

FREE

SPRING/SUMMER 2023

STARS AND STRIPES

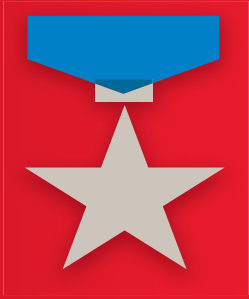
EUROPE

ARRIVE

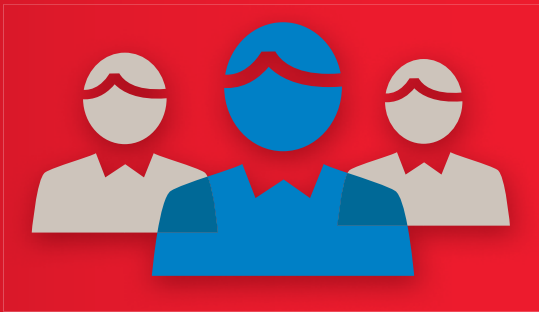
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EDITOR'S LETTER



Erica Fowler
Lead Writer-Editor
Stars and Stripes Europe

In this edition, we aim to shake off the frostiness that might have kept us away from the outdoors. This is the time to lace on hiking boots and trek through burgeoning spring woods, and we have some picturesque hiking trail options on our list.

There is no shortage of what you can do under the sun in places like Sicily, Spain or Portugal, where the weather is very beach worthy. We've got them all analyzed for you; you'll just have to order your own bellini when you're there. Did you know that Germany has an iconic Baltic Sea summer beach culture? Check out our breakdown of places to visit, and if you find yourself in one of their recognizable striped umbrella beach chairs, I don't think you'll forget that trip soon.

If you are the type to dodge the warmest places, don't worry because a journey to the Shetland Islands in the northernmost part of Scotland should have you feeling pretty serene. An English garden in Windsor never hurt anyone either. If you're seeking excitement in the British Isles, the Highland Games take over during the summer months, kilts and all. While this series of sporting events has grown in popularity across the world, there's something exceptional about spectating in the event's homeland.

No matter where you want to venture over summer break, we have you covered in several locations, especially if you want to take a fairytale-themed trip like we did in *Stepping into Animation: Places that inspired Disney Films*. For all you know, those charming villages and immense castles could be in your backyard.

If themed overnight stays are also your thing, you ought to check out the story on *Quirky Hotels*, which are positioned throughout Europe. They might even be on your route for your next vacation, or it might BE your vacation, we're not judging. I'll take a medieval or chocolate-themed escape anytime. Only the boldest of us might be able to stay in the Latvian prison though!

Like me, you could always be looking for culinary inspiration. We did a deep dive into delightful custards around the continent, plus how to get perfectly crispy Fish and Chips at home and how to make a slightly simpler Haggis.

Whatever your brilliant warm weather plans are, we hope you'll share them with us at contentteam@stripes.com. We love to highlight the top spots and experiences you've embarked on.

See you at the beach, fellow travelers!



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*By sales area or size - Market report "Outlet Centres in Europe", p. 29 (December 2022) produced by ecostra GmbH, www.ecostr.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/outlet-centres-europe_2022-12.pdf
**In comparison to the Manufacturer's Recommended Retail Price, where applicable.

Colorful PORTUGAL

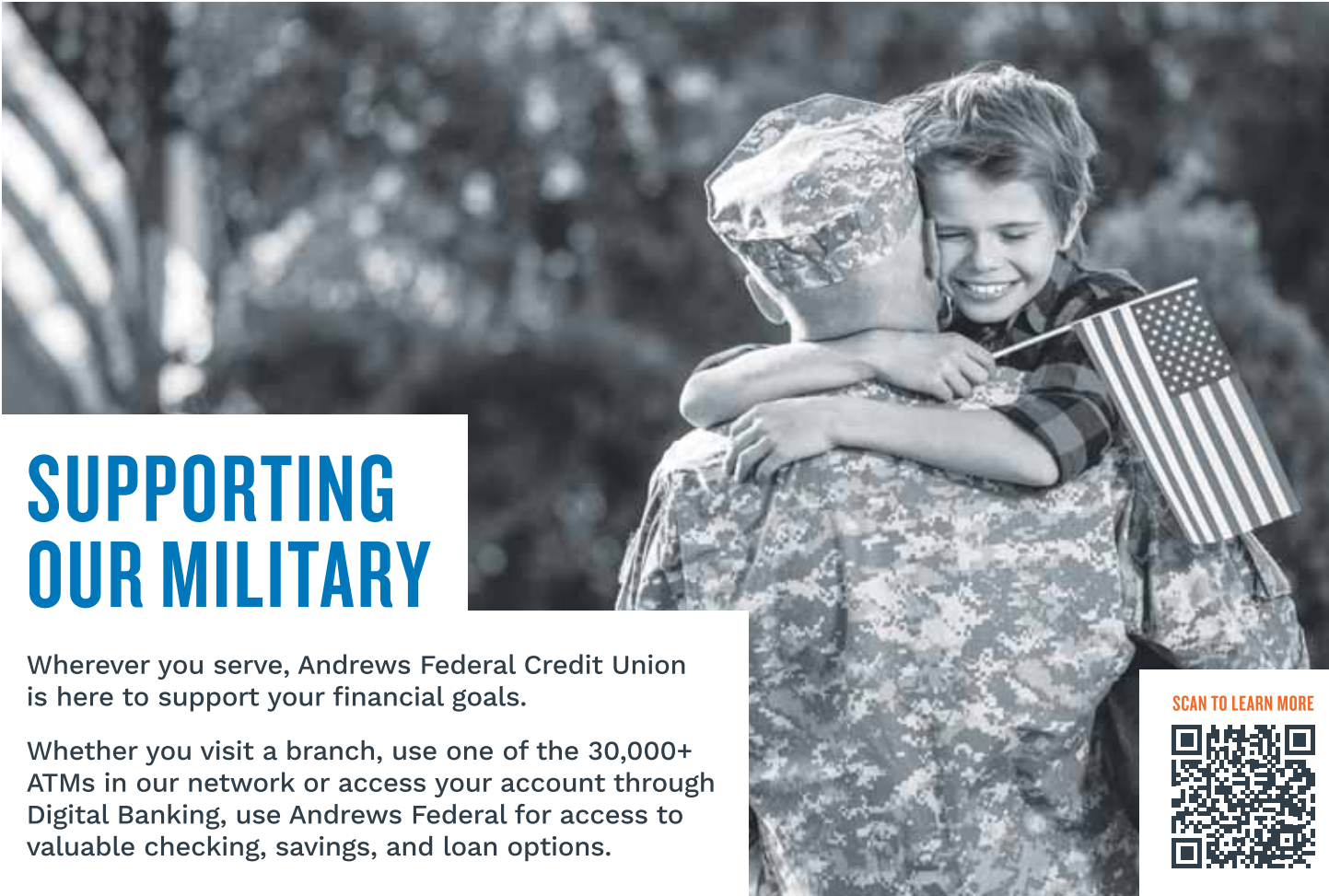
By Elizabeth Jones

Portugal is one of Europe's sunniest countries and home to vivacious towns, out-of-this-world gastronomy, extravagant landmarks and sparkling beaches, making it nothing short of amazing and colorful.

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Portuguese Treasures: Azulejos

Bursting with color, **azulejos** — ceramic tiles — decorate everything from churches, houses, palaces, park benches, train stations and more throughout Portugal. The tiles range from simple designs to large murals depicting moments in Portuguese history. They are often white and ocean blue, but it's easy to find many with their own unique styles and variety of colors. The introduction of these special tiles in Portugal began in the 15th century. Portuguese King Manuel I brought azulejos from Seville, Spain during this time as the tiles had been popular aspects throughout various parts of the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages. Since then, they've become an integral part of Portuguese culture.



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LISBON

Portugal's buzzing capital should be at the top of every avid traveler's list with its budget-friendly experiences, wide array of gastronomic specialties, vintage trams and historic landmarks. Although Portugal's best delicacies of salt cod, grilled sardines, Azeitão sheep's cheese, Alentejo ham, pastéis de nata and regional wines can be found throughout the entire country, a truly unique experience can be found in Lisbon's Time Out Market. This wonderful food hall hosts 35 various kiosks where many top chefs provide mini-versions of their restaurant's menus for travelers to enjoy.

Be sure to visit Lisbon's highlights: Castelo de São Jorge, Jerónimos Monastery, Camo Convent, Belém Tower and Lisbon Cathedral. Although different colors and patterns of azulejos are found decorating all types of places in Lisbon, visit the Azulejos Museum to get a deeper understanding of these tiles and their vital role in Portuguese culture and history. Taking home a tile for the perfect souvenir is a must.



Time Out Market / Lisbon



Majestic Café / Porto

PORTO

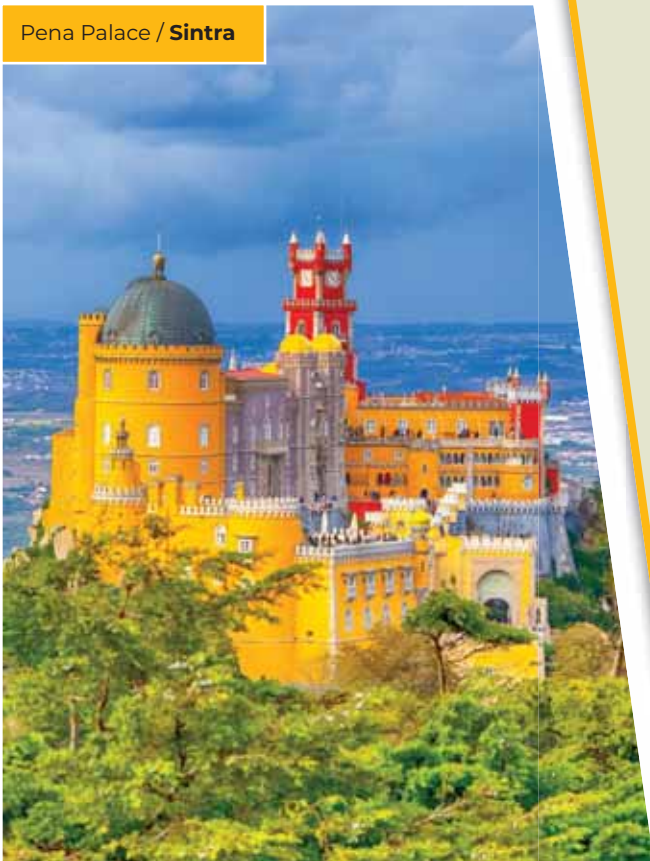
Home to an energetic atmosphere along the Douro riverside, lovely locals, fascinating architecture, delicious seafood and the creation of port wine—it's no wonder this city is becoming exceedingly popular. Take a river cruise along the Douro River while sipping on a refreshing glass of port wine. Better yet, try vinho verde (green wine), a true Portuguese specialty. Peek at azulejos at their finest at Igreja Paroquial de Santo Ildefonso, Parish Church of St. Nicholas, Sé do Porto, São Bento Station, Igreja do Carmo and Capela das Almas.

Make a stop at the fancy Majestic Café, a place that was frequented by the elite class in the 1920s, for a cappuccino or decadent dessert. It's said that J.K. Rowling wrote chapters of the earlier Harry Potter books in this cafe while she lived in Porto in the early '90s. Another magical fact, the astonishing library—Livraria Lello—inspired Rowling's vision for various parts of Hogwarts with its winding staircase, books covering the walls from top to bottom, brightly-colored, stained-glass windows and unparalleled atmosphere.



Livraria Lello / Porto

Pena Palace / **Sintra**



SINTRA

View the Portuguese fairytale of Pena Palace — a 19th-century architectural masterpiece perched on a hilltop overlooking the town of Sintra. The palace is covered with striking colors of dandelion yellow, coral and hues of grey and white that make it pop from the lush greenery of the forest that surrounds it. The inside of the palace holds the same degree of beauty with decor from 1910, intricate, cathedral-style ceilings, an indoor courtyard and azulejos adorning the Room of the Coats of Arms. The entrance fee into Pena Palace is 14 euros for adults, 12.50 euros for children and seniors or 49 euros per family.

Pena Palace Interior / **Sintra**



Camilo Beach / **The Algarve**



THE ALGARVE

Looking for a beach getaway? The Algarve region is known for its vivid, turquoise waters, sandy coves, gorgeous fishing villages and a plethora of restaurants, bars and shops dotted throughout. Lagos is the most-favorite city in the Algarve, making it a great home base as you explore the region. Take a dip in the radiant waters of the region's best beaches to include Praia da Marinha, Praia de Odeceixe, Praia de Falésia and Praia de Cacela Velha. However, with more than 150 beaches, you'll surely find one that suits you in the Algarve. Book a kayak tour, go snorkeling, take a boat or simply sunbathe along the shore in Portugal's southernmost region for an unforgettable escape from reality.

Buzzing towns, history around every corner, fabulous beaches and food and drinks galore—a trip to the colorful country of Portugal will not disappoint! ■



STEPPING INTO ANIMATION
PLACES THAT INSPIRED DISNEY FILMS



By Tamala Malerk



Neuschwanstein Castle

“A dream is a wish your heart makes” are the iconic lyrics sung by Cinderella in the classic animated Disney feature film. Since 1937, Disney has been making dreams come true and delighting audiences with animated films containing fascinating and gorgeous scenery. Many are familiar with the fact that the castles in Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty were inspired by Germany's Neuschwanstein Castle. But that isn't the only place Disney has garnered inspiration. Here are some locations across Europe you can visit that inspired some of your favorite Disney animated movies.

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FRANCE

"Little town, it's a quiet village," is where Disney garnered inspiration for "Beauty and the Beast." Alsace, France is the muse for the opening song, though it is not that quiet. Alsace is a border region of Germany where you can partake in delicious regional fare inspired by the cultures of both countries. Drive about seven hours west of Alsace and you'll find the inspiration for the Beast's castle, Château de Chambord. At the Chateau, you can tour the castle and gardens, solve puzzles as you go through the castle and explore the vineyard. Three hours north of the Chateau, you can find yourself in the city of romance, Paris, which resembles the location of several Disney animated films.

The Cathedral of Notre Dame is the setting of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" as Disney takes its viewers on an adventure with the bells and gargoyles. Unfortunately, visitors have not been able to go inside since the fire of 2019, but they are actively planning the reopening. If you want to eat like a true Parisian, head to Paris' oldest café, Procope, or Tour D'Argent, which both inspired the Disney animators behind "Ratatouille." The kitchen from the movie was inspired by The French Laundry in Napa Valley, California, but the animators visited the aforementioned restaurants for even more inspiration. O'Malley the Alley Cat weaved the streets and rooftops of Paris in the setting of the "Aristocats." See if you can tell which Bourgeois homes and parks made their way into the movie as you are walking the streets.

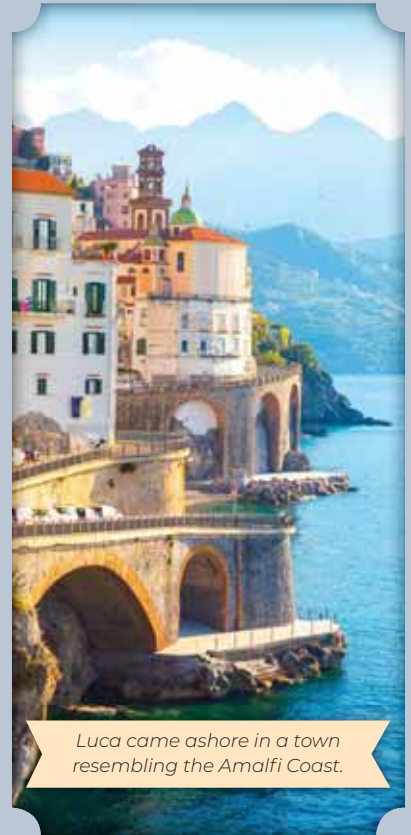
Three hours west of Paris is Normandy, where you will find Mont Saint-Michel, the inspiration for the kingdom of Corona in "Tangled." While in Mont Saint-Michel, eat at their most famous restaurant, La Mère Poulard and, of course, visit the Abbey.

THE U.K.

The United Kingdom is another place where Disney animators have drawn inspiration. In the "Great Mouse Detective," audiences can marvel at the animated Buckingham Palace as Basil tries to solve the case. You can explore the state rooms of the King yourself during 10 weeks in the summer, or select times in winter and spring. While in London, make your way to The Regent's Park where Pongo and Perdita walked in the "101 Dalmatians." Here you can see over 12,000 roses in Queen Mary's Garden, visit the London Zoo and the Open Air Theatre. One last stop in London is the neighborhood of Bloomsbury. See if you can spot the townhouses that inspired the home of Wendy and John in "Peter Pan."

Outside of the city, you can find more gorgeous locations that inspired the animators. Less than two hours from London is the inspiration for the 100-Acre Wood where Pooh, Tigger and Piglet call home, Ashdown Forest. While there, visit the real "Pooh Sticks Bridge." North of London, near Nottingham, is Sherwood Forest, where the adventures of Robin Hood took place. You can visit year-round: They hold special events such as medieval fairs and themed walks, writing workshops and scary storytelling.

Go north to Scotland to see the inspiration for the movie "Brave." The Scottish Highlands were the backdrop of her story, but Eilean Donan Castle was particularly featured in the form of Merida's DunBroch Castle. Not only can you visit and tour Eilean Donan, you can stay overnight at the cottage and apartments onsite.

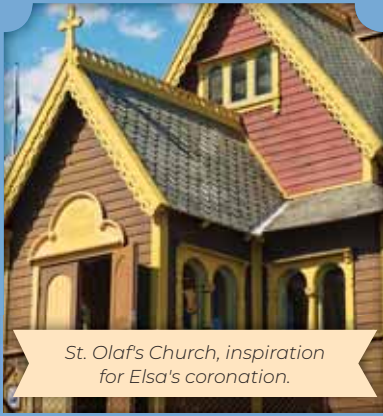


Luca came ashore in a town resembling the Amalfi Coast.

ITALY

The wooden puppet, Pinocchio, became a real boy in a village inspired by the Tuscan village of Collodi. While here, visit Pinocchio Park, the Butterfly House and Villa Garzoni. Approximately seven hours south is the Amalfi Coast, where Luca, the merboy, came out of the water and lived on land with his best friend. While on the coast, view the architecture that inspired the film as well as relax on the beaches and go hiking on scenic trails.

Mont Saint-Michel, the inspiration for the kingdom of Corona in "Tangled."



St. Olaf's Church, inspiration for Elsa's coronation.

NORWAY

If the cold never bothered you anyway, head to Bergen, Norway, one the towns that inspired the scenery of "Frozen." Take guided tours, enjoy the Gingerbread Town at Christmas and festivals year-round. Less than four hours north of Bergen, visit St. Olaf's Church in Balestrand, where you can see the inspiration for Elsa's coronation scene (and also the name of the summer-loving snowman, Olaf). While in Balestrand, tour a fjord, take part in cider tasting and go mountain hiking.

SPAIN

"Snow White and the Seven Dwarves" comes from Germanic origins, but the inspiration for the castle is actually Spanish. The Queen plans her evil plot in a castle inspired by Alcázar de Segovia. You can visit the castle year-round with the exception of some holidays, and a tour of the castle takes about 45 minutes.



"Snow White and the Seven Dwarves" comes from Germanic origins, but the inspiration for the castle is actually Spanish."

The Queen plans her evil plot in a castle inspired by Alcázar de Segovia.



Chateau de Chillon is the model for Prince Eric's castle.

SWITZERLAND

Ariel eats from a dinglehopper for the first time in Prince Eric's castle, which is inspired by the Chateau de Chillon in Veytaux, Switzerland. Book a tour of the castle in advance in different languages or just take yourself on a self-guided tour. While in Veytaux, you can see all of Lake Geneva and go on a wine tour.

GREECE

"Hercules" is borrowed from Greek mythology and so you can see where Disney animators found inspiration all over Greece. Visit the Parthenon to see the muses, the Temple of Zeus to see where Hercules first met his biological father or the Island of Rhodes, which is the inspiration for Phil's island where Hercules trains. ■



Hercules first met his father at the Temple of Zeus.

WHAT TO GAIN FROM THE SHETLAND ISLANDS

By Erica Fowler

This windswept archipelago has striking ocean cliffsides and lush sheep-filled pastures. As the northernmost point in the United Kingdom, it is worth an escape to learn about its beauty and history.

You can take the NorthLink ferry from Aberdeen, Scotland to Lerwick, which takes 14 hours, and is primarily overnight, but you can reserve a cabin and relax while enjoying the view.

I grew up with Shetland sheepdogs, and I always wondered what it was like where their canine ancestors came from. Just how different from the Scottish mainland was the culture of the Islands? Are there trees at all? Any vegetation I ever saw in pictures was what could hold up to merciless ocean gusts. And it's true, trees really aren't a part of the natural landscape, giving the land a look all its own.



EXPLORE VAST NATURE RESERVES

Dotted between communities are vast hike-able expanses of green space. Several areas, like the Hermaness Nature Reserve in the north allow you to get to the closest point to the North Pole while still in the UK. The Noss Nature Reserve in the east allows you to enjoy boat tours in the pristine waters. You will be joined by cute puffins, swooping seabirds and you may even spot seals resting on shore or orcas swimming offshore. The environment can be harsh due to rapidly changing weather and powerful winds, so it's recommended to have a windbreaker and clothing layers to stave off the North Sea chill. A Shetland phrase reflects this temporary condition, meaning "a day between weathers" and will sound like "a day atween waddirs." But the unpredictable weather can't get you down if you visit in mid-summer, or "Simmer Dim" when you will get up to 19 hours of sunlight and amber skies due to the Islands' location in the northern hemisphere. It's an odd and wonderful experience, and the locals rejoice with the seemingly longer days.

SHETLAND CULTURE

The 23,000 residents are famously friendly with a small community feel. The only difficulty that may be encountered in town is the thick Shetland English dialect full of their own words and phrases. The Shetland dialect is a hybrid of Old Scots and Norse influences, with its own Germanic roots. If experiencing some of that charm is what you're seeking, be sure to visit during the Shetland Folk Festival from April 27–30, when you can get your fill of various styles of music from local and visiting bands.





“

WHEREVER YOU ENJOY A MEAL OR A TASTING, YOU'RE WELCOME TO THE SIGHT OF THE SHETLAND ISLANDS' VERDANT GREEN AND DEEP BLUE THAT YOU'LL LIKELY WANT TO TAKE HOME WITH YOU.

”

A TABLEFUL FROM DOWN THE STREET

By virtue of living on the Islands, food production is local and full of diversity. The fishing industry churns out nets of seafood like salmon, mackerel and mussels. Stop by Frankie's Fish and Chips if you find yourself on the western half of the Mainland near Brae, which serves up crispy fresh battered fish and thick fries, or as it's called endearingly, chippys. The herding lifestyle has been a generational mainstay for centuries, and so the residents benefit from local mutton, cow's milk, butter and cheese, plus a thriving wool production. You can also tour the Shetland Reel gin distillery or the Lerwick Brewery for beer fans. Wherever you enjoy a meal or a tasting, you're welcome to the sight of the Shetland Islands' verdant green and deep blue that you'll likely want to take home with you. ■



FOLLOW NORSE TRACES

A celebration of Norse heritage that is worth attending is the series of festivals called Up Helly Aa, which occurs from January through March every year. Torch-lit parades in Viking dress reverberate through the Islands. As for the Viking settlements that were once just as sprawling as the current towns, many of those sites remain unexcavated. However, from what archeologists have uncovered, there's a bevy of insights into the Shetland's previous residents. The Viking Unst Project is a settlement site that was used as a staging location for forces whose goal was to claim Scottish loot and land. But the Vikings were not just brutal raiding parties that destroyed and pillaged, as has so often been the stereotype. In fact, Viking communities made of farms, longhouses and craftspeople multiplied on the Islands during the 9th century in a peaceful co-existence with the pre-existing residents called the Picts, who were thought to be an amalgamation of Celtic and Briton groups.

There is no doubt that the natural environment necessitates sturdy infrastructure. Historically, homes weren't wood-clad like in Scandinavia due to the lack of forests, but structures of stone and earthen mounds for insulation. You'll see the stone footprints of Viking longhouses and the Pictish buildings built before them scattered throughout the landscape. Like the third little pig outsmarting the wolf, stone structures held up best to the blustery and stormy weather for generations. Some of the best examples of these building styles are the ruins at Sandwick Bay to the East and the Jarlshof Norse settlement. If you only have time for one historical site, the Old Scatness Broch and Iron Age village to the south is an amazing place of maze-like trenches that was only rediscovered in 1975.



Stunning Hikes in Europe

By Erica Fowler

These hikes range from easy to moderately difficult. Feel free to scan the QR code to modify your length and difficulty level at AllTrails. The thing about beautiful places is that there's always another route to tack on to make it your own adventure.



Germany, Burg Eltz

In the middle of western Germany, you can lace on your hiking boots knowing there's an absolute treat at your destination: the idyllic Burg Eltz. After arriving via the train station, I walked through the neat little village of Mosel Kern and onto the footpath through open land and past burbling streams. The Landhotel Ringelsteiner Mühle is along the footpath before it climbs up into the trees. It has a restaurant and a nice place to stay overnight. The trail has plenty of signage and you might notice signs for the various path numbers and names. This is part of a longer trail that avid hikers may enjoy, called the Moselsteig Trail. It is 365 kilometers/227 miles from Perl on the French/Luxembourgish border to its convergence with the rhine in Koblenz, Germany.

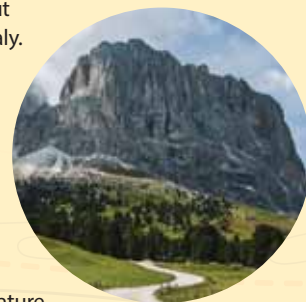
Whether your hike is part of a long trek or a short one to the castle, it is no less surreal to suddenly see it peeking through the trees, which no doubt made it the most memorable part of the hike itself. There is a restaurant at the castle with typical German fare, so no worries if you are famished. There are guided tours of the castle's well-preserved rooms, with no photography, filming or pets allowed inside the castle. I recommend downloading your preferred path to the castle on an app like AllTrails or Google Maps, as an occasional visitor has gotten lost and must backtrack. There is a two-euro bus ride if you want a ride to or from the castle to the parking lot where visitors can park.

Grasmere. Howitzer is the aptly named rocky crown at the top, and the view beside it is worth the moderately difficult 4 kilometer hike to the peak. A round-trip to the village, where you can stay overnight or dine and shop, is about 4.6 miles/7.4 kilometers. You can scale Howitzer in dry weather, but you will need climbing equipment and a little experience.

Be sure to visit Dove cottage, home of the poet William Wordsworth, which is a museum and monument to his life, and also to the Romantic influencers of the 19th century.

Italy, Dolomite's Val Gardena

Striking mountain trails through forests and along mountain ridges will have you seeing nothing but nature for miles in this northeastern section of Italy. Nestled in Val Gardena are the quaint villages of Ortisei, S. Cristina and Selva which offer plenty of overnight stay options year-round. These three villages alone accommodate over 2,210,000 guests a year, but despite that, you don't have to fight for space in this breathtaking mountain range. The clusters of charming alpine huts are surrounded by mountains Sassolungo, Sassopiatto and Sella and the Puez Odle Nature Park. Take your pick of trails that zigzag around the valley and up craggy rocks.



Alpine schools in the valley often have guided hikes, mountain biking trips and climbing courses to take advantage of if you're not sure where to start. You can also stop by the park's visitor center and venture to any of the several other nature parks around the area. If you need to refuel, stop by any of the fantastic eateries serving Tyrolean and Mediterranean cuisine. If you want to enjoy a dessert post-hike as I do, be sure to order panna cotta or crème brûlée aflame to celebrate your mountain-conquering self. ■

United Kingdom, Lake District's Helm Crag

The Lake District in Cumbria is known for attracting poets to its gorgeous expanses of green hills that jut upward into mottled peaks, dotted with waterways. The Helm Crag overlooks the village of



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Quirky Hotels

ACROSS EUROPE

By Genevieve Northup and Tamala Malerk

Have you ever wanted to sleep in a wine barrel, plane or igloo? Or how about travel back to your childhood and stay in a treehouse or doll house? Seasoned travelers and first-time adventurers will enjoy exploring these quirky hotels across Europe.



Treehotel Harads, Sweden

If you liked to climb trees and see the world around you as child, re-live that joy at the Treehotel. They have nine different types of rooms to capture the attention of any kind of visitor. Animal lovers will love the Biosphere where they can see all the birds and wildlife outside of the room hidden in the trees. For those who want to stay closer to ground, the slightly elevated Blue Cone would be more your speed.

2

Medieval Hotel, Dětenice, Czech Republic

Fans of Witcher, the Tolkien universe and Merlin, will be enchanted at this medieval-style hotel. Each room is styled to match the era, but fear not, hot water will come out of the stone trough where you wash your hands. Next to the hotel is a tavern where a nightly show takes place with dancers, swordsmen, feudal fare and more.

3

Kakslauttanen **Arctic Resort,** Saariselkä, Finland

If you have wanted to escape to a frozen paradise, you can sleep in a snow igloo that is consistently between -3 and -6 degrees Celsius (21-26 degrees Fahrenheit). If you are seeking something a tad warmer, you can still get the igloo experience but in a glass igloo. Glass igloos are available the entirety of the Northern Lights season until the end of April.



4

Karosta Prison Liepāja, LV-3402, Latvia

Those seeking a truly adventurous experience can spend a night in a Latvian prison that has been compared to Alcatraz. Participants can choose to sleep on an iron bed and be served a prison meal or experience the life of a prison chief and sleep in a comfier bed. The prison also hosts 12-hour night-time experiences for groups where they will experience a three-hour “show” and then sleep in a cell.

5

Coup 2 Foudres Saint-Jean-de-Blaignac, France

You can age like fine wine by sleeping in a wine barrel in the middle of vineyard. This hotel offers two choices for sleeping in a barrel that both include a stay at the hotel, breakfast, a tour of the vineyard and wine tasting. You will also have showers, Wi-Fi and a private bathroom.



6

Hotel Viking, Hafnarfjörður, Iceland

Channel your inner shield maiden or Leif Erikson at the only Viking-themed hotel in Iceland. The dining hall is carved from timber, and you can arrange to be “kidnapped” by Vikings while at the hotel. Make sure to go during the summer when the Viking Festival occurs. Access to a sauna and hot tub are included in the price of staying in the hotel.

8



7

V8 Hotel Stuttgart, Germany

At the V8 Hotel, envision the perfect set of wheels while snoozing in a bed constructed from vintage vehicles. This hotel has stylish and comfortable rooms geared toward motorheads but appreciated by all. Enter Death Valley via Route 66, top up your tank in the Filling Station, run a business in the Repair Shop or enjoy a rooftop deck, sauna and all things Mercedes in the multi-level Tower Suite.

The Old Railway Station Petworth, England

The locomotives of the 120-year-old Petworth Railway Station await guests, though their tracks lead to nowhere. Stop by the Old Railway Station inn to reminisce about late 19th century opulence, a time when sleeper cabins rivaled five-star hotels and dinner doubled as evening entertainment.

The bed and breakfast’s four Pullman train cars provide a total of eight elegant chambers with private bathrooms; two more are located in the station building. Start your day with an elegant breakfast in the former terminal.

Jumbo Stay Hotel and Hostel Stockholm, Sweden

Have a layover or vacation in the Swedish capital? Then spend the night at the Jumbo Stay Hostel, a Boeing 747 permanently parked on the tarmac of the Stockholm Arlanda International Airport. More than 400 seats have been replaced with a restaurant and 27 modernly furnished compartments for singles, couples and families.

The Dolls House Wexford, Ireland

Bring Barbie and G.I. Joe and get ready to play house in this charming life-size dollhouse. The attention to detail and decorations on the interior and exterior of the hotel make it worthy for anyone looking to stay somewhere unconventional. You’ll have access to a three-par golf course and the city center is less than a five-minute drive away.

Fábrica do Chocolate Viana do Castelo, Portugal

Chocolate lovers rejoice, there is a haven just for you in Portugal. This hotel, restaurant and museum is a three-in-one experience where visitors can be surrounded by all things chocolate. Each room is themed something chocolate-related such as “Maya,” “Willy Wonka” and “Theobroma Cacao.” ■

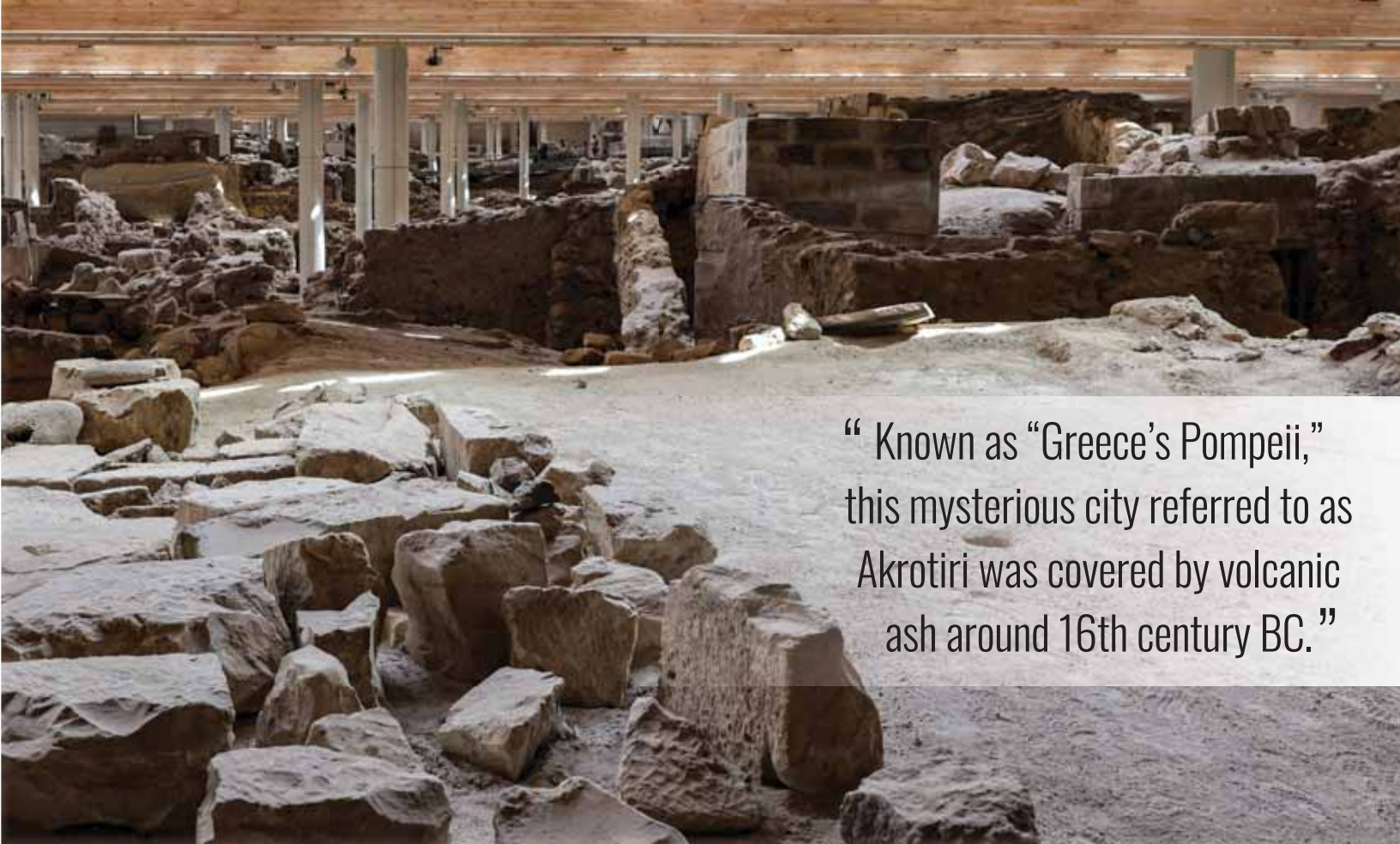
Ancient

Mediterranean Enigmas

Most people are familiar with the deadly volcanic eruption from Mt. Vesuvius in 79 AD, which left the wealthy Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum unusually preserved on Italy's Western coast. There are less well-known sites in the Mediterranean that also have mysterious stories of destruction and their massive projects of restoration are underway to tell the stories of those who lived long ago. Adding these two sites to your itinerary are well worth your time.

continued on page 22

By Erica Fowler



“ Known as “Greece’s Pompeii,” this mysterious city referred to as Akrotiri was covered by volcanic ash around 16th century BC.”

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continued from page 10

AKROTIRI, SANTORINI

Known as “Greece’s Pompeii,” the mysterious city referred to as Akrotiri was covered by volcanic ash around 16th century BC due to one of the most massive volcanic eruptions in the Mediterranean. The actual name of the ruins at Akrotiri is unknown and its adopted name is that of the modern village nearby. This former Minoan trading hub holds evidence of a thriving civilization as far back as 4th millennium BC. The enduring mystery is that, unlike Pompeii, no human remains or precious metals (except for a hand-sized gold ibex) were found in otherwise well-preserved buildings. It is thought that the residents may have had enough warning in the form of earthquakes to evacuate, but they may have also been caught up in the resulting tsunami. Many of the possessions they couldn’t carry with them, including art, pottery and cleverly engineered architecture were left behind. A modern roof and water irrigation system was finished in 2012 to keep the site protected from the ravages of time.

There was no shortage of beautiful residences, with frescoes and artfully created tools in the citizens’ everyday lives. They grew grains and olives, made their own wine, lived in multi-story houses with balconies, had hot and cold water, drainage systems and even had underfloor heating.

That was until the volcano Thera erupted, which left Santorini with its distinctive crescent shape. The echo of its mighty destructive power is still detectable around the Mediterranean. Layered pumice brought to far shores by the resulting ash cloud and sea showed a somewhat accurate timeline (give or take a century) of when the explosion occurred. The stories that may have been told about Akrotiri’s sudden disappearance have been linked with the legend of Atlantis and various explanations for exoduses in ancient times. As for what historians have excavated in this once spectacular city, it is estimated to be not even a third complete, so curious history enthusiasts like you and me have a lot more to be intrigued by.



RECOVERED ANCIENT POTTERY

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How to visit Akrotiri

- Rent a car from the Santorini Airport, which you can reserve at websites including www.rentalcars.com.
- Public transportation is another easy option; check out the bus timetable and prices at www.ktel-santorini.gr.
- Sign up for a tour guide or trip on travel sites like www.getyourguide.com.
- Check out the official website for free admission days, hours of operation and contact information at <http://odysseus.culture.gr>.

Pair your archeological adventure with a food and wine tour, a catamaran ride or a whole island tour and you’ll be on your way to an unforgettable trip.

CONZA, ITALY

An hour-and-a-half drive from Pompeii, a deadly earthquake in Conza, Italy revealed the ancient city of Compsa in November 1980. Now layers of history are exposed all together and it makes for a surreal environment. The welcoming modern village of Conza della Campania has been rebuilt down the hillside. Winding up the hillside, past the walled cemetery with miniature roofs peeking out, you only hear the wind. You can perhaps imagine sandals shuffling past on the Roman limestone forum square. Nature has reclaimed much of the remaining homes from 1980 that are still standing: ivy and dark windows framing the perimeter of these much older sites. Steps, walkways and railings have been restored so visitors can walk through the Archaeological Park of Compsa.

In the more modern homes, belongings are eerily strewn about amongst the falling plaster. Yet, a homemade baby jumper has been lovingly rehung on a hook and unbroken cups have been intentionally placed back in the cupboard. It is obvious that this is a memorial site where vigils are held and families still come to remember the lives once lived here, so if you get a chance to visit, tread carefully and respectfully.

There may be so much Roman architecture in Conza because the previous inhabitants, living here since at least the 6th century BC, were especially resistant to Roman rule. When the community was eventually defeated and became Roman, it was made an example of the empire's might by building at least two temples, a forum and an amphitheater. Throughout medieval times, homes, a cathedral and businesses were built over ancient infrastructure, sometimes right on top of Roman pavestones, especially when rebuilding efforts were necessary due to previous earthquakes.



“There are less well-known sites in the Mediterranean that also have mysterious stories of destruction.”

How to visit Conza

Whether you fly in through the Naples Airport or drive, there are some bed and breakfasts dotted throughout the nearby countryside and a handful of accommodation options in Conza della Campania. Visiting here can be a great day trip and gives you a taste of Italian rural life, especially if your itinerary otherwise includes busier tourist hubs like the Amalfi coast or Naples.

The Archaeological Park has seasonal hours:

- June through August, the park is open on Saturdays and Sundays, with a guided tour service from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4 to 7 p.m.

You can book a guided tour by emailing the preservation organization, Pro Loco Compsa, at prolococompsa@libero.it. They can also be messaged on Facebook and Instagram. They will try to accommodate dates outside of their regular season, so just ask beforehand. ■

Spontaneous Adventures in Sicily

By Anna Leigh Bagiackas

Palermo

My husband and I once spent five days traveling across the island of Sicily. While we typically like to plan each day of any trip, the small geographic size, low costs and many sights allowed us to drive across the whole island without a concrete plan in mind. We started in Palermo, then drove east to visit the volcano Mount Etna and coastal city of Catania. Then, we went down to the west coast city of Agrigento to see the Valley of the Temples and Turkish Steps before making our way back to Palermo, where we experienced a soccer game, a surprisingly growing craft beer scene and, of course, amazing food.

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Proetorian Fountain

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We rented a car at the airport to get us into Palermo and while we needed the car to get around the rest of the island, parking was a real challenge in the capital city. Search for a parking garage located near your accommodations or sites to see. We ended up moving to different underground garages because we couldn't find safe parking options on the street.

A word on driving in Palermo, it was hectic and rather stressful. However, if you commit to your driving decisions, you'll be fine. Sicilian drivers didn't necessarily follow the rules (so much double parking!), but in our experience they weren't overly aggressive.

We booked a low-cost Airbnb in Palermo near the harbor and could walk anywhere we wanted from there. We spent two days wandering around the city, eating pizzas and fresh seafood, visiting street markets and walking along the coast. We were pleasantly surprised to find the craft beer scene was buzzing. We stumbled upon a few different craft beer bars within walking distance of our apartment.



Teatro Massimo



Palermo Street Market



Palermo Cathedral

Options for Parking in *Palermo*

Blue lined parking spots:

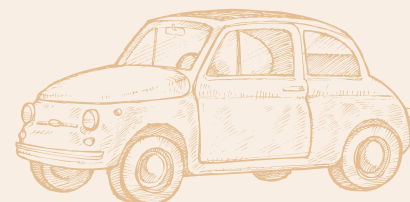
Paid parking is usually one euro an hour, and you can pay in the closest tobacco/convenience store or marked ticket machine. Be wary of people offering to accept your payment for parking in return for paper tickets. This often comes with an inflated cost. There are 21 different parking zones in Palermo, so be sure to only use that zone number ticket when you park there.

White lined parking spots:

Free parking. If it is not marked, look for the recognizable blue 'P' signs.

Parking Garages:

A recommended option, and many garages have affordable day rates, around 10 to 15 euros per day. Visit www.myparking.eu to choose your parking options in advance.



On day three we jumped in the car and drove to Mt. Etna, the highest volcano in Europe, in the eastern part of Sicily. This three-hour drive from Palermo was accompanied by fields of lemon, lime and olive trees and gorgeous, rocky landscapes. We drove around lava formations as we wound our way up the mountain and parked at the base of the peak, where you could take a cable car or hired bus closer to the summit. There were also lots of hiking opportunities around and up to the peak. Before we rode to the top, we had a pizza and an antipasto platter for lunch, accompanied by local wine of grapes grown in the area's lava-rich soil.

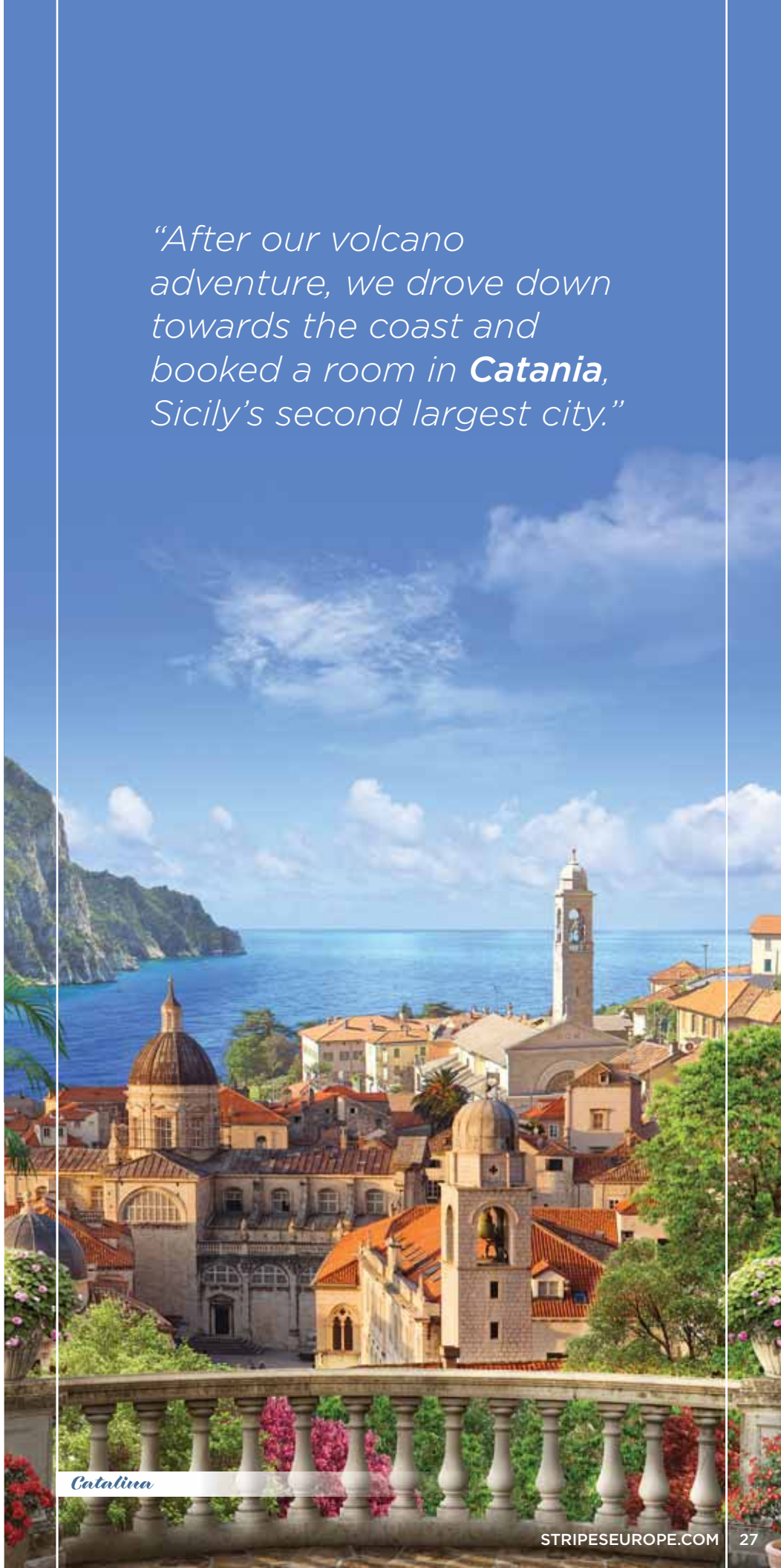
The mountain was covered in ice and snow and a chalet greeted us at the top, selling various souvenirs and goods, like local limoncello and almond and pistachio liqueurs. Once outside, we could walk around the mountain on our own, watching the steam pour out of the volcano and the clouds hover around us. One moment it was blue sky and we could look down and see the beaches of the Ionian Sea, and the next moment we couldn't see ten feet in front of us because of clouds and fog moving through.

After our volcano adventure, we drove down towards the coast and booked a room in Catania, Sicily's second largest city. We spent the following day walking along the coast and touring the Norman Castle (Castello Normanno), which overlooks the sea and was only connected to the coast after Mt. Etna erupted in 1169. Compared to the snowy, cold mountain the day before, we were in summer clothes, eating gelato and wandering through charming fishing villages.

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Mt. Etna



*“After our volcano adventure, we drove down towards the coast and booked a room in **Catania**, Sicily’s second largest city.”*

Catania



Agrigento

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From there we drove a few hours across the island to visit a couple of sights: the Valley of the Temples and the Turkish Steps. For this, we used the HotelTonight app to find a hotel in Agrigento, a beachy town on the coast.

We arrived at the Valley of the Temples (Valle dei Templi) late afternoon. This was one of the best spontaneous decisions we have made. We watched the sun set over the sea, high up on the hill surrounded by gorgeous ruins. This UNESCO site is the most well-preserved collection of Ancient Greek temples surrounded by gardens and almond trees. It could not have been more picturesque and walking through the monuments was another reminder of the layered history of Sicily.

The next morning, we drove to the Turkish Steps (Scala dei Turchi), only about 15 minutes away from our hotel, where we walked along the beach and climbed up the stairs for beautiful views of the coast. This rock formation was unique because of its characteristic white layers; the name is said to have come from frequent raids by Turkish pirates.

While there were a number of other places on the island we would have liked to visit, we also wanted to spend a little more time exploring Palermo, so we drove the two hours back to the city for a pasta-and-wine-filled lunch, followed by a visit to the Palermo Cathedral.

Our last stop was a Palermo–Messina football match, where we were surrounded by passionate and loyal Sicilians. Between rainy downpours and timeouts, the chanting and cheering never ceased and fellow spectators brought us right into their impassioned celebrations even though we didn't speak a lick of Italian.

We found Sicily to have lots of character and a unique culture from the other cities we have visited in Italy. While spontaneity may not be possible on every trip, Sicily was a great place to take on each day as an unexpected adventure, letting each city and place reveal itself to us. ■



Turkish Steps

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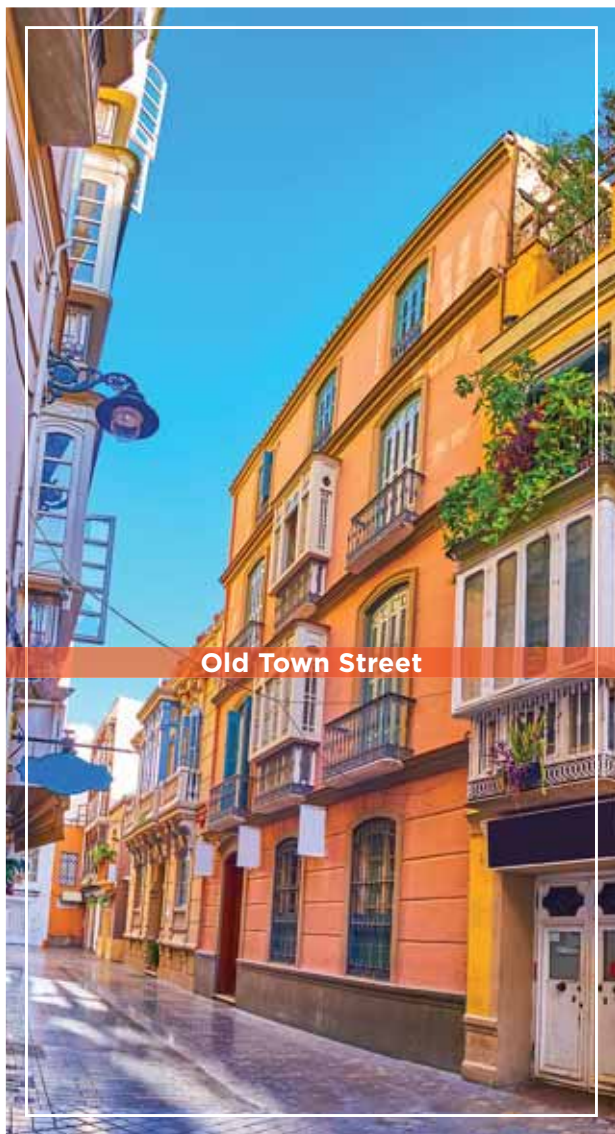


A DAY IN

MÁLAGA, SPAIN

By Tamala Malerk

In the middle of the Costa de la Sol (Coast of the Sun), is a city filled with beaches, history, frugal things to do, culture and art. This bright metropolis is Málaga, Spain, and it is also the birthplace of Picasso and Antonio Banderas. Founded by the Phoenicians in the 12th century B.C., the rule of Málaga changed hands several times over the centuries, before being conquered by the Christian armies in 1487 as part of the Reconquista. Now, you can visit the left behind artifacts and architecture from the various rules.



Old Town Street

If you are someone who needs to begin your day with a coffee, farawayworlds.com offers a great graphic for the ten different coffee styles you will find in Málaga. One does not simply order a “cafe con leche” here. Rather, you can order a “solo” coffee if you want a black coffee or a “corto” which is 70 percent milk and 30 percent coffee.

Begin your sight-seeing adventures by acting out your favorite scenes from “Gladiator” on the remains of the Roman Theater, which dates back to roughly the first century A.D. After accepting your imaginary Oscar for Best Actor, walk a few steps away (and up) and through the Alcazaba.

Alcazaba, meaning “citadel,” is a fortified palace and a wonderful place to see evidence of all of Málaga’s past. Originally built in the 11th century, the Roman ruins help form the foundations. As the years went on, Moors, Renaissance artists and others left evidence of their rule in the architectural additions.

Round off your castle and palace adventures at Gibralfaro Castle. This fortress was built in the 14th century to defend Alcazaba and was opened for public use in 1925. Make sure to wear your best walking and climbing shoes because getting to the top of this location is quite the workout. It sits at the highest point of the downtown area.

There are museums at all three of these locations for those wanting to do a deep dive into the history and culture of the sites.

If historical monuments are not your speed, Málaga features some of the most beautiful beaches along the Costa de la Sol. Mijas Costa, Torremolinos, and La Caleta offer fantastic sunbathing, swimming and walking opportunities in Málaga and surrounding areas.

Everyone will enjoy meandering around Old Town where you can find tourist shops, stops and restaurants. Shoppers, in particular, will love going down Calle Marqués de Larios. This street officially opened to the public in 1891 to connect the city center with the port, but now is renowned for its reputation of being a luxury shopping and residence street.

After your morning explorations, it is time to fuel up. Málaga has all of the tastiest treats for foodies to partake in. The Mercado Central de Atarazanas is a popular market filled with food items for even the pickiest of taste palettes. They have meats, cheeses, tapas bars, fruits, fish, vegetables and hundreds of different types of olives. The most devout epicure can sign up for a food tour with Devour Malaga.

For those who think the great outdoors are not really that great, Málaga boasts some terrific museums as well. People looking to learn more about the city surrounding them can visit the Museum of Málaga. Over 15,000 art and architectural pieces can be found in this museum and features the work of famous artists José Nogales Sevilla, Rafael Murillo Carreras and Antonio Muñoz Degrain.

Car and fashion enthusiasts will love the Automobile and Fashion Museum. Here, you see how automobile engineers, such as Ferrari and Bugatti, inspired the style of the world around them. There are car-related art pieces related to the "Roarin' Twenties," "Hot Rods" and more. They also feature fashion collections from Prada, Dior and more. The museum was home to the inaugural Iberian Fashion Film Festival in 2022.

You cannot talk about Málaga without mentioning Picasso. The Picasso Museum is housed in the Palacio de Buenavista. Through the end of 2023, visitors can explore the newest exhibit, "Dialogues with Picasso," and learn about the artist through the chronology of his life. The exhibit adds an additional 162 works by Picasso to more than 200 works already in the museum.

Kids and adults alike will adore the Museum of Imagination. Walk around, explore and interact with the optical illusions, exhibits, and shadow games. Children under seven get in for free.

No matter if you want to explore history, beaches, culture, art or shopping, Málaga has everything you need to have a great day in Spain. ■



Roman Theater



"MÁLAGA HAS EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO HAVE A GREAT DAY IN SPAIN."



Education

WHILE STATIONED IN EUROPE

By Tamala Malerk

Being stationed in Europe offers so many opportunities for learning. From language programs to colleges on-base and online, as well as study abroad opportunities, there is something for everyone who wants to expand their knowledge while they are here.

Learning the Language

For those stationed in Italy or Germany, it is beneficial to learn the language(s) surrounding you in your new home. For Army families stationed in either of these countries, ACS (Army Community Services) offers free German, Italian and English-as-a-Second-Language courses. For DoD affiliated families in Germany, the Ramstein Community Center offers a low-cost option to learn beginner's German and French. You can also find language courses for native English speakers in nearby communities, often held as evening classes in a community center or school. Fun fact, for those stationed in the Kaiserslautern Military Community area, you are about an hour from the French and Luxembourg borders, so you can put newly learned vocabulary to good use while exploring.

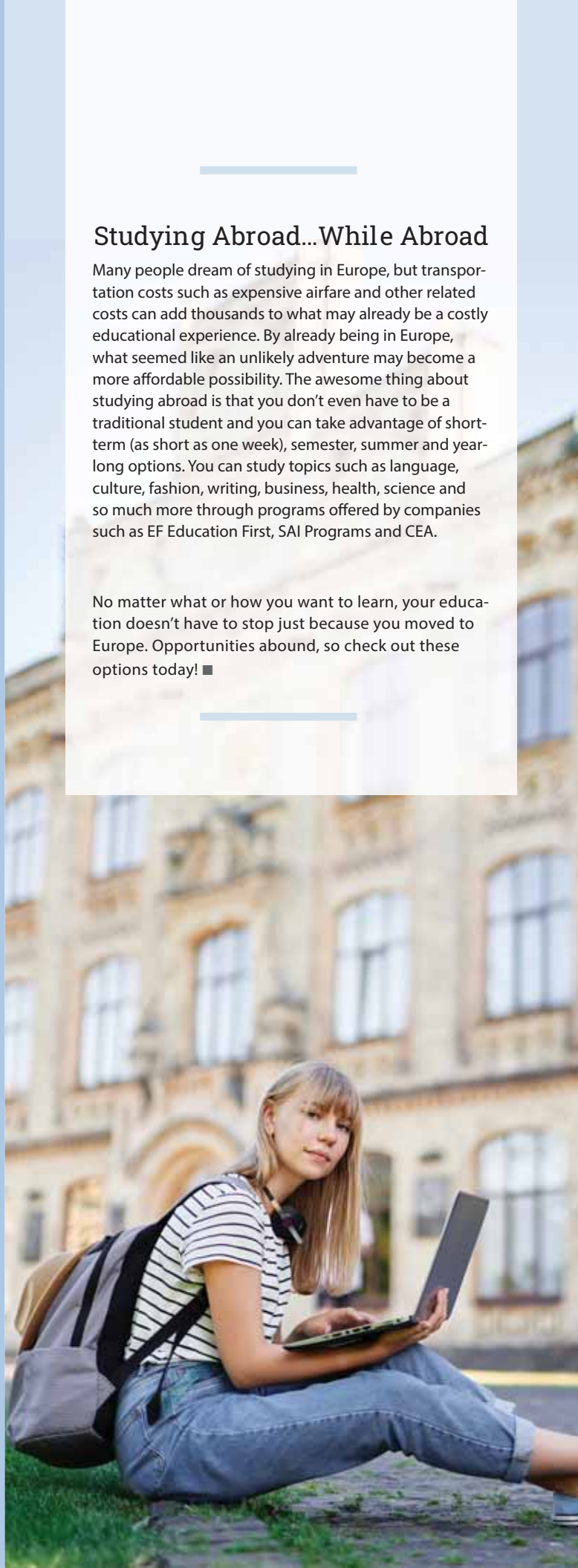
Going to College

Bases across Italy, Germany and the U.K. offer on-base and online undergraduate and graduate opportunities from the University of Maryland Global Campus and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (as of the time of writing). Central Texas College and the University of Oklahoma will stop offering on-base options in Europe in the summer of 2023, but will continue to offer online options. Southern New Hampshire University and Webster University offer military-affiliated tuition discounts, and some schools also allow for credits received from military courses (such as the Army Captain Career Courses and the Navy Senior Enlisted Academy) to count towards undergraduate and graduate course hours for those doing online or onsite courses. Enlisted members of the Air Force can earn their Associates Degree in Applied Sciences through the Community College of the Air Force and can earn many of their general education courses online or on-base with partner universities in Europe. For the most up-to-date information, go to your on-base Education Center for guidance.

Studying Abroad...While Abroad

Many people dream of studying in Europe, but transportation costs such as expensive airfare and other related costs can add thousands to what may already be a costly educational experience. By already being in Europe, what seemed like an unlikely adventure may become a more affordable possibility. The awesome thing about studying abroad is that you don't even have to be a traditional student and you can take advantage of short-term (as short as one week), semester, summer and year-long options. You can study topics such as language, culture, fashion, writing, business, health, science and so much more through programs offered by companies such as EF Education First, SAI Programs and CEA.

No matter what or how you want to learn, your education doesn't have to stop just because you moved to Europe. Opportunities abound, so check out these options today! ■





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TIPS & TRICKS FOR

TRAVELING

SPACE-A

By Stacy Roman

Living overseas creates incredible opportunities to travel to places you may not otherwise have. If you're near one of the larger installations with a passenger terminal, traveling Space-A can be enticing. Space Available travel, or Space-A, is just as it sounds. If there is room on a flight mission, the crew may allow passengers to travel to their destination. While it seems simple, there are some things you need to be aware of.

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GETTING STARTED

Before you show up with your suitcase in hand at the passenger terminal, there are a few things to take care of. First, you'll need to determine your category. If you're unsure of your category, contact your local passenger terminal. There are six categories for Space-A:



CATEGORY I Unfunded emergency leave.

CATEGORY II Accompanied environmental and morale leave (EML) or DODEA faculty in EML status during the school year holidays or summer vacation.

CATEGORY III Active duty members on ordinary leave, permissive TDYs for house hunting, dependents of 365-day deployed members.

CATEGORY IV Unaccompanied dependents on EML orders. Dependents of military members who have been deployed 30 or more days, DODEA faculty on EML status during breaks.

CATEGORY V Unaccompanied command-sponsored dependents, students located CONUS whose sponsors are OCONUS, military personnel in PTDY status (non-house hunting status).

CATEGORY VI National Guard or Reserve on Active Status List, retired military members with DD Form 2 and accompanied family members, surviving spouses of active status members, and authorized 100% disabled veterans.

REMINDERS, TIPS AND TRICKS

YOU MADE THE SEAT SELECTION FOR YOUR FLIGHT; NOW WHAT? HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

FEES

While Space-A is considerably less expensive than commercial travel, you will be charged a small fee for federal inspection (customs) and head tax. Sometimes you'll also have the option to purchase a box meal and beverage before boarding.

COMFORT

Unless you're flying on a Patriot Express mission, odds are you'll be flying in a military cargo plane. They are cold and loud. You may have actual airline seats, or you may be relegated to netted jump seats on the side. Cargo and mission will always take priority over your comfort.

Be sure to have a lot of layers and blankets. Depending on the type of plane, consider bringing a yoga mat, air mattress, or sleeping bag. If you're traveling with little ones, you can take their car seats to give them more comfort.

FLEXIBILITY

Anything can happen. Missions can (and will likely) change quickly, and aircraft might break down on leg two of a four-leg journey, leaving you stranded for a few days. Bring more than you think you'll need – snacks, diapers, wipes, etc. Before you make any hotel or rental reservations, check their cancellation and change policies.



“
**IT'S ESSENTIAL
 TO HAVE A
 BACKUP PLAN**
 ”

Once you've determined your eligibility, double-check your travel documents. Many overseas locations require six months of validity on passports.

Are your passport and paperwork all good? Great! It's time to figure out when and where you want to go. Most passenger terminals will have a schedule listed 72 hours in advance. The schedule is often listed 30 days in advance if you're traveling on the Patriot Express. Be advised that missions can change at the last minute. Flights that show 53 seats available might suddenly have zero seats. On the flip side, a flight showing no seats may open up to passengers.

Now that you've decided when and where to travel, you can register and sign up with your local passenger terminal. On the day of your desired flight, you'll need to check in and stay alert for seat selection and roll call times. Again, remember there is no guarantee you'll get on the flight, and you can keep trying for the next closest one if you aren't called.

HAVE A BACKUP PLAN

It's essential to have a backup plan. Ensuring you have a healthy bank account or room on a credit card is imperative, as you may have to extend your lodging or purchase last-minute commercial tickets home.

CHECK YOUR DATES

The busiest times of the year are the summer and winter holidays. Traveling outside these times increases your chance of securing a seat. You should also check the calendar at your destination, as local holidays or school breaks may differ from where you are, which could impact your return.

BE KIND

Due to the fickle nature of Space-A, it is easy to get frustrated if things change. Remember that Space A is a privilege and not a right. Loadmasters are neither flight attendants nor at your beck and call. Kindness can go a long way.

Commercial travel may be a better option if you're concerned about timing and unexpected delays. However, if you have time and flexibility (and a little financial wiggle room), Space-A can be a great adventure. ■



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A Day in Olomouc, Czechia

By Tamala Malerk

Ironically famed for being a great “small town” and yet the sixth largest city in Czechia (more commonly known as the Czech Republic), Olomouc has quite a few ways to spend the day. This city is less than a two-and-half-hour train ride from the more-well known Prague. The city was founded in the 11th century and was the capital of the region of Moravia until the 17th century when it lost the title to Brno.

HOLY TRINITY COLUMN

Olomouc boasts the second-largest Old Town in the country, with Prague having the largest. Within the Old Town, there is beautiful architecture in a variety of styles as well as the Orloj, the astronomical clock. Every day at noon you can catch the clock show. The Old Town is also home to the Holy Trinity Column, which has been listed in the UNESCO World Heritage list, and is "the largest group of Baroque statues within a single sculptural monument in Central Europe," according to tourism.olomouc.eu.

Olomouc has a thriving arts scene. Art enthusiasts, or even those with curiosity, should check out the Museum of Modern Art which features a permanent collection of 20th-century art and a temporary exhibit about Czech Sacral Art through early April 2023. Olomouc is home to the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra, one of the oldest symphonies in Czechia. Lovers of opera, ballet and theater will want to catch a performance at the Moravian Theatre Olomouc which also hosts the Flora Theatre, one of the largest annual international theatre festivals in Czechia in May. The Music Theatre Olomouc is a smaller space that allows for newer, experimental and alternative shows to be shown to the public.

Families can spend a day at the Olomouc Zoo, which is home to dozens of birds, mammals, fish, invertebrates and reptiles. Aside from the animals, visitors can enjoy the 12-stop geologic trail and ride the cable car and safari train. The most adventurous can climb the 32-meter high observation tower and see the sights. The zoo supports several national and global projects dedicated to the preservation and protection of animals and habitats including Mobile Phone Recycling and The Czech Society for the Protection of Bats (ČESON). You can also help by adopting your favorite animal

which helps cover the costs associated with caring for the animal.

Those looking to cool off or just get some aquatic adventures in can make their way to the Aqua Park. There is an indoor pool for year-round fun as well as an outdoor area open from June to October that includes water slides, a playground, a children's pool and a multipurpose pool. Visitors looking to relax can enjoy some time in the sauna and get a massage after dropping the kids off at the Children's Corner where there are plenty of toys and activities to keep the kids entertained.

Fans of flora and fauna should go to the Výstaviště Flora Olomouc. It features a botanical garden with 80 species of plants and trees. Since 2011, it has also been home to the "Garden of the Senses," a garden exhibit geared towards those with visual impairments. The greenhouses have over 700 types of cacti, succulents and citrus trees. There are also several exotic animals paired with the exotic plants such as birds, snakes, fish and turtles. Kids can enjoy the many on-site programs and playgrounds.

The most courageous foodies must try tvargle, Olomouc's famous cheese, known for being perhaps Czechia's smelliest cheese. The Czechs have been utilizing the same recipe since the 15th century. Less courageous foodies can also enjoy favorite traditional dishes such as potato dumplings and goulash. There are restaurants, pubs and breweries all over town ready to serve you regional dishes including Moravska Restaurace and Svatovaclavsky Pivovar.

No matter if you want to eat, swim, explore, learn or a combination of any or all of those things, Olomouc is the place for you to spend a day (or more). ■

“ Olomouc has a thriving arts scene. ”



ASTRONOMICAL CLOCK



CAESAR FOUNTAIN

Magnificent **WINDSOR**

By Tamala Malerk





CHANGING OF THE GUARD



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WINDSOR GREAT PARK VIEW



ASCOT RACECOURSE

No matter if you are into castles, LEGO®, shopping, history, food, parks, gardens, animals or pubs, Windsor has something for you. Founded by William the Conqueror in the 11th century and renowned for being the “oldest and largest occupied castle in the world,” Windsor Castle is a must for castle, history and royal family enthusiasts. The castle has been the home to over 40 monarchs, and you can re-live a royal wedding by visiting St. George’s Chapel onsite. If you have a sweet tooth like me, you can enjoy ice cream made from the Jersey Cows that live on the royal farm (I highly recommend the strawberry). While there you can tour certain rooms of the castle, see Queen Mary’s doll house and watch the changing of the Guard. The castle is closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, access to the Chapel is limited after 2:30 p.m. and only accessible for church services on Sundays.

Something for dream castle builders, but on a smaller scale, is the LEGOLAND® Windsor Resort, only a short nine-minute drive away from Windsor Castle. With 55 rides and attractions spread across over 10 “lands,” there is something for every member of the family at the theme park and resort, where you can enjoy themed rooms, fantastic dining options at the resort and castle hotels onsite. Attend fun events year-round, such as Brick Week, fireworks shows, Brick or Treat and LEGOLAND® at Christmas.

For the shopper in the family, Windsor has plenty of options from the thrifty shopper to the extravagant spender. Shop the pedestrian-only shopping centers, farmer’s markets and high-end stores.

History buffs will enjoy the many historical homes and museums in Windsor. For over 450 years, the Palmer family has made Dorney Court their home, and they have shared that beautiful home with visitors and film crews to appreciate its beauty. You can book a private tour of the house or check their website for their open public days. If you cannot visit in person you can see the house in films and television from the 1960s through the present including “Bridgerton,” “Drunk History,” “24,” “A Man for All Seasons” and “Bohemian Rhapsody.” Enjoy local and social history at the Windsor and Royal Borough Museum. There are over 100 objects on display and more than 10,000 objects in the collection overall, so there is a chance that you will see something new every time you visit. Use the online guide to learn more about your favorite items. For lovers of military history, there is the Berkshire Yeomanry Museum. The collection contains objects dating back to the 1700s and includes uniforms, weapons and equipment. The Yeomanry Museum is open by appointment only on Tuesday evenings, but groups can book another appointment time in advance.

If the great outdoors are your thing, the River Thames, Windsor Great Park and Ascot Racecourse are a wonderful way to while away the hours. Spanning over 200 miles the River Thames has many towns along its banks. There are plenty of boat tour options to explore along the river, as well as tons of dining and hotel choices. Once you are off the boat, you can spend plenty of hours meandering around Windsor Great Park. Take a walk around the lake at Virginia Water Lake, let the children play on the low-level play equipment on Obelisk Lawn, grab some food at their plentiful takeaway and dine-in food options, view the beauty of the Savill gardens and so much more. Since the 1700s, Ascot Racecourse has delighted horseracing fans since Queen Anne herself saw the potential in this land as a hub for recreation and sport. Live out your regal or Peaky Blinders fantasy as you choose which animal you think will win while wearing your fanciest attire and eating fine foods.

Before you go, make sure that you grab your passports, convert some money into British pounds and prepare to have tons of fun. ■



“You can enjoy ice cream made from the Jersey Cows that live on the royal farm.”

Islands OF GERMANY

By Jessica Zen

Though “island paradise” is perhaps not the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of Germany, did you know that there are several islands just waiting to be explored in the Baltic Sea? With perfect sandy beaches, picturesque cliffs and sand dunes galore, there is no shortage of beauty located in northern Germany. Visit any one of these islands for your next outing in Germany!

RÜGEN

Visit the country's largest island for an escape filled with pristine beaches, white-washed cliffs and stunning national parks. If you want to soak up the sun, head to the beach, which stretches for 37 miles. Stay at a seaside resort or relax at a rejuvenating spa. Explore Jasmund National Park and hike along the cliffs for the perfect afternoon of outdoor activity. No trip to the area is complete without a ride on the Rügenische Kleinbahn, a steam locomotive railway that takes visitors through the beautiful forests and past luxurious beach resorts. This outdoor oasis is sure to exceed your expectations!



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Jasmund National Park, Rügen



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Straight out of a fairy-tale: Hohenzollern Castle and the Swabian Alb

In SouthWest Germany, the legacy of the aristocratic Hohenzollern family includes some great attractions and sights. In the rugged, rolling upland of the Swabian Mountains, Hohenzollern Country is perfect for daytrips. Follow in the footsteps of one of the most important aristocratic families in Germany; explore the legacy of the once mighty Hohenzollerns.

The green, unspoiled Swabian Alb is so important that it has been recognized as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and, in 2015, as the UNESCO Global Geopark Swabian Alb.

Hohenzollern Castle, one of the most impressive fortresses in Germany, is perched on a hilltop in the Swabian Mountains. It looks like a fairytale castle from centuries ago, but it is actually a fine example of 19th-century Gothic Revival architecture. The seat of the Prussian royal family and the Princes of Hohenzollern impresses with stunning views. As Kaiser Wilhelm I said after a visit in 1886: "The view from Hohenzollern Castle is really worth the journey." And that is still true today.

The castle Hohenzollern is only one hour away from Stuttgart. You can book your tickets here:

www.burg-hohenzollern.com

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HIDDENSEE

This car-free island is located west of Rügen and is truly a hidden gem. With just over 1,000 inhabitants, this little island is sure to charm you with its natural beauty. Spend the day cycling around the area, hiking on various trails, taking a horse-drawn carriage ride or shopping for a piece of beautiful local amber. The seafood is extra fresh here, so don't miss out on trying local favorites like "Bismarckbrötchen" (pickled herring on a bread roll) or "Himmel und Erde" (potatoes, bacon and applesauce).



SYLT

Perhaps the biggest draw to this island is its massive shoreline that stretches with the finest of sand beaches for 25 miles. With so much space, the diversity here is outstanding. You'll find rough surf on the west coast, tidal flats on the east, sand dunes, green dykes, cliffs and more. Hike up 110 steps to the lookout point in Uwe Dunes or head to the Sylt Aquarium to see more than 150 species of fish from the North Sea.



Koserow, Usedom



Lemkenhafen, Fehmarn



Gellen Beach, Hiddensee



Wenningstedt Village, Sylt

USEDOM

Known as the sunny island, Usedom is for relaxation. Hit a luxurious spa for the day or visit Schmetterlingsfarm in Trassenheide, Europe's largest butterfly farm. Stroll through a shopping center, searching for the perfect souvenir to bring home. Don't miss the farmers' market at Koserow, a fun location for the whole family with a petting zoo, bouncy house, slides and more. Of course, there are also hiking paths, cycling trails, nature reserves and everything else a nature lover could ever want to find in a vacation location.



FEHMARN

This island has a little something for everyone, ranging from watersports and seaside spas to farm stays. Here you'll find colorful meadows and dense forests where you can do a variety of activities. Go angling, cycling, geocaching, horseback riding or play volleyball, football or tennis. If you want to try farming, book a stay in a rural setting and experience the growing agritourism trend. Feed the animals or go for a tractor ride, a thrilling experience for young children and adults alike!



Whether you want to relax on the beach or get active outdoors, the islands of Germany offer a plethora of things to do for the entire family. Head to Germany's northern reaches on your next adventure to experience even more beautiful landscapes! ■

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THE *Allure* OF *Austria*

By Stacy Roman

Austria invokes images of sophisticated elegance and quiet refinement. Often seen as an extension of Germany, Austria is more akin to a genteel cousin with its history, culture and identity. Borders lined with jagged alpine peaks and crystal-clear lakes make for fantastic hiking nearly all-year long and world-class snow sport options in the icy winter. However, spring and summer are some of the best seasons to visit this gem. From vibrant cities to small, rural villages and rugged mountain towns, there is no better time to discover Austria than now.

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The Great Outdoors

Austria's outdoor spaces are teeming with skiers, snowboarders, hikers, backpackers, mountaineers, and other thrill-seeking adventurers throughout the year. As spring begins to bloom, the well-maintained trails and parks emerge from their snowy slumber. Sandwiched between the German and Italian borders, the Tyrolean Alps boast breathtaking panoramas, sheer cliffs with cascading waterfalls and rolling emerald-green pastures. Adrenaline junkies can often squeeze in a few more snow sport sessions before the resorts close for the season. Likewise, hikers can explore the wildflower-filled meadows along the glaciers.

If you travel east, approximately 75 kilometers south of Salzburg you'll discover the charming Austrian town of Hallstatt. A UNESCO World Heritage site, the area is famous for what lies beneath. A complex tunnel of caves at Dachstein Cave World dates back millions of years and was once part of an ocean, as evidenced by the fossils and shells that remain. Jagged mineral deposits known as stalactites and stalagmites jut ominously through the cave floor and dangle precariously from the ceiling. Hallstatt is also home to the world's oldest salt mine. Visitors can walk through the mine or stay above ground and view the cityscape from the Skywalk. Or head to one of the nearby trails circling the lake for a trek through the lush forests.

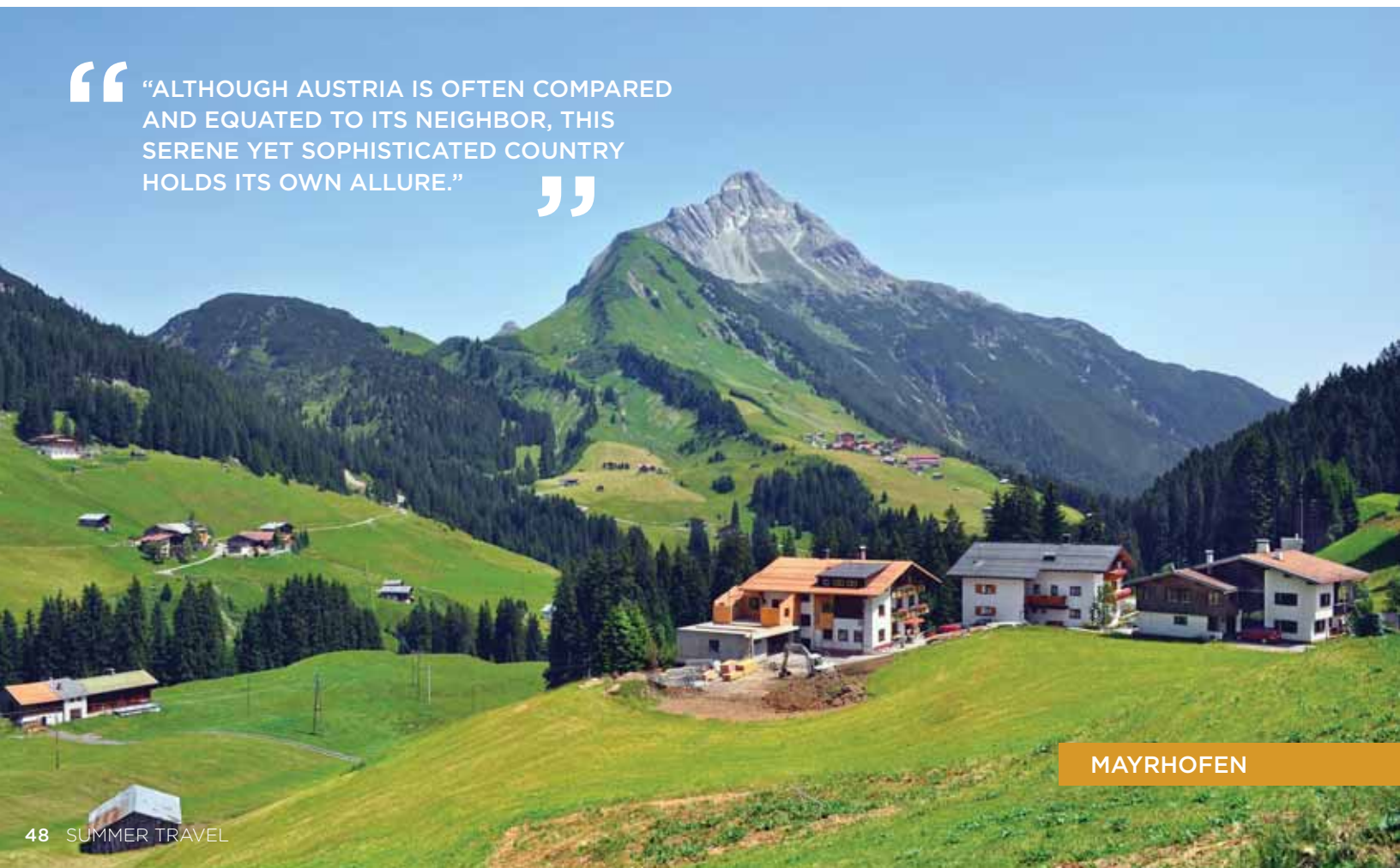


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TYROLEAN ALPS

“ALTHOUGH AUSTRIA IS OFTEN COMPARED AND EQUATED TO ITS NEIGHBOR, THIS SERENE YET SOPHISTICATED COUNTRY HOLDS ITS OWN ALLURE.”



MAYRHOFEN



BELVEDERE PALACE

The Cultural Icons

For urban travelers, a visit to the capital city of Vienna is a must. This magnificent metropolis is nothing short of spectacular. A cultural powerhouse, intellectual and artistic greats such as Sigmund Freud, Beethoven and Mozart once called Vienna home. If unpredictable seasonal showers chase you indoors, there are a plethora of museums near the city center in the Museums Quartier. Once home to Austrian royalty, visitors can see how the other half lived at one of the many palaces. The impressive Schönbrunn Palace is an easy U-Bahn ride from the middle of town. Likewise, the Hofburg, Vienna Opera House, Karlskirche, Palais Schwarzenberg and Belvedere Palace are all within walking distance and worth a stop.



VIENNA

Sitting on the German border is the enchanting city of Salzburg. Immortalized in the beloved film "The Sound of Music," its history is very much entwined with music and the arts. With a vast number of palatial homes and castles, Salzburg has a fairy tale feeling. As the birthplace of Mozart, visitors can walk through his childhood home and glide through the ornate ballrooms of Mirabell Palace and the Robinhof, imagining his dramatic musical stylings filling the grand spaces. If the outdoors is calling to you, head to the riverfront and walk beneath the beautiful foliage lining the Salzach River. For a little more adventure, head to one of the many hiking spots in the Alps east of the city.

Another cultural gem hiding in the Tyrolean Alps is the charming city of Innsbruck. Host to the Winter Olympics in 1964, 1976 and the Youth Olympic Games in 2012, Innsbruck is worth putting on your travel bucket list. Although it's best known as a winter sports mecca, visiting during the spring and summer allows visitors to see the vibrant green hues and brilliant pops of blooming foliage against the backdrop of pastel-colored buildings and towering snow-capped peaks. If the weather takes a turn, head indoors to the Swarovski Kristallwelten. With brilliant displays of glittering crystals, visitors can peek inside the world-famous crystal house.

Although Austria is often compared and equated to its western neighbor, this serene yet sophisticated country holds its own allure. During the warmer spring and summer months, you'll find a beautiful landscape unfurling from the wintry months and ample opportunity to discover all it has to offer. ■



SALZBURG



INNSBRUCK

SCOTLAND'S



HIGHLAND GAMES

By Tamala Malerk





©BILL ROBERTSON



Scotland is famous for kilts, William Wallace, whiskey and, of course, the Highland Games. There are multiple theories behind the origin of the Highland Games. Some believe the games originated in Ireland over 4,000 years ago and came to Scotland (Scotti) in the fourth and fifth centuries through periodic migrations. Others believe the games originated in the Middle Ages in Ireland based on 12th-century Irish literature and were similar to the Olympic games. No matter what legend you believe, it is a well-established fact that the Games as we know them today essentially began in the 1800s. In the modern era, the Games celebrate Celtic and Scottish culture.

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Fun fact: A caber is a long wooden pole, similar in size to a telegraph pole, being between 16 and 20 feet in length and weighing up to 132 pounds.



“

If you cannot make it to Scotland this year, you can attend Highland Games around the world.

”



In 2023, there will be over 50 Games occurring across Scotland beginning in May and ending in September. The largest and most famous of the Games are in Braemar and have been held since 1832. In 1848, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert attended the Braemar Games and, with their mere presence, made the Games the “in” thing to do. No matter what Games you attend, there are several events to keep your eyes peeled for: caber tossing, hammer tossing, pipe playing, stone putting, tug-o-war and racing, just to name a few. Because of the simplicity behind a lot of these events, you could even participate in these games at home or at a nearby park. You just need a hill or some rope for popular events such as hill racing and tug-o-war.

The Games not only contain fun and competitive events but also have several traditions including: Kilts, dancing, drumming and haggis hurling. The Royal Scottish Highland Games Association has made a rule that all contestants of the “Heavy Events” must wear a kilt while competing. You can read the official rules at rshga.org. Traditionally, only men were allowed to compete in the dancing competitions. However, today, upwards of 95 percent of dancing competitors are female, according to “Cottages and Castles.”

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SCOTLAND



Did You Know? Haggis is the national dish of Scotland. Haggis consists of sheep’s pluck (heart, liver and lungs) minced with onions, salt, spices, suet and oatmeal, traditionally encased in sheep’s stomach, but can also be encased in an artificial casing.





If you cannot make it to Scotland this year, you can attend Highland Games around the world. In France, the Caber is sometimes exchanged for a giant champagne cork; the most northern games occur in Norway, and the most southern games take place in New Zealand, according to Scotland.org. The first Highland Games in the U.S. were held in New York in the 1800s. The first one I encountered was while we were stationed at Fort Hood, Texas about half an hour down the road in Salado (the Salado Scottish Gathering of the Clans and Highland Games) but you can attend one in almost every state.

The Highland Games contain not only events and traditions, but often animals, clan tents, arts and crafts areas and, of course, delicious food and games. There is guaranteed to be something for everyone in the family to enjoy at the Scotland Highland Games. ■



STEP BACK IN TIME

A Day in Český Krumlov

By Jessica Zen



Step back in time in this delightful 14th-century walled city with numerous Renaissance buildings, winding cobblestone streets and a UNESCO World History city center. Here you can go on an outdoor adventure or stay in the city to relax and do some shopping or explore religious sites. Český Krumlov is the perfect day trip from Prague and offers a great opportunity to experience more of the Czech Republic.

If you're interested in religious structures, be sure to check out the Minorite Monastery. It was founded in 1350, along with the Church of Corpus Christi and St. Mary in Pain. The monastery

was initiated by Peter I as a common monastery for the Clare nuns. It was rebuilt in Baroque style in the late 1600s. By 1785, the nuns had left, but the Minorites remained until 1950. Afterward, the building was used for secular purposes. Inside, there is a beautiful Baroque pulpit from 1746, as well as a sculpture of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary that is particularly lovely. There are numerous altars, various statues and some incredible paintings at this beautiful monastery.

Another great religious structure is the Church of St. Vitus. It dominates the cityscape, second only to the castle on the other side of the river. This church traces its origin to the 13th century

and features a Gothic facade and 19th-century spire. It has a particularly tall nave that is worth noting, as well as the fact that it is the burial place for many prominent Bohemian families. If you can swing it, try to visit during a classical concert for an extra-special experience.

For a change of pace, the museums in the city are a great place to experience some culture. Visit the Egon Schiele Art Centrum, which opened in 1993. It is a large art gallery featuring classical and contemporary 20th-century artwork. It has rotating exhibits, a large studio for young artists and a writer's suite.

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How You Can Shop More Safely and Securely Around the World

As a military member or military family member, life can be unpredictable. Luckily, the security of your finances doesn't have to be.

If you're looking for the safest way to make purchases in Europe, it is always a good idea to use a credit card. If your card gets lost or stolen, a member services representative will be able to help you right away so that you can avoid fraudulent charges. Many financial institutions also make it easy to keep tabs on your card usage so you'll know right away whether someone else is using your card; whether it's via an SMS alert making you aware of potential suspicious activity, or through app options that allow you to set spending, category and location limits.

Plus, you'll usually get better rates for foreign exchange fees with credit cards than by exchanging currency. In fact, some

credit cards offer no foreign transaction fees at all.

If you are just starting out, a credit card such as Service CU's Visa® Everyday Card can help you begin establishing your credit history, which you'll need if you ever apply for an auto loan, mortgage or even a home rental. If you're eligible for a card with higher limits, such as their Visa® Signature Everyday Elite card, you'll earn points on every purchase, which you can use to redeem for merchandise or cash back.

Last but not least, many new credit cards are contactless, which means they are virtually impossible to tamper with or clone. All you have to do is tap and pay!

To learn more about Service CU's Everyday credit cards, visit servicecu.org/myeverydaycard.

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American Dentist in Heidelberg & Stuttgart

Dr. Charles A. Smith is an American-trained dentist in Heidelberg and Stuttgart. A Metlife/Preferred Tricare provider, he provides care for the entire family. He is a graduate of the University of Buffalo School of Dental Medicine and an LVI Fellow of the prestigious Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies. He provides advanced services such as Smile Makeovers, INVISALIGN, traditional orthodontics, TMJ, implants, and Full Mouth Reconstruction, as well as routine services including cleaning, periodontal treatment, fillings, pediatrics, crowns and root canals.

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Another great place to see is the Regional Museum, which has around 34,000 items on display. It even has a room-sized model of what the city looked like in 1800. You'll also find folk art from the Sumava region, history, fine arts, furnishings and some weapons as well.

For something a little out of the ordinary, head to the Museum of Torture. There are around 100 displays, including several instruments of torture, and the cellars have wax figures to enhance the grim atmosphere. Spooky sound effects take it to the next level and the visual effects of a witch burning are extra creepy.

If you find yourself in Old Town, be sure to visit Český Krumlov Castle, the largest in Eastern Europe. It offers insight into the past rulers of

Bohemia. The castle dates back to 1240, but most of what you can see today is from the 17th century. Highlights include Rosenberg Ballroom, Chapel of St. George, the Renaissance Hall, the Royal Apartments and the Baroque theater from 1682.

If you're interested in enjoying some of the great outdoors, you're in the right place. Just outside the city you'll find a great hiking trail that will take you up Mount Klet, a 3,556-foot high mountain. You can hike or take a chair lift through Blanský Forest to the top. Hike either directly under the chairlift or take the green trail, which is far more pleasant. From the Český Krumlov train station, follow the green trail signs. It takes about three hours but is worth the time. At the top is Josef's Tower, an observatory and a

cafe. Here you'll find incredible views of southern Bohemia and the city below.

Another great outdoor adventure opportunity is getting out on the River Vltava. Take a kayak or canoe out with Malecek Rafting & Canoe service. You can peacefully float down the river and take in the sites on a trip that ranges from 30 minutes to a full day.

Pick out a few of these activities that sound like the most fun and plan the perfect day trip to Český Krumlov. There are so many opportunities to learn about the local history and enjoy the beautiful surrounding nature. Next time you're in Prague, be sure to add Český Krumlov to your itinerary. ■

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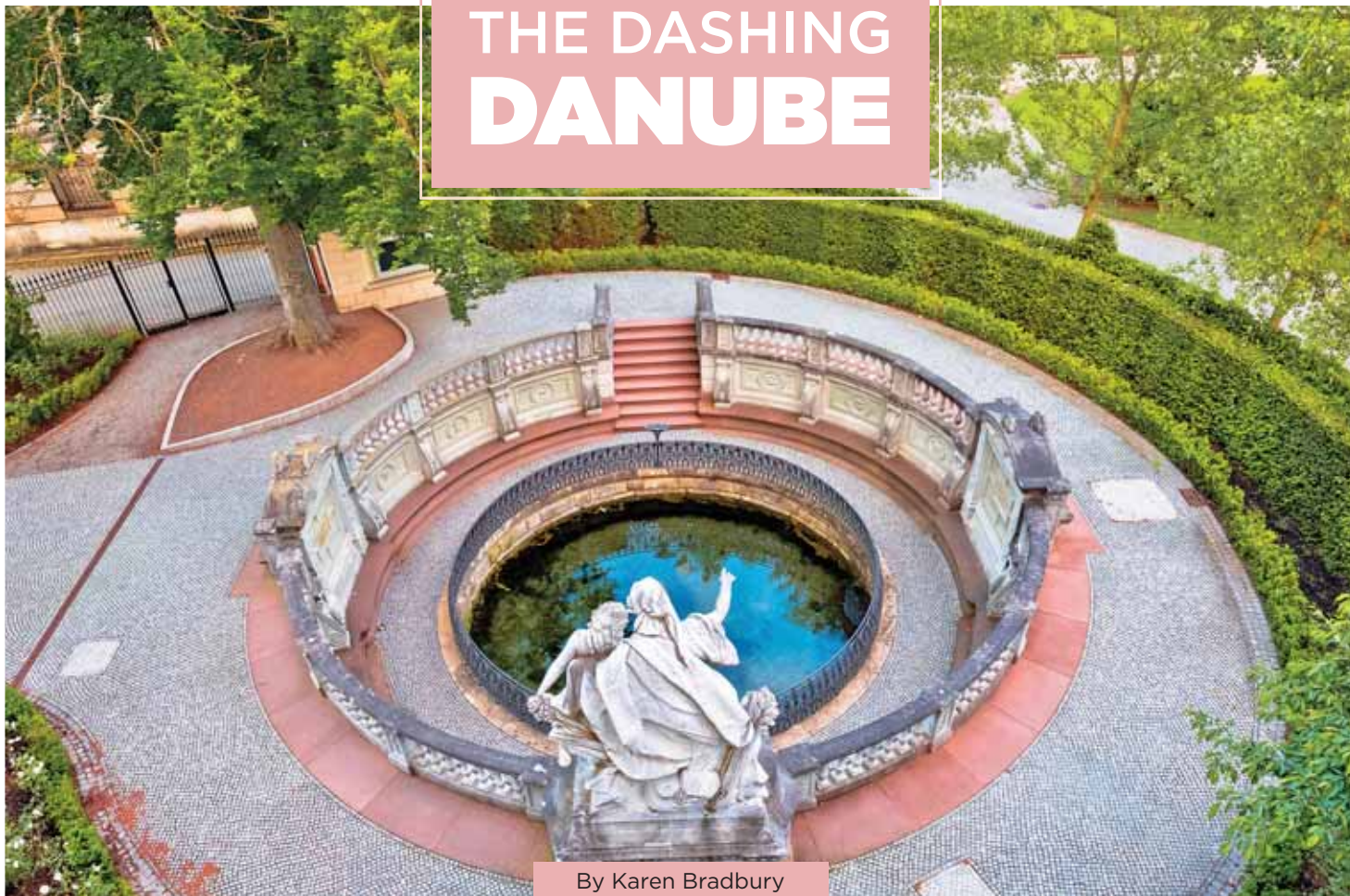
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SEE OUR AD ON PAGE #35

THE DASHING DANUBE



By Karen Bradbury

What do the words Donau, Dunaj, Duna, Dunav, Danubio and Tuna have in common? They are all proper nouns describing the same thing in different languages, the awe-inspiring Danube River, a source of artistic inspiration and countless legends.

The Danube traverses 10 nations, the most of any of the world's great rivers. It rises in Germany's Black Forest and flows past Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine before emptying into the Black Sea, covering a distance of 1,770 miles in its wake.

An important trade route in ancient times, a frontier of the Roman Empire for centuries and a boundary between nations today, the modern-day Danube remains a vital shipping route, an important source of drinking water and home to a great diversity of fish species.

The stretch of the Danube that flows through Germany is 384 miles long and passes through the country's two southernmost states, Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria.

DONAUESCHINGEN: In this orderly Black Forest town, the Brigach and Breg rivers join forces; this is considered the Danube's source. It's also possible to visit the river's symbolic birthplace. On the pretty grounds of the town's stately Residenzschloss palace, the Donauquelle, a small blue pool surrounded by an iron fence and statuary, is signposted as the birthplace of the great river.

TUTTLINGEN: With its grid layout, getting lost in this town known as a center of medical technology shouldn't be a concern. Things to see include the Pyramid Fountain, an art-nouveau Protestant Church and Railway Museum, featuring 26 vintage steam locomotives.

SIGMARINGEN: The ancestral Hohenzollern Castle can be visited as part of a tour or during the numerous annual events it hosts, including an atmospheric Christmas market. Other sights include the St. Johann Parish Church, Prince's Garden and the Round Tower.

ULM: Ulm's most famous landmark is its Minster, the highest church spire in the world. You'll need stamina to get to the top— 768 steps lead up to its viewing platform. Another must-see is the Fisherman's Quarter, a jumble of half-timbered houses and traditional restaurants.

GÜNZBURG: This Bavarian town's claim to fame is modern, not medieval, with the 55 million bricks that build LEGOLAND® Amusement Park.

FAIMINGEN: This village is worth a quick detour to check out the remains of the Temple of Apollo Granus, one of the most important Roman temples north of the Alps. Entry to this open-air museum is free.

DONA UWÖRTH: Once an Imperial Free Town, this city along the themed route known as the Romantic Road has seen more than its fair share of battles due to its strategic location. Stroll along the Reichsstraße and pay a visit to the baroque Monastery of the Holy Cross, home to a precious relic of the cross brought to the town around 1030.

NEUBURG AN DER DONAU: The town's undisputed glory is found in the immense Neuburg Castle. Within its walls, the State Gallery for Flemish Baroque Art houses masterpieces from the brushes of Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck.

INGOLSTADT: Ingolstadt's main attractions include the New Castle, home to the Bavarian Army Museum, and the Asamkirche of Maria de Victoria, a baroque church famed for its trompe-l'œil ceiling painting. Museum lovers will gravitate toward the German Museum for the History of Medicine the Audi Forum Experience.

KELHEIM: The Donaudurchbruch, or Danube Gorge, offers stunning natural beauty in the form of a three-mile slit through narrow limestone cliffs towering 200 feet above restless waters. Kelheim has a proud brewing tradition and is home to both the Weisses Brauhaus, Bavaria's oldest wheat beer brewery, and Weltenburg Abbey, the world's oldest monastery brewery.

REGENSBURG: A highlight of any Danube tour is a stop in this UNESCO-listed beauty. Considered one of the best-preserved medieval cities in all of Germany, the top sights include the Porta Praetoria, a Roman gate, Thurn and Taxis, one of Europe's largest privately owned palaces, and the awe-inspiring St. Peter's Cathedral.

DONAUSTAUF: While driving through the Bavarian countryside, the Walhalla makes for an unexpected sight. This sleek marble monument completed in 1842 was modelled after the Greek Parthenon and pays homage to the heroes of Bavarian mythology and other figures looming large in German history.

DEGGENDORF: As one of the gateways to the remarkable wilderness area of the Bavarian Forest, outdoor opportunities here abound, from golf to cross-country skiing. The streets surrounding the handsome main square trace the outlines of a moat that once encircled the town.

PASSAU: Germany's last city before the Austrian frontier sits at the conjunction of three rivers, the Danube, Inn and Ilz. Passau's dazzling baroque beauty can be credited to Italian master artists and architects. Peek into St. Steven's Cathedral for a look at one of the world's largest church organs. ■



Fisherman's Quarters
Ulm



New Castle
Ingolstadt



St. Steven's Cathedral
Passau

UK Eats

FISH & CHIPS

Adapted by Erica Fowler

I recently tried this delicious fish and chips recipe to satisfy my craving for crispy breaded and fried cod with thick-cut fries, or “chips” as they’re called in the U.K. It hit the spot and brought me back to a few of my childhood years in England. For authentic nosing, track down some malt vinegar to spritz over your chips.

Classic British Fish & Chips

Start to finish: 1 hour and 30 minutes (This includes batter resting in the fridge for 30 minutes to one hour). **Servings: 2-4**

Ingredients

For the Fish:

- 7 tablespoons all-purpose flour, divided, 55 grams
- 7 tablespoons cornstarch, 55 grams
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- Sea salt, to taste
- 1 pinch freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/3 cup dark beer, cold, 79ml
- 1/3 cup sparkling water, cold, 79ml
- 4 (7-ounce) well-dried fish fillets (thick, white cod, haddock or pollock)

For the Chips:

- 2 pounds potatoes, peeled
- 1 quart (1 liter) vegetable oil or lard, for frying

Instructions:

- 1 Ready your ingredients. Set aside 2 tablespoons of flour. In a large-bowl, mix the remaining flour with the cornstarch and baking powder. Season lightly with a tiny pinch of salt and pepper.
- 2 Using a fork to whisk continuously, add the beer and the sparkling water to the flour mixture and continue mixing until you have a thick, smooth batter. Place the batter in the fridge to rest for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
- 3 Meanwhile, cut the potatoes into a little less than 1/2-inch-thick slices, then slice these into 1/2-inch-wide chips. Place the chips into a colander and rinse under cold running water.
- 4 Place the washed chips into a pan of cold water. Bring to a gentle boil and simmer for 3 to 4 minutes.
- 5 Drain carefully through a colander, then dry with paper towels. Keep in the fridge covered with paper towels until needed.
- 6 Meanwhile, lay the fish fillets on a paper towel and pat dry. Season with a little sea salt.
- 7 Heat the oil to 350 F/175 C in a deep-fat fryer or large, deep saucepan. Cook the chips a few handfuls at a time in the oil for about 2 minutes. Do not brown them. Once the chips are slightly cooked, remove them from the oil and drain.
- 8 Place the 2 tablespoons of flour reserved from the batter mix into a shallow bowl. Toss each fish fillet in the flour and shake off any excess.
- 9 Dip fish into the batter, coating the entire fillet.
- 10 Check that the oil temperature is still 350 F. Carefully lower each fillet into the hot oil. Fry for approximately 8 minutes, or until the batter is crisp and golden, turning the fillets from time to time with a slotted spoon.
- 11 Once cooked, remove the fillets from the hot oil and drain on paper towels. Sprinkle with salt. Cover with greaseproof paper and keep hot.
- 12 Heat the oil to 400 F/200 C, then cook the chips until golden and crisp, or about 5 minutes. Remove from the oil and drain. Season with salt.
- 13 Serve immediately with the hot fish accompanied by your favorite condiment.

Adapted from the Spruce Eats.



& HAGGIS

Haggis is good at any time of year, but on Burns Night each year, fans gather around the table to recite this quote from Scottish poet Robert Burns before digging in:

*"Some hae meat and canna eat, and some wad eat that want it;
But we hae meat, and we can eat, Sae let the Lord be thankit."*

It is a colloquial message to remember to be thankful for what you have, including the food around you. Beyond the appreciation for Burns' famous verses, this social gathering, or "Cèilidh" is a celebration of Scottish culture on a platter. Heaping sides are passed around, to which I suggest you assign "neeps and tatties," or rutabagas and potatoes, to the job. This balances the richness of the meat. The celebration usually happens on or around Jan. 25, Burns' birthday, but haggis is brilliant at any time of year. We're sharing a simplified version of the dish using chicken livers and ground lamb if you'd prefer not to wrestle with lamb offal and sausage casings. This also makes it easier to envision how delicious and do-able a vegetarian variation using stuffed cabbage with beans, mushrooms and lentils could be. ■

Haggis

Start to finish: 1 hour and 15 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients

- ½ tablespoon butter, 5g
- 1 onion
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ¾ teaspoon ground coriander
- ¾ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 cup stock, 240ml
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme or fresh, chopped
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 lb ground lamb, 450g
- ½ lb chicken livers, 225g
- 4 oz steel-cut oats, 115g

Instructions:

- 1** Preheat the oven to 350 F/175 C.
- 2** Warm the butter in a pan. Finely dice the onion and cook over medium heat in the butter until softened, about 5 minutes.
- 3** Meanwhile, take any fatty or tough pieces off the chicken livers and roughly chop.
- 4** Add the spices to the onion and cook a minute, then add the lamb and chicken livers.
- 5** Brown the meat, then once it is all cooked, add the stock and cover. Allow to simmer for around 20 minutes.
- 6** Then add the oats, mix well and transfer to a baking dish (unless you started with a dish that can transfer).
- 7** Cover the dish and put in the oven for 30 minutes.
- 8** Remove the lid and cook for another 10 minutes.
- 9** Serve! And if you enjoy a good whiskey apéritif or digestif, that would be quite Scottish of you.



Adapted from Caroline's Cooking.

CUSTARD

Around Europe

Anytime I see crème brûlée on a menu, I find myself making room in my stomach no matter what giant meal I just stuffed myself with. There is always room for dessert. I thought I loved crème brûlée the most, but then discovered I loved flan, and now I think I just love custard dishes. This newly discovered love led me on a culinary deep dive to see how custard influences desserts across Europe.

England: “Proper” English Vanilla Custard

Since custard is the ingredient that brings all these desserts together, it makes sense to look into what custard is. Custard is a blend of egg yolk, milk and sugar (though some recipes may call for additional ingredients such as flour or vanilla). While the ingredients are simple, the preparation requires attention to detail and specific techniques to ensure your custard comes out perfect. English custard is often used as a saucy topper for cake and bread.

France: Crème Brûlée

French for “burnt cream.” While England, Spain and France have all claimed the dish originated there, most people associate crème brûlée with France. The earliest known recipe for this dish appeared in a French cookbook in 1691. This dessert is a baked custard dish that allows the chef to use a torch to create the signature sugar layer on top.

The Roman Empire...then Spain: Flan

This caramel-covered wobbly custard dessert is a Spanish treat and only requires four ingredients. This dessert survived the Roman Empire with iterations involving eel in the ingredients. Spain eventually brought the dish to the Americas where it received its Mexican flavors and influences.

The Netherlands: Vla

This is a custard dish with the addition of cornstarch. This is a dish that has very specific rules attached to it. For vla to be considered vla, it must contain at least 50% cow’s milk and must have a fat content of at least 2.6%. According to visitingthedutchcountryside.com, “vla’ comes from the Limburgish word of ‘vlaai,” and in the 13th century, “vlade,” was used in writing for the first time and meant “thin wide pie.”

Germany: Raspberry Custard Kuchen

The history of eating cake with coffee in the afternoons in Germany dates back about 400 years. This delicious recipe combines the creamy custard with a crumbly cake topping and the tart sweetness of raspberries. The key to the best crumble is rolling the flour with cold butter according to chopnotch.com.



By Tamala Malerk

Italy: Zabaglione

This Italian custard brings in the flavors of Marsala wine to create an intriguing taste. It is believed that it originated in 1500s Florence in the Medici court. Simply Recipes' trick to the perfect custard consistency is constantly whisking so it doesn't curdle or burn.

Sweden: Ostakaka/Ostkaka

The combination of custard ingredients and dry cottage cheese curds create this Swedish cheesecake. You can change it up by swapping the cream for eggnog or milk or adding fruits, jams or nuts. This dessert originated in Småland and Halsingland as early as the 16th century. Since 2004, Nov. 14 is "Day of Ostkaka" in Sweden.

Greece: Galaktoboureko

Crispy phyllo and scented syrup make this Greek custard dessert extra tasty. Its name is a combination of the Greek word for milk "gala" and the Turkish word for pastry, "bourek." The website My Greek Dish advises using butter combined with goat and cow milk and to use semolina to achieve the most authentic dessert.



Moldova: Alivenci

Corn meal and cottage cheese add a Moldovan twist to make this custard treat that can be either savory or sweet, depending on your choice of topping. Nowadays, it is a popular dish found in pubs and restaurants, but its humble beginnings can be traced to being a peasants' staple food.

Scotland: Scottish Trifle aka the "Topsy Laird"

Replacing the sherry of an English trifle with whiskey is what makes this custard treat Scottish. You'll need lady fingers and orange juice along with your custard ingredients to create this delicious dish. Although no one is sure when whiskey was swapped out for sherry, the first trifle recipe can be traced back to the 16th century.

To access recipes to all of these delicious custard treats, scan this QR code to the digital version of this article at Europe.stripes.com.





PASTA OF THE OPERA

Pasta alla Norma

Adapted by Tamala Malerk

What does an eggplant pasta dish have to do with 19th century opera? A lot actually. Sicilian composer and producer Vincenzo Bellini created the opera, "Norma." Some believe that the dish was created for the show's opening night, and some believe that when another playwright, Nino Martoglio, tried the dish, he exclaimed, "Chista è 'na vera Norma!" (This is a true Norma!). Whichever story is true, the dish, which originated in the Sicilian city of Catania, and opera will forever be connected.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups marinara sauce (canned or homemade)
- 2 medium eggplants
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup pasta (your choice), but we recommend ziti, rotini, spaghetti or rigatoni
- 4 garlic cloves
- ¼ teaspoon to 1 teaspoon of spices (vary it up for your palate): Choose from black pepper, basil, dried oregano, red pepper flakes, capers, thyme and salt.
- ¾ cup cheese: Originally calls for ricotta salata, but substitute with your choice of mozzarella, parmesan, Grana Padano, Pecorino Romano, feta, ricotta, blue cheese crumbles, shredded Swiss, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit / 218 degrees Celsius.
2. Warm your marinara sauce.
3. To ensure easy clean-up, line two large-rimmed baking pans with parchment paper.
4. Use a vegetable peeler, or knife, to shave off long alternating strips of eggplant peel. Then cut the eggplant into rounds.
5. Brush the rounds with olive oil on both sides, then put the eggplant on the baking sheets. Sprinkle salt and pepper onto the eggplant. Roast 35 to 45 minutes, until "deeply golden and tender." Flip the eggplant after 20 minutes. Set eggplant aside.
6. Bring a large pot of salted water to boil and cook the pasta until al dente, between 7–15 minutes; check your package's instructions. Set aside ½ cup of pasta water and then drain the pot and return the pasta to the pot.
7. Gently stir the roasted eggplant into the warmed marinara sauce. Add 1 teaspoon olive oil and spices to taste.
8. Add the pasta to the sauce and gently stir in two tablespoons of pasta water. Put aside about 1/3 of your cheese and add in the remaining cheese. Season, once more, to taste. If the sauce is too thick for your liking, you can add in pasta water in small increments until it reaches desired thickness. ■

This recipe makes *four servings*. Use the remaining cheese to top each serving.

Adapted from cookiekate.com

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TO DO WITH 19TH
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A LOT ACTUALLY.



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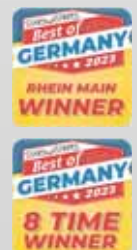
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FLEA MARKET FINDS IN PORTO

By Erica Fowler

With warm weather, comes more opportunity for busy European streets to break out into a sea of market stalls with unique finds. There is no better shopper's paradise than in Porto, Portugal!



TIME TO GO SHOPPING

Feira da Vandoma

This is one of the most notable flea markets in Porto. It is busy with shoppers even when it opens bright and early. This historic market started in the 1970s when students started selling secondhand items and books. You can pick up colored glass or porcelain vessels with funky flair. Soup terrines and tiny teacups are my favorite. An assortment of items carefully displayed always allows me to gravitate naturally to what I'm interested in, and the vendors here know exactly what they're doing.

📍 Avenida 25 de Abril 🕒 Every Saturday, 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.

FleaMarket Porto

This outdoor market has vintage furniture, décor and linens that are best found here. They live by the saying, "One man's garbage is another man's gold." Check out [facebook.com/fleamarket.porto](https://www.facebook.com/fleamarket.porto) for updated information.

📍 Praça da República 🕒 Every third Saturday of the month

Mercado Porto Belo

New and old items meld at this outdoor market, with vintage typewriters waiting to be a conversation piece and crisp art prints ready to beautify an empty wall. There is often a full craft market, so good luck walking away without another lovely accessory. Visit [facebook.com/mercadoportobelo](https://www.facebook.com/mercadoportobelo) for updated information.

📍 Praça de Carlos Alberto 🕒 Every Saturday, 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.

If you find must-have items that you can't take home in your luggage, you can walk a few blocks away to the DHL or DPD shop to mail them. Find a treasure for yourself or a gift for a friend, maybe? Who can honestly walk away from adopting an awesome boat helm with stories to tell?

FOODIES UNITE

Mercado do Bolhão

This is a covered fresh food market that reopened after extensive renovations in late 2022. You can buy just about anything you can think of to snack on, sip or even build your perfect picnic haul! You can also track down a few souvenirs here.

ALL ABOUT THOSE PAGES

For book lovers, there are a couple of special options you'll want to check out!

Livraria Lello

The ornate Livraria Lello Bookstore has a magnificent staircase that is said to have inspired Harry Potter's Hogwarts. Due to the bookstore's popularity, there is a line to get in and entry is fiveLO euro (which you can buy at [livrariavello.pt](https://www.livrariavello.pt)) that discounts the purchase of a book.

Porto Book Fair

In late summer, the Porto Book Fair is worth a stroll throughout the city, including visiting publishers, editors and authors. Check out [feiradolivro.porto.pt](https://www.feiradolivro.porto.pt) for more information. ■

“

If you find must-have items that you can't take home in your luggage, you can walk a few blocks away to the DHL or DPD shop to mail them.

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Staff Picks

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From community news to travel and PCS tips, StripesEurope.com has got you covered to conquer your tour in Europe!

In this edition, we asked some of our staff “Where is the first place you want to go once the weather is bright and warm?” Check out what they have to say!



“Starting in mid-February when I catch those extra minutes of sunlight peeking in slowly after 5 p.m., I start counting the days for **mountain hikes** that don’t require a million layers! Skiing is fun but being warm in the mountains without all the jackets is even better!”

—Leah Geier

MARKETING COORDINATOR



“**London.** On June 24, the Chicago Cubs and St. Louis Cardinals will be playing in London as part of the Major League Baseball’s World Tour. Summertime + Baseball. You can’t ask for anything more.”

—Noel Min

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT



“Number one on my list is always anywhere in **Greece.** I would love to make it to Los! A recent trip to Turkey has me yearning for more. I would return to Cappadocia over and over again and Dalyan, on the Aegean coast, was all sun, sand and sea turtles!”

—Heidi Bayfield

SALES ASSOCIATE



“I am excited to go check out **wineries around Germany.** We spent a day in the Mosel region last year and loved it.”

—John Rodriguez

BUSINESS OPERATIONS MANAGER



“I have not been able to travel out of the local area since moving here... but I’m hoping to change that as it starts to warm up again! I am thinking of visiting **Greece,** or the coastal bits of **Italy** as a first stop.”

—Ayla Roback

CUSTOMER SERVICE TECHNICIAN



“I would love to return to **Amsterdam** to visit museums like the independent modern museum, Moco, and to eat pancakes.”

—J. P. Lawrence

REPORTER/PHOTOGRAPHER

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