

# RENTING A CAR IN EUROPE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FINDING, BOOKING,  
AND DRIVING A CAR RENTAL IN EUROPE





# Renting a Car in Europe

*Everything you need to know about renting a car in Europe*

*A Consumer's Guide*

With so many options and terms to understand when renting a car, we at Auto Europe have put together a guide to help demystify the European car rental experience. Many of the frustrations that some experience during the car rental process are avoidable with a little bit of knowledge and know-how, so empower yourself with the right information before your next trip!



[www.autoeurope.com](http://www.autoeurope.com)

For exclusive deals, special promotions and savings on rental cars and other travel services in Europe please subscribe to our newsletter by clicking [HERE](#).

Copyright © 2016 by Auto Europe

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this work, in whole or in part, in any form.

Table of Contents

Europe Rental Car Insurance Information ..... 4

    Credit Card Coverage & Your Rental Car in Europe ..... 5

    Personal Automobile Coverage for a European Car Rental ..... 5

Extra Equipment, Winterization & Additional Fees ..... 6

    Europe Car Rental Driver Age-Related Fees..... 6

    Fuel Policies: Full-to-Full or Full-to-Empty ..... 6

    Car Rental Equipment ..... 6

    Winterization Fees ..... 6

Manual vs. Automatic Car Rental in Europe ..... 7

How Old do you have to be to Rent a Car in Europe? ..... 7

Do You Need an International Driver’s Permit (IDP)?..... 7

Rental Car Classes and Categories Explained..... 8

    Economy Car Rentals ..... 8

    Compact Car Rentals ..... 8

    Mid-Size Car Rentals ..... 8

    Full Size Car Rentals ..... 8

    Luxury & Sports Car Rentals..... 8

    SUV Rentals ..... 8

    Van Rentals ..... 8

Domestic and International One Way Car Rental in Europe ..... 9

GPS & Navigation ..... 9

Renting a Car in Eastern Europe ..... 9

    Eastern Europe Car Rental Zones..... 9

European Road Signs and Driving Information ..... 10

Long Term Car Rental and Short Term Leases ..... 10

Accidents and Emergencies While Driving a Rental Car – What to Do..... 10

# Tips for Renting a Car in Europe

## Money Saving Tips

- Pick one driver, age 25 or older
- Pickup/return downtown instead of at airports or rail stations when possible
- Book additional insurances like zero deductible coverage in advance rather than at the pickup counter
- Rent a manual if you can drive one
- Avoid international one-way rental fees by renting a different car in each country and taking public transit over the border
- Pre-pay your rate in USD to avoid conversion fees abroad
- Book a Peugeot Open Europe short-term lease if traveling for more than a couple weeks

### Before Picking up your Car:

- ✓ Arrive on time, according to the reserved time listed on your voucher
- ✓ Make sure the primary driver (as listed on the voucher) brings a valid credit card and driver's license in their name
- ✓ Be prepared with an international driving permit (some suppliers and countries require this by law)
- ✓ Have your Auto Europe voucher on hand
- ✓ Write down or save your voucher number somewhere safe
- ✓ Bring plane tickets/boarding passes (if picking up at an Airport location)
- ✓ Make sure you understand any extra charges from the rental company (listed on your Auto Europe voucher)
- ✓ Get instructions on how to operate the vehicle (turning headlights and windshield wipers on/off, etc.)
- ✓ Inspect the car and address any existing damages
- ✓ Take photos of the vehicle for your records

### Before Returning your Car:

- ✓ Return no later than the reserved drop-off time listed on your voucher. Early returns are always OK, but make sure the office will be open if returning early
- ✓ Make sure you've filled the tank & keep receipt if you have a full-to-full fuel policy
- ✓ Tidy up the vehicle to avoid cleaning charges
- ✓ Make sure you've removed all personal items
- ✓ Obtain final invoice for your records
- ✓ Make sure an employee of the car rental company signs off that you returned the vehicle without damages
- ✓ Inspect the car and take photos of the vehicle for your records

## Europe Rental Car Insurance Information

When renting a car in a Europe, it is important to know that insurance rules vary from country to country. The insurance guidelines of the country where you pick up the vehicle will be in effect for the duration of your rental even if the rental is returned to another country. While many countries only require a basic level of insurance, countries like Italy require renters to have a Collision Damage Waiver\*, or CDW for short. Auto Europe offers [three rate structures](#), allowing you to determine the best price and level of coverage for you in your specific destination.

Types of coverage available to you:

Basic	Inclusive	No Deductible
✓ Third Party Liability Insurance	✓ Third Party Liability Insurance	✓ Third Party Liability Insurance
✓ Fire Insurance	✓ Fire Insurance	✓ Fire Insurance
✓ Value Added Tax (VAT)	✓ Value Added Tax (VAT)	✓ Value Added Tax (VAT)
✓ Unlimited Mileage	✓ Unlimited Mileage	✓ Unlimited Mileage
	✓ Collision Damage Waiver (CDW)*	✓ Collision Damage Waiver (CDW)**
	✓ Theft Protection (TP)*	✓ Theft Protection (TP)**
		✓ Roadside Assistance
		✓ No Insurance Deductible ("Walk-Away Insurance")

### What is CDW Car Rental Coverage in Europe?

\*Collision Damage Waiver and theft protection releases you from full financial responsibility for the vehicle in case of an accident or theft. In most cases you will still be responsible for a deductible of some sort in the event of damage or theft. Most car rental suppliers will locally offer the option to purchase additional insurance to reduce the collision and theft deductible. You may also choose the "No Deductible" option from Auto Europe when available.

### About Our No Deductible Car Rental Coverage

\*\*No Deductible Collision Damage Waiver and theft protection releases you from full financial responsibility for the vehicle in case of an accident or theft. You will not be responsible for paying a deductible when Auto Europe's no deductible insurance is purchased. If you are interested in this coverage be sure to look for the "No Deductible Rate" when booking online.

### Are You Required to Purchase Additional Car Rental Insurance Coverage in Europe?

With the exception of rentals picked up in Italy or Ireland, Inclusive Rates are optional and may be refused in order to use the coverage your credit card policy offers.

The level of coverage offered by your credit card may not be adequate for some car rental companies in some locations. To help you better understand what's covered we've created a [credit card rental car insurance guide](#) and our experienced agents are available 24/7 by phone to advise you if you have questions.

## Credit Card Coverage & Your Rental Car in Europe

Some credit cards only offer coverage for certain car rental types. The following are exempted with most cards:

- Vehicles valued at over \$50,000 (Mercedes-Benz 320, BMW 730, etc.)
- Exotic cars or antique cars (over 20 years old or have not been manufactured in 10 years)
- Off road or 4x4 vehicles, motorcycles, trucks, cargo vans, full-sized vans and camper vans

### Other credit card coverage considerations:

- Coverage is limited to rentals under 30 days
- Some credit cards do not offer coverage for car rentals in Ireland, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Australia and travel into Eastern Europe
- To extend coverage, additional drivers must be listed on the rental contract
- Most credit cards will file a claim with your personal insurance company before they reimburse the deductible. This could affect your personal driving records and insurance premiums
- Most credit card companies require the repair bill to be paid directly by the card holder and have a specific time period to submit documentation for reimbursement
- Additionally, most credit cards will not cover rentals if the card was issued outside of the customer's home country

## Personal Automobile Coverage for a European Car Rental

The automobile insurance policy for the car you own may include coverage for your rental car, but understanding the extent of what is (and what isn't) covered by your policy is important as it will allow you to make the best choice while renting a car in Europe.

Here are a few key points to consider before deciding to use your personal automobile policy to cover your rental car:

- Coverage may be limited to the value of the car you own, not the rental
- Some policies will not cover a rental car unless it's due to your own personal car needing repairs
- Your insurance premium could be raised if you get into an accident with your rental car, and you could be put in a "high risk" bracket with the possibility of your insurance policy being canceled
- Most policies do not cover damage or theft of personal possessions, third party liability or medical costs

### An Important Note on Personal Automobile Coverage for US Travelers

While your personal automobile insurance may cover rental cars in the US, very few personal car insurance policies from America cover rental cars in Europe and abroad. Be sure to check with your provider and bring written proof confirming your coverage when you go to pick up your vehicle if you decide to use a personal automobile policy to cover your rental car in Europe.

## Extra Equipment, Winterization & Additional Fees

While Auto Europe's prices include unlimited miles, Value Added Tax, Full-to-Full fuel tank rentals, and liability insurance coverage, there are some [local charges that may apply to your rental](#) when you pick up from the supplier. A little bit of planning can help avoid many of these charges.

### Europe Car Rental Driver Age-Related Fees

The minimum [age varies from country to country](#), but almost all companies will charge a young driver surcharge for drivers under 25. These fees will be charged on a per-day basis and must be paid at the rental desk upon pick up. A less common rental car age requirement is a maximum age limit that will sometimes prevent older senior drivers from renting a car. These limits typically affect drivers 75 and older, but individual rental suppliers can set these rental car age requirements and restrictions at their own discretion.

### Fuel Policies: Full-to-Full or Full-to-Empty

Not paying attention to the rental company's fuel policy can cost you dearly. Vehicles on a **full to full contract** start with a full tank of fuel and must be returned at the same level when dropping off. If not, a locally determined refueling fee will apply, and it will be much more costly than filling the car up yourself.

If your rental includes a **full to empty fuel policy**, you will pre-pay a given amount for a full tank of fuel and can return the vehicle as close to empty as possible without incurring any additional fuel costs.

To save on fuel charges, opt for a full to full policy when available, fill up the rental car right before you return it, and retain a copy of the receipt for your records. It may be a bit less convenient to have to make a fuel stop just before dropping off, but that little bit of extra work can save you some money on the premium rates you will have to pay for a tank of gas through a full to empty policy.


### Car Rental Equipment

You will always have the option of adding additional equipment to your rental depending on your unique needs or preferences. The most commonly available accessories include GPS units, child seats, snow chains, ski racks, and portable WiFi devices, but other options may be offered in different locations. Additional equipment is usually charged on a per-day basis, and prices will range depending on the supplier you are renting from; add-ons will always cost extra, to be paid for at the counter and subject to VAT, unless your quote or contract explicitly states them as "included." Be sure to take care of the accessories you add on, too, because you will have to pay a replacement fee for any loss, theft, or damages done to the items!

### Winterization Fees

Winter fees mainly refer to the addition of winter tires and [vary from country to country](#) in Europe. Germany, for example, requires all rental vehicles from November 1<sup>st</sup> until March 31<sup>st</sup> to come equipped with winter tires. Auto Europe offers car rental packages with free winter tires in many destinations. When you book your special winter rate with us, there will be no extra charge for winter tires locally. Winter packages will be displayed as 'Winter Tires Included' when you book your car online.

Audi A3 or similar  
Midsize Class - Manual Transmission



**Price Includes:**

- Unlimited Miles
- Value Added Tax (VAT)
- [Product Information](#)

4 4 1 2 AC

**SPECIAL OFFER** → **Winter Tires Included**

## Manual vs. Automatic Car Rental in Europe

Cars with automatic transmission are harder to come by in Europe. Make sure to book well in advance if you require an automatic car rental in Europe since most of your fellow American travelers will be competing for these cars, and be prepared to pay a higher price for this type of vehicle.

## How Old do you have to be to Rent a Car in Europe?

Every country has different [rental car age requirements](#). Though the minimum age varies from 17-21 in most countries, many rental suppliers will set strict age limits or charge an additional daily fee known as a young driver surcharge. Remember that rules may vary depending on the location and rental supplier you choose, but specific terms and conditions will always be listed in your car rental contract.

## Do You Need an International Driver's Permit (IDP)?

There is a good chance that you will either need an [international driving permit](#) to rent a car, or it will come in handy at some point on your trip. They are inexpensive, easy to attain, and can provide you with some peace of mind to help you better enjoy your trip.

An international driver's permit translates your regular driver's license into the most common languages in the world, including German, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Italian. It is not a stand-alone document, as it is only accepted alongside your original license. This can be extremely helpful in the event that you are pulled over for a traffic infringement, or you need extra identification for any reason. If the person asking for your IDP doesn't speak a word of English, having an international driver's permit will tell them what your license says about you - sometimes allowing you to avoid delays or other issues while traveling abroad.

### How to Get an International Driver's Permit

You can obtain an international driver's permit from either [AAA](#) or the National Automobile Club. These are the only two places that are authorized to sell international driving permits by the US State Department. They cost \$15 dollars and can be mailed or done in person. You will need to provide:

- Your completed IDP application form
- Two original passport pictures each signed on the back
- \$15 USD permit fee
- A photocopy of both sides of your driver's license

The international driving permit is effective for one year from the date issued, and may not be issued more than six months in advance of desired effective date.



## Rental Car Classes and Categories Explained

Rental cars are broken down into different sizes and classes, but some are more easily understood than others. You probably can figure out what an SUV or van rental will entail, but most people aren't completely sure what a [compact vs economy rental car](#) is. Below you'll find an introduction to some of the most popular car rental categories to help you choose the car rental class that's best for your itinerary.

### Economy Car Rentals

Small, agile and fuel efficient, economy rental cars are an excellent choice for short term travel and for travelers on a budget. You can expect to enjoy 30-35 miles per gallon and an economy car rental can typically accommodate 4 adults, two medium-sized suitcases and a small carryon bag.



>> [Learn More about Economy Car Rentals in Europe](#)

---

### Compact Car Rentals

Renting a compact car offers superior fuel economy (25-30 miles per gallon) and adequate storage space for luggage (12-14 cubic feet), accommodating about three small to medium-sized bags or suitcases.



>> [Learn More about Compact Car Rentals in Europe](#)

---

### Mid-Size Car Rentals

Travelers who value comfort without busting their budget will appreciate a mid-size car rental while traveling in Europe or elsewhere. Offering 15-17 cubic feet of storage space for luggage, you can expect to comfortably fit 3-4 medium-sized bags or suitcases in a mid-size rental car.



>> [Learn More about Mid-Size Car Rentals in Europe](#)

---

### Full Size Car Rentals

Rent a full size car and you'll enjoy a full 18 cubic feet of storage (in most models) along with decent fuel economy at 15-25 miles per gallon. Comfortably stow 4 medium-sized bags during your driving tour of Europe.



>> [Learn More about Full-Size Car Rentals in Europe](#)

---

### Luxury & Sports Car Rentals

Renting a luxury car in Europe is an opportunity to indulge and enjoy some of the most beautiful scenery in the world from behind the wheel of a premium automobile. The make and model of your luxury rental car will determine the luggage capacity and fuel economy.



>> [Learn More about Luxury Car Rentals in Europe](#)

---

### SUV Rentals

Big, safe and plenty of storage space describes an SUV rental - the perfect vehicle for traveling with a family. Designed to accommodate extra equipment (are you planning a ski trip?), renting an SUV in Europe provides seating for 5 or more people.



>> [Learn More about SUV Rentals in Europe](#)

---

### Van Rentals

Renting a van will allow you to accomplish a variety of tasks that would be extremely difficult if not impossible without the additional space. From transporting extra luggage, to driving around a large group of people, the extra room a van rental provides is a necessity.



>> [Learn More about Van Rentals in Europe](#)

## Domestic and International One Way Car Rental in Europe

There are [two types of one way travel](#) with a rental car: domestic and international. One of the conditions of returning a rental vehicle to a different location is a compulsory charge known as a one way car rental fee or "drop fee." This varies in price depending on the rental car company's rate for a prearranged drop-off at a domestic or international location. Thanks to our continuing partnerships with our suppliers, a domestic one way fee is generally free of charge for a trip from one city to another within the same country, as long as a minimum rental period is met.

**An international one way fee is almost always required for a trip from one country to another country.** Unless stated otherwise, it is important to note that rental companies around the world charge an international one way fee, though some companies don't disclose this fee up front. Auto Europe always discloses one way rental car fees during the booking process. They can also be found on your Auto Europe quote or voucher.

### One Way Car Rental Information

For this rental the estimated one way fee is **EUR 600.00**, which will be paid locally (not included in rental rate below).  
Taxes/Fee are not included.

## GPS & Navigation

If you are choosing the freedom that a car rental in Europe can bring, don't forget you'll need to find your way around! Many make the mistake of assuming they can rely on their mobile phones for navigation. This can quickly become costly with potentially astronomical international roaming data charges to face when you return home. What's worse, you could end up stranded in a strange place when you lose service in more rural areas.

GPS rentals are a way to put your mind at ease so you can better enjoy your trip. You have options when it comes to gaining this peace of mind; you can either arrange to pick up a GPS from the local car rental company or, even better, you can save money and book a GPS with Auto Europe that is pre-loaded with maps, in English, and sent directly to your home! Call Auto Europe toll free at 1-888-223-5555 or [request a GPS rental online](#).

## Renting a Car in Eastern Europe

Traveling through Eastern Europe has a different set of rules than Western Europe when it comes to renting a car. Many car rental suppliers are more leery of allowing their rental vehicles to travel into the Eastern realm.

### Eastern Europe Car Rental Zones

**Zone 1:** Croatia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

**Zone 2:** Belarus, Bosnia, Estonia, Greece, Herzegovina, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, and Turkey.

To travel to either zone, there is a minimum rental duration requirement. This varies between origins of departures, drop-off, countries and suppliers. Zone 2 also often requires you to complete a Travel East Agreement and purchase Travel East Insurance. The Travel East Agreement acknowledges that you understand the risks and responsibility of taking a vehicle to Eastern Europe while Travel East Insurance covers your vehicle while crossing border(s).

The most expedient way to answer all of your questions and make sure all the minute details of your travel are taken care of is to contact one of our experienced reservation agents, available 24/7 and toll-free at **1-888-223-5555**.

## European Road Signs and Driving Information

Many members of the European Union now utilize a standard set of signs and signals to make travel easier for both visitors and residents alike. You will see signs and advisements that will be only valid in a particular country, such as London's congestion charge; however a majority of the signs in European destinations will be standardized.

Standard signs found throughout Europe will fall under the classes listed below, ranging from danger warnings, to services information, to directional signs. For information regarding signage specific to certain countries, [click here](#) or find [country-specific travel guides here](#).

- [Danger Warning Signs](#)
- [Prohibitory or Restrictive Signs](#)
- [Information, Facility & Service Signs](#)
- [Additional Information Signs](#)
- [Priority Signs](#)
- [Mandatory Signs](#)
- [Special Regulation Signs](#)
- [Direction, Position & Indication Signs](#)

## Long Term Car Rental and Short Term Leases

Renting a car for a few weeks or more is a wonderful way to take in Europe. You can find fantastic deals on long-term car rentals which will appeal to any traveler planning an extended trip. In general you can expect to receive a lower daily rate for longer reservations, but this is especially true if you rent a car for 2-3 weeks or more. Auto Europe offers attractive rates on long-term and month-long car rentals, but you might be surprised to learn a short-term lease of a factory-new Peugeot can often be even better than renting.

With a [Peugeot short-term lease](#), you'll drive a brand new car insured and registered in your name for a low daily rate. You get the benefits of driving your own personal car, like unlimited mileage, with the 24/7 support of a rental. When you're done, you simply return your vehicle just like you would with a standard car rental.

## Accidents and Emergencies While Driving a Rental Car – What to Do

A large benefit of booking a car with Auto Europe is knowing that you have 24/7 access to representatives who speak English and can advise you in any situation that arises with your rental. Whether you suffer a flat tire on a remote stretch of road in the Alps, have a question about crossing an international border, or you get into a fender-bender in Rome, you can call Auto Europe any time at **1-888-223-5555** or from one of our [international toll-free numbers](#) below:

<b>Australia</b>	0011-800-223-5555-5	<b>Hungary</b>	00-800-223-5555-5	<b>Poland</b>	0-0-800-111-1258
<b>Belgium</b>	00-800-223-5555-5	<b>Ireland</b>	00-800-223-5555-5	<b>Portugal</b>	00-800-223-5555-5
<b>Denmark</b>	00-800-223-5555-5	<b>Italy</b>	00-800-223-5555-5	<b>Spain</b>	900-96-1280
<b>Finland</b>	00-800-1-156218	<b>Luxembourg</b>	00-800-223-5555-5	<b>Sweden</b>	00-800-223-5555-5
<b>France</b>	00-800-223-5555-5	<b>Netherlands</b>	00-800-223-5555-5	<b>Switzerland</b>	00-800-223-5555-5
<b>Germany</b>	00-800-223-5555-5	<b>New Zealand</b>	00-800-223-5555-5	<b>United Kingdom</b>	00-800-223-5555-5
<b>Greece</b>	00-800-11-574-0300	<b>Norway</b>	00-800-223-5555-5		

## Still have questions?

Visit us online for more information and find the best rental car deals worldwide. Get a free quote and book your car today!

**auto  europe®**  
[www.autoeurope.com](http://www.autoeurope.com)

