

# Travel Guide

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Forum Educational Travel

# **FORUM** **EDUCATIONAL** **TRAVEL**



*Enriching Students' Lives Through Travel*

## *About Forum Educational Travel...*

***Forum Educational Travel*** is a sister company of ***Forum Music Festivals***. Founded twenty-four years ago, we've hosted thousands of music groups at our own festival events and arranged their travel details.

We're excited to branch out into a new venture with ***Forum Educational Travel***. Our clients have enjoyed traveling with us and encouraged us to offer our personalized service for student trips all across the country. Our vision for ***Forum Educational Travel*** is to develop and build on meaningful relationships by providing the same quality and worry-free experiences on customized student trips.

Whether you are looking for a world-class trip of a lifetime or a multi-day trip on a budget, we custom build every package to YOUR specific needs and requirements.

Your time is valuable. You have many choices and we want working with Forum to be easy and enjoyable. We care about our clients and we hope you'll use us as a resource in the coming year.

Discover ***Forum Educational Travel!*** Here's to another wonderful year of adventure!

## **Custom Travel Packages**

Our custom travel packages are designed to reflect your tour goals and interests. We are dedicated to setting up a safe trip packed with incredible memorable moments.

Every Overnight Package includes:

- Lodging at a quality hotel near attractions
- Breakfast at the hotel
- Activities and attractions of your choice
- Complimentary package for each educator
- On-call staff available 24/7 for any on-trip concerns

## **Suggested Itineraries**

- Chicago
- Cincinnati
- Los Angeles
- Orlando
- New York
- San Diego
- San Francisco
- Seattle

Contact FET for a custom package to the destination of your choice. Let's get something started for you!

Note: Travel protection is a recommended add-on to protect your investment; pricing for travel insurance depends on coverage requested (covered or cancel for any reason), Please contact us for additional information.

## **What activities may we choose?**

Count on us to create an itinerary that delivers a totally unique and interesting experience for *your* students.

*Explore your options* - here's a list with a diverse range of activities, but this is just a sample of vibrant and popular choices for the trip of a lifetime!

- *Performance opportunities*
- *Regional museums and activities*
- *Harbor cruises*
- *National historic places*
- *Theme Parks*
- *Symphony concerts & Broadway shows*
- *Festivals, exchange concerts and clinics*
- *Guided tours*
- *Group-friendly restaurants*

## **Can you arrange performances?**

**YES!** Many different attractions allow for groups to perform including theme park performances and workshops as well as public performances in well-trafficked venues. Contact us directly for ideas and suggestions.

## **How may I stay up-to-date with FET?**

We'd love to keep you posted on what's happening with Forum Educational Travel! Sign up for our e-newsletter, mailing list, & follow us on Facebook. Don't forget to tag us using @forumeducationaltravel and #2019FET and post your favorite photos directly to our page!

### **Can you arrange our lodging?**

**YES!** Hotel accommodations are reserved at hotels near your activities. When selecting a hotel for your group, safety and security are of the highest importance. Groups are only lodged at quality hotels with interior corridors. We request that student rooms be blocked close to chaperone rooms. Rooms are requested on the second floor or higher. We do not book student groups in rooms with outdoor access.

Our relationship with specific hotels helps keep your trip within budget. Any specific requests you provide to us is shared with the hotel.

### **Can you arrange our travel or other activities for our trip?**

**Absolutely!** We arrange everything from theatre, symphony tickets to bowling parties, sightseeing tours, clinics, workshops, and everything in between.

### **Can you arrange our airfare?**

**YES!** Upon request, FET will provide an airfare proposal. As always, Forum works to accommodate all of our groups' needs within your budget. Airlines do enforce strict deadlines, so we will inform you of all deadlines up front. Once a flight itinerary is chosen and reservations are made, we will assist with additional information pertaining to your specific airline in terms of luggage fees for instruments, underage traveler identification, etc.

## **What about ground transportation?**

Our relationship with reputable bus companies yields competitive rates and *you save money!* You will receive a no-obligation quote based on your itinerary. Here are a couple of initial tips to get you started:

- Let's order buses as soon as you have a confirmed date. We work with bus companies to get a clear picture of costs upfront so you have an accurate quote. A deposit may be required to hold your bus.
- The Department of Transportation determines rules about off-duty hours for drivers. **Safety is top priority.** Drive time limits are key when planning your return trip.
- Traffic jams, bathroom breaks, and surprises happen. Our itineraries provide drivers with precise destinations. We confirm it all so you don't have to!

We are always reviewing your itinerary to save you money.

## **The bus company requires specific accommodations for the drivers. Can you handle that?**

**Yes,** we can book a room for your bus drivers at your hotel whether or not we have arranged your charter bus transportation.

Driver's rooms must be listed on the rooming list. Many bus companies require a paid day sleeping room for each driver if the group requires transportation at night. Charges for bus driver's rooms vary. This information will be listed on your itinerary - no surprises!

### **What about meals?**

Breakfast is included on all Forum Educational Travel custom trips. Theme park or restaurant meal vouchers or group meals at student-friendly restaurants may be added.

### **Where will we get our theme park tickets?**

Educators will receive all theme park tickets (unless previously agreed upon) in a packet that is shipped about one week prior to travel. The packet contains tickets, maps, the latest itinerary, and rooming list as well as other helpful information. You ***MUST*** review all contents and mail the confirmation form back to us so tickets will be activated.

### **Do I need a tour escort?**

Our itineraries are so thorough, you won't need a tour escort. However, a tour escort helps ensure a seamless and worry-free trip for you! A tour escort can meet your group to handle itinerary details, as your budget will allow.

### **Your Trip Assistant – Automated Text Messaging System**

We are excited to introduce ***Your Trip Assistant*** – a fast, convenient, and completely customized alert system for directors of overnight groups! This complimentary automated text messaging system allows Forum Music Festivals to text reminder messages to you throughout your trip. No need for an onsite tour escort - receive reminders via text before your first warm-up time, prompting upcoming bus loading, theatre or concert start times, restaurant reservations and addresses, and more! Director must opt in to ***Your Trip Assistant***. Text messages apply only to your trip. Opt in today with a Forum team member to have ***Your Trip Assistant*** in the palm of your hand! Standard text messaging rates may apply – contact your carrier for details.

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## **How do I budget the cost of a trip?**

Calculating trip costs has several parts, including lodging, meals, buses, & activities. If you are trying to stay within a budget, let us know right from the start. We will make suggestions to match your needs within the budget. We'll sketch out an itinerary to fit your group's interests.

**Plan early.** Allow time for students to meet fundraising goals. This yields a higher ratio of involvement. Start with a realistic number to avoid returning to students for additional funds. Building in a surplus gives you options — refund money, or plan a special meal or extra outing.

**Create a timeline for collecting funds.** Take into account holiday breaks and payment processing time. Busing and airfare is a large part of the travel budget. Determine these costs before giving a per person cost to students. Base your transportation expenses on a realistic number of travelers, so if there's a drop, your bus expense will be covered. Other charges may apply— driver's rooms, parking or toll fees.

## **How many are assigned to each room?**

Students usually stay 4 or 5 to a room. Chaperones usually stay 2 to a room. Packages also include a complimentary room for each educator.

Pricing listed on your itinerary is a per student price based on quad (4/room) or quint (5/suite), triple, double, or single occupancy package that includes lodging, breakfast, and activities.



### **Can the hotel keep our group together?**

Your group's room block is based on your rooming list. Chaperone rooms are blocked between student rooms. Educators often request boys'/girls' rooms be on different floors. We'll communicate your requests with the hotel.

### **How many chaperones should we bring?**

Many groups recruit chaperones based on a 1 per 10 ratio. Check with your administration for guidelines. Be specific about your expectations for chaperones *before* the trip. Chaperone responsibilities can include bus counts, room checks, managing equipment, supervising behavior, enforcing curfews. Chaperones may be in charge of a preset group of students. Make them aware that, though the trip is enjoyable, their job is to supervise students. Check with your district to determine any requirements for chaperones that can include background checks, fingerprinting, etc.

### **How do I submit my rooming list?**

After registering, you'll receive an email with our rooming list form with the date we need the list returned to us. Your rooming list is due to us at least 75 days prior to your trip. Certain hotels require earlier due dates, but our staff will advise you if this applies to your trip.

### **Can I make changes to my rooming list?**

Changes occur in student travel, so we're as flexible as possible. Additions are allowed through Forum, based on hotel availability. After submitting your rooming list, you may change the rooming list *one time at no additional fee*. After that, a charge for each subsequent revision applies. No changes to the rooming list are allowed after the 30-day deadline. Please see our cancellation policy for more details.

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## ***Financial Considerations***

### **What is the payment schedule?**

Forum Educational Travel will reserve your hotel, transportation and activities upon approval of proposed itinerary.

All fees must be paid in full before the travel date.

Delinquent schools will face a trip cancellation. Invoices will be forwarded prior to each due date.

### **Travel Packages Payment Schedule:**

Payment schedules can be customized to meet the needs of your fundraising activities.

- 30 Days after Registration – Non-refundable deposits due. Motor coach deposit, if applicable.
- 90 Days before First Date of Travel – 1/3rd estimated balance due.
- 60 Days before First Date of Travel – 1/3rd estimated balance due.
- 30 Days before First Date of Travel – Final balance based on final Rooming List. Final motor coach balance due.
- Airfare will be billed separately based on carrier due dates and requirements.

## Additional Financial Details

**Registration after 90 days:** Late registrations (less than 90 days prior to your travel date) can be accepted based on availability. All payment due dates are adjusted accordingly.

**Payment Details:** Invoices are emailed prior to each due date. Notify Forum Educational Travel immediately of changes in participant numbers, travel date, or rooming lists. Forum Educational Travel accepts district P.O.s, but *all fees must be paid by check or credit card in full prior to the trip.*

Overnight proposals and packages are subject to hotel availability at the time that the group approves the trip which may affect per person pricing from the initial proposal.

### Important Dates:

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| • Upon approval, return Acceptance/Acknowledgment form  |
| • 1st payment - Return Contract (sent with first invoice)   |
| • 75 days prior to travel: Submit final rooming list online.  |
| • 30 days prior to travel: Participant Release forms due for ALL participants (sent with first invoice)           |
| • 3 weeks prior to travel: Itinerary finalized.   |
| • 1 week prior to travel: Pre-arrival package shipped to school with tickets, itinerary, and helpful information. |
| • <b>Note:</b> Airfare will be billed separately based on carrier due dates and requirements                      |

## **We want to participate! How do we register?**

*Registering your group is easy!*

**Give us a call (1-888-763-6786) or email us at [info@forumtravel.org](mailto:info@forumtravel.org).**

We'll answer your questions and register your group over the phone. Once you register, we will move forward with your trip.

We want to be the travel company that helps you share a world outside the classroom with your students. Call us today to find out more about crafting a trip of a lifetime!

## What is your cancellation policy?

Deposit fees are *non-refundable*. Theatre tickets are *non-refundable*. Bus and hotel deposits may not be refundable. Cancellation requests, signed by a school official, must be faxed or mailed to our office. The postmarked date and time reflected on the FAX will be used as the cancellation date. Please allow 30 days after your travel date for refunds.

***Cancelled overnight packages*** (including the hotel deposit) are subject to the following refund policy (applies whether entire group cancels or individual cancellations)

Prior to 60 days before first day of travel:	Full refund minus travel deposit or any non-refundable deposits (theatre, bus, hotel, etc).
49-59 days prior to first day of travel:	\$25 per person fee will be assessed. All other payments will be refunded unless designated as non-refundable deposits.
45 days or less prior to first day of travel:	No refunds approved for group cancellations. No refunds approved for individual cancellations 30 days or less prior. Participants unable to travel may be replaced by another traveler but a \$25 change fee may be assessed. Please contact us for options.

### ***A Note on Attrition:***

Forum understands changes occur in student travel. We accommodate changes to your package to the best of our ability. Pricing is based on current availability, fees, & taxes based on the total number of participants (students, chaperones, & educators). If that number changes, we may re-price your package to adjust prorated costs, etc. Please note that if the package is re-priced due to attrition, it will likely increase the per person price by just a few dollars.

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## **Destinations include:**

- Chicago
- Cincinnati
- Los Angeles
- Orlando
- New York
- San Diego
- San Francisco
- Seattle

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