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Friendship Force International

Guidelines for Travel Arrangements for U.S. Club Exchanges

U.S. Clubs are now making their own travel arrangements for club exchanges. Here are some suggestions to help you get started with the process. If at any time you need further assistance,

feel free to contact FFI staff for advice and recommendations.

- Begin researching possible airlines and travel itineraries as soon as your exchange assignment is confirmed. While it is not possible to get final pricing and confirmations more than a year in advance, it's never too early to start looking into the possibilities. If you enjoy using the Internet for research, it can be an invaluable tool for investigating sample airfares, tour itineraries, etc.
- The first call should be to the Program Services Coordinator at FFI who will be working with you on the exchange. FFI staff members can provide helpful advice on itineraries that have proved successful in the past and may also be able to refer you to Exchange Directors who have traveled to the same destination in recent years.
- In conjunction with the host club(s), establish your exact exchange dates as well as the program for any pre- or post-exchange touring. You will receive better service from travel providers if you have a fairly firm idea of your plans before they begin researching options on your behalf. At the same time, be open to suggestions from travel professionals, especially those with experience in the country you will be visiting.
- Decide whether you feel more comfortable working with a local travel agency in your home community or with a large consolidator or tour operator that operates on a national basis. You may get better prices from a consolidator, but you might receive better service by working through a local agency. Don't be afraid to interview several agencies to see which one feels like the best fit for you and your club.
- Select an agency to work with and ask them to make the airline bookings and/or tour arrangements and confirm the price to you. If your program will include land tour arrangements, you might work through the same company, or you might prefer to use two separate agencies to handle your air and land requirements.
- It is standard practice to require a deposit to hold airline space in advance, usually \$100 per seat. This allows the airline to hold a block of seats for your group on specific flights at a guaranteed price without knowing the passengers' names and with the actual ticketing not taking place until closer to the departure date. The club should assist with the payment of this deposit – the funds will be returned after the group travels as long as the terms of the contract have been fulfilled. Ideally, you will want to have a confirmed program and price about six months before your exchange to allow for maximum recruiting time.



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- Some clubs wait until the exchange is recruited before making travel arrangements. While this is a possibility, it is not recommended. Many members, especially those new to Friendship Force International, are reluctant to commit to an exchange without knowing the final cost in advance. This method may seem easier, but it can lower the participation on the exchange in the end by discouraging some potential Ambassadors.
- Make sure you understand the terms of your airline and/or tour contract. In most cases with airline contracts, you can hold all seats without penalty until 90 days before departure. At that point, you will need to start guaranteeing the number of participants or else risk losing your deposit. Typically, at 90 days out, you must guarantee 80% or 90% of the travelers. You will still want to hold as many additional seats as you can in order to have space for late additions to your exchange, but you will need to cancel seats that may not be used in order to protect your deposit. Keep in mind that usually there is a minimum of 10 people required to travel together in order to receive the discounted group fare. Take care to also get clear information on the airline's policy about deviations from the main itinerary – whether it is allowed, if there is any extra cost involved, etc.
- When pricing your exchange, use the worksheet provided by FFI. Make sure that you know in advance any potential expenses in addition to airfare, hosting fees, local club fees and FFI administrative fees. Are you asking your host club to arrange any special activities that will result in additional cost? What about transfers from your arrival airport to the host club, or between Phase I and Phase II hosting? Keep in mind that standard hosting fees do not include the cost of airport transfers. If there is a land package included in the program fee, do you want to include money to cover tips and gratuities? Consider including a small amount as a “contingency” fund to cover unanticipated costs such as an increase in airline taxes. If this money is not used, you can return it to the Ambassadors, pick up the tab for a meal not covered on the program, or donate it to a charity in the community you will be visiting. Some Exchange Directors include in the price the earned seat for the Exchange Director so that his/her costs for the exchange are fully covered with 20 or more paid Ambassadors and discounted proportionately with 10 or more paid Ambassadors. Discuss this with your board or your Program Services Coordinator.
- If your program fee includes a tour or land package that has pricing according to the number of participants (for example one price for a minimum of 15 people, a lower price if there are 20 or 25, etc.), we recommend that you set your price based on a lower number of participants than you expect. For example, if you hope to have 20 Ambassadors on the exchange, use the tour quote based on 15. Then let your Ambassadors know that if more people sign up for the exchange, the price can be lowered for everyone. It is a lot easier to lower the price than to increase it if you don't meet the minimum number of participants! It will also encourage potential Ambassadors to find others to join



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the exchange. You also want to protect your pricing from a situation where your exchange might be full but some Ambassadors may choose not to join the tour so that your tour numbers are lower than the total number of Ambassadors on the exchange. This will also protect you against late cancellations from the tour that might cause the price to be raised for all participants.

- Once you have your arrangements set and priced, you're ready to recruit! Be sure to keep your Program Services Coordinator at FFI updated as to your dates, plans, and status so that he/she can assist you. As Ambassadors sign up for the exchange, make sure they provide you with a photocopy of their passport along with their Ambassador Application. You will need to provide a name list to the airline with the names exactly as they appear in the passport. It is good to check that all of the Ambassadors have passports valid at least six months past the return date of your exchange since some countries require this before allowing a visitor to enter. Your Program Services Coordinator can also help you find out if your Ambassadors will need visas for travel to your country of destination and what the procedure is for that process. Be sure to also provide Ambassadors with information on the FFI travel insurance policy; remind them that they are required to have adequate insurance coverage for the exchange.

Timeline

- **Assignment Confirmed** Begin process of researching airline arrangements, also possible optional tour arrangements if appropriate

Contact FFI Program Services Coordinator for advice

- **6 months before departure** Dates, program fee, and itinerary confirmed Begin recruiting Collect photocopies of passports along with Ambassador Applications Provide brochures about FFI travel insurance policy to all Ambassadors
- **3 months before departure** First update due to airline and tour company including list of passport names of confirmed Ambassadors Estimate final number of Ambassadors Keep some extra seats if possible and drop any if needed to protect airline deposit Update FFI on status of exchange
- **2 months before departure** Final name list due to airline and to FFI Drop any unused seats Administrative and Host fees due to FFI Update FFI on status of exchange
- **1 month before departure** Final payment due to airline; tickets issued Final arrangements confirmed Update FFI on status of exchange Provide emergency contact information for all Ambassadors to FFI
- **Departure** Make friends!



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Recommended Travel Suppliers

Multiple Destinations

Airline Consolidator DFW Tours

Tel: 800-527-2589

www.dfwtours.com

DFW Tours is a major airline consolidator. They cover most destinations and have been

especially helpful in arranging airfares to Latin America.

River Cruises Value World Tours

Tel: 800-795-1633

jim@vwtours.com

www.vwtours.com

Jim Pierce at Value World Tours specializes in river cruises around the world, including Russia,

China, Europe and Egypt. They also arrange discounted airfares and land packages.

Europe

Great Britain Select Travel

Tel: 800-752-6787

Fax: 201-703-0931

matthews@selecttravel.com or info@selecttravel.com

www.selecttravel.com

Matthew Squire at Select Travel can arrange land packages in the United Kingdom and other

destinations in Europe as well as consolidator airfares.

Eastern & Central Europe Omega Tours

Tel: 4212-544-31-367

Cell: 421-905-566-009

Fax: 4212-544-31541

omegatours@isternet.sk

www.omegatours.sk

Juraj Chrenka at Omega Tours is a member of The Friendship Force of Bratislava in Slovakia.

Omega Tours can arrange tours in most areas of Eastern and Central Europe including Austria, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland.



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Croatia Tours Travel Time

Tel: 800-726-7474

trvltimeus@aol.com

www.traveltimeny.com

Dragica Lukas at Travel Time can arrange tours of Croatia as well as discounted airfares.

Hungary Tours Vista Travel

Tel: 361-429-9950

Fax: 361-429-9951

tourop@vista.hu or incoming@vista.hu

www.vista.hu

Vista Travel worked with FFI on arranging the 2003 International Conference in Budapest.

They are Hungary's largest travel provider and can assist with any arrangements in that country.

Scandinavia Passage Tours

Tel: +1 954-776-7070

Fax: 800-548-5960

hilkka@passagetours.com

www.passagetours.com

Hilkka Ruuska at Passage Tours can make both air and land arrangements to anywhere in Scandinavia.

Latin America

South American Tours

Marnella Tours

Tel: 1-866-993-0033

www.marnellatours.com

South American Tours

Tel: 800-469-7790

msschwartz@wordnet.att.net

www.southamericantours.com

Costa Rica Tours Horizontes Nature Tours

Tel: 506-222-2022

Fax: 506-255-4513

info@horizontes.com

www.horizontes.com

Peru



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Marnella Tours
Tel: 1-866-993-0033
www.marnellatours.com

Amazonia Expeditions
Tel: 800-262-9669
Fax: 813-907-8475
Amazonia.Expeditions@verizon.net

Recommended by Jeanne Zweibel in Lincoln, NE and Rita Weiland in Madison, WI for travel to Peru.

South Pacific

Australia

Let's Talk Australia & New Zealand
Tel: 800-655-3023
aussie@wojt.com

Lynda Wojt is a Premier Aussie Specialist and winner of the Australian Tourism Commissions

Opal Award for excellence and Best Deluxe Itinerary. Specialist for New Zealand, Fiji, Queensland, Northern Territories, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania.

New Zealand Tours New Zealand Scenic Coach Tours Ltd.

Tel: 011-643-351-8664
info@sceniccoachtours.co.nz
www.sceniccoachtours.co.nz

Alistair Donaldson is a member and past president of The Friendship Force of Christchurch. He

began working in tourism after retirement and has been arranging tours of the South Island of

New Zealand for Friendship Force Ambassadors for many years.

Africa

South Africa & East Africa Andrea Hugo Associates

Tel: 800-322-3867
atousa@aol.com

Andrea Hugo and her assistant, Margie, work with Rennies Travel, a major South African travel

provider. They also organize programs to Kenya and Tanzania.

South African Airways Karell Travel



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Tel: 800-327-0373
305-446-7766
Fax: 305-446-8553
hugo@karell.com
www.karell.com

Hugo at Karrell Travel can arrange consolidator airfares on South African Airways.

Ghana Tours Land Tours Ghana Ltd.

Tel: 233-21-761-752
travelafrica@landtours.com
www.landtours.com

Mona Boyd at Land Tours can handle all land arrangements in Ghana as well as neighboring countries in West Africa.

Kenya Tours Let's Go Travel

Tel: 254-20-444-2982, 4442486, 4443469
Cell: 254-722-513-509
Fax: 254-20-444-8351
info@letsgosafari.com
www.letsgosafari.com
Sun Trek Safaris
safaris@suntreksafaris.com
www.suntreksafaris.com

Let's Go Travel and Sun Trek Safaris have both arranged land tours for Friendship Force exchanges to Kenya. They are located in Nairobi.

Asia

Asia Pacific Protour Inc.

Tel: 1-800-776-8882
protour@earthlink.net
www.pacificprotour.com

Pacific Protour can arrange land packages as well as consolidator airfares to destinations throughout Asia including Japan and China.

Japan Tours JTB (Japan Travel Bureau)

www.jtbusa.com

JTB can assist with tours in Japan as well as internal air flights and train tickets. They have



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several offices around the U.S. Visit their web site to find the office most convenient to you.

Thailand Tours Diethelm Travel

Tel: 662-255-9150-70

dto@dto.co.th

www.diethelm-travel.com

Diethelm Travel worked with FFI on arranging the International Conference in Bangkok in

2001. They can arrange tours throughout Thailand as well as to neighboring countries in Indochina.

Korea Tours Aju Incentive Tours

Tel: 82-2-786-0026

Fax: 011-2462-3909

ajuincentive@ajutours.co.kr

www.ajutours.co.kr

Hyun A. Lee at Aju Tours is ready to assist with any land arrangements needed in Korea.

India Tours

Airawat Tours

Tel: 011-2469-3591

Fax: 011-2462-3909

pulin@airawat.com

www.airawat.com

Pulin Trivedi at Airawat Tours has worked with Friendship Force programs in India for many

years and can arrange programs throughout the country as well as to Nepal.

Canada

Canada Tours The Great Canadian Travel Company Ltd.

Tel: 204-949-0199

Fax: 204-949-0188

aruna@gctc-mst.com

www.greatcanadiantravel.com

Aruna Hall, a member of The Friendship Force of Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada, has been a

great resource to many Friendship Force clubs visiting her country.

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