



## Europe Travel Update May 2022

### Description

Providing a detailed summary of our experiences from our six-country trip for those curious about Europe's current travel conditions

Dates of travel April 22 to May 7, 2022

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Our itinerary was for a 15-night six-country trip in Western Europe. The countries visited included France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Italy, and Austria. On United Airlines, our flights went nonstop in and out of Zurich, Switzerland.

The Europe Travel Update aims to share our overall traveling experiences so people can gauge what to expect and plan accordingly based on their situation and concerns about traveling at this time.

### **How we got around**

We rented a car with Avis out of the Zurich Airport for 15 days and drove over 2,500 kilometers. We crossed country borders seven times. Driving through these countries was smooth, with excellent roads, good signage, and easy-to-find parking. Parking prices were low or free except in Munich, Zurich, and Strasbourg, which could get pricey. Gas prices were typical for Europe, about \$8 a gallon and a few times below. Our total fuel cost for the entire trip was \$450. We had a BMW Crossover type that used regular 95 octane gas.

### **Exchange rate**

The dollar is strong. The euro was running about .94/.95 cents for a euro. We have never seen it this

good during our travels. The Swiss franc was .98/.99 cents to the franc. We picked up some extra euros for future trips.

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### **Covid screening**

We had to provide proof of vaccinations to enter Switzerland and were never asked again after that. At the time, no Covid testing was required for Switzerland.



To our surprise, every border crossing we drove through was open without stopping or checking vaccination status or green cards. Most did not even have border control officers visible.

No museums, castles, restaurants, churches, or stores requested proof of vaccination anywhere. When we arrived in Italy, the Green Pass requirement for entry into all indoor settings was lifted.

Not one of the six countries required Covid testing when we were there.

## Mask wearing

*We report what we observed for the Europe Travel Update, not providing an opinion. Covid is still very real.*



PH: Andrea Tosi Photo from Adobe Stock

From a mask perspective, here is how it is by country and at the Zurich airport:

**Flights on United to and from the US:** no crew wore masks, and maybe 5% of passengers wore masks.

**NOTE:** As of May 16, 2022, the mask requirement on flights will be lifted in the EU.

Zurich Airport and public transportation: infrequent mask use.

**France:** less than 5% mask usage, if that. Public transport still required masks.

**Germany:** 20% still wear masks, and they are the FFP2. A few sites, such as museums, still required them, and they had to be that specific mask. But stores, banks, cafes, and restaurants never required them, but some servers wore them.

**Liechtenstein:** we never saw a mask used. Did not observe any public transportation during our short time there.

**Switzerland:** almost no mask usage anywhere. Some hotel and restaurant staff wore them, but that was rare. Mask use on public transportation is rare as well.



**Italy:** less than 10% mask use. None are required in restaurants, businesses, etc., but on public transportation, they remain necessary. It must be an FFP2.

### **How busy was the tourist activity**



Most of our stops had many tourists, but we never saw long lines. Restaurants and cafes were bustling everywhere, with tons of options open. Reservations were often a good idea. Locals were amiable and seemed back into their typical groove. Hotels were all up and running. Rooms were cleaned daily.

### **What we did during our travels**

We rarely wore our masks, which we had religiously on our previous trips during Covid. We always, though, had an FFP2 mask on us. Our masks were ready if we were in a tight or crowded situation. Of course, in any place it was required, we wore them.

## **Testing to get home**

We took the BinaxNOW Ag card Covid test kit on our trip, which worked flawlessly using our laptop in our hotel room. The test was completed the day before our flight home. There was no wait for online proctors, and we tested negative. (To say the least, we were relieved because we had heard many stories otherwise.) It was simple to upload the results to the United Airlines site, and we were never asked again for the documentation, even in the US.

[Click here for our article](#) on packing your Covid test kits for travel back to the US.

## **Insurance we purchased**





Having insurance during any overseas travel is an absolute must. Coming home without using it is something you never take for granted. On this trip, as always, we purchased our insurance through [Squaremouth.com](#). The insurance policy was with Tin Leg, which had the best deal and coverage. The best option often varies with each trip. [Click here for our article](#) on the importance of travel insurance and how to get the best coverage and price.

For the first time, we purchased a membership with [MedJet Assist](#), which provides medical emergency air evacuation when needing hospital-to-hospital transfer back to the US and home. It did provide peace of mind to have it. In those nightmare scenarios where you are seriously injured or ill, they will get you back to the US for medical care. [Click here for our article](#) on MedJet and what the membership provides.

## Final word



Our trip was a huge success, and travel was a breeze. We felt warm welcomes everywhere. If you are still worried about Covid, that is understandable. But we would not hesitate to travel if you are vaccinated, have a booster, and do not have other serious health issues.

Always be aware of the Covid risk and have contingency plans if you test positive for Covid. There are many stories of people testing positive while traveling. This is not over, and caution needs to be taken.

Remember that the Europe Travel Update was our observations and experiences, which could differ from others.

***We wish you safe travels and extraordinary adventures!***

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If you have any questions about our Europe Travel Update, please don't hesitate to contact us!

## Our Top Recommended [Travel Products and Resources](#)

### [Squaremouth.com](#)

#### Our favorite travel insurance site!

If you book a trip, don't forget to get travel insurance within 14 days of your first booking. We could not be stronger advocates of being well-insured. Not just for the little stuff but the big things like medical emergencies. We never leave home without it. Over the years, we have used many sites but have now found our go-to place. [Squaremouth.com](#) does a fantastic job; it has a user-friendly interface, uses top-rated and reputable insurance carriers, and most policies cover COVID-19 medical issues and cancellations. They also mediate on your behalf if you have problems with your policy.

To empower you as a consumer, we suggest you read our [blog post](#) on the importance of travel insurance and how to get the best coverage from top-rated companies for an affordable price.

### [MedjetAssist](#)

#### Medical transport back home from anywhere in the world

They are the premier global air medical transport. One caveat to travel insurance is that medical evacuation usually gets you to the closest facility to care for you. Medjet gets you back to the U.S. to the hospital of your choice once you are stable enough to fly. They cover COVID-related transport as well.

[Medjet](#) carries its own policies. These policies are only for transport and do not cover other aspects of travel insurance. They have individual trip policies starting at \$99 and annual policies for around \$300. Most of their policies limit the age to 74 and younger. Prices are not based on age below that.

To learn more about how Medical Evacuation membership with Medjet Assist works, check out our [blog post](#) for a more detailed review.

### [Expedia.com](#)

#### Hotels, home rentals, BNBS, flights, and other transportation & tours

[Expedia](#) is a US-based company whose mission is to power global travel for everyone and everywhere. Whether planning a family vacation, booking for business, or organizing the trip of a lifetime, they are a fantastic resource. Wanderers Compass focuses on independent travel, and using

sites like [Expedia](#) makes that possible. Every aspect of travel you need, from airfare, accommodations, rental car, and cruises to activities to do at your destination, can be booked on [Expedia](#).

## [Booking.com](#)

### **Hotels, Home rentals, BNBs, Flights, and other Transportation & Tours**

[Booking.com](#) connects millions of travelers to memorable experiences, various transportation options, and incredible places to stay – from homes to hotels and much more. It is one of the world's largest travel marketplaces for established brands and entrepreneurs of all sizes.

We always check Expedia and Booking.com to verify prices. At times, one is sold out of rooms while another at the same place has rooms. We also often find some European hotels, especially smaller ones, on Booking.com but not on Expedia. It could be they are a Europe-based company. Try both before booking accommodations.

## [Vacation Rental By Owner \(VRBO\)](#)

### **Are you traveling with a family or having an extended stay at your destination?**

With over 2 million bookable vacation rentals, [VRBO](#) connects homeowners with families and vacationers looking for something more than a hotel for their trip. The [VRBO](#) community offers families or groups various rental property types such as condos, cabins, lake rentals, beach houses, etc.

[VRBO](#) is now under the Expedia group's ownership, which many were worried about, but it hasn't panned out to be a concern. It is a massive network with access to all lodging forms should issues arise. Joelle has used VRBO for many years with her family and has had no problems with it.

## [Viator](#)

As the leading marketplace for travel experiences, [Viator](#) believes that making memories is what travel is all about. And with 300,000+ experiences to explore—everything from simple tours to extreme adventures (and all the niche, interesting stuff in between)—making memories that will last a lifetime has never been easier.

With industry-leading flexibility and last-minute availability, it's never too late to make any day extraordinary. This one site has it all and has experiences throughout the world. We use them often during our travels, especially for food tours. We especially take the time to read the reviews provided.

## [Amazon.com](#)

### **An excellent source for travel essentials and guides**

*We now have our own Amazon Storefront with all our favorite travel accessories and gear in one place. Check out our travel store at the link below.*

### [Wanderers Compass Amazon Storefront](#)

Amazon is one of the most comprehensive online shopping sources in the world. Teams worldwide provide lower prices, better selection, and rapid delivery on behalf of customers. They offer a vast inventory, and their 1.7 million small and medium businesses worldwide selling on Amazon.com offer extensive options to customers.

We buy most of our travel books, accessories, and luggage from Amazon. We have ordered up to two days before travel and get what we need.

### [HYDAWAY](#)

This is not your ordinary drinkware company. The **HYDAWAY** difference is what their products do when you're not using them. Practical and portable, HYDAWAY doesn't take up unnecessary space in your already-packed life or pile up in landfills. We all know that trying to pack light while being environmentally conscious can be difficult. Having the right items can make a world of difference. [HYDAWAY](#) provides that.

We have used their collapsible water bottle, carrying case for the water bottle, and collapsible insulated drink tumbler. They are all lightweight and durable. A conservation-focused product you can be proud to buy.

**Use our Promo Code. WANCOM15, at checkout for 15% off your Hydaway order**

### [Welcome Pick-ups](#) (Airport and sightseeing service)

A global leader in ground transportation for travelers. They help hundreds of companies worldwide enhance their services and boost their revenue with our 5-star ride experiences and hassle-free automation.

Founded in 2015 in Athens, Greece, [Welcome Pick-ups](#) goes above and beyond the standard transfer service as the first company to deliver a holistic, in-destination travel experience. From the moment a traveler arrives at a new destination until they return home, Welcome accommodates all their travel needs (transfers, travel products, things to do, information) as the easiest, friendliest, and most personalized solution.

### [PhotoAiD](#)

Do you feel like you are wasting time visiting an on-site photographer only to be embarrassed by the photo? Would you like control of the final product? Get the perfect VISA or passport photo online with



PhotoAID.

When traveling, you often need to apply for official documents such as a passport, ID, and different kinds of licenses or cards. Those applications require a picture that must meet specific conditions to be accepted, depending on the country. Now, it is possible to take this picture at home without the help of a professional photographer. PhotoAiD allows you to take the perfect biometric photo you approve without leaving home.

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