

Club bridge weekend or short holiday

Bridge Clubs have many social aspects. Quite a number of clubs like to organise a bridge weekend or short bridge holiday for their members. This need not be too difficult to do.

Firstly, it would be a good idea to ask around amongst the club members whether there would be sufficient interest for such a break. It might be best to begin with just a weekend for a smaller group, and if that is successful, try a larger group or longer holiday of a week or so.

Try to pick a comfortable hotel with a suitable bridge room in an attractive location. You will need to obtain a quote from the hotel with as much detail as you want. A typical programme could be something like:

Friday 6pm: Reception – one glass of wine or a soft drink each.
 6.30: Three-course table d’hôte dinner.
 7.45: Bridge.

Saturday 8-9am: Breakfast
 10am: Lesson perhaps, more bridge, or free time for sightseeing
 11am: Morning tea/coffee
 1pm: Lunch of two courses – included or optional?
 2.30pm: Bridge
 4pm: Afternoon tea/coffee with cake or pastry
 6.30: Three-course table d’hôte dinner. (Wine included?)
 7.45: Bridge.

Sunday 8-9am: Breakfast
 9.30am: Seminar perhaps, more bridge, or sightseeing
 11am: Morning tea/coffee
 Noon: Check out of rooms
 12.30pm: Sandwiches – included or optional?
 1pm: Bridge
 4pm: Closing tea/coffee with cake or pastry

You then need to add something on top of that quote for the bridge element. That is used to

- give your TD and host a free room
- possibly pay for the TD
- prizes
- general expenses

If you do end up with a surplus, that can be refunded or donated to the club or a charity. (Decide and state this in advance.) The TD and host should be prepared to act as stand-bys to play if someone drops out of one of the sessions.

You need to spell out to the hotel precisely what you want:

- Does the package price include the use of the bridge room or is that an additional expense to be taken into account?
- Is there a single person supplement?
- How much deposit do they need, and when is full payment due?
- What happens in case of a cancellation?
- What are the costs for anyone wishing to extend their stay?

You also need to find out what they have by way of equipment:

- Do you need to take your own bridge tables or does the hotel have square tables you can use?
- Do they have enough chairs?
- You will probably have to take other bridge paraphernalia – bidding boxes, cloths, boards, stationery – but the hotel may have cloths, for example.
- Is the room you hope to use for play well lit, well heated and well ventilated?
- Is it big enough for what you have in mind. Allow 8 feet or 2.5 metres from table centre to table centre (this is a bit generous which means you can compromise a little bit)).
- Is it a hotel that is used for weddings, particularly on Saturdays? If so will you be well away from noisy discos? Your request for a silent environment impinges just as much on them as their noise will do on you.

- What parking facilities are there?
- What time can you get access to the playing room on Friday to set up?
- What time do you have to be out by on Sunday?

You should also:

- Decide on whether Master Points will be issued or not.
- Make clear that any extras such as bar drinks have to be paid for by members themselves.
- Ask people to inform you/the hotel in advance of any special dietary needs.

It might also be wise to take out some insurance in case of cancellation, e.g. due to heavy snow or flooding.

If all this seems a bit daunting, you might start by organising a group to go together on a commercially-run bridge break. This will ensure there are some familiar faces, and you will see for yourselves how such breaks work. Licenced operators are listed on the EBU website and often advertise in *English Bridge*.