

TIPS AND TIDBITS

A fact sheet about your



Walkin' Dixie: Charleston to Orlando

Adventure

Walking Adventures International plans and guides walking adventures that combine traditional motorcoach touring with walking. Our itineraries blend historic, cultural, and scenic highlights of the regions we're traveling through with walks in the area. Our trips are fast-paced; they are designed as overview tours to expose travelers to as much of the region's significant highlights as we can manage and still maintain a reasonable daily schedule. Even though most active people find it easy and natural to enjoy our style of travel, we want to ensure that we've afforded every opportunity for travelers to know what to expect — in advance! Listed below are a series of questions and answers to help you develop accurate expectations of this Adventure and make plans to maximize your enjoyment. Please feel free to call us with any additional questions you have.

Questions & Answers

Q: Do you have more detailed information than is available in the brochure?

- A: About three weeks before departure, a final packet will be mailed to each participant. This packet will include:
- *Hotel Listing (including address and phone information of all hotels)
 - *Traveler List
 - *Daily Schedule
 - *Tour t-shirt
 - *Nametag
 - *Re-usable luggage tags for first-time travelers

Q: What kind of identification do I need to get through security at the airports?

- A: If you are a U.S. citizen, you will need a government-issued photo identification such as a driver's license.
- IMPORTANT:** If you were born outside of the USA, it is recommended that you carry a passport or some other proof of citizenship.

Q: Do you have any suggestions to help with connecting flights?

- A: Because travelers will be coming to Charleston from all points of the compass, it is not possible to include the transportation in the tour price. WAI is not a travel agent and we don't have the authority to make bookings or print airline tickets.

Travel agents are still the simplest way to plan your flight and provide you with a lifeline should you encounter problems on the day of travel. We recommend that you contact the travel agent we work closely with, Debbi Custer, at 888.276.0925, email debbi@wtpdx.com. Debbi knows our program and would be glad to assist you in finding a competitive fare.

If you are a member, AAA is also a good option. If you have access to the Internet, we've discovered several websites that may be helpful in finding the best fares. To start your planning, www.orbitz.com is a good site to find which flights are available on the days of travel. For the best fares, we've found it's better to go to the website of the specific airline serving your home and destination. Often you can leave your e-mail address and they'll

contact you when they have specials flying to cities that interest you most. Sites to check out include:

| Airline sites: | Planning sites: |
|--|--|
| www.continental.com | www.travelocity.com |
| www.southwest.com | www.expedia.com |
| www.united.com | www.orbitz.com |
| www.aa.com (American) | www.onetravel.com |
| www.alaskaair.com | www.bestfares.com |
| www.usairways.com | www.priceline.com |
| www.delta.com | www.qixo.com |

NOTE: As flight delays and missed connections become a more and more common occurrence, the advantages of departing for the starting point one day early increase. We propose that you consider planning your flights to arrive one day early, thereby minimizing the stress of any possible delays and allowing an additional day to recover from the trip before the Adventure begins in earnest. Most hotels honor our group rate for travelers who arrive a day early.

Q: What are the plans for rendezvousing in Charleston?

- A: The starting point of the Adventure is our first hotel in the historic district of Charleston. Since the hotel is in the center of town, you'll need to take a taxi from the airport (cost is about \$25 per taxi). The first group activity will be a Welcome Reception around 7:30 pm. Details will follow in the Final Mailing three weeks before the tour.

Q: What type of hotels will we be in?

- A: We use good quality, tourist class, 3-star accommodations. When making reservations, we request non-smoking rooms and as many rooms on the ground floor as possible. Many hotels will not have elevators. We recommend the strategy outlined below under Luggage Restrictions.

Q: What kind of walks will we be doing?

- A: We believe this tour will provide a good mix of city sight-seeing and small town, rural walks, including natural and coastal areas. Most walks will be year-round events sponsored by local clubs. Most clubs will have a representative present to walk with us.

The local clubs that host our walks are part of an international walking network known as "volksporting" or "volkswalking." They use a difficulty rating system ranging from 1 to 5. Following is a description of the rating system:

1. An easy walk on pavement or well-maintained trail with no significant hills. Probably suitable for wheelchairs and strollers.
2. A moderately easy walk, may be on pavement or on trails. No significant difficulty with hills. May not be suitable for wheelchairs and strollers.
3. A moderate walk in any setting with some difficult terrain, one or two substantial hills and/or steps. Strollers and wheelchairs questionable.
4. A more difficult walk. Most likely in a natural setting with poorly maintained paths and steeper or hilly inclines. Not likely to be wheelchair or stroller accessible. Participants with certain health problems should take caution.
5. A very difficult walk. All in rough fields or woods. Many steep hills or high altitude trails, or very rough uneven terrain, steep or unstable inclines. Not suitable for any person who is not in good health

We try to stay away from walks with a difficulty rating higher than 2, and on this particular Adventure, most of the walks are on relatively flat terrain with ratings of 2 or less. We normally allow between 3 and 3¼ hours for each walk, depending upon our itinerary for the day and the sightseeing opportunities along the route. Of course, none of the walks are mandatory and we encourage travelers to pace themselves. Take a day off or do a partial walk as necessary. Just let the guide know your needs, and we'll help you make adjustments. **Carrying a water bottle on the walks is highly recommended.**

Our itinerary is aggressive and designed to offer the traveler as much exposure to the areas we visit as possible. In order to maximize enjoyment of these rigorous and rewarding Adventures, we recommend that travelers be in good physical condition. If you have doubts about your ability to participate, please contact us for a more detailed description of what to expect from this experience.

Q: What is a volkswalk?

A: Volkssport is a club activity that began in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in 1968. There are four primary activities: walking, biking, swimming, and cross country skiing. Walking is, by far, the most popular and well developed. A volkswalk is a steady walk through a scenic and/or historic area over a pre-marked route (usually 10 km, which is 6.2 miles). It is noncompetitive and aims to involve people of all ages. Everyone who participates is declared a WINNER! Presently, there are walks in all 50 states and more than 30 countries worldwide.

Q: What type of foot wear should I bring?

A: Two pairs of walking shoes or boots are recommended. The first pair may get wet or muddy and need a day off. Plan to pack an extra pair of socks with your extra shoes in a plastic bag (good for wet gear), and have a spot for them right on the bus with you. The increase in the number of light-weight hiking boots is making them the preferred footwear for travelers. We believe a quality pair of lightweight hiking boots is a good investment for a traveling walker and can even eliminate the need for a 2nd pair of walking shoes if waterproof.

Q: Are there any health precautions I should take?

A: One of the realities of group travel is that we share a lot

of things — including germs. As a result, cold nasties can quickly travel through the bus looking for weak immune systems to attack. There are several supplements and behaviors that can make a significant difference in your ability to resist these bugs and preserve a healthy Adventure, including the following:

- * Use Vitamin C and Echinacea beginning a week before the trip and during the trip to boost your immune system (check with your doctor for possible allergies to Echinacea).
- * Maintain the use of a good multi-vitamin both before and during the trip.
- * Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently (carrying a waterless hand cleaner is highly recommended).
- * If/when you cough, cover your mouth as completely as possible to avoid the spread of germs in consideration of fellow travelers.
- * Avoid touching your face and rubbing your eyes.
- * Be sensitive to your health and particularly your need for rest. Guard against fatigue by monitoring your participation in group activities and allowing yourself necessary "down time."

Prescriptions:

Though we have not had problems with prescription drugs at airport security before, we recommend that you bring a note from your doctor verifying your need for any prescription drugs you will bring on the trip.

Q: How many people do you accept on an Adventure?

A: Generally, we close the trip at no more than 30 people. Often, our groups are quite a bit smaller than that; this will likely be one of our smaller groups.

Q: What is the average age of your groups?

A: Most of our travelers fall between 50 and 70 years of age. This seems to be the age bracket that has the time and means to travel. However, we always have travelers that fall outside that range, anywhere from the 20's up into the 80's. Walkers are characteristically great traveling companions — positive, cheerful, and appreciative of the opportunity to see the world.

Q: What is the split between men and women?

A: One of the realities of life is that there are more women on the planet than men. Another is that they tend to outlive their spouses. As a result, we do have more women on the trips than men. The percentage of women on the trip can run anywhere from 60 to 80%. We have quite a few couples, a lot of women traveling together or singly, and the occasional single male traveler. We like to see this ratio as even as possible and are always looking for a few more good men!

Q: What if I don't have a roommate?

A: It's always best to register for the trip with your own roommate, but we do offer to help match travelers up with others needing roommates. We provide contact information for potential roommates and allow travelers to contact each other and make their own decisions.

Q: How much money should I take along?

A: This depends entirely upon your own preferences. However, here are some things to keep in mind:

- Lunch and dinner are generally not included.
- Gratuities for group meals, as well as for the coach driver and local guides, if any, are included in the program price.
- It is always a good idea to make photocopies of the credit cards you're using while you're traveling. These photocopies should be kept separate from the cards themselves.

Q: What arrangements are made for meals other than breakfast?

A: Because we want to focus on as many fun and interesting activities as possible, we usually don't schedule "sit-down" lunch stops. When our travel time spans the lunch hour, we normally have a quick 30 to 45-minute stop someplace where travelers can get a bite of "fast food" or visit a grocery store deli. We recommend that you stash fruit and snacks on the bus (non-messy foods) to fill the gaps when necessary. Dinners are usually available at any number of restaurants within walking distance of our hotel. Occasionally, the tour guide may decide to make a special dinner run with the bus to a location where more choices for dinner are available.

Q: What type of clothing is appropriate?

A: As always, it is best to arrange your wardrobe so that you can layer clothing as needed. Compact rain gear is always recommended. Two pairs of walking shoes are a good idea in case one gets wet or muddy. Walking attire is the standard for the entire trip. Most of the time, shorts and a t-shirt will be the "in-vogue" way to dress, though we suggest you bring along a set of casual pants and blouse or shirt for an occasional activity or more formal dinner (e.g. farewell dinner).

Weather:

Generally, the weather should be mild (55 to 70 degrees), but we sometimes see extreme temperatures on either side of that range. It will likely be a bit warmer in the Orlando area. Rain is a possibility with precipitation historically received on about 25% of the days during this time of year.

Q: What kind of laundry facilities should we expect?

A: Some of our hotels will have laundry facilities. Normally, however, these are limited to one washer and one dryer, creating quite a bottleneck for a walking tour group. There are two other approaches to the laundry problem: 1) pack a few feet of clothes line and do your laundry in your room, or 2) pack tightly and bring enough essentials so that you don't need to do laundry until you return home.

Q: Are there restrictions on the amount of luggage we can bring?

A: One large suitcase or two smaller suitcases are allowed per person, as well as carry-on type luggage. Remember that portage is not provided on this tour. Packing light has proven to be the best way to travel. Another idea is to bring along a collapsible piece of luggage. You may then be able to leave your main luggage on the coach if you plan ahead for the couple of 1-night stays in the program. You'll find that this greatly simplifies the unloading process at the hotel.

TRAVELER'S PERSPECTIVE:

As with most things in life, the benefit you receive from this experience will depend to a large degree on the frame of mind you have at the outset. If you've not participated in group travel before, there are a few things you should be aware of:

- Though we attempt to eliminate it as much as possible, travel always contains an element of uncertainty. Being ready to adjust will enhance your experience.
- Though we continue to look for ways to slow the pace of our "Adventures," we still believe in providing a full day's opportunities for our travelers. On some days, we spend a significant amount of time on the bus.
- Group travel, by its nature, involves giving up a certain degree of individual convenience. Though we strive for added flexibility for the individual, much of the time we all need to be "headed in the same direction."

We hope we've covered most of your questions. If not, feel free to contact us and we'll be glad to fill in the gaps. We look forward to walkin' Dixie with you!



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