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“Let’s Go Touring”

by
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Well, the Italy trip has come and gone and I will be writing blurbs off and on in the future about what happened over there. I want to give fair warning, however, that my take on the beautiful country of ‘Italia’ might not coincide with all those who have gone before me. Remember... I look at things through an entirely different set of eyes than most of you out there, and I don’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings or start a war with all my Italian friends. I also should advise that my response to the tour is not necessarily the same as Judy’s and any opinions expressed herein are solely the opinions of the writer and not those of the person he lives with.

In writing my critique I approach it as someone who has gone on ahead to pave the way for those who come behind... say... like Columbus, who came to our country a long time ago and then went back and told others what to expect when they got here. Much of what he learned protected others from suffering the same maladies he contracted while roaming the shores and in-lands of what would become the good old USA. I am hoping that I can give all of you... especially other ‘seniors’... a heads up about some of the pitfalls lying in wait for you, so you can step adroitly around them.

The biggest thing I have against any extended tour, to any country, is having to live out of a suitcase, especially a suitcase that has been filled, not with the clothes you will need, nor those you wish to take but only those that can be packed and still comply with the airline’s maximum weight limit. You will probably have to purchase a whole new wardrobe of 21st century fibers... and folks, don’t believe that ‘wrinkle-free’ label that entices you to buy certain items. There ‘ain’t’ no such thing as wrinkle-free. Believe me!

Another big area of concern that I experienced was having to make the allotted pairs of underwear last through the entire trip without becoming so odoriferous that my fellow travelers would shun me, or make me ride on top of the bus. Have you ever washed a pair of cotton drawers and tried to dry them with a hair dryer? As my 12 year-old grandson Josh would say, “I’ve seen it and it’s not a pretty sight!” Thankfully though, the hotels in which we stayed provided a small sink-like contraption in the bathroom, right beside the commode...that allowed the washing of soiled clothes just fine. It even had a little pressure spout that helped remove any skid marks one might find. I think all European hotels provide the same facilities and I applaud them for that. Who would have thought about such a thing other than our Euro brothers and sisters? Next trip, if there is a next trip, I will search high and low for paper, throwaway underwear that I can wear without fear of running out. Paper weighs so little and once tossed one has so much more room in the suitcase for purchased baubles from the trip.

If you should book a tour that is designed to show you an entire country in two weeks time prepare yourself for rising at 5:30 a.m. to be able to have your never un-packed bags outside the door by 6:00 a.m., followed by breakfast at 6:30 a.m.. Then it's back on the bus and a two hour drive before the next potty-break. Of course, there is a toilet on the bus but you will be told at the beginning of the tour that it is to be used for "Emergency Purposes" only. My question... who is the determiner of what is an "Emergency?" Thankfully, most of the 42 of us who were on the bus had over-sized bladders and no "Emergency" ever arose.

Well, time's up so I'll talk more about the subject in the near future. (By the way folks, this old WV boy knows what a bidet is but for me, there ain't no way, no how.) See you next week.

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