

“Explore Europe on Foot” Planning Checklist

Six Months to a Year in Advance

- Decide on a trail.
- Order a passport if you don't already have one.
- Apply for a visa if you need one.
- Make sure your smartphone is unlocked and GSM-compatible (see Cell Phone Service in Chapter 16, Electronic Tools) if you plan to use it in Europe (some carriers may not unlock your phone if you haven't had their service for at least a year).
- Optional: Find a travel companion.
- Optional: Make a reservation with a tour company.
- Finalize your itinerary, taking into consideration ground transportation to and from the trailhead.
- Buy your plane tickets, including short domestic flights.
- Book your accommodations, if you're going on a popular trail or in high season.
- Optional: Purchase trip insurance.
- Start a training program.

Three Months in Advance

- Buy your train and/or bus tickets.
- Book your accommodations, if you're not going on a really popular trail or you're walking outside of the main season.
- Book any additional services, adventures and activities.
- Start studying up on the local culture.
- Purchase any remaining gear, including an international SIM card if that's how you're going to get cell phone service in Europe.

One Month in Advance

- Verify that your health insurance company will cover you while you're in Europe, or purchase international health insurance for the time you'll be gone (see the International Health Insurance sidebar in Chapter 15, Trail and Travel Tools).