

GENERAL INFORMATION 2011



AIR TICKETS, LUGGAGE AND CHECK-IN INSTRUCTIONS

Your e-ticket receipts and check-in details will be sent to you or to your travel agent approximately fourteen days before departure, providing full payment and your completed passenger information form including details of travel insurance have been received.

Your free baggage allowance is usually 20kg (44lbs) in Economy Class (please check relevant airline) except for British Airways when it is 23kg (50lbs) (economy class and World Traveller Plus). The baggage allowances for business and first class vary from airline to airline, so you will be advised the correct allowance with your final documents. Excess baggage charges can be expensive and have to be paid to the airline on the spot. For security reasons, the airlines usually permit only one piece of hand baggage in the cabin.

Important note: Please remember, if you are travelling in any class above economy (such as business class), even though you have an increased luggage allowance, if your itinerary includes domestic or international flights with any other airline in economy class your allowance will be limited to 20kgs (44lbs) and so we would recommend you keep your luggage within this allowance. In some instances, your luggage allowance on internal flights may be further limited to 15Kgs (33 lbs) or less, as in Africa. Please refer to your specific country Tour Notes for guidance.

Although it is rare for luggage to go missing on international flights, from time to time this does happen. We would therefore suggest that you are adequately prepared and recommend that you pack a spare set of clothing and other essentials, such as medication, in your hand luggage, as a precautionary measure, although please bear in mind that your hand luggage is limited in weight and size.

Items to include

For the majority of itineraries we recommend that you use a hard suitcase, as softer ones are more prone to damage during flights and road journeys from the general wear and tear of handling during long distance travelling. There are occasions when only soft bags can be used, for example on some safaris in Africa, but we will inform you of this if this applies to your particular holiday.

- Dollar cash in small denominations is useful in most developing countries
- Travel sweets and wet wipes or hand gel are invaluable when travelling and sightseeing
- Insect repellent
- Sunhat
- Antiseptic/antihistamine cream
- Lip salve
- Dioralyte
- Sunglasses, sun cream and after-sun cream according to the time of year you travel
- Alarm clock is useful
- Torch with extra batteries and a battery shaver
- Dust bag and lens brush will help protect your camera, and we suggest you take plenty of spare memory cards of film.
- In some countries visited on our itineraries, personal items such as Tampax, or contact lens solutions, may not be available.
- International adaptor
- Mobile phone charger

Polythene bags are invaluable for packing and keeping clothes separate and clean. We recommend that detachable luggage wheels, if used, should not be checked in with your suitcase as they are often damaged or mislaid.

Passengers must not carry sharp items (e.g. nail scissors, nail files, steel combs, penknives) in their hand luggage on any flight, and risk having such items confiscated altogether or for the duration of the flight. To avoid such inconvenience, please pack all sharp objects in your main luggage.

Documents to be securely carried separately include a copy of your invoice; a note of the numbers of your travellers' cheques; credit cards; passport (including place and date of issue); and a copy of your insurance policy summary. We would also recommend that all valuables such as money and your camera are packed in your hand luggage.

Check in

We ask you to check no later than two hours prior to the international flight departure time (although three hours is usually recommended) and two hours for any regional flights because of the extra security checks now in operation at British airports. If your flight is early in the morning you may wish to check with the airline how early they will be opening their check-in desks.

We regret that we cannot pre-book seats for clients travelling in Economy Class. If you have a frequent flyer card from one of the airlines or groups you are using, please also give the number here. Please note that seat requests are always requests only and never 100% guaranteed as the airline reserve the right to change seat allocations and the aircraft at any time. Please bear in mind that a percentage of seats are always retained to be allocated at check in, so you may be able to change your seats at that stage.

Delayed or missed flights - In the absence of a local representative to assist you, we would ask you initially to seek the advice of the airline's customer service desk in the event of flight delays or missed connections. They should be able to assist you with making any necessary amendments to your travel arrangements. If for any reason they are unable to help you please contact the Bales office (tel. 00 44 (0) 845 0575657) or our Duty Office Manager (tel. 00 44 (0) 771 117 9057).

Airline schedules

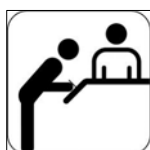
Everything possible will be done to ensure that information on airline schedules is accurate, but Bales Worldwide cannot be held responsible for any changes in airline schedules and timetables, and any expenses or inconvenience caused thereby. Airline timings and flight numbers advised are correct at time of writing but are always subject to alteration.

We also reserve the right to use other airlines, or other methods of transport, according to schedules, particularly at peak periods such as Easter and Christmas. All timings on flight schedules are given in local time.



ARRIVAL INFORMATION

On arrival at your destination, you will be met by a representative of our local ground agent and transferred to your hotel. Our local agent will be identifiable by a clipboard either headed up "BALES WORLDWIDE" or with your name on it or in some instances both.



ACCOMMODATION

Triple accommodation: We would like to draw your attention to the fact that if booking triple accommodation, this usually consists of a standard size twin or double bedded room and an extra bed, which tends to be a rollaway or temporary bed variety.

Single rooms; In many destinations we feature single clients will be given a twin bedded room for sole occupancy. However, this cannot be guaranteed and some hotels have designated single rooms that can be on the small side.

Special requests; Any special requests with regard to accommodation, such as double beds, need to be made in advance but please note these cannot be guaranteed.

Swimming Pools; Please note that swimming pools can sometimes be closed for maintenance and this is usually during their winter months.

Renovation work;

For any hotel or cruise boat that we use which are currently undergoing renovations, clients will be made aware at the time of booking wherever possible. However, there are occasions when renovations occur after the initial booking stage and we will advise of these in subsequent documentation.

Furthermore, whilst we regularly ask our local agents to advise us of any renovation work being undertaken at the hotels or cruise boats that we use, we cannot guarantee that this information is always 100% accurate and current.



COMMUNICATION

You will be sent a contact list as part of your final travel documents, with details of our local agents and the out of hours duty office.

Mobile telephones do work in many parts of the world, but if you intend to take one with you on holiday, please check with your supplier that it will work and the cost making and receiving calls, as this can be high. Please note that mobile telephones must be turned off during flights.



CREDIT CARDS

It is possible to use credit cards in many parts of the world, however on occasions transactions may be blocked by your credit card company if they feel that your card is not being used in your normal buying pattern. This can include if you spend an unusually high amount on a souvenir for example, or if you are using the card overseas when you normally only use it in the UK. If you are in any doubt, you can notify your card company that you are going to be using the card in the country you are travelling to and the dates you will be there.



EMERGENCIES WHILE ABROAD

If you are travelling on a Bales Escorted journey, your local tour manager has the experience to assist you in the event of any unforeseen emergency arising. If you are travelling independently, please contact our local agent (details with your final documents) or the hotel reception who will help you. For your reassurance and assistance a few guidelines are given below.

It is a wise precaution to carry a separate note of your passport number (plus place and date of issue) also the numbers of your travellers' cheques and credit cards. If you lose your passport while abroad, report the loss to the police then inform the British Embassy, as you will require a replacement travel document.

If you lose any personal belongings, every effort will be made to locate these with the help of the relevant local authorities. If all efforts to locate your belongings fail, the local police should be notified to validate your insurance claim. Valuables should always be lodged in the hotel or boat's safe.

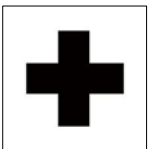
If you lose your travellers' cheques, the loss is reported to the local police, and then the nearest office of the issuer is given a note of the numbers of the cheques and the sales receipt. This usually allows a prompt refund. For credit cards you should make a note of the details described on the back of your card or on your statement before travelling. As well as telephoning the nearest office of your credit card company within 24 hours.

Should you feel seriously unwell your hotel can arrange for an English-speaking doctor to call. They can also arrange to collect prescriptions, although there may be a small charge for this service. If you are seriously ill or have an accident, it may be necessary for you to go into a local hospital. Our local agents will assist you initially and it will help them if your insurance details are immediately to hand so that they can authorise hospital bill payments for you. They will also arrange for your return home or your onward travel as appropriate. Our agents will liaise with Bales Worldwide so that we can keep your relatives informed on your behalf if you are unable to make telephone calls yourself.



FOOD AND DRINK

Meal arrangements for your holiday are specified in your itinerary. We regret that no refund can be given for meals not taken. While special diets cannot be guaranteed, it would be appreciated if you could give Bales Worldwide advance warning of any special requests such as diabetic or vegetarian requirements, so that we can assist you wherever possible. It is only fair to add that vegetarians may find the choice limited to local food with little variety available in some countries. We would also like to advise that some special dietary requirements, like gluten free for example, are hard to fulfill in some of the countries we feature. When visiting warmer climates, it is very important that you drink plenty of water, especially during the heat of the day. It is generally recommended that you drink at least 2 to 3 litres (4 to 6 pints) of water per day to limit the effects of dehydration.



HEALTH

Passengers should be fit to undertake this itinerary, which should not be considered suitable for anyone requiring assistance or for those who are not independently mobile. However, we would stipulate that clients inform us of any special requirements, as the success of these holidays depends upon us being provided with the necessary information as to their particular needs. With this information we hope to ensure that we avoid any problems regarding health on the holiday to either themselves or other participants. If you have any doubt about your fitness to travel you should consult your GP before travelling.

If you are travelling when you are pregnant, we recommend that you consult your GP, as some destinations require that you have vaccinations and take anti-malaria medication. If you travel when between 29 – 36 weeks pregnant, you will need a certificate from your GP, confirming you are able to travel. If you are 36 weeks plus, you will need special medical clearance as air travel is only allowed in special cases.

Health authorities change vaccination requirements as the need may arise and it is advisable to check the up-to-date position before departure, for example, **for certain African and South American countries it is essential to have a Yellow Fever certificate**. Additionally, these notes are for passengers travelling from the UK and may vary for anyone who has visited any other part of the world in the days just prior to departure from the UK.

We strongly advise that you contact the Medical Advisory Service for Travellers Abroad (MASTA) on their travellers health line number 09068 224100. MASTA will provide you with written advice on both health matters and Foreign Office travel advice. Please note that these calls are charged at a premium rate, although, the information given is very comprehensive.

Alternatively you can check the FCO website at www.fco.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo. This also contains health advice as well as essential travel advice and up to date country information.

Dengue Fever

Dengue infections have been reported in over 100 countries and are widespread in most tropical countries of the South Pacific, Asia, the Caribbean, the Americas, and Africa. The geographic spread of dengue infections is similar to that of malaria, but unlike malaria, dengue infections are often found in the urban areas of tropical nations, including Thailand, Singapore, Taiwan, Indonesia, Philippines, India, Peru, Brazil and more recently in the Middle East. Because the main risk of exposure for the traveller is in populated urban and residential areas, travellers are advised to consult either MASTA or the World Health Organisation website for outbreak information.

DVT

There have been many reports in the media about the problems of Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) when flying. DVT is the clotting of blood, usually occurring in the lower legs.

If you have any doubts or wish to discuss this further we recommend that you consult your own doctor, however you may also find the information below useful.

Advice to avoid the development of DVT for all passengers:

- Drink adequate fluids
- Avoid smoking
- Avoid beverages that contain alcohol and/or caffeine both before and during the flight
- Avoid crossing legs when seated
- Walk around the aircraft cabin at quiet times
- Exercise your legs while seated and regularly rotate and flex your shoulders, feet and ankles
- Wear loose fitting comfortable clothes when travelling

High Altitude

Altitude sickness can affect any age group and even the very fit, although those who are tempted to exert themselves prematurely are most likely to be affected. Some of the usual symptoms are physical fatigue, rapid palpitations, indigestion, dizziness and headaches. Insomnia and restlessness are common.

It is essential to help yourself acclimatise; if walking uphill consciously stop and rest at regular intervals. Avoid alcohol and abstain from smoking. It also helps to take lighter meals and avoid strenuous activities such as running. Because of the problems sometimes experienced at altitude, you should not have a history of high blood pressure, respiratory difficulties or heart problems. Some medication may react differently at high altitude. If you are in any doubt whatsoever, please consult your GP ensuring there is awareness of exactly what your itinerary entails.

Medication

If you take any medication, please ensure you have enough to last while you are away as you may not be able to get your prescription abroad and clearly label any essential drugs. We recommend you keep a written record of any medical condition affecting you and any medication you are taking. If you need to carry hypodermic syringes in your hand luggage for medical reasons, we strongly recommend that you contact the airline before you travel as they may require proof of your medical need, i.e. a doctor's letter or similar. You may wish to take a first aid kit, re-hydration formula (e.g. Dioralyte), insect repellent and sun protection cream.

If you do feel unwell please tell your Tour Manager, or the hotel reception staff if travelling independently, who will assist in obtaining medical advice or the necessary medication if required. However, please note that our Tour Managers are not medically qualified and are not permitted to provide medication for our clients.

Malaria

For the latest information about malaria zones and recommended precautions, please contact your GP or the Medical Advisory Service for Travellers Abroad (MASTA – number listed above).

Malaria is a disease prevalent in some areas of the world. It is caused by a parasite transmitted by certain types of mosquito. Preventative measures include taking the appropriate anti-malaria tablets; the type of medication depends on the area you are visiting. Additionally it is recommended that you apply insect repellent to exposed skin, wear long-sleeved clothing from dusk to dawn and sleep in screened areas under mosquito netting. Bales Worldwide is unable to give medical advice.



INSURANCE

We cannot accept a booking from anyone who has not taken out adequate insurance protection, either through Bales, their travel agent or direct with an insurance company.

For clients over 80 years of age we must receive a copy of the insurance coupon with policy number. It is important you have adequate and comprehensive insurance cover and that you have carefully read the conditions relating to your policy. In the event of illness requiring medical treatment, or an emergency requiring changes to your arrangements, please be sure to contact the insurance company on their 24 hour telephone number as a priority. **You must carry a copy of the details with you at all times in case of emergency (paperwork, policy number and 24 hour emergency number).** The telephone call should be made by you directly, or by a travelling companion/our local representative under your instruction. Failure to follow this procedure could invalidate any claim you may later wish to make and we regret that claims cannot be made to Bales in such circumstances.

If you have taken the insurance cover we offer in conjunction with Preferential Insurance Services Limited, underwritten by White Horse Insurance Ireland Limited, please refer to the back page of the insurance leaflet, which gives details on how to make a claim.

If baggage is damaged on an international flight, an airline claims form must be completed **on the spot at the airport** as in this instance it is the airline that will reimburse you.

Please note, most insurance policies will not cover or cover may be limited on the following activities. We strongly recommend that if you are likely to take part in one of the following activities or a similar 'hazardous' activity during your holiday, you contact your insurance provider to discuss if this activity is covered within your policy.

Activities:

Bungee jumping

Glacier walking

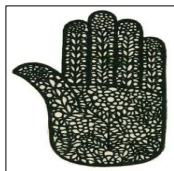
Scuba diving over 30 metres

Trekking at heights over 4,000 metres



LOCALLY BOOKED OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS (ESCORTED & SELECT DEPARTURES ONLY)

If travelling on a Bales Escorted Journey or Bales Select Departure a number of optional excursions may be available for you to book locally. If applicable, these will be listed on your itinerary. Please note, the prices given for these excursions may vary according to the number of passengers participating and are also subject to currency fluctuation and increase from time to time. Your local representative will advise of any changes to the prices given. Should you need to cancel an optional excursion once booked, please note a cancellation charge may apply.



LOCAL CUSTOMS

It is important not to dress or behave in such a way as to offend local customs or religious codes of conduct. Please refer to your Tour Notes for further advice.



PHOTOGRAPHY

A dust bag and lens brush will help protect your camera and we suggest that you take spare camera batteries, memory cards or film depending on the type of camera equipment you have, as it is often easy to take more photographs than anticipated. Film supplies are available locally in most countries we feature, but the quality can be unreliable, and may not be available exactly where and when you want them. In lesser developed countries it will be difficult to buy additional digital memory cards, so you should always take these with you if required.

It is only polite to ask permission before you photograph local people, especially women. Caution must be exercised in very rural or local areas, such as bazaars, where photography can cause serious offence. Do not be surprised if you are asked for a tip, particularly if you photograph someone at close range. You should not take photographs of airports, bridges, military installations or personnel – this is particularly the case in sensitive military areas such as borders. Occasionally, photography is restricted inside some buildings or a small camera fee may be required. There may be some restrictions on the use of video cameras and again a charge is made in some places. Your local guide will be able to provide further advice.



SAFETY

Consider carefully before using any form of local transport (e.g. unlicensed taxis, tuk tuk, cycle and auto rickshaw, moped), as they may not have liability insurance and may not be regularly serviced. If exploring unfamiliar areas on your own always take advice from our local representatives about where to go. Be alert at all times and never go into areas at night that are unlit or poorly lit.

To reduce risk we recommend that you leave valuable items at home e.g. expensive watches and jewellery. If you are going out, take only what you need and leave the rest in the hotel safety deposit box. Be discreet with your wallet and jewellery and keep hold of your camera. Report lost or stolen items to the management of the premises and to the local police within 24 hours. If your bankcards are missing contact your bank or card protection company. Report lost travellers' cheques and notify any other relevant parties.

Under no circumstances should you agree to carry a bag, parcel or even a letter for any other person at any stage of the journey, however innocent the request might appear. As in the UK, any packages that appear to be unattended in hotels, at tourist sites etc., should not be touched but reported immediately. Unofficial guides, taxi drivers touting for sightseeing tours or strangers asking you to visit a shop should all be avoided.

It is important not to dress or behave in a way which might offend local customs or religious codes of conduct. If you are in any doubt, please ask your Tour Manager or local representative.

Cruise Boat Safety

If your holiday includes a stay on board a cruise boat we recommend that soon after you embark on your cruise ship, you make a point of running through a checklist of the boat's main safety features. In particular, check that you know the location of your personal life jacket, the escape stairs nearest to your cabin and the position of the vessel's life-raft/lifeboats.

Please note that life jackets are not provided for any of the felucca sails or ferry boat excursions that may be arranged during the course of a cruise in Egypt. The life jacket allocated on your main cruise ship is available for you to take on any boat excursions (supplied in each cabin). However prior consent from the boat management is required before taking the life jacket. If you would like to take your life jacket on an excursion please speak to either your local representative or the staff on your cruise ship to arrange this. Please note, any charges for damage or loss of the life jacket will be your responsibility. If you are considering taking the excursion to the Sound & Light show at the Temple of Philae in Aswan, we strongly recommend you take a torch for this excursion as lighting on board the motor boat and mooring points is very poor or non-existent.



SECURITY

To reduce any risk, we advise you to take the following sensible precautions. Good jewellery and expensive watches should not be worn outside your hotel. It is also important not to leave cash, travellers' cheques or other items of value in your room when you are not present. It is wise not to carry valuables such as large sums of cash or your passport outside your hotel. Security boxes or the hotel safe are available throughout most itineraries. Any packages that appear to be unattended in airports, hotels, at tourist sites etc., should not be touched but reported immediately to your guide, police or airline/hotel security.

Unofficial guides offering to escort you are to be avoided, as are taxi drivers touting for sightseeing tours and strangers asking you to visit a particular shop.



SHOPPING

There is a wide and tempting range of handicrafts on sale in the shops and/or bazaars on the majority of itineraries. A few general words of caution are worth mentioning here. Many of the items for sale are handmade and may contain imperfections natural in goods that have not been mass-produced. It is worth taking a little time to check each item that you wish to buy in order to avoid disappointment. In local shops and markets, bargaining is often the general rule and here quality must be scrutinised with special care.

Some countries, such as India for example, have emporia run by the state government or government registered shops, where prices are usually fixed. These are generally a safer place to buy because they aim to standardise quality. Prices can vary from shop to shop and you may find similar goods at a different price if visiting other shops during your free time. While bargaining is a way of life in countries such as India, the Middle East and South America, you may wish to consider that it does not become a visitor from a wealthier country to press the bargaining too far. After ensuring that you are fully satisfied with your purchases, you should obtain a proper receipt. In India, the shops do not entertain the returning of goods; indeed this is difficult once you have returned to your own country as Indian Customs have strict regulations against this.

If you decide to purchase luxury goods such as carpets or jewellery whilst travelling, please be sure to check their quality and guarantee thereof with great care. If you do go ahead with buying one of these items, there are sometimes extra costs involved in transporting it home to the UK, such as VAT and customs duty, no matter how earnest the assurances of the salesmen. There is no legal way to avoid at least some of these charges, so please be wary and take this extra expense into account when you buy and if at all possible, bring the goods home with you.

Please note it is illegal to import ivory, turtle shell, and most furs into the UK or EU countries. It is also illegal to import any item derived from an endangered species.

It is unlikely that any of the 'antiques' you will be offered will be genuine. Please remember that it is illegal to purchase genuine antiques; that is articles more than 100 years old such as religious dance masks, Buddha figures and other monastic items. We regret Bales Worldwide cannot become involved in problems relating to purchases you may have made while abroad.



SIGHTSEEING AND TRANSPORTATION

During city sightseeing tours, the local guide may include short stops at a shop or handicraft emporium. While this affords a short break, often in the cool of an air-conditioned room, we ask those passengers who may be interested in purchasing souvenirs to show consideration for others by not overstaying the scheduled break and delaying the excursion.

Some of our itineraries involve travel by road, which can be fatiguing, especially during the hotter months or if visiting places at altitude. In some developing countries, western style toilets are mainly limited to hotels and some resthouses. In many countries, other public facilities are often quite basic and few and far between.

We regularly monitor the standard of transportation used on included transfers and excursions to ensure all transportation is safe and road-worthy and is subject to regular maintenance and servicing. All transportation used on included arrangements will conform to the local and national regulations within the country you are visiting. However please note, we cannot guarantee that seat belts will be fitted in the front or rear of vehicles used in countries where this is not a mandatory requirement. We always request the use of vehicles fitted with seat belts wherever possible, but we feel it is only fair to give advance warning that in some destinations these will not be provided.

In fairness to everyone, for itineraries involving any group travel, coach passengers may be asked to rotate seats. Please note that in the interests of our passengers, we have a 'No Smoking' rule on all coach travel for accompanied groups and smoking is therefore restricted to rest stops. Also for tailor made or independent passengers, smoking is usually not permitted in the vehicles used.

Please note that generally speaking hotels require checkout to be after breakfast, to allow them time to prepare the rooms for incoming guests, while check-in is usually after lunch. We trust you will appreciate that it is not always possible to plan our itineraries to fit in with these times, although we do try to request early check-ins if passengers arrive from a long-haul flight.



TRAVEL ADVICE

As a partner in the 'Know Before You Go' campaign, we are working with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to do all that we can to help British travellers stay safe overseas.

We recommend you visit their web site at www.fco.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo, which is packed with essential travel advice and tips, and up-to-date country information. Alternatively, you can call the Foreign & Commonwealth Office 'Advice to Travellers' telephone: 0207 008 1500.

Bales Worldwide are under a legal obligation to follow the Foreign and Commonwealth advice and if at any time they advise against travel to a country we would immediately inform you. We do not want to alarm you with this information, but do need to advise all our clients where you can check current travel conditions in the countries you intend to visit.