

Sample Student Budgets for Europe

The following are *sample* budget guidelines for Europe, based on student peer advisor travel experience and research in reputable travel guides. Budgets obviously vary depending on a number of things (lifestyle, time of year, location, etc), but if nothing else these samples might help you to consider the types of expenses for which one needs to account when planning a trip abroad.

General Budgeting Guidelines for Europe:

Cheap*

\$40-\$50 per day based on person traveling alone; traveling with a group may save you money. Rock bottom travel includes staying in mostly youth hostels or university dorm rooms (single traveler) or sometimes cheap hotels (groups); eating main meals in student cafeterias; preparing your own meals -- some youth hostels have kitchens, be sure to inquire -- and picnicking; sightseeing by foot; no money for entertainment; no souvenirs; no postcards (stamps are very expensive abroad). This may be impossible in some major cities. For example, a youth hostel in Paris or London is typically \$25-30 a night, leaving you little for eating or sightseeing. Many Greek islands (after transportation costs), however, have very cheap accommodations, sometimes around \$10/night. To save money bring your own sheets (or sleeping sack) and towels.

**While technically there are cheap hostels out there, running between \$20-\$30 a night, generally in a major city in Western Europe, these hostels may not be available on short (less than 3 weeks) notice. Most people, who are traveling on day to day basis, or even week to week, will end up paying higher rates of \$35-\$45, especially during the peak season of May-September. Travelling during the off-season is less expensive as are less commonly visited areas. Large Western European cities and Scandinavian countries will be more expensive than travel in Eastern Europe. Also, if you are willing to take alternative routes or stay in campgrounds you can get by on less per day than what we are estimating.*

Moderate

\$60-\$70 per day includes nice youth hostels; 1-2 meals in reasonably priced restaurants; public transportation in town; museum fees; *some* entertainment (movies, bars, adventure sports such as whitewater rafting, and bike rentals, to name a few). Does not include souvenirs or postcards.

Emergencies

Be prepared for emergencies! Once you have determined your own travel budget, plan to live within it and either take another credit card or a \$400 to \$500 emergency fund. It may be hard to stick to your budget because it is easy to rationalize "I'm in Europe, don't know when I will be back again, might as well spend money on..." It is a good idea to carry a small stash of American currency for emergencies since you almost never have a problem exchanging it. We particularly recommend that women carry some extra in case they do not feel that their housing situation is safe. Currently, the most expensive areas are London, Paris, Switzerland and most of Scandinavia, where you should plan on the "moderate" budget figures above for the "rock bottom" amenities. In Greece, Portugal, and Turkey, travel expenses seem to be about \$10 a day

cheaper except for major cities like Athens; in **Eastern Europe**, costs vary from maybe \$10 a day cheaper in Poland or the Czech Republic, to \$20-\$30 cheaper in Romania, and Bulgaria. If you plan on buying gifts or souvenirs, don't forget to take extra money for these. For more detailed information on travel costs in Europe and **worldwide**, consult a travel guidebook.

Sample Budget breakdowns:

Cheap Budget:

Food: \$15 per day x 31 days = \$465

This is a rock bottom budget, which means that you do not go to restaurants or drinking much alcohol. You would be making your own sandwiches and preparing your own meals.

Accommodations: \$500

This is for the cheapest youth hostels. They may not be the cleanest places you stay in so definitely bring a sleeping sack or your own sheets. Some of them may be located out of the city.

Local Transportation: \$70

This means that you don't buy the 3 day public transportation passes and walk a lot. If you stay in a youth hostel near the attractions you want to see, you will spend less on public transportation. If the hostel is outside of the city, you may end up spending a lot just to get anywhere. This really depends on the city you travel to and hostel you choose.

Other Transportation: \$65

Flight from Rome to Madrid, taking the train would take more than 24 hours and at least 4 trains.

Attractions and Fun: \$20 per city x 8 cities = \$160;

This means that you have \$20 to spend on museums and attractions. It is enough to visit a museum or two in each city and some other attraction.

Miscellaneous: \$60

Money for internet cafes (if there is no free internet access in the youth hostel), public bathroom (yes, you have to pay for public restrooms in Europe), etc.

Personal Spending: varies

Souvenirs: varies

Expenses in Europe Total: \$1320

Expenses per day in Europe: \$1320 / 31 days = \$43

Total Trip Cost: \$1320 + \$1518(pre-trip expenses) = \$2838

Emergency Fund: about 10% of your total trip budget so about \$284

Moderate Budget:

Food: \$25 per day x 31 days = \$775

This is a rough estimate and includes restaurants, street food, free hostel breakfasts and some drinks. Food prices really depend on where you are so this is where you can save money by picnicking and making your own meals. In general, grocery stores in Europe are a lot less expensive than American grocery stores. Restaurant prices are comparable to the US; of course touristy places will be more expensive. You will save money by having a picnic lunch with bread rolls, cheese and fresh fruit which costs \$1-5. Street food costs \$3-7, and sit down restaurants \$6-\$15 or more.

Accommodations: \$700

This is for mid-range hostels in May and June. Sometimes inexpensive hotels will be cheaper than hostels for groups. Reserve ahead of time in large cities during the summer. Bring your own sheets and towels to save money, invest in a sleeping sack.

Local Transportation: \$152

Other Transportation: \$65

Flight from Rome to Madrid, taking the train would take more than 24 hours and at least 4 trains.

Attractions and Fun: \$320

\$40 per city x 8 cities = \$320. This means that you have about €30 per city to spend on museums and attractions. It translated to visiting 3-5 museums per city. Cities like Paris and Amsterdam are a lot more expensive than Vienna or Budapest.

Miscellaneous: \$60

Money for internet cafes (if there is no free internet access in the youth hostel), public bathroom (yes, you have to pay for public restrooms in Europe), etc.

Personal Spending: varies

Souvenirs: varies

Expenses in Europe Total: \$2072

Expenses per day in Europe: $\$2072 / 31 = \67

Total Trip Cost: \$2072 + \$1518(pre-trip expenses) = \$3590

Emergency Fund: about 10% of your total trip budget so about \$359

**** Prices above are estimates for March 2010***