



Choosing an Educational Tour Company

What to Consider



PROMÉTOUR
a class of its own



Intro

You want to be the teacher who offers your students a truly life-changing experience, one who opens their eyes to the world. You're excited about all the possibilities, but they can also be overwhelming. When choosing a company to work with—to plan the many details of a trip, to help promote the trip to your students and their parents, to lead your group abroad—what should you consider?

This handy booklet helps you to keep all those important questions top of mind. The checklist format allows you to easily compare student travel companies as you do your research, and also to present your choice to your school's administration. If you have any questions that we haven't answered here, please give us a call! We're just as excited as you are to get the ball rolling.

 www.prometour.com  info@prometour.com

 Or call us at (USA) 1 800 304-9446 | (Canada) 1 800 657-7754

Join Us:



Table Of Contents

Safety	4
Experience	6
Flexibility	8
Price	10
Support	12
Hotels	14
Food	16
Transportation	18
Travel Philosophy	20
Testimonials	24



Safety

There's a reason why safety is at the top of the list. When leading a group of students abroad, safety is the greatest concern of teachers, administrators and parents. Your educational tour company should be able to check off everything on this list and put your mind at ease. After all, a safe and secure trip is one that everyone will enjoy.



Prométour
(company name)
(company name)

Does the company provide:

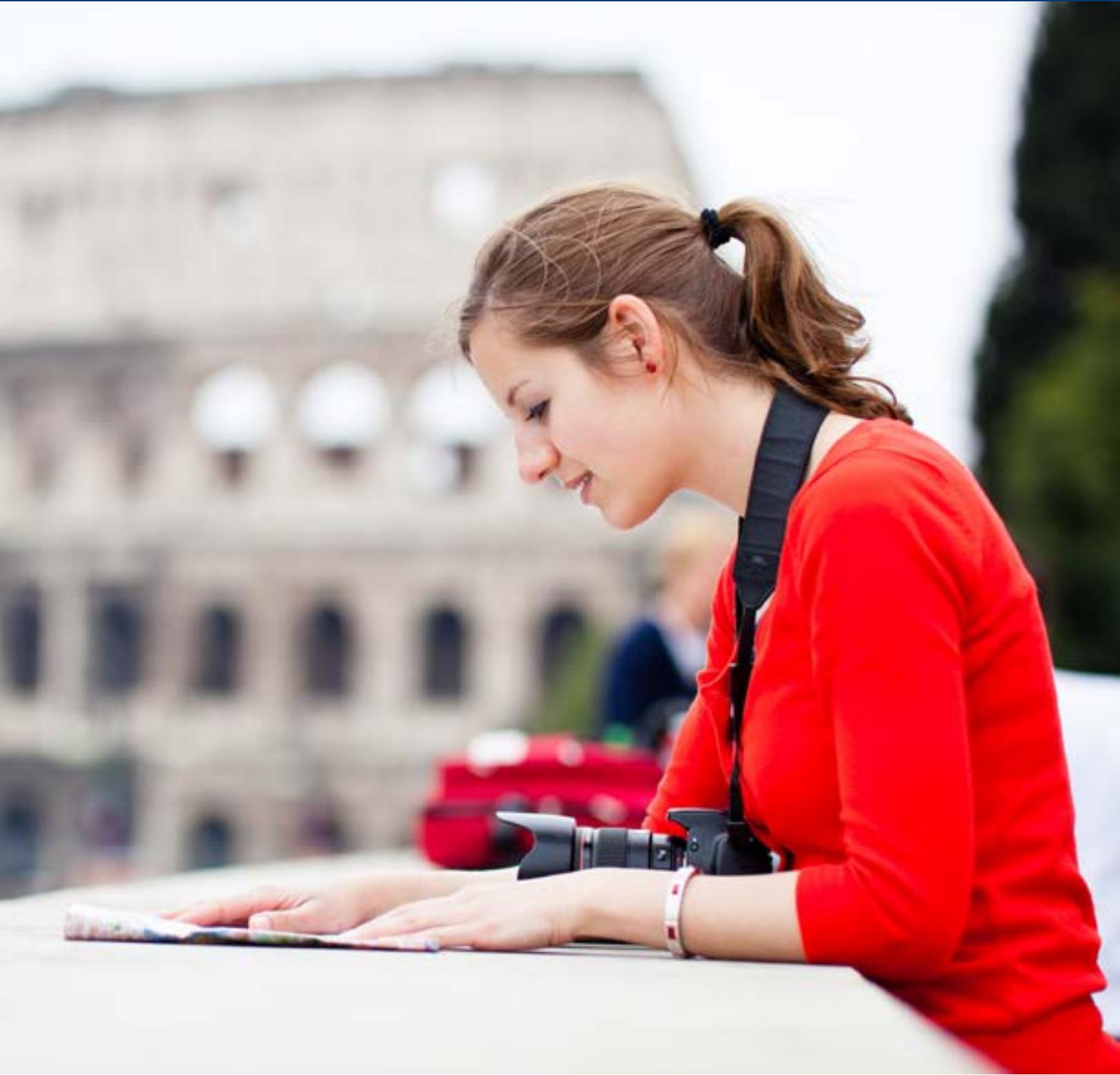
- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Comprehensive group travel insurance? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Financial safeguards that protect travellers' payments ? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Finalized itineraries before departure, with complete hotel contact information? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A tour director who stays with your group 24/7 (including free time and overnight)? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 24-hour emergency phone line for parents and travellers? |

Extra points to consider:

1. What exactly is included in the travel insurance? Is the insurance premium covered in the trip cost, or will the students have to pay extra?
2. How long before your departure date will you receive all hotel and travel details?
3. Ask about the company's safety protocols. How do they decide if a particular destination is safe for student travel?

Experience

It may be your first trip to this particular destination, but it shouldn't be your tour director's. A company's experience in organizing educational tours, and your guides' experience in leading student groups and their knowledge of your destination, can make or break a tour. Make sure you choose a company whose travel experience covers all the bases, and then some.



Prométour
(company name)
(company name)

Some questions to ask:

20+ — —

How many years has the company been leading student tours?

Is the company a member of the Student & Youth Travel Association (www.syta.com)?

— — —

How many years of experience do the tour directors have?

Are the tour directors **licensed professionals**?

How well does the tour company **know the destination**?

— — —

How long have they been on the ground in those countries?

Extra points to consider:

1. Some companies hire student tour directors who lead groups as a summer job. They are not professional tour directors, and their experience is often minimal.

Flexibility

This may be your students' first—or only—experience abroad. Don't settle for a prepackaged tour itinerary that flies you past all the major tourist attractions, herding large groups of students through museums and requiring them to take blurry snapshots through bus windows. Review itineraries in detail and make sure that you're getting an experience that matches your educational goals.



Some questions to ask:

How **flexible** is the itinerary?

Can I **add or take away activities**, depending on my group's learning objectives and interests?

Are the **tours private** (or will I be combined with another student group)?

— — —

How many students will be travelling together, and how will that affect logistics?

— — —

What's the **pace of the trip**? How much **time** will be allotted for each activity?

Extra points to consider:

1. Are you comfortable travelling with a group of students from another school?
2. What is the ratio of planned activities to free time? Will the tour director help you and accompany you in your choice of free time activities?
3. Is the itinerary tailored to your group's interests?

Price

Do you want a budget tour, or a tour with all the bells and whistles? It's likely that you'll be trying to strike the right balance to create a worthwhile educational tour that your students can afford. Ask the tour company to be upfront about the cost of the trip and to detail the options. Understand what you're paying for so that you're comfortable explaining the cost of the trip to parents.



Prométour
 (company name)
 (company name)

Some questions to ask:

<u>All</u>	—	—	On the itinerary, which items are included?
<u>No</u>	—	—	Are there additional costs associated with optional activities? What are they?
<u>N/A</u>	—	—	What happens if some students choose the optional activities and others don't?
—	—	—	How much pocket money will the students need?
—	—	—	What extras are the students expected to pay for?
<u>No</u>	—	—	Are there membership or late payment fees to pay?
<u>No</u>	—	—	Are there weekend supplements??
<u>No</u>	—	—	Can the company help you with fundraising?

Extra points to consider:

1. Some tour companies offer optional on-tour activities. This means, students will need to pay extra while on tour to participate in an activity. If they don't have the money or don't want to pay for the activity, the group may split and some students will have extra free time to fill.
2. Some tour companies require students to pay for all drinks, even for included meals. This will affect the amount of pocket money your students need, as well as increase the amount of time spent at the restaurant.
3. Be sure to get a detailed list of "extras". These can greatly affect the final price of your tour.

Support

Organizing an educational tour should be fun—not a headache. Ask about how much support you will receive from the tour company in order to plan and promote your student trip.



Prométour
(company name)
(company name)

Does the company provide...

Materials for your parent and student presentations?

A phone number for parents to call with their questions and concerns?

A secure website where you can manage all aspects of your tour?

Online registration and payment?

An easy **monthly payment plan** to help with budgeting?

Extra points to consider:

1. You shouldn't have to worry about the logistics of travelling. Most educational tour companies take care of all transportation and hotel reservations, itinerary planning, meal planning, etc.
2. How will the tour company handle special requests, such as hotel upgrades or requests for certain meals or cultural experiences? Ask about the support you'll receive from your tour consultant.

Hotels

Where will you stay while on tour? Here are some things to consider about the hotels that a tour company uses.



Prométour
(company name)
(company name)

Some questions to ask:

- | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|
| — | — | — | What is the star rating of the hotels you will stay in? |
| <u>Yes</u> | — | — | Are the hotels centrally located ? |
| — | — | — | What are the names of some of the hotels typically used? |
| <u>Yes</u> | — | — | Will you have input into the choice of hotels? |

Extra points to consider:

1. Hotels located in the suburbs or other far reaches of the city will result in wasted transportation time on tour.
2. Are the hotels near public transportation?
3. Are they located in safe neighborhoods?
4. How long before the departure date will you know the exact names and contact information of the hotels?

Food

Food is a huge part of any trip—and exposure to local cuisine is a huge part of the travel experience. Will your group eat at large chain, fast food restaurants to save time and money? Or will your tour director be able to lead you to a city's hidden gems? Know what to expect about the food on tour and prepare your students accordingly.



Prométour
(company name)
(company name)

Some questions to ask:

All — —

What does a typical meal **include**?

No — —

Will students have to pay **extra for beverages**? Dessert?

Yes — —

Are the meals of **good quality**?

— — —

Will students have **options** or have to accept a set menu?

Yes — —

Are the meals **representative of local cuisine**?

Extra points to consider:

1. Make sure the tour company can accommodate students with dietary restrictions.
2. The quality of the meals does matter. A student who has eaten well will be able to take advantage of all the day's activities.

Transportation

The journey to your destination is part of the experience. Consider how you will arrive in your destination country, and then again how you will travel once you're there.



Prométour
(company name)
(company name)

Does your tour company...

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use trusted major airlines , not charter flights? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Book direct flights? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Guarantee departure dates? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use a reputable bus company for ground transportation? |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Provide your group with opportunities to use public transportation rather than bus? |

Extra points to consider:

1. A direct flight can mean the difference between arriving at your destination ready to see the sights, or ready to nap. Consider whether or not you want to deal with flight connections with your group.
2. Some companies require you to be flexible with your departure dates, often up to just a few days before departure.
3. Ask about the busses that your group will travel on. Make sure that they are newer and well maintained.

Travel Philosophy

Last, but certainly not least, consider the tour company's travel philosophy. Do they want to offer the absolute lowest prices? Do they want you to check off the absolute highest number of "must-sees" on a pre-generated list? Or do they want to work with you to create an itinerary that offers the richest travel experience for your particular group at a price you can afford? A company's travel philosophy will make the difference between a vacation and a truly unforgettable, educational experience.



What to consider

It's a concept that's often difficult to quantify, so we've left you a few pages to jot down notes. Try answering these questions:

1. What does your ideal trip look like?
2. What monuments/museums/destinations are musts on your itinerary?
3. What experiences would you like your students to have?
4. What local modes of transportation would you like to include? Subway? Boat?
5. How touristy is the itinerary? Does it strike a balance between major attractions and experiences off the beaten path?
6. Do you want your students to have the opportunity to interact with local people? To practice a foreign language? To find out what student life is like in your destination country? To participate in local customs?

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

Testimonials

With the answers to these questions in mind, you'll be able to choose the best educational tour company to lead you and your students abroad. Of course, we hope you'll choose Prométour! Here are some comments from teachers who did just that.

It was an amazing, interactive and well-planned tour. Throughout the process, Prométour answered every question possible and were great with dealing with our parents. We felt totally at ease and appreciate the great service the company has given us. Prométour is very professional and I would recommend the company to other school groups. I look forward to our next trip.

—Brad Mellor, Calgary, AB

When we first started planning for Spain, I researched several tour companies, but Prométour was by far the most comprehensive that I had seen. After speaking with Maria [our tour manager], I was even more impressed. The fact that you offer a customized tour is a huge advantage. As a 12-year veteran teacher, I have used [another company] and was left unimpressed or disappointed. It was important for me to have a good, set price that covered as many things as possible and to have an itinerary established before we leave the U.S. I appreciate all the hard work [our tour manager] has done and would be happy to recommend her and Prométour!

—Kai Coleman-Morris, Downingtown West, PA

We have travelled with Prométour since 2008, visiting Montréal and Québec. Every trip has been the highlight of the school year for students, parents, and teachers attending. All aspects of the trip have been fantastic. I have appreciated the prompt, professional service of the project managers. Their skill and personal attention minimize the work involved in planning the trips. Our guides have been absolutely wonderful, engaging the students and sharing their knowledge and passion for the venues. The amenities are also first rate—nice, comfortable hotels, outstanding restaurants, and good transportation services. And, of course, the cities and activities themselves have provided experiences that will last a lifetime for my middle school students! We literally count down the days in class until our next trip!

—Mike McTammany, Severna Park, MD

Ready to get started? Just give us a call!
Your tour consultant is waiting to help you plan
the trip of a lifetime.

PROMÉTOUR

a class of its own



1 800 304-9446 from the USA | **1 800 657-7754** from Canada