



Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures

Independent Travel to European countries

What is it?

AFS allows you to go for one trip abroad during your program. The trip is called “independent travel”, as you are supposed to organize it by yourself and travel independently on AFS or your host family. However, you are still on the AFS program during this trip so you have to follow the same rules as in the Czech Republic (no drugs, hitchhiking, driving, and alcohol)

When can I travel?

You can travel in the second part of your AFS program (after January 1st, for summer semester students after May 1st). It is highly recommended to travel towards the end of the program, in May or June, due to necessary school attendance. Also the weather is much nicer during the spring/summer time. The independent trip cannot be planned for period of obligatory AFS orientations.

How many days I can travel?

You can travel for 5 days maximum including the travel days. You can go on the independent travel only once. It is up to you if you go for 5 days or less but you are not allowed to go for 3 days in May and 2 days in June for example. You are allowed to travel to one country only.

Can I travel alone?

No, you cannot travel alone. If you decide to go for the independent travel, you can go with your AFS friends, school friends, host brother or sister, etc. You cannot travel with your natural parents or siblings. You can also visit your AFS friend abroad in his host family (with the permission of his/her host family), or for example, you may visit an AFS student you hosted in your home country.

Which countries can I visit?

You can visit an European country except your home country (for example – if you are a German student you cannot travel to Germany). You can travel to one country only. Here is the list of the countries you may visit: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Great Britain.

What I have to do before I travel?

Plan! Choose a date. Check if the dates are fine for your host family and their planes, for your school and the AFS orientation camps.

If yes, check if you need a special visa to enter the country you want to visit. Non-European students arrived with visas that allow them to travel to all European countries. European students can travel within EU countries without visa. However, it is always better to double check with the embassy of the visited country.

If dates and visa are fine, inform AFS office about your travel. You have to do so **at least 3 weeks in advance**. In January you will receive a form from the AFS office. Please, fill in this form after you have all necessary information about your planned trip. The form includes this information –

- the exact dates of the trip
- address and phone number of the accommodation
- name and contact of fellow traveler/s
- information about your travel (destination, dates and time of departures and arrivals, reservation number of your flight ticket etc.)
- **Do not forget you have to be excused at school!**

After AFS office receives all necessary information from you filled in this form, and your trip will be enabled, we will require a written approval from your natural parents through the AFS office in your home country.

In case this approval will not be received before the trip begins, you will not be allowed to go. It is recommended to buy your flight/bus tickets after the formal approval from the AFS office.