



## How to BUILD your own Charity Convoy trip to Calais in 10 easy steps!

Thank you for deciding to go to Calais to give your hands and hearts to the invaluable work being done there. This sheet is to encourage you to organize a group trip. The charities in Calais are desperate for LOTS of volunteers! So please follow our example & go in a group. Running your own convoy is a fun, easy & rewarding experience, and can be done *lightly*. We've shown hundreds of people the ropes. Now we want to help you to DIY with your mates & get more new volunteers involved with supporting destitute refugees.

Below is our advice after running 14 successful convoys to Northern France as part of Calais Light. We do it for c.£80 pp for 2 nights in the Auberge de Jeunesse including all costs & a night out in a restaurant.

(Based on a Car + 4 passengers).

**Coming for a couple of days? It's so doable. But you must book in the right order to avoid disappointment or wasting time!**

### 1. Before you book anything:

**Choose a date** & commit to it. Treat it like a wedding. There's never a perfect time to go!

Ask your mates if they can make that exact date!

- **Driver competence:** Would you like to be driven in France by someone who had never driven in France before, who might get nervous on the motorway or at a roundabout? Please pick someone who is an experienced European driver, as Calais Light always does. You/they may be driving people who are not family members, so this is not the moment to practice foreign driving. ☺ Stay safe! With both charities a small amount of motorway driving on the A16 is involved.
- Check your passport which needs 6 months plus left on it before expiry.

- ### 2. "Where to volunteer?"
- Decide if it's Care4Calais, Refugee Community Kitchen, Help Refugees. Check their websites to do this. They offer different support to refugees. **Email them straightway** with your desired passenger numbers to request the dates you'd like! **You must register with our partner charities first. You can't just turn up on the day!** They may not have space for you as occasionally they have big groups for one day only. Once confirmed by them, get going with your travel plans.

- ### 3. Sleeping / Food:
- The next step is to book accommodation. Our preference is the **Centre Européen de Séjour**, ie. Auberge de Jeunesse in Calais, the very nice modern, bright youth hostel that's 15 mins drive from the charities we volunteer at. There is a "tarif bénévole" (discount) based on 2 sharing for 2 nights, with breakfast included. Pay on arrival in euros/card

<https://www.auberge-jeunesse-calais.com/en>

**You can phone if you are in a rush.** 00 33 3 21 34 70 20 (They speak great English).

**Auberge Price:** 21.10€ for Night 1, then 18.50€ for Night 2 (a shared room - Twin/triple/quad).

So in all: 40,80 € per person for a 2 night stay in a shared room. 0.5 euros for a towel but sheets/blankets are provided. Rooms are fine with a shared ensuite. Do look at their site and if you want to discuss anything by phone/email, be reassured that English is spoken. The youth hostel is 15 mins by car, from ferry/Eurotunnel exit, so ideal for late crossings as there's a concierge service all night.

**FUN:** The hostel's just 40 sec walk from the most beautiful thing in Calais, the gorgeous 35 miles of Calais Beach, pure, fine, white sand. Do have a walk or a run on it when you arrive. It has its own BANKSY mural!

**Food:** The charities all provide free lunch. The Family Pub, Rue Royale is a short walk from the Auberge & most volunteers go there for dinner. BOOK! Great food, served quick, lots of music, fab vibe & lots of Calesiens too.

**Airbnb** offers lots of great accommodation to suit all budgets.

**4. Getting there: TRAVEL:** The next step is to book travel. **Ferry/Eurotunnel/Eurostar?**

**Ferry:** Cheapest!! P&O & DFDS = main operators Dover-Calais route. 30 crossings of 90 min each way. Choose a ferry that charges **per car** rather than per passenger & you can take up to 9 passengers for c.£85 return. **TIP:** Book the crossing & yourself & all *committed* passengers onto the ferry as soon as you've done Step 1 & 2 (confirmed with charity & booked accommodation). You can add other passengers free as you convince them. *But make sure if you do this that you have **FIRST** registered these extra people with the charities & the Auberge de Jeunesse/Centre de Séjour ☺* You can also amend car passenger names free.

**Directferries.co.uk** or **uk.discountsfinder.net** are two comparison sites to look at.

**Eurotunnel:** The quickest/easiest way to travel when driving, if you need to work the Friday and return late Sunday pm. Cost is per car + < 9 passengers. Crossing time = 35 mins + 25 min check-in time of 25 mins.

**Eurostar: Quite pricey!** 55min London to Calais-Frethun, just outside the city. Check-in is 45-60 min. Frequent trains from Calais-Frethun to the town centre (18 min /1.2€).

**Coach:** Checkmybus is a low-cost website that compares UK bus and coach journeys. Av return price is £35.

**Lift share:** There are 3 great Facebook pages offering car-share to Calais with other people. Just post your requirements or keep an eye for people offering lifts:

- a. Volunteer Group to Calais
- b. Uniting Volunteer, travel buddies ( car & room share) Refugee Crisis
- c. Liftshare – Calais & Dunkirk Refugee Camps

These are travel groups for like-minded individuals who want to volunteer and find a travel buddy to spread the cost & care for the environment. Stay safe! Maybe travel in 2s!

**5. TIP: BREAKDOWN INSURANCE:** Make sure your driver buys Breakdown Insurance. **The cheapest way is as part of the ferry purchase. You will see a screen that asks you.** Or use annual multi-trip policy or breakdown insurance via your bank. Insurance is essential!! Your friends/colleagues won't thank you if your car breaks down in France & you can't get them back to the UK for work on Monday. It should cover repatriation, towing to garage or an alternative car. This is a precaution that may not instantly occur to you but it's vital prep if you're driving non-family members!

**6. TRAVEL INSURANCE:** Every volunteer must take out short-term travel insurance, to cover their medical costs, repatriation, loss, cancellation, money. Though you have an EHIC, which currently covers most medical costs, all the charities **insist** on proof of travel insurance

**7. YOUNG ADULTS:** We recommend you don't bring anyone under 17. The charities have their own rules on this (check their sites) but they also explain that their insurance & your travel insurance won't cover volunteers when out in the field. Working with refugees in Calais can be volatile. Things can happen. It's not Disneyland Paris! You should gauge whether your teenagers are sufficiently mature to cope in tricky or emotional situations as YOU will be responsible for them. The charities do fantastic role-play & training for emergencies but you need to take that responsibility. *So know your child!* If you are considering bringing any minors, ensure that they are fully aware and engaged with the activities that they will be part of. You must email the charity that you are volunteering with stating their ages & that you take full responsibility for their wellbeing and safety. Please ensure that each young adult knows what to expect and that it's appropriate for them to volunteer. *It should be stated, that contact with the refugees is not a given nor is it expected.*

**8. GETTING YOUR MONEY BACK:** It's wise to ask for a deposit from your passengers (e.g. c£40 – the price of the Auberge) because it frequently happens that people change their minds about going to Calais. You will have already paid for the ferry!! As you are running a convoy, gauge how many you want to take, divide costs by that number & be clear upfront on the overall costs to be shared out. Best confirmed first by email.

These costs are Ferry/Accommodation/Petrol/ Breakdown Insurance. Yes - Do remember to include *fuel* costs into that equation and that can easily be estimated by using google maps to estimate the mileage from your start point in the UK & the weekend. You will do around 90 miles max in Calais, & that's only if you are with Care4Calais & you drive to Dunkirk!

Calais Light estimates £10/person for petrol all in from Brentwood-Calais-Brentwood, in Essex. We do the entire WEEKEND trip for £80p.p & that includes 15 euros for a restaurant meal. So make a note of your starting/end mileage & settle up later. TIP: Agree on a meeting point where others' cars can be safely parked for the time away.

**9. Final tips :** Plan in advance to get better pricing. Calais is very busy in summer & the Auberge is often full! Brexit isn't an issue until 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2020 so nothing has changed regarding your rights of entry and medical cover when there. Do ensure that your car meets French driving regulations. Check out the relevant section on our website [www.calaislight.com](http://www.calaislight.com) or on the P&O or DFDS sites

**10. Then RELAX :** Once you've done the above 10 simple steps.....relax, look forward to it & help refugees .....

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