

Dear Parents,

Travel opens minds. Travel develops personalities. Travel teaches respect for other cultures and rewards curiosity. Travel teaches responsibility and helps students decide career choices while they learn to define their place in the world. In my case, high school travel helped me overcome shyness, and helped with both career and educational choices, and gave me a passion for understanding that continues to enlighten my relationships and interests today.

To me, there is no more important investment parents can make in the education of their child than frequent and distant travel. I have chosen this year's trip with an eye to teaching your child about other cultures, and to follow up on what we learned in AP World History. Students will be able to use their foreign language abilities, and to learn phrases in new languages. I also plan our trips so that students will experience a variety of transportation modes they may not have experienced at home, and I try to bring them the distinction of visiting more than one continent on my trips (ie: last year, Europe and Asia, this year Europe and Africa).

When I was a sophomore in high school, I studied French language and culture in Aix-en-Provence for two months and then traveled throughout France for two more weeks. When I returned home, I had a killer French accent, and I had developed a fascination for the rest of the world that still motivates my studies, my teaching, and my recreation choices.

After college, I lived in Brazil for a year, and I have traveled internationally for business, for tourism, as an international flight attendant, a travel agent, a parent, and now as a high school teacher. I understand that travel is an art, rather than a science, and I use my experience and understanding to build exciting trips, organize our groups, and deal with challenges that occur on tour.

I chose EF Tours for the exceptional price value and for their reputation, and the fact that they have offices in almost every city we plan to visit. They offer the most travel for the best prices, which makes it possible for more students to travel. I welcome students who have finished their sophomore year at Signature, Juniors, and graduating Seniors. Since my trips are not a school-sponsored field trip, but an educational experience I offer during my summer break, I reserve the right to limit group size and participation.

Student tours are exceptionally fast-paced, and hotels are standard tourist class European hotels with private bathrooms. Tour prices are exceptional because EF "consolidates" student groups. This we travel with students from other US high schools for the duration of our trip – giving us the chance to make new American friends while we learn about new cultures and destinations.

To secure the best prices, the best hotels available, and most convenient and comfortable flights, it is *imperative* that we book our group as soon as possible. This is why we sign our travelers up in the early Autumn. This also gives families time to spread payments out over the school year.

To help families and students prepare for the trip, we will meet several times during the school year to discuss what to bring and how to pack, learn more about our destinations, and to help us get to know each other as a group.

Cost of the trip includes international airfare; train between Paris and Madrid; transfers; breakfast and dinner daily; 24-7 services of a Tour Director who will travel with us; and guides, tours, and entry fees per the itinerary.

Extra expenses? In Europe “tipping” is an essential and expected practice. Therefore, we will collect tips for our bus drivers and our Tour Director at our last meeting before we leave the US. Students also need spending money for souvenirs (including gifts for family); lunches, snacks and beverages; and a little extra for anything they may want to do during our free time – such as museum entrance fees or taxi/subway fares. Students will not need a visa, but they will need a Passport (approximately \$90) which they should apply for IMMEDIATELY if they do not already have one.

Travel abroad is always an adventure. It creates special memories, and special relationships between travelers while it teaches life lessons of responsibility, patience, and appreciation. Thank you for considering allowing your child to travel with us this summer.

Janet Pareja