

Culture File 29, Unit 29

Allowances

Allowances for international travel are changing all the time. Many people think that 'duty-free' or 'tax-free' allowances are out-of-date, and that airlines use a lot of aviation fuel carrying duty-free goods. Some airports (e.g. London) allow you to buy your allowances on arrival, and in the future this may be the normal method, or duty-free allowances may stop completely.

Travel inside the European Union (**EU**) is not international travel. In airport shops in the EU, goods in the 'green area' are tax-free. Goods in the blue area are not 'tax free.' When you arrive at customs, there are two or three **channels**. The green channel is **nothing to declare**. The red channel is **goods to declare**. In the European Union, there is a third blue channel for travelers from an EU country. If you are traveling from an EU country (e.g. from Rome to London) you go through the blue channel. Your nationality is not important.

Culture File 30, Unit 30

Walking in the U.S.A.

In some American cities, it's quite difficult to walk between buildings outside the downtown area. Some cities were built with six lane highways, with very few sidewalks. Because these highways have complex crossroads it can be difficult to cross the highway on foot.

As suburban shopping areas ('strip malls') and offices have large parking lots, it's often easier to drive between two buildings, even when the distance is short – 300 or 400 meters.

In downtown areas, people usually give directions in blocks where cities are built in a grid pattern. *Walk four blocks along Michigan Avenue and it's on the right ...*

Culture File 31, Unit 31

Daylight Savings Time

Many countries have Daylight Savings Time. This is called Summer Time in Europe (BST or British Summer Time in the U.K.).

In the winter, London is on GMT or Greenwich Mean Time. GMT times are used for international air travel, and all time differences are measured from GMT.

In the summer many countries 'change the clocks' so as to change the number of useful daylight hours.

So in Britain, BST is one hour ahead of GMT. The clocks change in March and October. In March 6 a.m. becomes 7 a.m. and we say the clocks 'go forward.' In October the clocks 'go back.' Children are often taught, "Spring forward. Fall back."

In comparison, Japan does not use daylight saving time, so that in the summer daylight can begin at 4:30 a.m., and it gets dark at 7 p.m. New York (on the same line of latitude) uses daylight saving time, so that daylight begins later at 5:30 a.m. and it gets dark later at 8 p.m.

Culture File 32, Unit 32

American breakfasts

An American breakfast (or a traditional Canadian, English or Irish breakfast) is very large and is a hot, cooked breakfast. They are popular in hotels, and in diners. An 'American breakfast' might include juice, coffee, cereal or hot oatmeal, a cooked main course with eggs, bacon, sausages, pancakes, breakfast potatoes or hash browns, then toast and jelly or breakfast rolls. 'Grits' are a Southern U.S. specialty and are a kind of hot cereal.

A Full English breakfast is similar, but would not include grits or pancakes. Kippers (a smoked fish, served hot) might be offered as a choice instead of eggs and bacon, and tea is the usual drink.

Nowadays, few people eat breakfasts like this at home (except perhaps on weekends). Many people have cereal, fruit, yoghurt or a Continental breakfast (Continental = Europe without Britain) of rolls, jam and tea or coffee.

In hotels, breakfast is often a buffet where you can choose hot or cold food. There is a standard charge and you can eat as much as you like.