SUCCESSFUL TRADE SHOW PARTICIPATION
GUIDE FOR COFFEE EXPORTERS

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Why Market Coffee at Trade Shows?

Coffee is one of the world’s largest industries and most widely-traded global commodities. Seventy or more countries produce and export coffee and practically every other country consumes it. Because of the vast geography and large number of participants involved in its trade, coffee trade shows (also known as trade fairs or exhibitions) become a gathering place to promote products and services, to learn new skills, socialize and develop new business.

At a trade show, coffee exporters can:

- **Build brand awareness as an exhibitor or advertiser.** Building awareness is a valuable contribution to an organizational sales effort. It is a foundation for all other sales and marketing effort. Set expectations realistically, however, as sales cycles in the coffee trade are slow and most business identified through coffee trade show activity is not transacted at the event. It may take months or years to complete new business with sales prospects.

- **Hold customer meetings.** Industry events provide an opportunity to meet with a large number of existing trade partners in one forum. Use the time to discuss ongoing or new business matters and socialize with customers. In addition to formal business meetings, social activities build trust, which is of critical importance in the specialty coffee niche.

- **Gather intelligence.** Use shows to learn how other coffee exporters promote coffees. Visit competitor displays to gauge their effectiveness. Taste coffees from other exporters to better understand the competition. Adapt good ideas from your competitors for your own marketing plan.

- **Learn.** Learn more about coffee, new innovations in the coffee industry, or how to conduct export business better. Everyone can learn something new from attending lectures or skill-building workshops. Trade shows sometimes educational courses that teach attendees to perform better as coffee cuppers, roasters, or baristas. A better understanding the industry from soil to cup will improve selling effectiveness.

- **Develop strategic partnerships.** Consider joining or aligning with regional trade groups, barista or roaster associations, or other national coffee associations with common interests. Banding together with others increases social networks and can improve the effectiveness of sales activity.

- **Meet the press.** Trade press attend events to cover stories generated within the industry. Form relationships with editors or other media representatives to improve the potential of future exposure for your business or region. Invite and involve trade media in your activities at shows. Making media impressions a key metric for evaluating success of the activity.

Participating as an attendee or exhibitor at an international coffee trade show can cost substantial sums of money. In addition to the direct costs associated with travel and display-related costs an exhibitor, one must also not forget lost time while away from the office. Since so much is at risk, it is important to plan to achieve a positive return on investment. When done right, trade shows can be a profitable investment.
ADDED VALUE IN THE SPECIALTY NICHE

Within the coffee industry there are two primary market segments: commodity, currently representing about 85% of the quantity of coffee traded and specialty (sometimes referred to as differentiated), the other 15%. This guide is intended for exporters pursuing the niche specialty segment. Although there may also be some benefits of marketing commodity coffees at trade shows (e.g. when introducing coffee to new markets, or when seeking new commodity traders), much more will be gained by those dealing in specialty.

The ideology of specialty coffee is that every coffee is unique, making value addition possible. This new value comes from tangible changes like improvement in quality or flavor and availability of data or from intangible ones influenced by marketing. In addition to technical criteria, such as plant variety, origin location, and method of processing, specialty coffee buyers want to know where their coffees come from, under what conditions they were farmed, and about the people responsible for its production.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Specialty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideology</strong></td>
<td>Coffee is interchangeable</td>
<td>Every coffee is unique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sensory characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Simple “coffee flavor,” low acidity, sometimes inconsistent</td>
<td>Complex, distinctive characteristics indicative of origin terror, plant genetics, farm practices and processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Defects</strong></td>
<td>Up-to 10% by weight</td>
<td>Low to zero, no primary defects producing off-cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trading</strong></td>
<td>Electronic futures exchanges or large volume commodities traders, little to no interaction between producer and end-user</td>
<td>Relationship-based trade conducted between parties in direct communication, often involving specialist importer/traders. Sometimes sold at auction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traceability</strong></td>
<td>Limited, only to the origin, cooperative, or exporter</td>
<td>Potentially traceable to an individual producer or estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lot quantity</strong></td>
<td>Multiple shipping containers</td>
<td>Typically less than full 20t container, often micro-lots 100 60kg bags or less. Nano-lots may be few kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Packing</strong></td>
<td>Jute, 1t big bag, or full shipping container bladder</td>
<td>Moisture barrier lining or hermetic sealed (Grainpro, Ecotact) various sizes, or 15k vacuum-sealed bricks, advanced recyclable technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Price discovery</strong></td>
<td>Set by futures exchanges with strict premiums and discounts for origin and quality variation</td>
<td>Varies: often set at price premiums above futures markets, sometimes including additional premiums for certification. Sometimes negotiated directly between producer and buyer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Value addition

| Low price, credit terms, storage options, shipping time | Flavor, quality, exclusivity, rarity, authenticity, story, relationship, novelty, environmental and social sustainability, traceability, brand |

### Trade show goal

| Identify new customers, find new suppliers | Identify new customers, find new suppliers, support existing relationships, add value with brand promotion and social interaction |

Unlike in the larger commodity market, trading in specialty coffee requires detailed communication between buyer and seller throughout the season. Specialty trading partners may be in contact regularly by phone or email, and buyers may visit the farming areas of their suppliers seasonally. Relationships are develop over time, developing loyalty and even friendships. These relationships enhance the effectiveness of communication and improve the ease of doing business.

**2 ROASTERS’ VILLAGE AT WORLD OF COFFEE AMSTERDAM, A PLACE FOR BUSINESS AND SOCIALIZING**

Trade shows play an important role in facilitating these relationships:

- **Introductions.** Participation at events puts exporters in contact with hundreds of new potential customers. The exhibition floor, cupping rooms, social activities, even meetings in a hotel lobby, elevator, or shared taxicab offer new opportunities. Always carry business cards and be prepared with a short description of your company’s offerings. (known as an “elevator pitch” for this reason!)

- **Business planning/support.** Once trust is established, exporters can meet casually with buyers each year at industry events to discuss ongoing business details. There may no longer be a need for one party to travel to the others’ location (at additional time and expense) specifically for that purpose.

- **Socializing.** Do not underestimate the value of social relationships within the coffee industry. Social relationships between buyer and seller help to build bonds that add and customer loyalty. Trust-based relationships allow for greater flexibility in times of trouble or when pursuing mutual goals.
EVENT SELECTION

There are many coffee events to attend each year. In addition to international, regional and national coffee-focused trade events, there are also food and hospitality industry shows, consumer coffee festivals, coffee pavilions at agriculture trade events, restaurant shows and more. Careful event selection is necessary to make good use of limited marketing resources and time.

INTERNATIONAL TRADESHOWS

International or regional coffee industry trade-focused events are generally best for exporters seeking to reach large audiences of specialty buyers. These large annual shows draw thousands and possibly tens of thousands of businesspeople engaged in the trade of coffee, related products, and services.

Major industry shows include:

- Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) Global Expo (USA)
- SCA World of Coffee (Europe)
- Seoul International Cafe Show (Korea)
- Melbourne International Coffee Expo (MICE) (Australia)
- Specialty Coffee Association of Japan Event
NATIONAL TRADESHOWS
Smaller regional or national coffee-focused trade shows draw potential buyers from the surrounding region or country. Hosts of these events may be private for-profit show companies or national coffee associations. Although typically drawing smaller audiences, these may be good options for coffee exporters targeting a geographic region (or country) for new business.

Smaller, regionally-focused events include:

- **Trieste Espresso** (Italy)
- **COTEC`** (Germany)
- **Taiwan International Coffee Show** (Taiwan)
- **Canadian Coffee and Tea Show**
- **Café Asia** (Singapore)
- **National Coffee Association Conference and Expo** (United States)
- **Coffee & Chocolate Expo** (Saudi Arabia)

FOOD AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY EVENTS
Large food and hospitality events, some with hundreds of thousands of visitors, may have entire conference halls or pavilions dedicated to coffee industry suppliers. In some countries, these large events may host annual gatherings and competitions of national coffee associations.

Although the majority of attendees at food and hospitality shows will not have an interest or application for green coffee, the high volume of traffic means that even a small percentage of coffee professionals may make participation an exhibitor worthwhile.

Examples of these food and hospitality shows include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food &amp; Hotel Asia (Singapore)</th>
<th>SIAL Paris (France)</th>
<th>GulfHost (UAE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotelex (China)</td>
<td>HOST Milan (Italy)</td>
<td>Anuga (Germany)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIR (Russia)</td>
<td>Thaifex (Thailand)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONSUMER COFFEE FESTIVALS

Coffee festivals and consumer food shows are best to promote roasted coffee to wholesale or retail coffee buyers. Consumer festivals are generally not recommended for green coffee exporters, as attendees of these shows are not ideal customers for green coffee imports; however, exhibitors appearing or professionals participating at these events may be. Festivals also provide an opportunity to gather intelligence about a market and its trends.

These include:

- Amsterdam, London, or New York Coffee Festival
- Athens Coffee Festival (Greece)
- Coffee Con (USA)
- Coffee Fest (USA)
- Istanbul Coffee Festival (Turkey)
- Fancy Food Show (USA)

EXPORT ASSOCIATION TRADE SHOWS

Trade associations in coffee exporting nations also organize national events for the purpose of attracting foreign buyers, hosting national competitions, and gathering domestic stakeholders. Some foreign buyers may attend these shows but are not a primary audience. More likely, foreign attendees are equipment and service providers exhibiting for the purpose of selling to coffee producer/exporters (processing or roasting equipment, packaging suppliers, inputs, etc.). Therefore, the main purpose of attending an export association trade event should be to meet with suppliers and participate in national competitions, educational workshops, and lectures.
Export association trade shows include:

- **African Fine Coffee Association Event** (East Africa)
- **EspacoCafe** (Brazil)
- **ExpoEspeciales** (Colombia)
- **India International Coffee Festival**
- **Kona Coffee Cultural Festival** (Hawaii, USA)
- **Sintercafe** (Costa Rica)

**WHO ARE THE ATTENDEES?**

When considering participation in a trade show, learn as much as possible about who will be there to attend and exhibit. Visit show websites to review a list of current or past exhibitors. There is safety in numbers. If a number of competitors are listed as exhibitors, the show may be highly relevant to your business.

Large and established trade show events may also offer detailed attendee demographics in a prospectus for potential exhibitors. Data may include the number of participants, nationalities, company category, and job function. Sometimes, these also include key interests and spending budgets obtained in registration surveys that can be helpful to better-understand the motives and buying potential of a show’s audience.

Beyond the materials offered by show promoters, ask existing customers what trade shows they attend and reasons why. Very often, the shows that your customers attend are the ones that you should attend too.

**TO EXHIBIT OR NOT?**

Once a show is selected, one must decide how to participate: an attendee or exhibitor? There are benefits and drawbacks to each.

**EXHIBITING**

A trade show display is not a market stall or living brochure hoping to attract passers-by. A well-organized display (or booth) projects a message. It says that your business is both capable and credible to do business with within a market. It provides a known place of meeting for staff and customers, and a site for cupping demonstrations and tastings. The display functions a base of operations for the duration of the trade event, normally two or three days.

Exhibitors may also have access to privileges not available to ordinary non-exhibitor attendees, such as:

- early and late access to the event floor
- cupping or meeting rooms (for hire)
- lead retrieval systems that scan attendee badges (for hire)
- listings in printed show guides or on a show website
- priority consideration as a speaker in lectures
- reduced advertising rates in related trade publications
- access to attendee lists and contact information

However, this comes at a significant cost that measured in thousands or 10s of thousands of euros, which may be beyond the reach of small companies. If unable to participate as a single-company exhibitor due to cost,
check with a local coffee export association to ask about joining as a part of their group at a shared rate. Government trade programs, NGO market access initiatives may also offer subsidies or other programs to assist small business exporters doing business abroad. If not available, consider sharing a stand with likeminded competitors or customers (importers, roasters) with an interest to promote your products, however these arrangements can be complex.

Time is also a consideration. Planning to exhibit at a large international event should begin 10-12 months in advance. There are several decisions that must be made, logistics to be arranged, and administrative requirements to be met that require extensive preparation. Consider how much time remains until the show begins. If less than four months, it may be better to attend rather than exhibit.

ATTENDING

Attendee credentials at professional trade show events are usually inexpensive, while still providing access to the trade floor and many show activities. Attendees can walk the floor to observe competitors or meet with customers and suppliers at or outside the event, but booth-to-booth selling is strictly prohibited. It is not considered acceptable to walk show aisles handing out marketing materials and or green coffee samples, since that privilege is reserved for paying exhibitors. As an alternative, attendees who wish to sell coffee at a trade show may consider hosting an offsite event or hotel hospitality suite.

Offsite events, such as cupping sessions or social engagements may be hosted by anyone. These activities are regularly scheduled by coffee companies maintaining offices or retail locations in the host city of an event. To promote a brand offsite, consider arranging for cupping room space at a nearby customer’s coffee shop or roastery, or hosting a cocktail reception at restaurant for clientele.

Suites at nearby hotels can double as a reception venue and a meeting room away from the busy show floor. Be sure any hospitality suite is within close walking distance to the conference facility, as most attendees of professional trade shows have limited schedule availability.

BUDGETING COSTS

Reserving booth space at an event is a small piece of a coffee trade show exhibitor’s budget. Thoroughly investigate costs before committing to an event, as some additional services (e.g. electricity, or show insurance) may be sold separately. Consider requesting a sample budget from the event organizer.

Consider:

- advertisements (show guide, trade media, social media promotion)
- catering (water for coffee, milk for espresso drinks)
- display equipment (brewing equipment, grinders, airpots)
- exhibit (show-provided shell or custom exhibit)
- furniture rental (chairs, tables, sofa, plants)
- hosted events (dinners, parties, hospitality suites, cupping rooms)
- inbound and outbound freight (freight, plus show drayage)
- marketing materials and supplies (handouts, green samples)
- services (electricity, cleaning)
- sponsorships (competitions, show features)
- supplies (extension cables, cups, paper filters, towels, cleaning supplies)
- travel expenses (flights, hotels, meals, ground transportation, visas)
The sample budget below compares potential costs to participate as an attendee or small exhibitor (e.g. 3m² display) at a fictitious coffee trade show for purposes of illustration. Market prices and assessed fees vary substantially by city and event, so be sure to update these costs with real data provided by an event organizer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Attendee</th>
<th>Small Exhibitor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exhibit space / attendee registration</td>
<td>€150</td>
<td>€3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display costs (modest design, build)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>€2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance (required by show)</td>
<td></td>
<td>€250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freight (in/out)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>€750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising, sponsorships</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>€1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture rental</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>€350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services (electrical, cleaning)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>€250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing supplies</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>€500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead retrieval system</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>€150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering (brewing water)</td>
<td>Included in suite</td>
<td>€250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality suite or event</td>
<td>€1500 (optional)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. supplies</td>
<td>€50</td>
<td>€150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>€200 attend</td>
<td>€10,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€1,700 w/suite or event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Travel (per person)          |          |          |
| Airfare, ground transportation | €500-€1,500 | €500-€1,500 |
| Hotel (3-days attendee, 5 days exhibitor) | €525 | €875 |
| Visa costs (if applicable)   | €100     | €100   |
| Meals and incidentals (3-days attendee, 5 days exhibitor) | €225 | €375 |
| **Subtotal Travel (per person)** | €1,350-€2,350 | €1,850-€2,850 |

**WHAT TO BRING**

**MARKETING MATERIALS**
When considering marketing materials to bring, remember the saying “less is more.” Paper marketing materials can be costly to produce and cannot be changed once printed. They are also heavy to carry. Be mindful that coffee buyers also do not want to carry brochures from multiple prospective suppliers back to their home offices or respective countries of origin. In some consumer markets, printed materials may be considered environmentally unfriendly and leave a negative impression. The less you carry to a show, the less you will need to carry home.
Where possible, bring a simple one-page (or double-sided) sheet with basic information about the coffee exporter and origin. This should contain relevant facts and some attractive photos of coffee and/or national culture. English language is typical for international business in the coffee industry, however it may be advantageous to translate marketing materials into a local language. Individual business cards with an email address or website are often the best way to receive follow-up inbound calls.

**COFFEE SAMPLES**

Bring coffee samples representing lots that are for sale or typical of seasonal availability. Bring the best that is available to offer being sure it is authentic and representative of typical availability. Do not groom defects from samples to make them appear better, as such tactics do not build trust.

It is appropriate to have a small quantity of sample green coffee packs on-hand (150g). Do not bring more than a dozen or two. Some coffee buyers will provide instructions to ship samples to them directly after the event. The cost of shipment may be preferable to the burden of carrying several kilos of green coffee in personal luggage. Be aware are some countries where green coffee samples cannot be hand-carried and must be either roasted or imported using special procedures. Be sure to check with the show host or visit the country’s customs website to review regulations prior to attending.

**SAMPLE PACKAGING**

Sample packs make a first impression with coffee importers that demonstrates professionalism as an organization and potential ability to deliver promises as a trading partner. They should be rigid or sturdy, sealed and clearly labeled with identifying criteria. Where possible, these should also include the company brand. Labeling should display:

- Company and contact information (name, phone, email, website)
- Sample or lot identifying information
- Lot size, total production size
- Harvest, ship dates
- National coffee grade (if applicable)
- Location (with coordinates and elevation, if available)
- Community/regional name, estate name, or washing station (if applicable)
- Variety (if known)
- Processing method
- Certifications, e.g. organic, RFA/Utz, FT, others (if applicable)
- Marked “SAMPLE: NO COMMERCIAL VALUE” in case of any questions upon arrival at customs.

**SUPPLIES**

Exhibition halls are large and usually located outside of central business districts. It may be difficult to source needed supplies at these remote locations during the busy few days of a trade show. Suppliers who are located on the show grounds will charge a (sometimes substantial) premium for their services. For that reason, it is recommended that you bring all materials and supplies that you reasonably expect to need during the event with you, or plan to source them in the city of the show during the few days prior. Availability of food and water is also sometimes limited on the trade show floor (or inferior at exorbitant prices due to lack of competition), so it is advisable to pack a lunch or snacks and water bottle to carry through the day.

Consider bringing the following supplies. Even if you do not need all of these at an event, others around you may, which may make you a popular person.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Supplies</th>
<th>Office / Coffee Supplies</th>
<th>Exhibit and Sales Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All prescribed medicines, cold medicine, stomach medicines</td>
<td>Aprons</td>
<td>Batteries (various sizes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band Aids</td>
<td>Clipboard(s)</td>
<td>Bungee cords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual backup shoes (to replace heels, dress shoes)</td>
<td>Computer/video cables (RGB, HDMI)</td>
<td>Business card collection box/bowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit cards, petty cash</td>
<td>Coffee sample packs</td>
<td>Business card holders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand sanitizer, wet wipes</td>
<td>Cupping bowls</td>
<td>Business cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hat, sunscreen</td>
<td>Cupping scoresheets</td>
<td>Cable ties, zip ties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lint brush</td>
<td>Cupping spoons</td>
<td>Cleaners, towels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lip balm</td>
<td>Electrical tape, clear tape, double-sided mounting tape</td>
<td>Customer information log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone travel SIM card</td>
<td>Highlighter</td>
<td>Draping tablecloth, sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nail clippers</td>
<td>Index cards</td>
<td>First aid kit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain killers</td>
<td>International power adapters</td>
<td>Giveaway and promotions (swag)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone charger</td>
<td>Kettles</td>
<td>Hammer, nails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable snacks (dried fruit, nuts, granola bars, chocolate, etc.)</td>
<td>Notepad(s)</td>
<td>Name tag / company lanyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing kit</td>
<td>Packing tape</td>
<td>Power extension cords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin lotion</td>
<td>Paper clips, rubber bands</td>
<td>Printed handouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stain remover pen</td>
<td>Pens, pencils, markers</td>
<td>Replacement light bulbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tissues</td>
<td>Power strip</td>
<td>Ruler, tape measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toothbrush, dental floss</td>
<td>Reusable shopping bag(s)</td>
<td>Sample information labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tote bag or backpack (locking, if possible, for security)</td>
<td>Scissors</td>
<td>Shower hooks (signage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel plans and registration printouts</td>
<td>Spittoons</td>
<td>Sign holders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umbrella</td>
<td>Stapler, staples</td>
<td>Tool kit (various screwdrivers, pliers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reusable water bottle</td>
<td>Sticky notes</td>
<td>Trash bags, trash can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superglue</td>
<td>Utility knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USB memory sticks</td>
<td>Vacuum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Velcro strips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Voltage meter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wire or string (for signage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ziploc bags</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOW TO PREPARE

REVIEW EXHIBITOR SHOW MANUAL
The first thing that any exhibitor should do is read the show manual provided by organizers. Do this before signing a contract to exhibit, if at all possible, as it contains detailed information about rules, your responsibilities, critical deadlines, and other costs that may be unexpected. Rules and customs vary substantially between venues, sometimes even within the same country, so it is important to assume nothing.

For example, if certain administrative paperwork like insurance forms or health certificates are not filed by specified dates, an exhibitor may face large fines for late submission or be banned entirely from participating at the event. Services (like construction labor, electricity, water delivery, vacuuming, etc.) are typically less expensive when arranged by set dates outlined in the manual. Purchasing needed services and supplies on-site may be at a substantial premium. Read and understand the show manual far in advance so that there are no unpleasant surprises later.

RESEARCH THE DESTINATION
Practically all of the information needed to prepare for any trip can be found searching online at no charge. TripAdvisor, Fodors, Lonely Planet, other travel companies and private blogs all can offer guidance about what conditions and local customs to expect, as well as, what items are best to bring or leave behind. Free government resources like the U.S. State Department Travel international travel website provide detailed information about travel destinations worldwide and can warn of any known threats. For disease advisories or information for travelers with medical conditions, visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control travel site.

VISA
A travel visa may be required for entry into the country of destination and sometimes connecting countries passed in-transit. Check requirements for transit countries and destinations far in advance of the scheduled date of travel. It may take several months and require significant documentation and/or multiple visits to embassies within your country of residence to obtain travel approval.

WEATHER
Lookup a weather forecast for the show destination during planning when clothes are selected for the trip and again immediately prior to travel. Actual conditions may be different than predicted of a place. Heat spells, winter storms, and heavy rains can make a busy work trip uncomfortable or cause substantial travel delays. Be prepared for whatever may come.

CLOTHING
In addition to selecting clothing suited to anticipated weather conditions, also consider what is both comfortable and appropriate in the host country and event venue. Comfortable shoes are important, as both trade show exhibitors and attendees walk long distances or stand long hours on concrete floors. If wearing high heels or dress shoes for some activities, be sure to bring a set of casual backup shoes.

Choose clothing that is professional but comfortable and suited to both indoor and outdoor environmental conditions. Events hosted in Europe and Asia tend to be more formal than those in North America or Australia. Professional high-level conferences and small venue symposiums tend to be more formal than large trade hall expositions. Government and academic conferences tend to be more formal than private sector events. Search for local dress customs to identify any style of clothing to avoid in public, for example, modesty requirements in Muslim countries.
COMMUNICATION
Check with your mobile phone service provider before traveling to determine what roaming rates or other fees may apply for international destinations. Some providers offer international voice and data roaming packages that make international use relatively inexpensive. Others offer temporary rental phones for foreign travel. Alternatively, consider purchasing a travel SIM card in advance or local SIM card on arrival in the destination country.

Travel SIM cards offered by OneSim, GigSky, WorldSim and others provide coverage internationally at reasonable rates. Skyroam offers mobile hotspots that provide similar coverage in many countries. Advanced smartphones equipped with eSIM technology may offer alternative carriers for international roaming without the need to insert a new chip. Options change quickly in this highly competitive field, so do research online to locate the best option available in your area before travel.

GEOGRAPHY AND TRANSPORTATION
Study the geography of the destination before travel: where hotels are located relative to the event venue, where restaurants and supply stores are located relative to the hotel? Where are hospitals, train stations, embassies, pharmacies, or places of worship?

Visit travel websites to gain an idea of how to travel from an airport or train station to the hotel and how much it typically costs. Learn what transportation options are available and recommended for travel between the hotel and exhibition site, the reliability of local taxicabs, availability of public transportation like underground or light rail, trolleys, busses and ferries. In some cities (but not all), ride share services like Uber and Lyft may also be available as convenient transportation options through a smartphone app.

On arrival, confirm your research by asking hotel desk staff and request the contact information of a reliable taxi service. In foreign language-speaking countries, have the hotel provide a business card with written address, phone number, and optional directions.

NEWS
Search the internet for news related to your destination prior to travel. News headlines can provide timely information and warnings about potential complications during your stay. Look for articles about political instability, calls for protests and labor strikes, elections, large sporting events or concerts, recent natural disasters, or other occurrences that may be in your path. Some governments’ foreign outposts offer email mailing lists for visiting citizens to notify them of events. Check the website of your government’s embassy in the destination country to determine if these services are available.

HOLIDAYS
Check a public holiday calendar online for your destination to determine if there are any civic or religious holidays over or near the dates of travel. Holidays may inconvenience travelers, since businesses, services (like couriers for exhibition freight) and government offices may be closed. Travel volumes may increase on public holidays, leading to higher prices, longer than normal wait times for transportation, and long lines at airport security check points.

CURRENCY
Determine the local currency of a place, approximate costs of local goods and services (like a lunch, a bottle of water, a taxi ride, and a haircut) and whether or not credit cards are commonly accepted. Check if there is an additional fee for credit card use (charged by vendors or international fees charge by the issuing bank), and also notify your card issuer of travel. Travel notifications may be required by bank card issuers as a theft deterrent. Exchange rates may vary substantially by exchange location, with the best rates usually obtained at automated teller machines operated by large reputable banks. Check online travel resources to determine the best recommended exchange options and how much cash should be carried versus withdrawn after arrival.
LAWs
Laws of a foreign country may vary significantly from your home. You will be required to follow them or face consequences. Check travel sites and resources offered by your country’s embassy and/or the destination country to determine what is legal. In particular, pay attention to customs laws to confirm what commercial goods may be carried into a country for an exhibition and if any special declaration or duty must be paid to be in compliance with local laws. Similarly, confirm that any prescription medicines used are legal abroad (or in-transit). In case you plan to drive, verify road rules and if additional permitting or insurance is necessary.

LANGUAGE
Determine the local language spoken at the destination, noting that it may be different than the official language of a country. Citizens of small countries bordered by foreign language neighbors may speak multiple languages and English for international business (like the Netherlands). Larger countries with few land borders may speak primarily one (like Brazil or Korea). Create a list of common phrases and words to use in social situations or emergencies (Appendix D: Useful Translations).

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE
Culture is a word that is difficult to define, but essentially is the set of rules we follow, the meaning of our objects and expressions, and expectations we have for ourselves and others that is learned from our family group. Cultural expectations in coffee consuming countries is usually different than in coffee producing countries. As a result, expectations like “to be on time” have very different meanings for buyers and sellers. Some sellers may consider arriving an hour late acceptable, where buyers may consider anything more than a minute or two after the scheduled time offensive. In some cultures, it is considered offensive to show the soles of one’s shoes to another. The same concept applies for directness of speech, male and female gender roles, hierarchy within an organization or community, and whether or not goals are pursued for the many (such as a company) or for the one (an individual).

Be mindful of these potential cultural differences when visiting a new place and speaking with people unlike yourself. (See Appendix C: Common factors affecting culture.) There is no right or wrong, just different from what may be familiar. Do not be offended if a foreigner breaks one of your own cultural norms, it is likely a misunderstanding. Ask questions to gain a full understanding of the issues and expectations of other cultures to avoid unintended miscommunications.

FOOD
Food may be unfamiliar at your destination. Do research online before travel to determine what styles of cuisine may be available. Travelers with dietary restrictions or allergies should be particularly careful to investigate the ingredients customarily used and should have a local language speaker write the restriction on paper to show in restaurants.

Where not limited by medical concerns, try something new. New flavors, smells, and textures of food will make you a better coffee cupper. Well-traveled cuppers can draw on a broad set of sensory experiences to better-articulate characteristics in coffee. Every new food experience you have will be added to your library of coffee descriptors that can be recalled later. Alternatively, considering bringing non-perishable snacks for sustenance during the trip.

AIR TRANSPORTATION AND LODGING
Air transportation and lodging should be booked as early as possible. The best airfare rates are typically found between approximately 45 and 60 days in advance. However, discounted fares may be restricted or subject to substantial fees in case of changes or cancellation, so be certain of your travel dates and ticketing rules before making a commitment.
There is greater urgency to book hotel rooms early, since availability for hotels in preferable locations adjacent to the event venue may fill months or a year in advance. Trade events often offer hotel rooms through an official lodging company found on its website. Booking through the host is usually a good idea, as coffee associations (in particular) negotiate discount rates for large room blocks and return savings back to membership. This is not always the case, however, so it is advisable to verify pricing options at the same property through an independent travel agency.

In some cities, renting an apartment or whole home with a group of others may be a preferable option through a service like Airbnb. Apartments are not generally serviced and do not offer the same conveniences of a hotel, like dry cleaning or restaurants on the premises. They are usually larger, however, which is better for company teams of attendees traveling together (or families) and often include a kitchen and laundry facilities that make the overall cost of meals and lodging much less expensive than hotels.

**Update Marketing Materials**

Trade shows are gathering places that offers opportunities to meet with existing contacts as well as new ones. Months ahead of participating at a show is the best time to start updating marketing materials.

**Coffee Samples**

Coffee samples should not be an afterthought. They are arguably the most important part of a trade show appearance and must be carefully planned and prepared. Depending on the size and scope of your production, select an appropriate number of samples (perhaps between 5 and 10) that adequately represent the company’s offerings and/or actual lots available for sale.

Package and label each as referenced in (Coffee samples). Where possible, reserve samples (e.g. 5kg) of top performing lots produced each year exclusively for marketing purposes in a sample library. Store the sample under controlled climate conditions and/or in Ecotact® or Grainpro® packaging to maximize shelf life. The sample library of coffee can then be used to demonstrate company products outside of peak harvest and shipment months. Store and demonstrate good (but authentic) examples of products produced by the company. As with pre-shipment samples, do not groom marketing samples to remove defects, as this may be considered misrepresentation. Exceeding expectations by delivery coffees as good or better than promised is always the best path to a long-term customer relationship.

**Samples and Roasting**

Follow SCA-recommended protocols for sample roasting. Sample roasting must be performed within a day to few days (if necessary) prior to trade show event. This makes sample roasting logistics complex, as it requires roasting immediately prior to travel or after arrival at a third-party location.

Make a plan for sample roasting months ahead of an event. Third-party locations (like importers, coffee roasters, cafes, etc.) in close proximity to a coffee trade event will have limited availability the week of a major show. Many companies will be competing to borrow or hire time on a limited supply of roasting equipment. Do not arrive at the event with green coffee and no plan for roasting. This demonstrates disorganization and makes a bad impression with potential customers.

**Website**

One of the first and easiest updates is to a company website: make mention of your upcoming event appearance on an events page or in a blog entry. Include event contact information, including the event name, city, dates, a show booth number (if known), and the names and phone numbers of personnel who may attend. This is free promotion for the investment already being made in attendance.
EMAIL SIGNATURE
Every email message can promote an appearance at an event for free. Including mention of an appearance, for example, “See me at World of Coffee 20xx” in the signature section of your email client. Despite the large size and scope of the coffee industry, there is a relatively small number of professionals engaged in international buying and selling. Many of them attend annual events, so you may be surprised by the effectiveness of this method.

NEWSLETTER
Make mention of upcoming events in a company newsletter or monthly consolidated collection of blog entries sent to email subscribers each month, two months or quarter.

SELL SHEETS
Produce simple one-page sell sheets with key company facts and coffees available specific to the interests of attendees at an upcoming event. Marketing material handouts should be light for customers to carry. Draft them to include action items that drive readers to view a website or contact salesperson for detailed additional information.

At international trade shows, it is sometimes appropriate to translate marketing materials into a local language. Be prepared, however, in the event that a non-English speaker requests more information or wishes to conduct business. A professional translator may be necessary to establish and maintain the customer relationship. This is most effective for exporters committed to do business with multiple clients in one particular market.

TALKING POINTS
Talking points are helpful for both solo attendees and groups to provide planned, consistent, and concise information to potential customers. Make a list of key selling points about your region, coffee company (including a background story), goals for attending the event, and coffees available for sale (or expected the next season). This ensures that anyone representing the company can answer basic questions and will help to project a positive image as prepared professionals.
SCHEDULE CUSTOMER MEETINGS

Scheduling meetings at shows with busy buyers (and sellers) can be challenging. Many hope to meet with tens of customers and suppliers during a two- or three-day event, in addition to participating in other conference activities. For that reason, it is important to schedule meetings with firm times and places well in advance of arriving.

A meeting that is not scheduled is unlikely to happen. Contact customers and prospects with whom you have had some prior communication to schedule meetings between one week to one month in advance. Choose a location, such as a trade show booth, hospitality suit or hotel lobby, as a primary meeting point. On arrival, confirm that the space selected is suitable, as these areas may be noisy with convention crowds at the time of the event. Reconfirm the meeting and location by phone, email, or text one day in advance. Although thirty minutes may be sufficient for most meetings, allow extra time for possible delays. There are many distractions at events that may delay scheduled activities, so be careful not to book a calendar completely full.
## APPENDIX A: EXHIBITOR CHECKLIST

### SIX MONTHS TO ONE YEAR BEFORE A TRADE SHOW

- Read the trade show manual end-to-end
- Research the destination and audience of attendees
- Budget and procure design and building services for exhibit
- Determine show staffing and budget travel
- Determine requirements and begin application process for staff visas (if necessary)
- Create a calendar of critical dates and deadlines for services and administrative filing
- Determine which utilities the show provides and what others (e.g. water, power, drain, cleaning, furniture rental, carpeting & padding, etc.) must be purchased
- Complete forms and pay fees for services at discounted “early bird” rates
- Determine if there are there rules or fees associated with the shipment and carrying of goods to the venue
- Determine if health forms are required to serve brewed coffee samples
- Determine insurance needs (required in USA). Obtain trade show insurance, as appropriate from the show’s recommended provider or company insurer. Follow rules to file the insurance policy with show organizers.
- Reserve cupping room space (often limited availability)
**THREE TO SIX MONTHS BEFORE A TRADE SHOW**

- Overseer and approve display production
- Print and mount booth graphics
- Order services from show providers (water, electricity, carpet padding, cleaning, furniture, etc.)
- Identify coffee samples to bring and confirm a plan for roasting (advance or agreement with third-party roaster)
- Identify meeting venues and/or restaurants for social activities
- Inventory handouts or other marketing materials to determine gaps, create and re-print, as necessary
- Develop new 1-page information 'sell sheets', as necessary
- Conduct a pre-show trade media campaign to build awareness and traffic
- Add show and booth information to trade media advertisements scheduled to run at or near the same time of the event;
- Add mention of event appearance on website, in newsletter, and email signatures
- Complete show guide listing and select relevant category, keywords
- Pay outstanding invoices. Confirm payment information is on-file with the show contractor in case of onsite orders
- Make hotel reservations (check penalty for cancellation)
- Ship display materials to advance show warehouse

**ONE TO THREE MONTHS BEFORE A TRADE SHOW**

- Book air travel (unless as previously required for visa process)
- Register staff as conference exhibitors or attendees
- If using third party roasting services, send green samples to roaster. Although roasting days before the event, allow substantial time for shipment and customs delays
- If brewing coffee: secure brewing, grinding equipment, airpots, cups and paper supplies
- Develop an "elevator pitch" -- a 30 second description of the company that can be told on demand
- Promote participation and booth number on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Inventory office and display supplies. Determine which materials to ship ahead and which to hand carry
- Identify trade media contacts who will be at the event
- Request a pre-registered attendee list from show organizers and use for personalized invitations. DO NOT solicit buyers by email indiscriminately
ONE WEEK TO ONE MONTH BEFORE A TRADE SHOW

- Schedule customer meetings, social engagements
- Develop a list of talking points or common information that all booth staff should know
- Create a lead sheet with pre-printed form fields for name, company, email, notes about discussion and sales contact
- Develop a short press announcement about some newsworthy activity or accomplishment to distribute
- Purchase any last-minute supplies to hand carry
- Create a list of all booth staff attending the show with hotel information and mobile phone numbers for each, distribute to all staff
- Determine what time staff must arrive (and where) for pre-show meeting
- Schedule time and responsibilities for booth setup and tear down before and after the event;
- Determine booth cleaning schedule assigned to staff
- Determine booth staffing schedule for each day of the event (rotating to allow show viewing and meetings)
- Develop time schedule of lectures, activities, events, and customers or competitor exhibits to visit

ONE DAY BEFORE A TRADE SHOW

- Confirm customer meetings
- Conduct pre-show staff meeting. A 1-2 hour meeting held in advance at the show recommend during setup or immediately before the event opening
- Discuss show hours, registration process
- Promote team spirit, collaborative message projected to customers
- Discuss prospect qualifying procedures and collection/distribution of sales prospect information, lead sheets
- Distribute talking points and information sheets
- Explain and demonstrate nonverbal communication cues
- Lead collection procedures (how to collect, distribute after show)
- Establish a policy about personal items & clutter
- Establish a policy about personal food and beverage in the booth space
AFTER A SHOW

- Hold a wrap up meeting will on the final day of the event to discuss challenges and successes (recorded for project notes)
- Distribute lead sheet contact information from the show to staff
- Discuss most and least favorite booth at the show. Discuss as a group and use constructive comments to approve future appearances
- Thank all visitors by email. Staff person listed on each lead sheet is responsible to complete the indicated follow-up actions.
- Tally metrics (impressions, contacts, media contact, sales revenue, etc.)
- Tally total costs
- Record sales contact information associated with show for future planning.
- Analyze the cost per metric to determine if the show was a good investment.
APPENDIX B: COMMUNICATION QUICK REFERENCE

COMMUNICATION

- Maintain a professional but friendly appearance. Approach potential customers assertively but not forcefully or aggressively. Cultural adaptation may be required.

QUALIFYING

- Do not open a conversation with a sales pitch or ask a question that can be easily dismissed, such as "how are you today?"
- Provide attendees an easy way into conversation. Try asking a question that is not confrontational and allows the visitor to discuss their interests.
- Listen to answers and proceed into natural conversation. Continuing to narrow-in focus on those topics of interest so that you may better respond to his or her needs.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- "What brings you to the show?"
- "What are your goals for attending this show?"
- "What does your company do?"
- "What's the most interesting thing you've seen at the event so far?"

ANSWERS

Listen for the following responses:

- Industry the prospect represents
- Role or function the prospect performs
- Does the prospect use coffee? If so, what, how and/or where?
- Does the prospect buy coffee? If so, green coffee or roasted?
- If roasted coffee, does the prospect work with a roasting business? Who?
- Is the prospect satisfied with the current supplier or are there perceived issues for improvement?

NEXT ACTION

The purpose of interactions at the tradeshow event is to gather information that will assist a sales transaction. This may happen weeks or months (possibly years) after the show, so record careful notes about each discussion.

1. Request the best next action to proceed (arrange a meeting, send sample, schedule follow-up call, etc.)
2. Agree to next action and record notes
APPENDIX C: COMMON FACTORS AFFECTING CULTURE

Background

1. Geography and topography
2. History
3. Economic system
4. Business and commerce
5. Political structures
6. Media and broadcasting
7. Language(s)

Society

8. Current political situation
9. Legal system
10. Religious influences
11. Regional differences
12. Social and community life
13. Ethnic minorities
14. Gender issues
15. Education system
16. Heroes and myths
17. Private / work life overlap

Traditions and customs

18. Communication styles
19. Greetings
20. Gestures
21. Levels of formality
22. Holidays and festivals
23. Taboos
24. Gift-giving

Daily life

25. Shopping
26. Entertaining
27. Food and Eating out
28. Getting around
29. Climate
30. Healthcare
31. Housing
32. Security

Business Etiquette

33. Business relationships
34. Approaches to work
35. Approaches to leadership and teams
36. Management styles
37. Formal and informal meetings and discussions
38. Negotiations and presentations
# Appendix D: Useful Translations

English to German shown here for reference. Translate your own languages or use [https://translate.google.com](https://translate.google.com) for assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greetings / Interjections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hello</td>
<td>Hallo (informal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good day</td>
<td>Guten tag (formal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good morning</td>
<td>Guten morgen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good evening</td>
<td>Guten abend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please</td>
<td>Bitte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse me (or sorry)</td>
<td>Entschuldigung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>Dankeschön</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks</td>
<td>Danke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’re welcome</td>
<td>Bitteschön</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No problem</td>
<td>Kein problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Ja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Nein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop</td>
<td>Halt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help</td>
<td>Hilfe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td>Notfall</td>
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<td>Cheers</td>
<td>Prost</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nouns</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>Kaffee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Wasser</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>Frühstück</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Mittagessen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Abendessen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
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<td>Taxi</td>
<td>Taxi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Polizei</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>Arzt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>Krankenhaus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>Apotheke</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjectives</td>
<td>Links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right</td>
<td>Recht</td>
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<tr>
<td>Up</td>
<td>Oben</td>
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<tr>
<td>Down</td>
<td>Neider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Near</td>
<td>Nahe</td>
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<td>Far</td>
<td>Welt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big</td>
<td>Groß</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Klein</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adverbs</td>
<td>Damen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s</td>
<td>Herren</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Mann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrases</td>
<td>Wie heißen Sie?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your name?</td>
<td>Ich heiße</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My name is</td>
<td>Ich heiße</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I come from</td>
<td>Ich heiße</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you speak English?</td>
<td>Sprechen Sie Englisch?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t speak German</td>
<td>Ich spreche kein deutsch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t understand</td>
<td>Ich verstehe nicht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the toilet?</td>
<td>Wo ist die Toilette?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much does that cost?</td>
<td>Wie viel Kostet das?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to have</td>
<td>Ich hatte gern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you help me?</td>
<td>Können Sie mir helfen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like the check, please</td>
<td>Ich möchte bezahlen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(insert country) Germany is a wonderful country</td>
<td>Deutschland ist wunderschön</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>