date of tour: June 13-21, 2015
  + Hotel info is not available just yet…stay tuned for an email.
  + A few people need to sign their passports! Check the page just opposite of your picture.
  + Review from last meeting: Debit Cards-- I suggest taking a “regular” debit card, and just taking money out of the ATM, and spending cash on everything--instead of planning to use your card everywhere.
    - Suggested $35-$50 per day for spending money (Around $400 total)
    - Please have some cash on hand upon landing, I highly recommend getting some Euro before you leave.
* **Suitcase Derby! (Winner gets a prize!!!)**
* **Practice Spanish Phrases (handout)**
* **Review of Behavior Expectations on the trip**
* **Departure Day: June 13th - See our departure day plan on the back of this page!**
* **Packing**
  + Ms. Taylor’s packing demonstration/explanation
  + Packing handout and to do list
* **Backpack and T-shirts**
  + Your backpacks in! Be sure to grab the one with your name on it!
* **Boys/Girls/Adults Group Meeting**
  + We need to break into three groups of *travelers*: boys/girls/ adults
    - Boys meet with Mrs. Silva (Mrs. Johnson)
    - Girls Meet with Mrs. Sanchez
    - Adults Meet with Mrs. Townsend
  + Chaperones will talk with each group about important reminders
* **Thinking Ahead**
  + Don’t forget to buy a converter and adapter
  + Don’t forget to call your bank and let them you will be using debit card internationally
  + Don’t forget to call credit card and/or mobile service provider before we leave!

Next meeting: **June 8th**

**~One week until departure!~**

**Time and location TBA**

**Departure Day – June 13, 2015**

Due to construction, we will be meeting at Wylie East High School, in the cafeteria.

Park in the back it is the closest entry to the cafeteria.

Super shuttle will be taking us to the airport.

**Wear your t-shirt! Don’t forget your passport!**

Timeline:

9:30am – Wylie East Travelers arrive at WEHS cafeteria for pre-check in

10:00am – Wylie High Travelers arrive at WEHS cafeteria for pre-check in

The chaperones will check your carry-on for anything that might not clear security. They will also weigh and tape your checked bag. Please form one-line when you enter the cafeteria. Parents, who are not traveling, please have a seat in the waiting area.

10:30am – Final Group Meeting, Instructions for the day

10:45am – Good byes and load up

11:00am – Pull away from WEHS

12:00pm – arrive at DFW, Terminal D. Check in and security.

1:00-2:00pm – Lunch in the terminal

2:30 pm – Boarding

3:30pm – Take off!

**Travel Non-Negotiables**

On the day of departure, I will be checking for the following things from each traveler…

* **At least €50 - €100 in cash** (yes, in the Euro). Sometimes it takes us a while to find an ATM when first arriving. It is best to have some cash on you, to get you through one or two days.
  + You can order the Euro at most major banks. It usually takes them a week or more to have the currency delivered to the bank branch…so, plan ahead. (For example, I bank at Capital One. I go into my local branch at least a month before departure and fill out a form to order the currency. They look up the current exchange rate, and let me know how much the currency will cost in the US dollar. I sign the agreement, and they deduct the amount from my account.)
  + You can also by cash from a currency exchange store. This usually comes with a fee and a higher exchange rate. Here are two suggestions: (1) Travelex Store in Dallas on Beltline (very close to Addison) -5100 Beltline Road Suite 532, Dallas, TX 75254. (2) ALTOUR American Express – 5700 Legacy Drive, Plano, TX 75024 (in the Shops at Legacy).
* **A wrist watch.** I know that most students today don’t wear watches anymore. Speaking from experience, cell phones are not reliable as your only source of time. The roaming often drains the battery quickly. (Mine wouldn’t stay set to the correct time zone, once). I recommend leaving the time on your cell phone set to Central Standard Time, if possible, so that you will always know what time it is in Texas when you want to call home. We will often split up in groups and have a set meeting time. Being on time is **very** important.
* **A change of clothes in your carry-on bag.** You are not a believer until you have had it happen to you…you arrive in Europe, but your bag doesn’t. It is very miserable to go a day or two without a change of clothes and basic toiletry items. Play it safe, and bring a few items to make it through, in case the inevitable happens. I have also found it helpful to use this change of clothes when staying only one night in a city/hotel…not having to drag in my large suitcase.
* **System for securing money and passport.** Be sure that you have a safe way to carry your money and passport at all times. I carry a messenger bag with an inside zipper pocket (the inside pocket makes it a tricky for the pick-pockets). I have used a back pack before (you need to keep money and passport in an inside pocket…backpacks are easy targets). I have had students in the past who have used a passport wallet that hangs around their neck. Whatever you decide to use, it needs to be with you at all times. On the day that we depart, I will give you a card that has all the addresses and phone numbers of the hotels where we will be staying. This card is designed to be the same size as your passport. Please include it in your bag/wallet, and have it on you at all times.