



Driving In Europe

This guide is designed to help you understand what you need to know about travelling in the EU and direct you in the right direction for further information.

When travelling outside of the UK it's important to be aware of the motoring laws abroad as they may be more different than just driving on the opposite side of the road.

You need to ensure you comply with all regulations and requirements in any country you are visiting. This includes any documentation required, seating and child seat restrictions and equipment you need to carry with you.

If you are leasing a vehicle then there are a few additional steps you'll need to take but we will cover these below and in our supporting [blog post](#).

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There are a number of documents that you will need to take with you and these include:

- Driving Licence
- Passport
- Proof of Insurance
- International Driving Permit
- VC5 / VE103
- GB Sticker



Driving licence: Whenever you are driving you should carry your driving licence with you. You should always ensure your personal details are up to date on your driving licence including your address, as you can be fined up to £1,000 for not doing this. When travelling your address on the licence is especially important as it will need to match the address on other documents.

Passport: When travelling you should always carry your passport with you. Following the UK's exit from the EU there are some additional requirements you should be aware of. Your passport must have more than six months left before its expiry date and be less than 10 years old in order to travel to an EU country.

Proof of insurance: Although for a brief period UK drivers were required to carry a green card insurance certificate the EU has advised that this is no longer necessary. However, it is still recommended that you advise your insurer that you are travelling abroad and to confirm the level of cover they are able to provide as this can be different to your usual insurance level. You should also take proof of insurance with you when travelling as you may need to provide this if requested by police or border controls or if you are involved in an accident.

International driving permit: You will not usually need an international driving permit when travelling in Europe. However, if your licence was issued in Jersey, Guernsey, Gibraltar or on the Isle of Man then you will need to request an IDP. You can check if you need an IDP [here](#).

VC5 / VE103: If you are the owner of the vehicle you will need the VC5, also known as the registration documents in the vehicle. If you are leasing a vehicle then you will need the VE103 which confirms you are authorised to drive and travel with the vehicle. To get your VE103 just contact your lease funder or give us a call on **01722 322 888** and our Customer Services Team can direct you to the right team.



GB Sticker: If your vehicle does not have a GB identifier on the number plate then you will need to display a GB sticker on the rear of the vehicle. If you are taking a trailer or caravan this will also need a sticker.



As well as documents you might need to take a few extra pieces of safety equipment with you as European countries have different requirements to the EU.

Take a look at our table below to see what additional safety equipment you might need to take with you on your travels.

	France	Germany	Italy	Belgium	Holland	Spain	Austria	Ireland	Poland	Denmark	Switzerland
Warning triangle	✓	Ⓡ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Ⓡ	✓	✓	✓
Hi-vis vest	✓	Ⓡ	✓	✓		✓	✓				
GB sticker	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Beam deflectors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
First aid kit		Ⓡ		Ⓡ	Ⓡ		✓	Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ
Bulb kit	✓				Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ
Breathalyser	✓										
Fire extinguisher		Ⓡ		Ⓡ	Ⓡ				Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ

There are a few things you need to be aware of with the above. You must have an NF approved breathalyser when travelling in France. It is recommended in Spain that you have two warning triangles. And if you do travel with a first aid kit in Germany this needs to be a DIN approved standard.

As well as these safety items you might also consider taking a comfort pack for yourself and your passengers. With bottles of water, healthy snacks, a blanket or your children's favourite car friendly toy for longer journeys if you are going to be driving across country.

Tyres:

Most EU countries have the same minimum tread depth of 1.6mm over the central three-quarters of the tread and around the whole circumference of the tyre as the UK. You should check your tyres before any long drive but especially before travelling to ensure they do not go below this limit whilst on your trip.

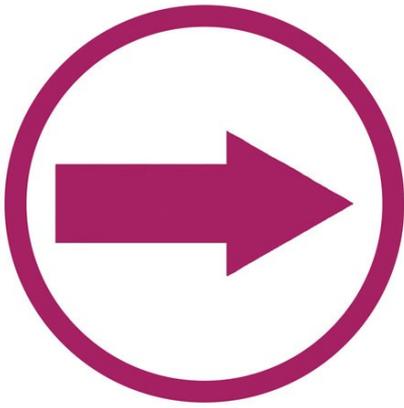
Lights:

If You are driving in Europe you will need to adjust your headlight beam pattern so that your dipped beams will not dazzle oncoming traffic. This is compulsory in most countries and not doing so can void your insurance so it is essential you do this.

Overloading:

It is important that you do not overload your vehicle when going away. Not only does adding too much weight cause extra stress on the vehicle and potential damage, but it can also be dangerous if you cannot see out of all the windows, especially when driving on the other side of the road.

As well as a GB sticker some countries require you have stickers for other purposes. For example, in France you also need a Crit'Air sticker to drive in some areas.



Keep to the right hand side of the road. It's easy to forget if there's no other traffic on the road but the UK is the only country to drive on the left.



If you wear glasses we recommend taking a spare pair with you when travelling, even if you usually wear contact lenses.



You should make sure that you check your insurance level before travelling and that you have some form of breakdown cover while abroad.



Make sure you know the rules on children in the car where you are travelling, as the rules of car seat change between countries.



The blood alcohol level you can legally have varies between countries as well. If you are going to have a drink we recommend not driving at all



The use of handheld devices including mobile phones is prohibited in most European countries including the UK. You shouldn't use a mobile while driving.



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