Illume Resources

The organization sponsoring your travel event has selected illume to design a travel program that reflects its institutional objectives and mission. Many opportunities and resources that sensitively support these program goals have been identified by illume.  Your program will creatively integrate educational, cultural and spiritual activities in historic settings that evoke these values.

Preparations for life-transforming experiences can be enhanced with travel reading that helps contextualize what you will see and experience at your destination. Our team of experts does a great job of making complex historical information accessible to participants in our journeys. Supplementing guided visits with pre-journey reading makes venues more stimulating as you begin your journey prepared with a lively curiosity.

Bibliography

This resource is available to participants preparing for their international travel experience.  Here you will also find links relevant to destinations and topics related to world citizenship

To enhance this resource we appreciate your suggestions to make more accessible substantive information about historical, religious and cultural sites around the world available to others. We invite you to send articles and/or references to articles or books for inclusion in the Bibliography.  Please feel free to forward titles for areas not already covered to: [info@travelillume.com](mailto:info@travelillume.com)

And take this opportunity to include a link to it on your own website and share this resource with others!

Travel Resource Center

Program participants have exclusive use of a Travel Resource Center (TRC).  This is a private webpage through which important information and updates for participants are communicated. Only members of your travel event will have exclusive access to the TRC.

As you prepare for your journey, remember, the best journeys have a healthy balance of preparation – learn about your destination, preservation – keep a journal, a sketchbook, and take photos before, during and after your journey, and celebration – share your experience with others.  
It is our pleasure to travel in your company as you discover the world illumed!

Program Registration

To join an illume travel event, complete the Registration Application and forward with the appropriate payment by the due date indicated.

Your travel event has been designed by the organizer sponsoring your event, together with illume, for participants to travel wholly together throughout the program itinerary.

Land Only Option

We respect that your individual travel needs may include a desire to upgrade your airline ticket, reserve a specific seat ahead of time, leave from a different US city, travel to other places after the illume program event finishes, or return back home later – in other words, to travel outside the parameters of the Complete Program. In order to best focus our resources on supporting the group event as planned, illume offers those who want to deviate from the Complete Program the option to register for the Land Only portion of the program. The Land Only option is priced without airfare and without airport transfers.  This option gives participants the freedom to independently arrange their own airfare and any personal travels before or after the illume program.

When registering, please consider carefully the best program option for your travel needs.  Should you initially register for the Complete Program and subsequently wish to change your registration to the Land Only option, substantial fees ranging from $200 up to the full cost of the airfare will be incurred for your cancelled air seat.  Similarly, additional costs will be incurred to change your registration from Land Only to Complete Program after your registration has been received by illume and will be subject to airline availability at the time the change is requested.

Special Assistance

Physically challenged participants who require any form of assistance must be accompanied by a helper who is capable of assuming total responsibility for that participant. These participants must advise our office with their Registration Application of any special assistance required.

The right is reserved to decline to accept or retain any member whose health or general deportment impedes the operation of the program or is detrimental to the other participants.  Due to safety regulations, wheelchairs and walkers cannot be carried onto motor coaches and must be stored in the coach’s baggage compartment.

Please note that hotels, railroads, bus lines and foreign flag carriers are exempt from U.S. laws and regulations regarding physically challenged persons, and we make no representations that these entities can reasonably accommodate (or will accommodate) them as program participants.

Wheelchairs can be reserved at the airports by indicating this necessity on the registration application. Notify the airline check-in agent that you have requested a wheelchair and one will be brought to you. If you need a wheelchair throughout the entire program, you must bring one with you, either your own or a rented one. Wheelchairs cannot be provided at all of the site visits in your itinerary, so it is best to bring your own if you need it every day.

Travel Insurance

Illume recommends you purchase travel insurance to cover the cost of the investment you have made in your travel program.

Travel insurance provides peace of mind and protection against the unexpected. Please read the illume Conditions and Clauses to review the charges that will apply in the event that you cancel your program participation. The illume Conditions and Clauses are included on our Event Registration forms. **There are no extenuating circumstances under which these can be waived.**

Please visit [www.travelillume.com/travel-insurance](http://www.travelillume.com/travel-insurance) for more information.

Cancellation

In case you will not be able to travel as planned, please refer to illume’s Conditions and Clauses on the Travel Resource Center for cancellation fees that will be applied.  Cancellations must be in writing. Emails can be sent to [info@travelillume.com](mailto:info@travelillume.com)..

Passports/Visas

For U.S. citizens, a valid passport is required for travel outside of the United States and to re-enter the US.  Your passport must be valid for 6 months beyond your stay, or boarding your flight or entry into the destination may be denied.  If you have any questions about your passport validity, contact the consulates of the countries you will be visiting and transiting, and the US Passport Office in your area.

For minors under the age of 18 traveling without both parents or legal guardians, additional documents may be required that authorize the child’s permission to travel.  Please contact the nearest consulate of the country to which you are visiting and transiting for additional information

For passport renewal visit [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov/) and select Passports.

It is the responsibility of each participant to determine if visas are required and to obtain them. To determine if a visa is required by any foreign country that you will be visiting and/or transiting, contact the consulate of these countries in the US; most countries have a consulate office in New York City.

Participants who are not United States citizens must determine if visas are required by the countries visited, by countries transited and for re-entry requirements back into the U.S. If your flight stops briefly in another country besides your final destination, this country is being transited and you still need to check into the visa requirements.

A simple online search will usually provide the contact information of the consulate office. For example, by searching in google.com, if you search for “Israeli consulate + U.S.” the information will be among the first few entries.

The name you list on your Registration Application must match your first and last name as it appears on your passport.  Your airline ticket will be issued with this name.  Airlines assess a fee to reissue a ticket to correct a name.  You must provide Illume with your complete passport information not later than 90 days prior to departure.

We recommend you carry a photocopy of the first two pages of your passport (and visas) with you and to leave a copy of all of your travel documents with someone at home.

Program Travel Documents

Program Travel Documents will be sent to you a few weeks before the departure date.  This documentation will include a detailed program itinerary, hotel names and contact information, airline flight schedule/ticket receipt document, and luggage tag.  You will verify your passport with an agent and receive your boarding pass at airport check-in on the day of departure.

Program Etiquette

Travel in any country is an adventure – a time to experience new customs and traditions.  There may be times when flights are late or weather conditions necessitate a change in the itinerary – your sense of humor will help keep these occasional disruptions in perspective, and sometimes the unexpected turns out to be the highlight of your program!

As a guest in another’s country, you may experience certain customs that are native to local residents and quite foreign to you. Each country is comfortable to its own people.  Enjoy the cultural differences; some may be so charming you may wish you could bring them back home with you.

In large cities, English is widely spoken.  But don’t be shy!  Harbor your inhibitions and try speaking the language.

Airlines

The airline schedule for your program is secured from a designated departure city to a designated arrival city, and participants will travel together roundtrip as a group of these scheduled flights.  The airline schedule for your program will be available approximately 2 months after your group registration deadline has passed. A flight schedule/ticket receipt document will be sent with your final document packet 3 weeks before your departure date.

Airline seating is assigned by the airline. Many airlines assign individual seats for group reservations only on the day of departure at check-in.  Similarly, bulkhead seats and seats in the emergency row can be assigned only on the day of departure at airport check-in. As noted on your Event Registration form, specific seat assignments, upgrades, extensions or deviations are not possible when booked as a group reservation. Any seat requests made on your Event Registration form will be forwarded to the airline.

Most airlines have a frequent flyer program.  If you are a member you must give your membership number to the airline when you check in at the airport for your flights.  If you wish to become a member please contact the airline to register before your departure so you will be credited for your mileage.  Save your boarding passes and the Passenger Receipt of your ticket; mileage should be credited within two months of your last flight.  Some airlines do not award miles for travel on a group reservation.  Passengers are advised to contact the airline’s Frequent Flyer Program directly with any questions regarding mileage accreditation and program details.

If you requested wheelchair assistance when you registered for your program, you must identify yourself to airline personnel upon check-in at the airport to make the airline aware you need this assistance.  If you have requested a special meal, you must identify yourself to the flight attendant onboard the aircraft.  We have noted any special requests you may have and forwarded the request to the airlines.

Luggage

When you arrive at the airport, check your luggage through to your final destination.  It is important to receive an acknowledgment from the agent that your bag is to be picked up at your final destination. Baggage gratuities for luggage handling throughout the program are included in the program price.

Due to frequent changes by the airlines and airport security, please check directly with the airline(s) and [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov/) for any questions you may have about permitted items.

Due to space limitations aboard motor coaches, checked baggage is limited to one normal size piece of checked luggage, weighing not more than 50 lbs; the dimensions of the total length + width + height cannot exceed 62 inches.  One carry-on bag per person (not to exceed 32 inches) is also permitted.  You may like to contact the specific airline via telephone or by visiting their website to see their luggage specifications as they can differ slightly.

It is wise to pack some personal items and a change of clothing in your carry-on in the event that your other luggage is lost or delayed. Should your luggage not arrive with you to your destination, please notify your tour manager immediately so he or she can work with the airport personnel.

Handling of one piece of normal luggage is included in the program price. Smaller handbags and flight bags should be carried with you.

Many different people will be responsible for moving your luggage and although they will do it as expeditiously and safely as possible, we cannot be responsible for damage, or accept claims for luggage damaged or pilfered while in the custody of an airline, hotel, bus company or transfer company.  We suggest you consider the purchase of all-risk travel insurance with baggage coverage such as the insurance plans outlined on the Travel Resource Center.  Should your luggage be damaged or lost by an airline, you are responsible for notifying the airline that accepted your luggage and gave you your baggage claim check receipt.

What to Pack

You will be traveling in an area where the climate is temperate and unpredictable.  As a general rule for Europe and most countries in the Middle East, you can expect temperatures to range from 70 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer; 45-70 degrees during the spring and fall; and 30-50 degrees in winter months, but be prepared for occasional extremes.  Select a wardrobe that is adaptable and allows for layering.  During the day, casual, comfortable clothing is recommended along with a good pair of walking shoes. You may wish to pack sunglasses as well as an umbrella.  In the evening you may enjoy dressing up a bit after a day of sightseeing and exploring. When visiting places of worship, it is appropriate for all female visitors to cover their upper arms, and shorts are inappropriate for either sex.  Head coverings are usually not necessary for women.  If they are, they will be provided at the site.

While some hotels may have bath toiletry amenities in guestrooms, it is recommended that you bring your own.  Typically, most hotels have a hairdryer in guest rooms.

Even though our local affiliates will handle your luggage most of the time, you will get along better with a suitcase that isn’t too heavy.  Our baggage handlers are not permitted inside of any airport customs area, and it will be necessary for you to handle your own baggage until you are outside of restricted areas.  Remember the wise traveler travels light!

Health Information

Participants must be medically and physically fit to participate in this travel program.  This program requires a significant amount of walking.  Motorcoaches are not permitted to pick up and drop off in front of major monuments and attractions.  Motorcoaches and hotels are not wheelchair accessible.  Should you require any special medical equipment or have special medical conditions, you must notify illume in writing prior to your registration.  Should any special assistance be required, you must travel with a companion capable and willing to solely assist you.

Should you have any questions regarding inoculations, medical conditions or preventive medication please consult your physician and the Center for Disease Control (CDC).  If you are currently taking medication, bring a sufficient supply to last through your entire trip.  It is advisable to bring a letter from your physician stating the following: full name of the drug(s), the condition for which it was prescribed, dosage per day, quantity of drug necessary for the period of time outside the U.S. and that it is for your well-being.  Should you have a chronic medical problem or a history of allergies, have your doctor prepare a statement or letter outlining your condition and required medication.  This letter may be useful if you require any emergency treatment by an overseas doctor. Always hand carry any necessary medicines in the original prescription case.

Please visit [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov/) for questions you may have regarding items you wish to bring with you.

Time Change

You should be careful to let your body adjust to the time change between the U.S. and your destination.  There are time differences between the US and

Europe: 5-6 hours Eastern Time; 8-9 hours Pacific Time.

Middle East: 6-7 hours Eastern Time; 9-10 hours Pacific Time.

Asia: 11-13 hours Eastern Time; 8-13 hours Pacific Time.

South America: 1-2 hours Eastern Time; 2-3 hours Pacific Time

The Day of Arrival at Your Destination

An English-speaking assistant will greet program participants at the airport after you clear Passport Control and Immigration, Baggage Claim and Customs.  The assistant will verify that all participants and luggage have arrived in good order, and then accompany you to your awaiting transport.

Participants who have made independent flight arrangements will meet up with program participants at the first hotel  - and must transfer at their own expense between the airport and hotel. However, if your flight is arriving prior to the group flight, you may be able to join them on the transfer to the first hotel.

In the unlikely event that your luggage does not arrive at the airport, immediately notify your tour manager and an airline agent. If you purchased travel insurance be sure to save receipts from purchases that you needed to make as a result of lost baggage. Most travel insurance policies will reimburse you between $100-$300 per day for necessities. If your baggage is delayed it is usually found and delivered to your hotel within 12-48 hours by the airline.

Your Local Tour Manager

Most illume programs are arranged and coordinated through an institution known to you, and an organizer from your institution may accompany your group.

In addition there may be a local Tour Manager who has been engaged to support your program organizer.

Tour Managers are on-site senior-level facilitators who assume responsibility for the logistical movements of your program and available exclusively to you and fellow sojourners while traveling. This person is selected for his or her knowledge of the destination you will be visiting, and for high standards of integrity, competence and professional conduct.  They are there to smooth the way for a fun, interesting and informative program.

The Tour Manager will coordinate activities with your organizer throughout your program, placing bulletins in your hotel lobby with daily updates.  Please check this bulletin for vital information, including departure arrangements and the times when the Tour Manager will be available to assist with location information, sightseeing ideas, and optional excursions.

Should you have any questions about any phase of the program please ask your Tour Manager.  Should you find anything unsatisfactory, please advise your Tour Manager immediately, and give him/her a chance to solve your problem – don’t try to do it yourself.  If your Tour Manager doesn’t know what’s wrong, he or she can’t help you and the last thing we want is an unhappy guest.

Your Local On-Site Experts

Illume’s global affiliates of on-site experts are local specialists:  top-of-profession docents, renowned scholars and expert licensed and matriculated guides in the fields directly related to your program.  Illume’s local affiliates hire guides personally known and trusted, who share a love for people and for sharing their knowledge.  Only full-time, professional and licensed staff whose income is derived from guiding are selected.

Your Program Visits

All site and museum visits are pre-reserved and pre-ticketed in anticipation of your arrival. Illume arranges for special entrances to restricted sites not accessible and available to the general public.  Permission and authorization for all restricted-access locations is obtained in advance. Entrance and admission fees are pre-paid.  You will therefore be able to spend the maximum amount of time at each venue.

As the program itinerary is planned many months ahead of the departure date, it may be necessary to rearrange visits where attractions are closed or no longer available.  During local or national holidays abroad, museums, sightseeing tours and shopping possibilities may be limited.  In such instances, and where possible, itinerary adjustments may be made.  Your program has been planned to include a balanced mix of essential visits with free time to shop and for personal exploration.

To further your enjoyment, optional excursions may be offered during your trip.  Your Tour Manager will set up an interesting and varied program of optional evening entertainment and additional sightseeing at approved prices.  Optional excursions usually range from $35-50 for a half-day tour, and $85-150 for a full day excursion with lunch or dinner; the prices vary depending on the destination and activities included.  You may wish to budget for this prior to departure.  Payment for these optional excursions may be paid by credit card, U.S. dollars or local currency.  All optional excursions, including those during a cruise, can be scheduled and paid for once you are already on the tour.

Religious Services and Ceremonies

Prayer at places of great religious and historic importance is a powerful experience.  Many sites have been centers of devotion and pilgrimage for centuries.  Opportunities for visits enable members to be part of that heritage and be moved by the same power of the place as others have before.  When visiting places of worship, it is appropriate for all female visitors to cover their upper arms, and shorts are inappropriate for either sex.

Out and About: Walking and Other Transport

This program will be different from tours you have taken.  Many cities and places we visit are centuries old and have been preserved in their original setting.  They are not well-suited to cars and motor coach access.  This means walking significant distances, often over cobblestone streets and uneven ground and some of the visits can only be accomplished on foot.  Comfortable walking shoes are a must!

Many cities have pedestrian-only zones, and many countries are taking action to increase their numbers.  These are delightful places to stroll for those physically able, but can be very limiting for those who are not.  Special ramps and access are less prevalent than in the United States.

To ensure that your program runs smoothly you are asked to arrive promptly for each organized visit. Your punctuality is appreciated by your fellow sojourners. All motorcoaches are air-conditioned and smoke-free.

Gratuities

Tipping as an appreciation of good service is an established practice.  Your program price includes tips for porters and hotel chambermaids and wait staff at local restaurants.

Other gratuities are left to your discretion.  If you have been satisfied with their services, the following customary amounts are appropriate. A good rule of thumb is to budget $13-$15 per day. Excellent services to be additionally compensated:

Local Tour Manager  
E/$ 8.00 per person per day

Local Guides  
E/$ 3.00 per person per half day  
E/$ 5.00 per person per full day

Motorcoach Driver  
E/$ 3.00 per person per half day or per airport transfer  
E/$ 5.00 per person per full day

Cruise ship staff  
$10.00 per person per day will be added to your cabin’s on-board expense tab

Donations at venues where religious services take place: $50.00 per group per venue or at the discretion of the spiritual director

Accommodations

Every effort is made to secure centrally located accommodation located within walking distance of the treasures and places you travel to visit. This provides participants with independence, opportunities to interact with local residents at neighborhood restaurants and cafes, and to experience life in the heart of the place.  The hotel names and contact information for your program will be sent with your final documents a few weeks before your departure date.

Most hotels request that guests vacate their rooms by noon on the final day of their stay.  Due to this checkout time, early morning arrivals will often experience a delay while rooms are made ready for you.  Before you even arrive, your Tour Manager will make every effort to secure early allocation of rooms and will do his/her very best to make you comfortable by providing suggestions for using this waiting time.  Luggage is usually secured in a locked area until room assignments are made, so you are free to leave the hotel area if you wish.

Luggage is taken to all rooms at check-in and check-out by hotel porters (unless otherwise noted).

Gratuities are paid to reception staff, hotel porters and chambermaids by illume.

Please bear in mind that American and International rating standards differ.  A First Class rating in the United States generally includes a higher degree of luxury than overseas standards.  Similarly, each hotel room may be furnished somewhat differently.  Air conditioning is not as widely available as in the U.S., and central heating not as efficient.  The concept of smoking/non-smoking guest rooms and sections of a restaurant is now beginning to reach most hotels.

Accommodations are based on two persons sharing a twin bedded room with a private bath or shower.

Participants traveling alone may find single rooms smaller with only one bed.  Generally triple rooms consist of normal twin-bedded accommodations with a rollaway bed for the third occupant, there is no price reduction for a third person sharing in a twin room. Single rooms are limited in availability.

You will typically need a special adapter plug for your chargers to fit into the wall receptacles abroad.  A comprehensive list of countries and plug types can be found at: http://electricaloutlet.org/

Electric current in most countries outside the U.S. is 220V, AC, 50Hz.  If your device is not designed to handle a current of 220V, you will need to bring a voltage converter in addition to the adapter.

Adapters, converters, and all-in-one devices are available on Amazon.com.  Stores like Target and Best Buy generally carry converter/adapter all-in-one devices in the $15-$40 range.

Cell phone carriers offer international plans where calls can be made back to the US from abroad for around 20 cents/minute. Contact your cell phone carrier to find out which plan will work best for you.   Voice call applications (Skype, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger) are also popular options for when you are connected to WiFi.

Room service meals are not included in the program.  Should you order room service, the meal and service charge will be placed on your personal incidental account.  Incidental charges -miscellaneous personal charges such as telephone, minibar items, room service, laundry, etc. – are not included in the program price.  These charges must be paid by you directly to the hotel cashier before you depart each hotel; upon payment, request and retain a receipt.

Participants are reminded to safeguard their valuables and personal belongings.  Hotels normally provide safety deposit facilities, often free of charge.  No responsibility can be accepted for any loss, however incurred; but should you lose something, inform your Tour Manager immediately.

As in many cities here in the U.S., petty crime and theft are an unfortunate occurrence.  Visitors are often perceived as easy targets; therefore we suggest you take common sense precautions to protect your belongings.  Among these are limiting the number of credit cards and cash you carry; leave valuable jewelry at home; don’t leave your camera unattended; be aware of  backpacks, wallets and purses at all times; keep your passport and airline ticket in a safe place in the hotel.

Dining

Continental breakfast each day (except the day of arrival) is included in your program. It is typically served buffet style and will generally consist of coffee, tea, juice, and breakfast breads, fruits, meat and cheese, butter and jam in the Breakfast Room at your hotel.

In many cases illume programs offer the freedom of choosing a restaurant for the evening that suits your own needs.  Some of our special included dinners are arranged for dining together as a group, and a fixed menu has been selected.  Some luncheons may have a limited choice in deference to good service so as not to detract from the flow of the day’s program.  Any other included meals are noted on the program itinerary.  Unfortunately we cannot guarantee the provision of special menus to meet dietary or religious requirements.  All cover charges and gratuities to restaurant staff are paid by illume.

Meal service charges for any included lunches and dinners are included in the program price.  For other meals, a table service charge and/or cover charge for bread, table linens, and silverware may be included in your bill.  However, when you enjoy good service take the trouble to thank the waiter or waitress personally.

The traditional meal (even if the pace of life today is changing more traditional ways) is made up of two courses: the “first” and “second”.  The first is nearly always a soup, pasta or rice dish.  These dishes vary greatly among regions.  The “second” is meat or fish with vegetables.  Not to be left out are the cheeses, salads, desserts, and ice cream.

You will find the cost of eating out in most cities about the same as in larger U.S. cities.  On average, previous participants spend between $15-30 for lunch and $35-65 for dinner. These prices reflect the cost of a full meal with several courses (soup, salad, pasta, meat, dessert and a glass of wine, coffee or tea).

Currency

It is not necessary to purchase local currency before you leave home, though you may wish to.   You will have an opportunity to exchange money after you arrive at the airport or at your hotel. We suggest bringing $200 -$400 with you in cash ready to be exchanged as needed. Major credit cards are accepted at most establishments.  Cash in small denominations of local currency is advisable for small purchases.  Some stores and restaurants accept U.S. dollars as payment, but it is not a guarantee.   Money can be exchanged at banks, exchange stores, or at the hotel.

In nearly all cities, you can use ATM cards to retrieve cash in local currencies.  Check with the bank that issues your ATM card to verify whether your card can be used in foreign countries and whether your PIN is valid.

Since there are occasional disruptions of ATM and credit card processing services, it is usually good to have back up plans for getting the cash you may need.

Shopping

Shopping is an adventure.  The profusion of shops and markets and the huge variety of goods make a shopper’s paradise where you’re sure to come upon the perfect pair of shoes, the ideal piece of pottery or a lovely print without doing much more than walking down the right street.

Of course, nothing is perfect.  The constantly shifting shoals of business hours, long and chaotic lines in banks and sometimes in stores are nuisances.  Since many countries have played host to foreign visitors for 2,000 years, their citizens have long since learned how to smooth the path for the shopper and visitor.  Be patient in line, and eventually you’ll be served.  With a healthy supply of patience and good humor, your shopping excursions should be nothing less than a triumph.

Customs & Immigration Regulations

U.S. residents may personally import up to $ 800.00 worth of goods duty free.  You may mail back gifts of $100.00 or less, but not to more than one person per address a day. For more information visit [www.CBP.gov](http://www.cbp.gov/) and select Travel.

Once you arrive in the United States you must claim your luggage at the point of entry, even if you are continuing onto another flight and city.  Once you pass through U.S. passport control, proceed to the baggage claim area.  You must file your customs declaration form here.  Immediately outside of the customs area, airline representatives will be waiting at the “Interline Luggage Desk”.  If you are connecting to another flight, you may leave your luggage here and it will be transferred to your flight.  You may then proceed to your airline and gate.