

clubeurope
concert tours

CLUB EUROPE'S GUIDE FOR

FIRST TIME
PARTY LEADERS



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Step-by-Step Guide

This step-by-step guide is our recommendation for keeping on top of everything when it comes to planning your tour

- Secure dates on the school calendar 12-18 months in advance and ensure the Head has given approval before the trip is launched.

Decide where to go and obtain quotes from tour operators (2 or 3 quotes suggested).

- Send out letter to students gauging interest. Include a form...interested/not interested.
- If you have enough interest, collect first deposits (still ideally working at least a year in advance). Highlight NON RETURNABLE first and second deposits to parents to avoid 'drop outs'.
- Collect second deposits 8 weeks later.
- Collect the balance in small regular instalments for budgeting purposes and to help spot potential 'drop outs'. Final payment to the tour company will usually be due 11 weeks before departure.
- Passports can be renewed up to 9 months in advance so encourage parents to check when passports expire early on.

Plan fundraising e.g. put in your applications to trusts, research sponsorship, talk to governors and senior leadership about concert proceeds, busking opportunities, bag packing etc.

- Collect personal information including student and staff names as per passports, dietary and medical information, dates of birth, instrument dimensions and weights (if traveling by air you'll need to collect full passport information).

Create tour Facebook, blog or Twitter account so that you can keep parents and students up to date easily.

- Hold your pre tour meeting for parents 3-4 weeks before departure. Create an information booklet including outline itinerary, code of conduct, spending money guidelines etc. Ask if we can attend or send a presentation.
- Collect passports and EHIC cards.



Before You Start Planning Your Tour

You may be feeling very excited about organising a concert tour but before you start contacting tour operators for quotes you'll need to consider the following:

What other trips are being organised in your school and when? How will this affect your plans?

- » If there are already lots of established trips you may be competing for the same students.
- » If there are very few trips, ask other heads of department why they think this might be so that you can anticipate the obstacles and decide how you might overcome them e.g. student apathy or financial difficulties

If you have an Educational Visits Co-ordinator check what the procedures are, e.g.

- » You may have to get the trip approved in principal with the Head teacher before collecting quotes.
- » You may have to get the trip approved by Governors.

Get some approved dates on the school calendar. The more flexibility you have the better.

- » Check dates don't clash with exams, other important dates, other tours and even county music tours.
- » Are you planning to travel during school holidays or weekends? If so, ensure you have the support of enough staff willing to give up their spare time to go on tour.

- » If you are planning to travel during term time check whether you have to pay for staff cover while you're away and who will cover the cost e.g. will you have to add this to the tour cost to students?
- » Some schools offer trips in Activities Week only and timescales for advertising and collecting deposits may be restricted. If this is the case in your school it could be worth asking for permission to advertise your trip outside the normal rules to allow parents more time to pay.

Will your school require you to carry out an Inspection Visit before your tour? Who will cover the costs?

It may sound premature but mentioning the possibility of a tour to students will help you gauge whether a tour is a good idea or whether they will take some persuasion. Having students keen for more news will make your job of advertising the trip and collecting deposits much easier.

Starting early is the key to successful planning. Advertising the trip at least 15 to 18 months in advance means your trip will be more inclusive and appeal to less well off parents and those with siblings.

Planning Your Tour

The Role of the Sales/Account Manager

It is the Account Manager's role to help you through the booking process. They have a good overview of all destinations and are all musicians. They will know if a destination has suitable venues for your ensembles. They:

- » Guide you on your selected destination and advise you based on your budget and requirements. A detailed consultation either over the phone or in person will help ensure your Account Manager has as much information about your group as possible and about how you like to work as a Party Leader.

Design your tour in concept. This may take several steps and your feedback during the quote stages will help your Account Manager to design the most suitable tour for your group.

- » Liaise internally with the relevant people within Club Europe.

Help you to promote the trip to students. This could include anything from promotional material and advice to giving a presentation to parents.

- » Assist with all aspects of the booking process.
- » Manage the administrative aspects of the tour once booked.



Planning Your Tour

Budgeting – Pre Booking

Budgeting for your tour is a complex task and there are a number of conditions to take into account, which will affect the final tour cost. It is important to understand that the following 3 points significantly affect the cost of your tour:

- » Group size - Aim for 40 students and above for the best value tour.
- » How many free adults will you want/need? Fewer than 1:10 isn't recommended and you may want a higher ratio for younger groups.
- » Mode of Transport - Coach or Air.

It is important to remember that the cost you receive from Club Europe will not be the final tour cost.

Alongside the initial quote, it is also necessary to think about:

- » Costs for excursions – some excursions are significantly more expensive than others.
- » Venue hire fees – each venue has different fees. Some venues are free of charge while prestigious venues have high costs.
- » Who will pay for meals en-route? Students? Or will that be part of the tour 'cost'?
- » Contingency money for: treats, hoodies, music, equipment such as extension leads or lightweight music stands.
- » Inspection Visit - Club Europe will cover the cost of your accommodation but you will need to budget for transport, travel insurance and expenses in resort.

If the budget is tight then your Sales/Account Manager will be able to advise you on alternative destinations and on ways to keep the costs down.



Fundraising is an excellent way to pay for any extras and to keep the tour cost down. Successful strategies you could consider include:

» Concerts

» Bag packing

» Sponsorship

» Busking



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Thank you all for always being so accommodating throughout all of the tours over the last nine years. Club Europe are a very caring company who want only the very best musical experiences for our students.

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Planning Your Tour

Selecting Accommodation

There are so many aspects to consider when choosing the accommodation for your tour. Here are some of the questions you should ask yourself when selecting the accommodation that will be most appropriate for your group:

How important is budget?

For most groups budget will be high up on their list of priorities. Regardless of your school's demographic you'll want to provide the best value for money to your parents. Deciding whether some of the following elements are higher on your list than the actual cost will be one of the things you need to consider. The chances are you won't get everything you want so the best approach is to consider your 'shopping list' then decide what is most important and where you are prepared to compromise.

Location

Do you want your accommodation to simply be a base to return to at night or somewhere you can relax, rehearse and have organised activities? Do you want to be within walking distance of a historical town or do you prefer to be tucked away somewhere quiet with plenty of space?

Facilities

What will you need to keep students entertained e.g. WiFi, café, sports hall, beach nearby? The age range and gender may be a factor. Remember that space comes at a cost. If your top priority is to have plenty of outdoor space and rooms to rehearse in, then you're unlikely to also be right in the centre of a capital city, even with a big budget. Similarly, if the most important part of the tour is to have free time to walk into town in the evenings then you may have to compromise on facilities at

your accommodation and rooms may also be less spacious.

Adult rooming

What sort of rooming arrangements do you want for adults e.g. Singles, twins, doubles, family rooms? Remember most 'student friendly' accommodation will have very few single rooms.

Size

How do you feel about sharing your accommodation with other groups and individuals? There's no doubt that not having to worry about other guests would make life easier for you and if this is a priority you will need to consider whether it is more important than the



destination itself. Although sole occupancy is possible in some destinations it is more likely you will be sharing the accommodation. Don't worry, though; it is in everyone's interest that your students are grouped together to make supervision easier.

Ensuite vs showers and toilets on the corridor?

While the answer to this might be obvious, it is as well to consider where it fits in amongst your other priorities. For example if you really wanted to stay somewhere where there were great outdoor facilities but the only place suitable was in non-ensuite dormitories, how would this affect your plans?



Hotel vs Hostel

- Hostels are a great solution for music groups because they are often very modern and usually have great facilities including self service dining, recreation space both indoor and outdoors and ensuite bathrooms. Rooms for students usually have between three and six beds and occasionally up to eight but we rarely accept rooms of this size.
- Most major cities have at least one hostel in a very central location. A three star hotel in the same location could cost double and be much older. Downsides to consider with hostels are that they can be rigid with meal times; they don't usually have very many single rooms and can feel rather functional.
- Hotels can give you more of a 'holiday feel' and usually have more character. Small, independent family owned hotels are often very flexible with meal times and getting single rooms can be much easier. Students' rooms are rarely more than 4 bedded. Downsides to consider with hotels are that menus are often set and therefore there is less choice, students may be expected to behave in a more 'adult' way, access for the coach may be more difficult and in-house amenities are usually quite limited.

Destinations vary on what is 'the norm'.

For example, in Belgium we mainly use hostels because they are really well run, modern, well priced and in great locations; whilst in Prague we mainly use larger hotels with up to 400 beds because small hotels are newer and tend to be 5 star; and in the Costa Brava hotels have swimming pools and rooms with balconies because this is what the majority of visitors require. If it is important for you to have a certain type of accommodation this may narrow down which destinations you can consider.

How will you manage your VI formers and drinking?

Drinking laws vary and when taking older students overseas it is a good idea to plan in advance how you intend to manage this. For some groups this means staying somewhere remote and allowing controlled drinking in the accommodation. Will staff be permitted to drink on tour? How will this be managed?

Once Your Tour is Booked

The Role of Operations Manager

Once you have booked your tour and paid your first deposit, the fun really begins!

Your Operations Manager will get in touch with you for a detailed consultation and start the concrete planning of the programme. They have a detailed knowledge of their destination and will have countless contacts in venues and accommodation centres. Their role is to organise all the ground arrangements once your tour is booked, including:

- » Accommodation
- » Concerts
- » Excursions
- » The itinerary

This is an ongoing process and your Operations Manager will need you to provide regular feedback during the several phases of the planning and executing of your tour.



Once Your Tour is Booked

Concerts: Information we need from you

Researching and confirming your venues will usually be the starting point and is a lengthy process that starts from the moment you book. The sort of information we will need from you to help us this will be:

Detailed programme/repertoire

A recording of two or three pieces that are representative of the tour repertoire

A short biography of the ensemble including any notable achievements

Other publicity material – a representative photo of your group, school logo, name of ensemble, Director etc.

Details of the staging requirements including:

- » Minimum space required in square metres
- » Do you need electricity?
- » Number of chairs needed

Other equipment required e.g. piano (this cannot be guaranteed and will limit available venues)

Budget for venue hire

Other requirements



Northern European countries will often require a lot of notice and performance times and dates will be confirmed well in advance whereas Mediterranean counties confirm their concerts very late, sometimes just a couple of months before the date itself.

Once Your Tour is Booked

Concerts: Venues and Performances

The concerts are a crucial part of your music tour. Below are the different types of venue and performance opportunities and points that you should consider in order to select a suitable venue for your ensembles.

Things to remember

- » It is important to select appropriate repertoire for your venues or to select a venue for your repertoire.
- » Get any audition material and a general recording to us early in the planning process. Remember this is your shop window and a chance for you to 'sell' your group to potential venues and audiences. Whether you are a jazz band with a fun and lively repertoire or a highly accomplished



- sacred choir, make sure this comes across in your material. Consider whether your repertoire will attract an international audience.
- » Do you need rehearsal or warm up time, either at the venue or your accommodation?
- » When performing try to avoid long gaps between pieces and too much shuffling of players, especially for groups with more than one ensemble, or you risk losing your audience.
- » Highly organised get ins/get outs are a must! Make sure the ensemble knows what they are doing to help set up and pack up.
- » Be flexible and expect the unexpected. The challenges of performing in new spaces is what will stretch your ensembles and is part of what makes going on concert tour different from performing in your regular venues.
- » Acknowledge, interact with and thank your audience!

Churches

Broadly speaking, churches as performance venues can be categorized into the following two groups:

- » **High standard** 'prestigious' venues include the likes of: Notre Dame, La Madeleine, La Trinité, La Sagrada Familia, Cologne Cathedral, St Mark's Venice, St Peter's Rome etc. These require a high standard of performance but provide a real 'wow' factor and very memorable performances whether you are performing a recital or as part of a service. They are also a good 'selling point' for parents. Prestigious venues often have an obligatory donation (i.e. a fee), which can be anything from £100-£500 or beyond.
- » **More intimate**, less intimidating churches and chapels. The advantage of these is they usually have a more regular, local congregation and often more hospitality is provided. These are generally still impressive venues to perform in but provide more of a chance for students to meet the congregation. Smaller churches are usually free.

Performance opportunities:

- » Mass participation – Repertoire will need to be checked and approved by the local priest, otherwise they will request specific pieces i.e. Introit, Sanctus, Agnus Dei etc. music for communion.
- » A concert after the mass is often possible and a good way of 'ensuring' a good audience.
- » Stand alone concerts work really well for groups of a high standard. Groups will often be vetted.
- » Some churches, especially Catholic, may request music which is suitable for feast days. For example, during the two weeks after Easter, repertoire should be joyous and uplifting.

Repertoire:

- » The majority of churches specify that repertoire must be religious or at least classical. Some churches allow secular repertoire, more so in Protestant churches/countries.

- » Most churches, especially Catholic churches, will not accept groups in Holy Week (the week leading up to Easter), even very good choirs.

Other issues to consider:

- » Student behaviour and dress is important in sacred buildings.

Other types of venue

Concert Halls and cultural centres are great for classical orchestras and choirs

Some can work well for other secular music such as jazz or pop bands and choirs but it depends on the venue.

- » Some good examples are found in Prague and Budapest where the cultural centres with concert halls have regular, loyal audiences.
- » Each venue is different so it's important you give as much information as possible to ensure that your ensemble will be a good fit.
- » Hire fees will apply (c. £200-£1000).

Community Centres are perfect for 'less accomplished' ensembles with a mixed repertoire where ensembles can perform in a relaxed environment.

- » Great for warm, appreciative audiences.
- » Opportunity to mix with audience afterwards.
- » Good outreach opportunity.

Outdoors

Outdoor spaces are great for all kinds of ensemble. They can provide fantastic audiences without all the pressure of an indoors venue and are perfect for all standards of group.

- » Bandstands can be found all across Europe. Perfect in summer, lots of 'passing trade'.
- » Public squares are most commonly found in Mediterranean countries. Mostly evening concerts due to the heat. Squares are generally surrounded by lots of cafes/bars which make for good audiences. Perfect for big bands and wind bands etc., although not so good for quieter ensembles such as choirs.
- » Spa towns such as those in the Rhineland in Germany offer great outdoor spaces and they often have a permanent stage. Many spa towns also have the advantage of having a wet weather alternative.

Joint Performances

A performance with a local group has many benefits and is a way to make the tour a cultural experience. Joint collaborations are possible with local schools, ensembles and choirs.

- » Gives the tour an 'exchange' vibe.
- » Good for music making skills i.e. working with unfamiliar people and different types of music.
- » Excellent opportunity to experience other cultures and improve language skills.

- » Attracts a local audience and increases the publicity
- » Opportunity to mix with audience afterwards, usually with excellent hospitality

Festivals

Festivals offer unique performance opportunities and are often the highlight of a trip. We have placed groups at large scale festivals such as GhentFest in Belgium and Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland as well as smaller festivals all across Europe. They are:

- » Great for achieving big audiences.
- » A fun chance for groups to watch other musicians before then performing themselves.

If enough Club Europe groups are touring to the same destination at the same time we may be able to organise a mini festival.



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Once Your Tour is Booked

Fine Tuning:

We start working on your tour from the moment you book but much of the fine tuning takes place in the final weeks leading up to the tour

Publicity and Promotion

We want your concerts to be as successful as possible and we always promote and publicise them in advance.

- » Wherever appropriate we send posters.
- » We can provide you with flyers to hand out on the day of performances (local restrictions may apply).
- » We can contact local tourist information centres, send posters and ask them to use any connections they have to raise awareness.
- » We can contact local businesses, schools, music centres and any other connections we have in the region.
- » When appropriate, we can also contact the local press.
- » Local social media.

Your Excursions and Itinerary

Once your concerts are confirmed we'll work on the rest of your itinerary. Let us know what type of excursions you'd like to do and what your budget is. Some excursions may need to be booked up well in advance so its best to let us know early on the sorts

of excursions you'd like to do. Unless your quote specifically includes the cost of any excursions, these charges will be added to your invoice once they are confirmed.



Once Your Tour is Booked

Passenger information and Payment deadlines

Approximately three months before departure we'll ask you for your passenger information, including details of accompanying adults. Preparing ahead and collecting the following information will ensure you have everything to hand when required.

- » Names as per passports
- » Passports - check well in advance that everyone's passport is in date. British passports can be renewed up to nine months in advance.
- » Passports - if your group is traveling by air we'll need full passport details
- » Dates of birth
- » Dietary requirements
- » Medical information

- » Instruments, including weights and measurements
- » Check visa requirements
- » Party leader contact numbers on tour
- » Emergency contacts back in the UK
- » Special rooming requirements for adults or families

Payment schedule

- First deposit to confirm your booking
- Second deposit payable eight weeks after booking
- Final balance payable eleven weeks before departure

We strongly recommend giving parents a payment schedule to ensure they make regular payments. This helps you identify early on students who may drop out, giving you time to find a replacement.

Health and Safety

■ Health and Safety is paramount to us

Although each school generally has its own procedures in place, these steps are worth double checking:

- » Use generic forms from the school plus information that we have provided (Safety Management System and Demystifying Risk Assessments).
- » Use your common sense when completing the forms.
- » Complete these as soon as possible and make use of Health and Safety officer at your school.

What is Risk Assessment?

Identifying Hazard & Person at Risk, Likelihood & Severity, Control and Measure.

Risk Assessing Excursions and Accommodation

Pre-tour inspection visits are a good opportunity for carrying out your own Risk Assessment. However they are not absolutely necessary.

Accommodation

- » Consider how it will suit your group in terms of size, age of students, location etc.
- » State the specifics in your tour brochure: set out your tour rules while emphasising the importance of student enjoyment and getting the most out of the tour e.g. lights out.
- » Ensure students are sorted into groups pre-tour - no individuals - roll call groups.

Excursions and Concert Venues

How do you Risk Assess the Eiffel Tower?

When faced with this question it's easier to see that identifying the risks more broadly will help you consider the hazards more effectively and means you don't have to have visited every venue, excursion or even your accommodation. In this instance you are assessing the risk of a large monument in a busy, public place. The hazards include:

- » Children getting lost
- » Children's behaviour
- » Trips on stairs
- » Strangers



- » Petty theft
- » Fear of heights
- » Weather

Most importantly, you will be Risk Assessing 'in situ' when you are in resort with the group. How will you manage unexpected risks e.g. crossing the road, heights or water?

Set clear boundaries for students and establish systems to ensure rules are followed.

Pre-Tour Inspection Trip

An inspection trip can be an invaluable exercise to give you confidence on the tour you have planned. The earlier you go, the more able we are to meet your requests.

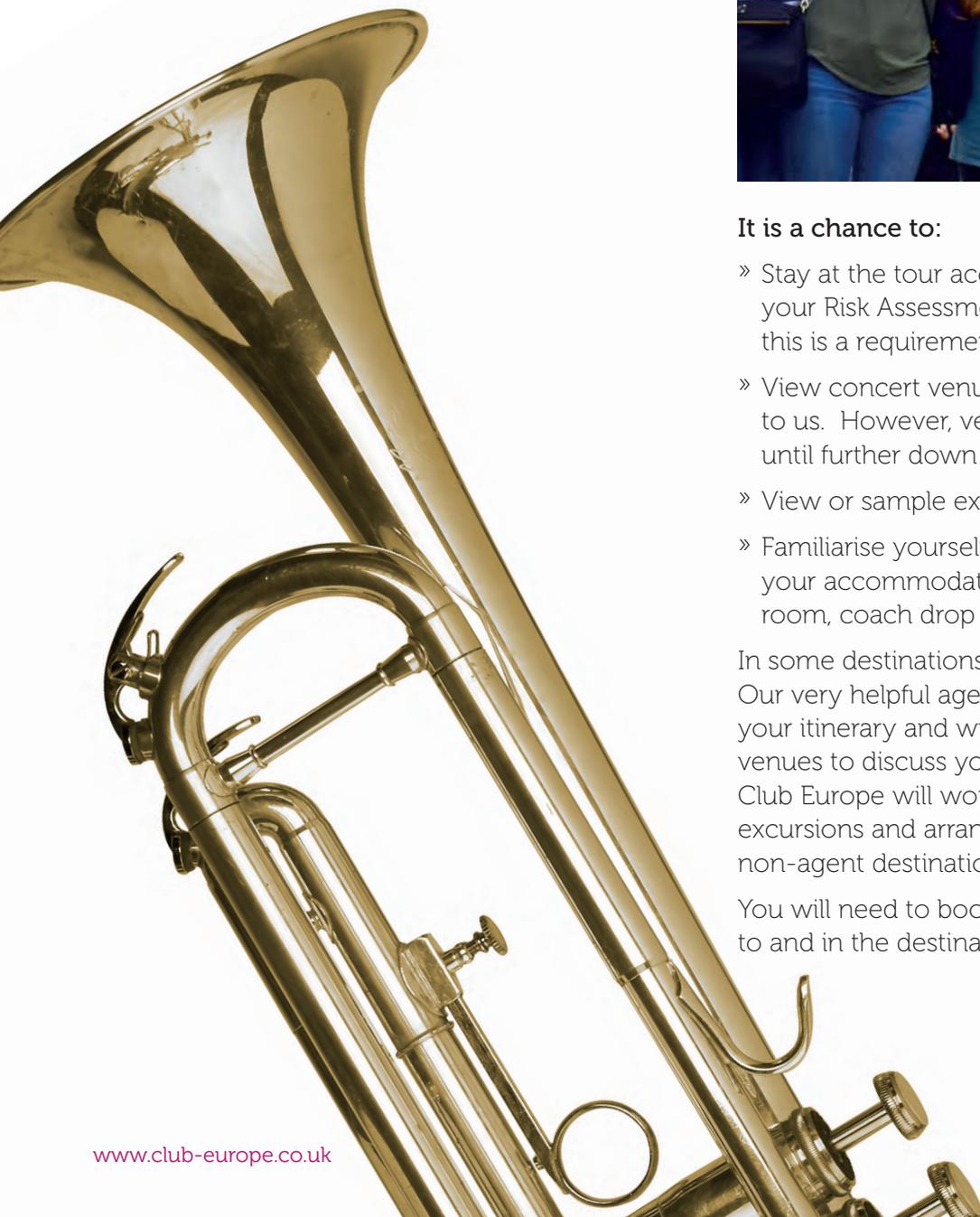


It is a chance to:

- » Stay at the tour accommodation and carry out your Risk Assessment. Check with your Head if this is a requirement of your school.
- » View concert venues and put in your requests to us. However, venues cannot be confirmed until further down the line.
- » View or sample excursions.
- » Familiarise yourself with local area and layout of your accommodation e.g. fire exits, rehearsal room, coach drop off point etc.

In some destinations we use third party agents. Our very helpful agents will work with us to plan your itinerary and will often accompany you to the venues to discuss your requirements and logistics. Club Europe will work directly with venues and excursions and arrange appointments for you in any non-agent destinations.

You will need to book your own flights or transport to and in the destination i.e. car hire.



On Tour

Providing we have all the information we need from you, you'll receive a draft itinerary around 3 weeks before departure and the final tour information should be with you a week before departure

The Operations Manager will then brief your Tour Manager on all the important aspects of the trip and specifics of your group.

The final pack includes:

- » Final Travel details- showing departure/arrival times and key contact numbers.
- » Final Programme- your day by day itinerary and information about excursions and entrance fees.
- » Rooming list
- » Maps
- » Excursion confirmations / vouchers

Whilst on tour you'll also have 24 hour emergency phone contact with Club Europe Senior Management in the UK.

The Role of the Tour Manager (TM)

Most groups travel with a Tour Manager to resort while some TMs will meet the group at the airport (if flying) or at the accommodation. They become an important part of your tour and will be an invaluable member of the team on the road.

The role of a TM is to ensure the smooth running of your tour. They will usually contact you before you depart to introduce themselves to you and check whether you have any special requirements.

What to expect

- » Your TM will be fully prepared and briefed about your group and daily programme as well as special dietary/medical requirements.

- » On arrival, your TM will oversee your check-in and carry out a fire drill.

During the tour

Your TM will be busy behind the scenes re-confirming all pre-booked excursions and concert venues; They will:

- » Ensure all timings are still accurate
- » Complete a Health & Safety checklist at the venue, together with you
- » Work on changes to the itinerary when needed.
- » Introduce the group and your repertoire to the audience if you wish
- » Help with the promotion of your concerts (handing out flyers, placing posters).
- » Liaise with your coach driver(s).

Should party members be taken ill, the TM will assist you in contacting a local doctor and translating, if required. They are there to communicate any requests or information you may have when on tour.





Post Tour

Our interest in your tour doesn't stop once you return. Getting your feedback is all part of the ongoing consultation process which helps us identify where we can make improvements for both your future tours and those of others returning to the same destination.

This guide has been compiled using a fraction of the expertise our team has accumulated over several decades of providing music tours. We hope that it has been, and will continue to be, a useful tool in organising your tour. If you have any questions regarding the planning of your tour please contact us at travel@club-europe.co.uk or your Account Manager.