

Southern Star Tour and Travel - Travel Tips & Information

1. Everyone on the trip will receive a copy of the itinerary.
2. The Groups director will receive a complete tour notebook with all tour information (reservation numbers, contracts, special instructions, etc).
3. Everyone will be issued a lanyard and badge case with hotel contact information, contact numbers for your trip planner and contact numbers for your group leaders. These should be worn by all tour participants.
4. **Medical Release Forms** – Each person should carry a copy of their medical release form in their badge case or somewhere on their person at all times. This will insure that there will be no delay in medical treatment should the need arise. Be sure to also carry your medical coverage information with you.
An extra copy of all medical release forms should be carried by a responsible party on the trip in case someone's is lost or damaged.
5. **Travel Documents** – Proper travel identification and documents are as listed below. Keep your travel documents / tickets safe and secure during your entire trip.
Requirements for Domestic Travel (US Only)
Unexpired state-issued photo drivers license OR
Unexpired state-issued photo identification card OR
Employee ID issued by a Federal, State or local government agency OR
School issued Photo ID
6. **Luggage / Packing** - Use pieces of luggage that are lightweight, roomy and durable. Material and design should be able to keep contents dry in adverse weather. Do not over pack your luggage as it may cause your bag to rip apart or pop open during transport. Remove any old destination tags from your luggage. Make sure each piece of luggage has a sturdy ID tag on the outside. Place a card inside each piece of luggage with your name, address and telephone number in case the outside tag is lost. If you carry a list of all the items you are taking with you, you can check the list prior to returning home to make sure you have not forgotten anything. This also comes in handy for insurance and reimbursement should your luggage be lost or stolen.
If you wear prescription glasses / contacts it is advisable to carry an extra pair with you.
In the unlikely event that your baggage becomes lost or misrouted, it is a good idea to pack essential items in a carry-on bag. These items include: medications, change of clothes, personal care items, eyeglasses and car keys. Also, items such as cameras, jewelry, money, IDs and other valuables should be packed in carry-on luggage or bags.
Pack fragile items in your carry-on luggage.
Keep in mind that storage area is limited inside the luggage bay of charter buses.
It's best not to wear or carry expensive jewelry as it can be lost, damaged or stolen, plus it can make you a target for thieves.
7. **Souvenirs / Gifts** – If you plan on purchasing souvenirs and gifts be sure to leave enough room in your luggage to bring them home. You may wish to carry an extra expandable bag to carry these rather than purchasing one at your destination which can be expensive.
8. **Dress** – Be sure to take appropriate dress for the expected weather at your destination. Be sure to wear Comfortable shoes as you will probably be doing a lot of walking. It is advisable to bring a small collapsible umbrella.
9. **Valuables** – Do not leave valuables in your hotel room or on the bus. If you plan on taking an iPod or similar device, camera, computer, etc. you must plan on carrying it with you everywhere you go. Safeguard your cell phone at all times.
10. **Safety** – Please pay close attention to your safety and security while on any trip. Keep your identification, and any other valuables in a safe place. Keep photocopies of your identification, credit cards and travelers check numbers and any other important personal documentation in a separate part of your luggage.
While in your hotel room keep the door locked and chained. Never open your hotel room door to a stranger. Refuse any unexpected deliveries to your room. Read the fire safety instructions on the back of your room door and know where the fire exits are located. In case of fire, NEVER get in an elevator. NEVER give out your room number or phone number to strangers. Do not enter your room if you find it unlocked upon returning or if someone you do not know is following you down the hallway.

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Avoid handbags, fanny packs, back packs and outside pockets that are easy targets for thieves and pickpockets. Inside pockets and a sturdy shoulder bag are somewhat safer. You will most likely be on crowded city streets or attractions. Be careful of traffic and watch your step when moving on and off curbs, entering or leaving monuments or buildings, etc. DO NOT go off by yourself or alone. Stay in groups and with your assigned chaperone.

Be particularly careful at ATM machines, stations, or any public place especially when withdrawing money. Do not hang purses on your chair in any restaurant. Keep your purse on your lap or on the floor between your feet. Check each time you leave a bus, restaurant, shop, taxi or restroom to make sure you have all your belongings with you.

11. **Cash / Credit Cards** – You will need to carry some cash to cover your lunches, snacks, etc. If you do not have a credit card, it is best to carry a prepaid Visa, MC, AmEx or a bank debit card. You can use one of these to make purchases or obtain cash if needed.
12. **Incidental Charges** – The hotel property is required to turn off room phones to outside calls (only room to room should be available) and pay-per-view movies. Room service cannot be charged to a room. These services can only be turned back on or reinstated by an adult with a credit card guarantee. If for some reason you do add any incidental charges to your room, you will be required to pay these charges prior to check out.
13. **Hotel** – Those occupying a room will be responsible for any damages or missing items.
 - Check-In** – Your rooms have been pre-assigned. If changes in assignment need to be made, please be patient while this is being done. Please enter your rooms in a quiet and orderly fashion so as not to disturb other guests not with your group. Check rooms immediately for any damage or missing items (towels, iron, etc) and report it to a chaperone or your director immediately. If they are not available, report it to the front desk. Normally you will be leaving the hotel early and returning late, so please be considerate of other guests who may be sleeping.
 - Check-Out** – Check your room carefully before departing to be certain you have left nothing behind. Check closets, drawers, under beds, and bathrooms. Make sure to turn all room keys to your director or to the front desk.
 - Chargeable Items** – It is requested that the hotel remove any bottled water, drinks or snack items from rooms. If you find these items in your room, please request that the hotel remove them. These ARE NOT complimentary items. DO NOT eat or drink any of these items as you will be charged and required to pay for them before check-out.
14. **Breakfast** – Will normally be served buffet style. Your starting breakfast time each day is listed on your itinerary. Normally the hotel will assign a banquet room for your group breakfast. Please check with your director and/or assigned chaperones for that information. You have been allotted ample time to eat and return to your room to refresh prior to departure from the hotel.
15. **Dinners** – Normally dinners have been prearranged. Many times your group has preordered your meals. Pre-paid dinners have had the total, plus tax, plus tip included and there is no need to leave additional gratuities.
16. **Lunches** – Most of the time the group will have lunch on their own at a predetermined spot. Normally this will be a food court or an area with numerous restaurants / fast food places. Please plan on having the funds to cover this expense. If a lunch is included in your tour it will state as such on your itinerary or you will be provided with a meal coupon.
17. **Motor Coaches** – Your departure times from the hotel each morning are listed on your itinerary unless changed by your director. Please plan on arriving a little early. Arriving late will hold up departure time and can be embarrassing if everyone is waiting for “you”. During the day make sure you are at the allotted place and time to meet coaches after an activity.
 - Make sure to take everything you will need for the day’s activities as you may not be returning to the hotel until late in the evening.