

10 Things Your Sponsor Meant To Tell You

Following are 10 things to which new arrivals often say, "I wish I knew that before I got here!" Knowing this stuff before your arrival will make your tour at Lajes Field, Azores, a much better experience.

1. You DO need separate NATO orders--don't let anybody try to convince you otherwise! Get them from your FSS before you depart. If you'll be arriving via AMC and don't have them, you will NOT be allowed to board the aircraft.
2. If you plan to drive a car here, whether your own or a rental, you must have a valid, UNEXPIRED Stateside driver license. Local officials will NOT recognize an extension issued by any state, so be sure your driver license will be current all the way through the end of your tour.
3. If you will be accompanied, don't delay processing the AF Form 1466 for your dependents' overseas clearance. Do it right away! Putting this off can only result in disappointment, PSC delays, or any number of other bad things happening.
4. As of 15 May, 2010, full JFTR is now authorized for accompanied members! But don't bring your washer, dryer, refrigerator, etc. These will be issued by the Furnishing Management Office. Non-temporary storage is NOT available on the island, and your excess items cannot be shipped back to CONUS for storage at government expense. If you bring too much stuff, you'll have to store it in your house.
5. Want to call back home to the States really cheap? Get the hardware for IP-over-internet service (such as Vonage) with a local Stateside phone number before you arrive. It will work here, so when you call to, or receive calls from the States, charges--if any--will apply as if you were in the States. Skype* and other similar programs work very well too. Others swear by devices such as MajicJack*.
6. Our DoDD School includes grades K through 12, and is widely recognized as the BEST in the Mediterranean District! We've got Sure Start too! Fact: 100 percent of this year's eleven high school graduates were accepted to the college of their choice, with \$227,902 in scholarships shared between them.
7. All dependents (10 years and older) will require a Portuguese-issued identification card to enter or exit Lajes Field. Be sure your sponsor has requested a temporary pass in advance of your arrival. This is especially important if you'll be arriving just before, or during a weekend.
8. The BX and Commissary are closed on Sundays & Mondays. Let your sponsor know of any special dietary or child cares needs (diapers, formula, etc.) to ensure you will have what you need upon arrival.
9. If you are considering bringing your TV here from the US, remember the video format in the US is NTSC while in Europe it is PAL. Thus, the only NTSC signals you will receive are Armed Forces Network (AFN - 10 Channels) and your DVD player. If you wish to watch local channels, you'll need a Multi-system TV, which you can purchase here at the BX.
10. While some members bring their very large American vehicles, mid-size and smaller vehicles are often better suited for the more narrow roadways off base. Diesel is not available on base, and must be purchased off base, at local prices.

Bonus material:

11. Before traveling, make sure both your bank and credit companies know you are moving overseas. How frustrating is it to try to use your ATM/Credit card, only to have it rejected?
12. Consider using your current homeowner's policy to purchase, renter's insurance, or purchase it separately.

*No Federal endorsement intended.

13. Some investment companies will not allow you to begin new investments from an overseas location. Check with your investment counselor and if you want to begin any new investments, you may need to do so before you depart the US.

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