

Where to start with your first holiday abroad

Whilst The Caravan Club does not own or run its own sites abroad, we have special arrangements with over 200 sites in 18 countries throughout Europe, we can also book your Channel crossing and arrange Red Pennant travel insurance. You can order your free copy of our Continental Caravanning brochure via our website www.caravanclub.co.uk or by calling 01342 327410

When you have decided on the campsite and ferry/Eurotunnel crossing you would like, you can check prices and book via our website www.caravanclub.co.uk or call our reservations team on 01342 316101.

For loads of ideas, feedback, suggestions and information about overseas touring see our club community [here](#)

The Caravan Club strongly recommends for your own safety that you stay on an official camp site rather than using roadside facilities such as motorway service areas or ferry terminal car parks. On your first visit you will probably not want to travel too far from the port. Bearing this in mind, decide whether you want a site near the seaside or in the country, quiet or lively, with facilities for the children or near specific interests, eg vineyards, châteaux, sports facilities, etc. Remember that in low season many site facilities may not be open.

Things to check before you make your booking:

Contact your vehicle and caravan insurance providers to make sure you are covered for the countries you are planning to visit.

If you have a break-down and recovery policy in the UK, contact your provider to confirm if you are covered for overseas travel, if not, consider taking out The Caravan Club's Red Pennant travel insurance.

If you are going to be away from your home for some time, check your house and contents insurance policies regarding any limitations or regulations.

Check passports to make sure they are valid until after you return home.

Things to do before you leave home:

Ensure that your car and caravan are properly serviced and ready for the journey.

Check tyre pressures, water and oil.

Ensure that caravan tyres are suited to the maximum weight of the caravan and the maximum permitted speed when travelling abroad - see the Technical Information section of your Sites Directory & Handbook.

Leave an itinerary with a relative or friend in case of emergency.

Take contact numbers of your bank/credit card company in case you need to report lost or stolen cards.

Obtain the European Health Insurance card (EHIC) application forms are available from selected Post Offices, on-line at www.ehic.org.uk or by calling 0845 606 2030

Obtain the Camping Key Europe (CKE) this card is accepted instead of your passport when you check-in on campsites, it also provides public liability insurance. A CKE card is included in our Red Pennant travel insurance (motoring or motoring and personal policies), or can be purchased separately £7.50, by calling 01342 336633.

Plan your route in advance. An up-to-date map or atlas covering the areas you are driving through and visiting is essential. If you have access to the internet you can also plan a route using www.viamichelin.co.uk Make a note of the road number and direction you will be travelling in so that you know what signposts to follow when you arrive at the port.

Arriving at the ferry port in the UK

You will receive a confirmation when you book your holiday or ferry crossing with the Club. This confirmation will include a “Ferry booking reference” and this is all you need to show when you arrive at the port, you will not receive any tickets.

When you arrive at the Port, follow the signs for the Ferry operator you have booked with, show them your confirmation, they will check you in, and tell you what lane you need to queue up in. Staff at the port will assist you on to the ferry.

If you book with Eurotunnel you can use their self check-in lane by typing your 8 digit booking reference into the kiosk and following the instructions that are given.

Arriving in France, Spain, Netherlands.....

When you drive off the ferry, follow the signs “toute directions” until you see a sign for the road you need to take. You will very quickly become used to driving on the right side of the road. If you are driving a right hand vehicle then you (the driver) should always be next to the kerb, the passenger should be next to the white line.

There are some differences between Caravan Club sites in the UK and the campsites we work with overseas (which are not owned or managed by The Caravan Club):

- Campsite receptions are often open for longer hours, but close at lunch time – plan your arrival accordingly.
- Some campsites do not allow long swimming shorts in the pool, only brief style shorts, and some require bathing caps.
- Lots of sites have entry/exit barriers, and a deposit is usually required for the key.
- Not all campsites provide toilet paper and toilet seats.
- Many sites have uni-sex toilets and showers.
- Hard standing pitches are not as popular as they are here in the UK.
- Pitches can often be smaller and closer together.
- Some campsites especially in Germany and Ireland do not accept credit cards
- Many sites in Europe have a high number of static, semi-permanent caravans and mobile homes.
- Some sites, particularly in Holland have separate parking areas for cars, as they are not permitted on the pitches.
- European sites quite often have unfenced lakes, rivers and streams.
- Electricity can be metered, particularly in Germany, Switzerland and Austria.
- Many sites will not allow traffic movement between 23.00-08.00, so if you need to arrive really late, or leave very early, check with the campsite that it is possible.