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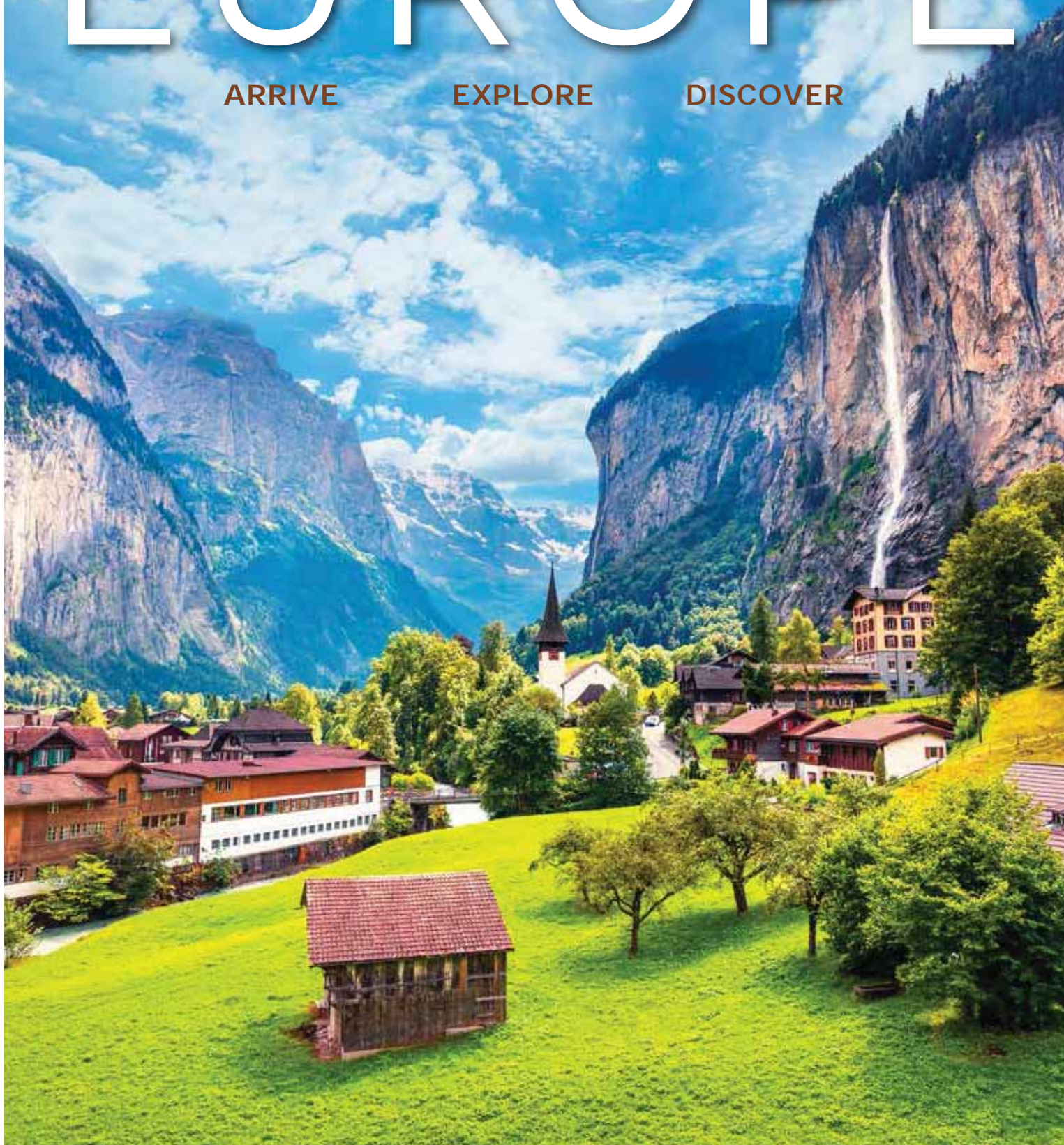
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# EDITOR'S LETTER



Mary Del Rosario  
Lead-Writer Editor  
Stars and Stripes Europe

## "NOT ALL THOSE WHO WANDER ARE LOST"

**This quote by J.R.R. Tolkien** is one that holds great value to me. Ever since I came to Germany five years ago, I felt something I never experienced before: the case of wanderlust—the strong desire to travel. It seemed like every month, I was bitten by the travel bug and needed to break free of everyday life and live a few days or weeks exploring different countries and everything they had to offer. I wanted this magazine to show how delving into a world different than your own can help you

Whether you're a seasoned traveler or just beginning your chapter in Europe, let our magazine light the way for all your adventures.

grow as a person. After all, traveling does turn you into a storyteller, and we're here to get you started. Whether you're a seasoned traveler or just arrived and are looking for inspiration for your travel chapter, our magazine covers a few chapters for your story.

### Chapter 1

#### **Not Your Usual Suspects.**

Instead of going to locations swarmed with tourists, branch out of your comfort zone and discover places that are less traveled. When discussing vacations, you'll have another city or country to bring to the table! In this edition, we feature locations you usually don't read about such as Martinhal Beach and Cagliari.

### Chapter 2

#### **The Bucket List.**

Whether it's creating a bucket list for you and that special someone or jotting down places to cross off that ever-growing list with your family, our magazine discusses several locations you have to jet-set to. From seven European nations that seem too small to be their own country to experiencing popular European attractions, your adventure list will require reams of paper.

### Chapter 3

#### **Eat and Shop Your Way to Happiness.**

Part of embracing culture is through food and sinking your teeth into that country's delicacy is the perfect way to enjoy vacation. This magazine shows how to do just that by exploring exquisite food markets sprinkled throughout Europe and how to properly enjoy a glass of bubbly in France's champagne region. And, since dining and shopping go hand in hand, come see why Italians are fascinated with genuine leather and where in Europe you can find the best shopping outlets.

Now that you have some chapters to look forward to, my next question to you is, where to now?



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By Leigh Anne Lord



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# SCANDINAVIA

So much more than you thought

**Y**ou can find the area on a map, but you might not know which countries belong to Scandinavia.

Norway, Sweden and Denmark form this region, but what do you really know about Scandinavia? Yes, there are the Vikings, pickled herring and the Northern Lights. There are also whales, beautiful scenery, unique museums and fabulous outdoor activities. Here's what makes Scandinavia so much more.

## DENMARK

"The Little Mermaid" and "The Emperor's New Clothes" are familiar stories from our childhood. Hans Christian Andersen, one of the country's most famous authors, lived and worked in its capital, Copenhagen. Today, one of the best

ways to get a glimpse of the author's life and a view of Copenhagen is to book a Hans Christian Andersen Walking Tour. A guaranteed stop on the tour is Denmark's most photographed attraction, The Little Mermaid.

Looking for a little amusement? Perhaps, the most famous of Denmark's parks is Tivoli Gardens. This fairy-tale-like park's summer hours are from April through September. Over the years, it has been maintained and improved, and its seasonal themes and decorations are breathtaking to see. The small park has some wonderful and modern rides and roller coasters, as well.

Copenhagen can also boast about its shopping and dining experiences. The Strøget, located in the historic district, is Europe's longest pedestrian-only shopping zone. While you can dine at any number of fine restaurants, why not dine at a place that you know will be a culinary experience? Try Noma, one of the top-ranked restaurants in the world.

For an adventure outside of the capital city, take the train along the Danish coast from Copenhagen to Helsingør. Not only is the town quaint and vibrant, but its nearby castle, Kronborg, is also a wonder to see. From the castle, Sweden is only four miles across the sea, and served as a military fort. It was also the setting of William Shakespeare's "Hamlet."

## NORWAY

A visit to Norway's capital, Oslo, can provide an abundance of unique sightseeing opportunities. Plan to see the Kon-Tiki Museum, which follows Thor Heyerdahl's crossing of the Pacific Ocean in 1947 by using rafts made of balsa wood. Continuing on a boat theme, Oslo's Viking Ship Museum contains the best-preserved wooden Viking ships from the 9th century.

The most visited tourist attraction in all of Norway is the Holmenkollen National Ski Arena. The arena hosts various World Cup Nordic ski-

ing events each year, but what is an incredibly impressive sight is the ski jump. Visiting in September or October? Adrenaline enthusiasts will want to schedule time to take the zipline from the start gate to the finish. It is an exhilarating and thrilling ride.

To know Norway is to get out and explore the countryside, and there is no better way to do it than to book a train ticket on the Bergen line. The seven-hour journey links Norway's two main cities. The train climbs Europe's highest mountainous plateau at 1,222 meters above sea level. While on this journey, take a side trip

**DENMARK, NORWAY,  
AND SWEDEN ARE  
SAID TO BE THE  
HAPPIEST PLACES  
IN THE WORLD.**

on the Flåm Railway where you will climb steep mountainsides and view incredible waterfalls and ravines. There are several tour companies with packages that include a journey on the railway from Oslo to Flåm, a fjord cruise and transportation to Norway's second-biggest city, Bergen. While there, spend a couple of days exploring the quaint port city before taking the train back to Oslo.

Head north for an unparalleled experience above the Arctic Circle. Lofoten is a cluster of mountainous islands 100 kilometers off northern Norway's coastline. In late fall through early spring, it is one of the best places in Scandinavia to view the Northern Lights. Most people, however, go to the islands for whale watching. From October through mid-January, head out on a tour boat and search for killer whales, sea eagles and seals.

**SWEDEN**

Sweden is the largest of the Scandinavian countries. Its capital, Stockholm, consists of 14 islands and more than 50 bridges and is frequently hailed as being the most beautiful capital in the world. The oldest and most visited of its neighborhoods is the Old Town, Gamla Stan. It was the original Stockholm and today, this medieval neighborhood boasts cobblestone streets, trendy shops, and beautifully maintained 17th-century buildings. A stop in

Gamla Stan must include a visit to the Royal Palace. It is one of the largest in Europe with more than 600 rooms and several museums, which are open to the public.

The Djurgården neighborhood is not only Stockholm's summer recreation area, but it is also the location for some of Stockholm's most unique attractions. In 1628, the warship Vasa sank within a few minutes of its maiden voyage. In 1961, it was salvaged and reassembled. Today, a museum encases the original warship.

If you are a lover of ABBA, then you cannot miss the ABBA Museum. It has been designed to let you experience what it is really like to be part of the late 1970s rock group. Or perhaps a literary tour is more your style? Make a stop at the Stockholm City Museum and register for the Stieg Larsson Millennium Tour. Based on the books from the creator of "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo," the walking tour allows you to follow in the footsteps of Mikael Blomkvist and Lisbeth Salander.

Gothenburg, Sweden's second-largest city, claims that it is the gourmet seafood capital of the country. With several Michelin-starred restaurants, it is easy to support that claim. The food scene is vibrant here. Visit the Feskekörka, or Fish Church, a fabulous indoor seafood market housed in a structure that looks like a Gothic church. Be sure to take a lobster safari! The west coast islands are located only a short boat ride away, and many hotels offer packages including boat trips to catch your own lobster. ■



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**ABOVE:** The "Little Mermaid" statue is perched along the shoreline in Copenhagen.

**LEFT:** The picturesque, coastal village of Reine, on the Lofoten Islands, is a great place to catch the Northern Lights.





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# OUTSIDE OF EUROPE

## Top 5 Countries to Visit

By Jessica Zen

While stationed in Europe, you should certainly take advantage of traveling the continent, visiting various countries and learning about their cultures and history. While Europe has so much to offer, have you considered using this opportunity as a springboard to get to other fabulous countries on different continents? Here are five countries with a vast amount of culture, history and experiences to be had that are located outside of Europe.

# United Arab Emirates

The city of Dubai boasts more “World’s Largest” titles than most. Here you’ll find the world’s largest indoor snow park, Ski Dubai. Located in the Mall of the Emirates, you can ski, snowboard, toboggan, zip line and see penguins in this eternal winter. For free entertainment, head to The Dubai Fountain. The world’s largest choreographed fountain system is located on the man-made Burj Kjalifa Lake in downtown Dubai. With 6,600 lights, 50 colored projectors and water shooting up to 500 feet, it is truly spectacular.

Not far from Dubai is another bustling city, Abu Dhabi. Here you’ll find the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, a masterpiece of Islamic architecture that personifies the Islamic message of peace, tolerance and diversity. A variety of post-modern architectural designs were used to create this religious building between 1996-2007. It covers over 30 acres and holds a whopping 40,000 worshippers!



Dubai  
Dancing  
Fountain

# Thailand

Phuket, Thailand’s biggest island and a tropic lover’s dream, has fine white sand beaches and swaying palm trees. Patong Beach has the densest concentration of bars and clubs and attracts the party crowd. Kata Beach is great for surfers, young travelers and families, with its less wild nightlife. Kamala Beach has a relaxed feel and attracts people looking for a quiet escape. Nai Harn Beach is best for nature lovers as the area is not crowded with buildings. The best part about visiting these gorgeous beaches? It won’t break the bank!

To take in some Thai culture, visit Pattaya, home of the Sanctuary of Truth at Rachvate Cape. This religious building is over 22,765 square feet and doesn’t have a single nail to hold it in place! The front faces the sea as a welcome to visitors and a four-faced Brahma sits peacefully on the gable. Inside boasts various religious sculptures from traditional Buddhist and Hindu motifs. The sanctuary was designed to reflect the ancient vision of earth, knowledge and Eastern philosophy.



Phuket  
Island in  
Thailand



Water puppet show in Thang Long Theater in Hanoi Vietnam

## Vietnam

This Asian country has a little bit of everything, from staggering natural beauty to crowded cities. To experience a hyperactive pace, visit lively Hanoi, one of the world's most ancient capitals. The Old and French Quarters are two of the main neighborhoods where you'll find lots of cheap local beer and fantastic street food. For a true taste of Vietnamese culture, go to the Thang Long Water Puppet Theater, which dates back to the 11th century. Another great activity to attend is the Hanoi Weekend Night Market, which is bursting with things to see and endless food vendors with items like "bun thang," "pho" and "bun cha".

If the big city isn't for you, consider visiting Mỹ Sơn. Built by the kings of Champa between the fourth and 13th century AD, this area is a cluster of abandoned Hindu temple ruins dedicated to worshipping Shiva. Once a burial place for Cham royalty and national heroes with over 70 temples, it is now a UNESCO world heritage site.

## Indonesia

Indonesia is home to the Borobudur Buddhist Temple, the largest Buddhist temple in the world. This magnificent ninth century temple was built during the reign of Sailendra Dynasty and combines elements of Indonesian indigenous cult worship and the Buddhist concept of Nirvana. With a mere nine stacked platforms, 2,672 relief panels and 504 Buddha statues, it's nothing short of a stone monstrosity.

For an outdoor adventure, head to Mount Bromo, an active volcano that is part of Tengger Semeru National Park. It stands at 7,641 feet and you can often see plumes of smoke puff from the top. The volcano sits in the middle of a plain called the "Sea of Sand," which is a protected nature reserve. This area has rolling plateaus with valleys, scenic lakes and numerous marked trails to wander through.



## Morocco

An easy country to visit outside of Europe is Morocco, particularly the city of Fez, which is potentially home to the largest car-free urban area in the world. Fes el Bali is the world's largest surviving medieval city and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is comprised of thousands of narrow alleyways, shops, stalls, mosques and schools, which make the area moderately difficult to navigate. It's worth the challenge though, because here you'll find the world's oldest university, University of Al-Karaouine. To take the guesswork out of your visit to the medina, look into hiring a local guide.

To get away from the city, book a private glamping (glamorous camping) trip with Sahara Luxury Camps ([www.saharaluxurycamps.com](http://www.saharaluxurycamps.com)). They'll pick you up anywhere in Morocco and bring you to a luxury or royal camp in the desert. Here you'll be pampered with all the comforts of a luxury hotel and get to experience the Sahara Desert on camelback and have the opportunity to go sandboarding. This is truly a once-in-a-lifetime adventure, as you'll see spectacular sunrises and sunsets, sleep under the sparkling stars that seem to be scattered to the edge of the universe and marvel at the beauty the desert has to offer.

Don't limit yourself to only traveling within Europe during your tour. Expand your search for the greatest vacation by considering a few more outside-of-Europe destinations. Would you prefer a beach getaway or riding a camel through the desert? Perhaps you want to ski indoors or learn about another culture? No matter what you decide, extend your search outside of Europe and get ready for the trip of a lifetime! ■



Borobudur Temple, Yogyakarta, Java, Indonesia



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EUROPE'S MOST  
BEAUTIFUL

# Nature Parks

By Jessica Zen

When the hustle and bustle of city life becomes too overbearing and the wilderness starts calling, Europe is rife with options for outdoor adventures. Pick a country and plan to spend some time outside hiking, biking, horseback riding or even canoeing. The options are endless when you discover these nature parks in Europe!



## Oulanka National Park, Finland

The Kitka River rushes throughout this park and is surrounded by a rugged, yet beautiful, landscape. Here you'll find hiking trails galore, hanging bridges, waterfalls and wild rapids. If overnight camping is in the cards for you, look for the wilderness huts where you can make camp. They were once reindeer herder cabins! The Karhunkierros Hiking Trail, which is just over 50 miles long, is the most popular trail in Finland. Along it you'll find rapids of the Kitka River, pine forests and water meadows. If you want to complete the entire trail, plan for four to seven days.



## National Park of Belluno, Italy

Perhaps mostly known as a skiing destination, this park is just as wonderful during the warmer months! Ranging from the Cison Valley to the Piave Valley, this natural panorama is truly a delight. The rigid mountain tops and various rock faces are home to golden eagles, who majestically soar over the land. Wander the valley floor and take in the beautiful flowers that carpet the area. Explore the park on foot, by bike or on horseback. Stop at the nature museum and cultural centers for more information on this stunning area.

## Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park, Spain

Located in northern Spain, this park boasts a massive canyon, dramatic ridges and towering summits in the Pyrenees Mountains. The center of the

*continue on page 14*

Head out on your own or opt for a guided tour while you explore this area.

park is home to Monte Perdido, the third highest Pyrenees mountain peak. Of the four deep canyons here, the most famous is Ordesa. Hikers will find four main routes that will take them through the canyon. On either side, cliffs rise over 2,500 feet, while the end showcases Mount Perdido. Head out on your own or opt for a guided tour while you explore this area.

### Plitvice Lakes National Park, Croatia

This park is the oldest and largest national park in Croatia. Though the 16 terraced lakes are certainly what draws the crowd, they only cover about 1% of the park itself. Don't miss hiking around both the upper and lower lakes on one of seven routes. You'll find the rushing Veliki Slap Waterfall, at 255 feet high, near the lower lakes. The rest of the park is covered in forest vegetation. The northern region is home to numerous valleys where you can visit a wild deer ranch or go horseback riding.

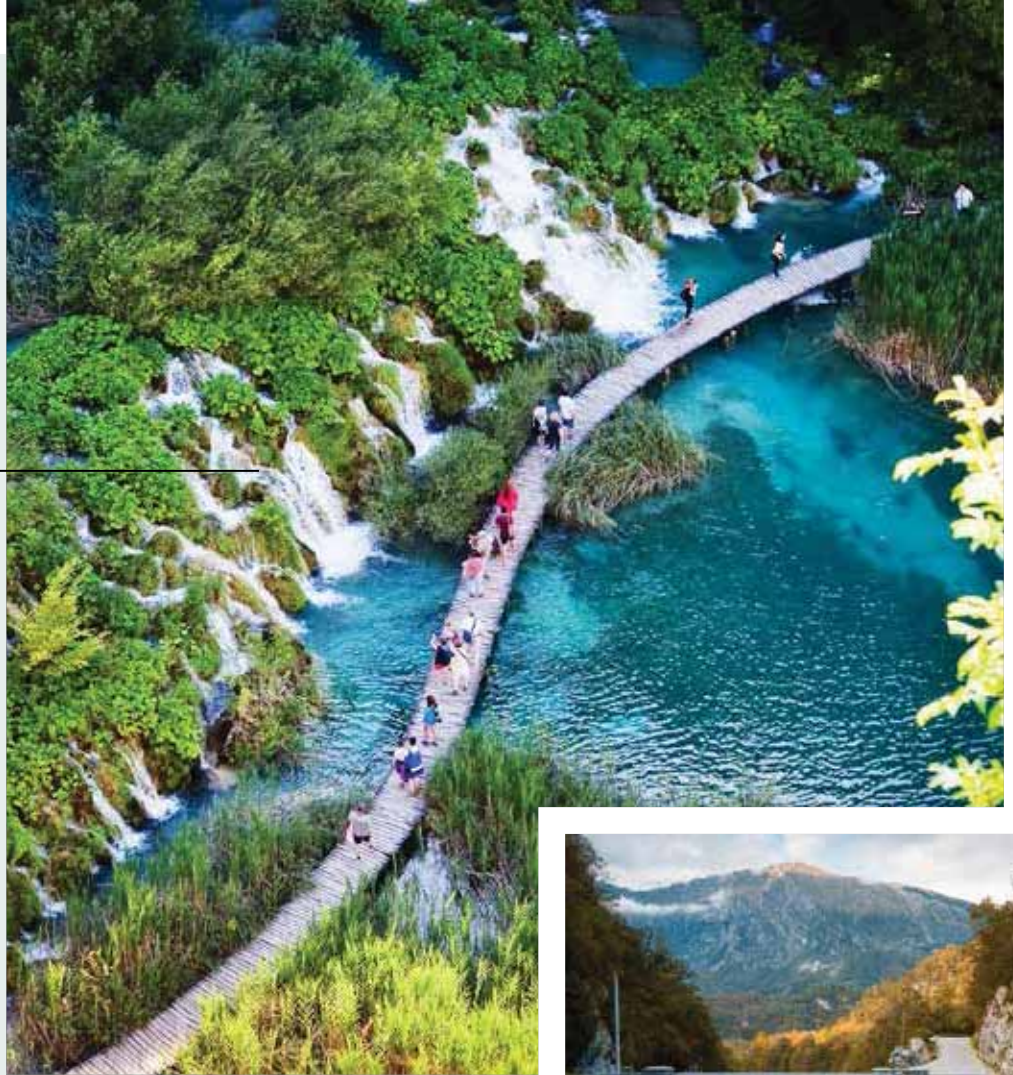
You'll find the rushing Veliki Slap Waterfall, at 255 feet high, near the lower lakes.

### Rago National Park, Norway

Since 1971, this park has been welcoming visitors to take in the views of thundering waterfalls, peaceful lakes and countless rugged mountain tops. Though this park isn't particularly well known for wildlife, you can enjoy the harshness of the land itself and will occasionally see moose or reindeer. Hike to either Storskogvatnet or Litlverivatnet Lake or take a stroll by the Rago River. For some stunning waterfalls, wander through the Storskogdalen Valley and keep an eye out for furry beavers!

### Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, Scotland

Though you may not find the famous Loch Ness Monster here, you shouldn't rule out this park as a potential place to visit for some fantastic Scottish landscapes. Here you'll find a massive body of water surrounded by rolling bluffs. Climb any of the "wee hills" for a spectacular view of the area. Take a boat to Inchcailloch, a small island in Loch Lomond, and look for wildlife and enjoy views over the loch. Maybe you'll spot a fallow deer! Throughout the rest of the park, keep your eyes peeled as you may witness an otter hunting along the shores or an osprey fishing



### Triglav National Park, Slovenia

Babbling brooks, alpine lakes and vast valleys are just a few of the things you'll find in this park. Add in some diverse flora and fauna and you're in for a treat! This is the only national park in Slovenia and it is located in the eastern Julian Alps. The park is named after its highest mountain, Triglav, which looms at 9,396 feet. While you're there, don't miss the Kozjak Waterfall or the Tolmin Gorges, which are located at the lowest point in the park and connected to the Tolminka River. Hike through the gorges and to Dante's caves for a two hour outing. Pick a lake and go for a swim, or if you're feeling adventurous, go canyoning in upper or lower Predelica. For even more of an adrenaline rush, go kayaking, canoeing or rafting in the Soca River.

Whether you're after a leisurely horseback ride or a rigid hike, there is something for everyone regardless of which country you pick. No matter where you decide to go, get outside and moving in Europe's beautiful nature parks! ■





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# Colorful FLOWER FESTIVALS of Europe

By Karen Bradbury

The reward for having endured the short, gray chilly days that characterize winter throughout much of Europe is a gift from nature: a riot of blooming beauty, as natural landscapes, planted fields and meticulously groomed parks put on their springtime attire. As various types of trees, plants and flowers reach the peak of their beauty. Festivals celebrating the promise of spring fulfilled are quick to follow. Here are just some of the many events in which the glory of flowers combined with human ingenuity take center stage.

## Tulpenfest (Tulip Festival)

MORGES, SWITZERLAND | MARCH 20 - MAY 10

Say the word “tulip” and the first country that comes to mind will be Holland, but that’s not the only European land to fete this once-revered flower. On the shores of Lake Geneva, the pretty Parc de l’Indépendance beguiles visitors with the sight of row upon row of tulips gently waving in the breeze. Across the wide expanse of deep blue lake, the snow-capped peaks of the Alps appear, adding more drama to the scene. Some 380 varieties of bulbs are planted on site. On the weekends, various programs from ceramic markets to Alphon concert to folk dancing are laid on. Entry to the festival is free.

## Bloemencorso (Flower Parade)

NOORDWIJK TO HAARLEM, NETHERLANDS | APRIL 25

One of Netherland’s top attractions is Keukenhof, which counts among the biggest flower gardens in the world. Although tulips are the main attraction here, there’s no end of other blossoming beauties to admire over the seven short weeks the park remains open. A highlight during the park’s all-too-short season is the annual Flower Parade, in which 20 brilliantly decorated floats and 30 decked-out vehicles slowly make their way along a 25-mile route stretching from the beaches of Noordwijk to the charming city of Haarlem. The flower-bedecked floats depict fantastical creatures and typically Dutch images. The parade route passes right by Keukenhof, although you may be better off staking out a spot away from there, as the parade attracts hundreds of thousands of spectators. A second chance to check out the floats comes the following day, when they’re put on display in Haarlem.

## Fiesta de los Patios (The Courtyards Festival of Córdoba)

CÓRDOBA, SPAIN | MAY 4 - 17

Due to Córdoba’s hot and arid climate, homes in the area are often built around a central patio with plants and water features. This building tradition started by the Romans and carried on by the Moors makes for not only a clever cooling system but a stunning backdrop for an annual competition. Each May, the heavy doors and iron gates of the city’s houses are thrown open to reveal the wonders within. The scent of jasmine and orange





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The picturesque town of Metzingen, 30 km south of Stuttgart and about 2 hours from Frankfurt, Munich and Zurich, is one of the most successful factory outlet locations in Europe with approximately 4 million visitors from 185 nations every year. The reason for this success lies in the traditional past of the town as a center of textile industry and the hometown of Hugo Boss. The small town with its historic center worth seeing is embedded in a biosphere area, a centuries-old wine growing tradition and first-class catering invite visitors to stay. In addition, many exclusive events make a visit to OUTLETCITY METZINGEN a highlight the whole year round.

[www.outletcity.com](http://www.outletcity.com)

SEE OUR AD ON PAGE #8

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blossoms hangs heavy in the air as 50 courtyards welcome visitors to gasp in awe over their flowers in a riot of colors, which are set off nicely by mosaics, ceramics and other typical decor. A mix of private and municipal properties compete to have their patio declared the most beautiful. Concerts and flamenco dancing feature on the evening program of entertainment. Entry to the patios is free, although many residences set out a box for donations.

## Temps de Flors (Flower Time)

GIRONA, SPAIN | MAY 9 - 17

Flower Time in this gorgeous medieval city in Catalonia is a highlight on its annual calendar of events. The walled city's stone walls, cathedrals and other centuries-old edifices serve as the backdrop to gorgeous floral displays. While the Barri Vell (Old Town) setting is wonderfully aged, much of the arrangements seen here in fact reflect contemporary styles. In addition to taking in the sight of gorgeous blooms, live entertainment in the form of concerts and shows is laid on, clever installations light up the night and restaurants offer special menus incorporating flowers into their meals.

## Infiorata Di Noto (Floral Carpet of Noto)

NOTO, SICILY | MAY 15 - 17

Noto, named a UNESCO World Heritage site for its exquisite Baroque architecture, is the backdrop against which an ephemeral floral carpet comes into being. For three days in May, the elegant Via Nicolaci takes on the role of a living canvas. Local and international artists set down floral petals and other natural materials to create an image corresponding to a theme which changes each year. Once their work is complete, visitors can walk along both sides of the street, taking in the kaleidoscope of colors. Parades and shows add to the festive atmosphere. On the last day of the festival, a Monday, the children of the city are set loose to tear through the carpet, symbolic of the divine plan of destruction and renewal. Other cities with a thriving Infiorata tradition include Genzano di Roma, Ovierto and Spello.

## Narzissenfest (Daffodil Festival)

AUSSEERLAND - SALZKAMMERGUT,  
AUSTRIA | MAY 21 - 24

This lesser-known region in the heart of Austria is characterized by pristine nature, crystal-clear waters and bizarre rock formations—a stunning backdrop for wild narcissi in shades of yellow, white and green, stretching as far as the eye can see. These fragrant flowers bloom between mid-May and mid-June, depending on their altitude. Austria's biggest flower festival offers a program encouraging visitors to mingle with the local community and admire their imaginative creations made from narcissi. ■



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Fiesta de los Patios



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# 7 Creative Classes

YOUR CHILDREN WILL LOVE

By Stacy Roman

Traveling through Europe with kids in tow can be both a blessing and traumatizing affair. Seeing their eyes light up at the Eiffel Tower or Buckingham Palace is almost enough to forget about the feet dragging at yet another museum or turned up noses at the site (or smell) of delectable fragrant French cheese. While parents have bucket list items to cross off during their European tour, it can be an absolute blast to plan kid-specific adventures as well. Here are seven classes and experiences for little ones you won't want to miss.





## 1 Become a gladiator of ancient Rome

“When in Rome, do as the Romans do.” If your kids are needing a way to spend some pent-up energy, harken back to the Roman Empire and become a gladiator. Approximately a mile from the Colosseum just off the Appian Way is the Gruppo Storico Romano (Rome Gladiator School) — a training facility for Rome’s fiercest warriors. For two hours, families learn sword skills and basic hand-to-hand combat techniques. Also included is a hands-on exhibit and museum, complete with helmets and costumes. While you may not be as victorious as Russell Crowe in “Gladiator,” it will definitely be an adventure of a lifetime.

[www.gruppostoricoromano.it/en](http://www.gruppostoricoromano.it/en)

## 2 Discover the sweeter side of life with a French twist

One of the trendiest and most delicious souvenirs from Paris is the macaron. My son usually starts drooling the moment he spots the delicate dessert in bakery display cases. For budding bakers, a lesson in making macarons is a must. Families can learn the ways of French pastry chefs at a 90-minute class at Galeries Lafayette in the historic Opera District of Paris. Students learn how to mix ingredients, fill and assemble the tasty treats.

[hausmann.galerieslafayette.com/en](http://hausmann.galerieslafayette.com/en)

## 3 Hang 10 in the Atlantic

Believe it or not, Portugal boasts some of the largest waves in the world, which brings in

world-class surfers. If you’ve got water babies on your hands, take a trip to the seaside hamlet of Peniche, Portugal and learn from the best. During the late spring and summer months, the ocean is a bit tamer with wave heights averaging between 3-5 feet. At Baleal Surfcamp, lessons last a little more than two hours and include learning the basics of lying prone, standing and finding the right wave.

[www.balealsurfcamp.com](http://www.balealsurfcamp.com)

## 4 Tap into your artistic side in Italy

Florence is home to magnificent art legends such as Leonardo Da Vinci, Michaelangelo, Donatello and Dante. If you need to strike a compromise to visit the Uffizi Gallery without complaining, take the kids to Accademia d’Arte Bianco Cappello during your visit. Offering instructional art classes specifically designed for children, no one will be bored. You may just discover you’ve got a blooming artist on your hands.

[www.florenceartschool.it](http://www.florenceartschool.it)

## 5 Learn etiquette like a royal

You might be scratching your head at the inclusion of an etiquette class but gone are the days of getting smacked with a ruler. Go beyond the basics of “please” and “thank you,” and get fancy! At Polished Manners in London, they can teach rambunctious little ones how to behave like a proper Eliza Doolittle while having fun. Through humor and hands-on demonstrations, you may just be ready for tea with the Queen.

[www.polishedmanners.co.uk](http://www.polishedmanners.co.uk)

## 6 Break out in song and dance in Spain

One of the most stunning forms of dance originated in the Andalusian region of Spain. If your children have a flair for the dramatic and love to dance, sign them up for a Flamenco dance or music lesson when visiting Seville. Under the artistic direction of professional dancers and musicians at Taller Flamenco, students learn the history, movements and staccato beats of this beautiful art form.

[www.tallerflamenco.com/en](http://www.tallerflamenco.com/en)

## 7 Did someone say waffles?

Brussels is famous for its sumptuous cuisine — chocolate, mussels, beer, frites and, of course, waffles. Known locally as “gaufres,” waffles are a sinfully delicious Belgian treat which will leave your kids wanting more long after you go home. Why not teach them how to make their own? Create culinary masterpieces with all the traditional toppings (fruit, chocolate, whipped cream and more), and eat all you want! The caveat? Everyone is a participant, no spectators allowed. They also offer gluten-free, dairy-free and sugar-free workshops on request.

[www.waffleworkshop.com](http://www.waffleworkshop.com)

While traveling with kids can be somewhat challenging at times, try a few adventures just for them. By leaving a little wiggle room for activities and classes with your little (or not-so-little) ones in mind, you may just find your inner child is just as happy as they are. ■



# Get a Degree

## WHILE OVERSEAS

By Ruth Cuevas & Amanda Palumbo

Being stationed abroad doesn't mean you have to put your education on hold. You can continue your studies through DOD contracted schools for service members and their dependents with a variety of options to fit your lifestyle.

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Offering undergraduate degrees in aeronautics, aviation maintenance, technical management, aviation security and unmanned systems. ERAU also offers master's degrees in aeronautics, unmanned systems, human factors and aviation maintenance. Each month there are new face-to-face and online courses.

### University of Maryland Global Campus

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More than 90 degree programs to choose from with specializations and certificates in liberal arts and sciences. Some degrees can be completed entirely online. Classes are also offered in-person.

### University of Oklahoma

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Three graduate programs are offered: Master of Human Relations, Master of Arts in International Relations and Master of Education. Professors from the university's main campus come to Europe to teach students in class while also offering a variety of online courses.



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- **Flexible Schedules:** Online students can still work full-time, spend time with families and travel while attaining their degree on their time.
- **Sharpen Time Management Skills:** If you're a notorious procrastinator, online classes could be that added push to get you more organized. Online students have to be diligent about scheduling their time for learning and course work.
- **Lower Cost:** Students on average pay less when achieving an online degree. While they're paying for tuition costs and books, they're avoiding fees like housing and transportation. Most universities will offer a military non-resident tuition waiver to avoid out-of-state tuition costs.
- **Comfortable Learning Environment:** Online students can also set up an environment that works best for their brain like comfy couches, music in the background and snacks readily on hand. You also get to avoid that one person in class that has an outrageous, argumentative opinion about every topic.

Not only can you continue your education but you could be eligible for financial aid and tuition assistance. Contact your installation's education center for more details. ■



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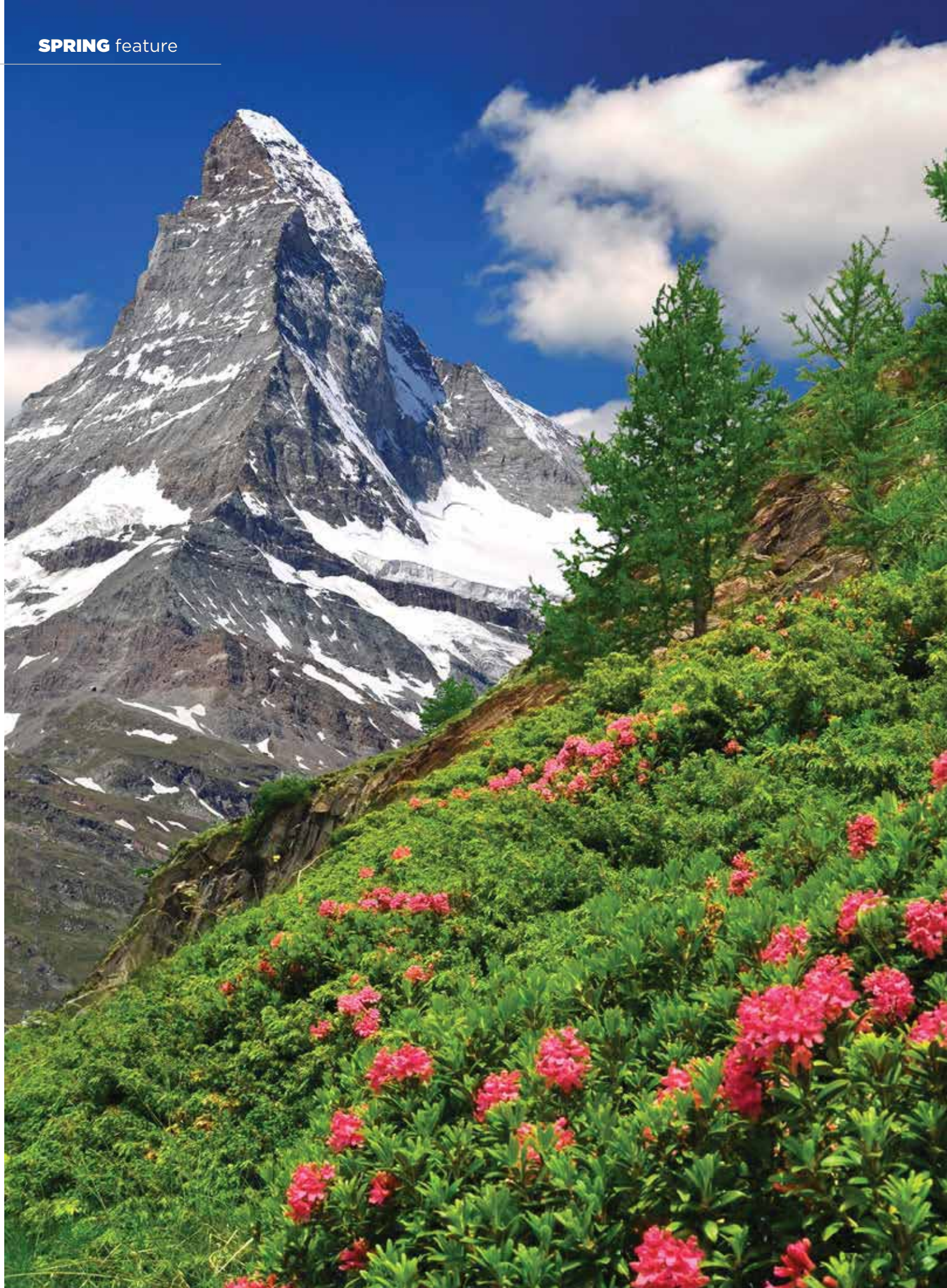
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# springtime adventures in SWITZER LAND

By Amanda Palumbo

**A**s we start to defrost from the dark, cold abyss known as European Winter, the travel bug inside you emerges. While Switzerland is known for its winter sports like skiing, this country offers so much more than playing in the snow. From exploding snowmen to family-friendly hikes, here's why Switzerland is the place to be when spring has finally sprung.



## An Exploding Snowman

If you want to ring in spring with a very loud bang, head to Zurich's Sechseläuten Spring Festival in April. This party dates back to the 16th century and is similar to Nevada's Burning Man Festival but with a snowman whose head explodes. You read that right. An 11-foot "Böögg," snowman, is placed on a 32-foot high pyre. The effigy is set ablaze and the snowman's head, filled with fireworks, explodes. Similar to the American Groundhog Day, the faster the fire reaches the snowman's head, the better summer will be. I'll take an exploding snowman head over a rodent's shadow any day.

## Family-Friendly Spring Break

Switzerland is filled with sensory trails. These are kid-friendly hiking trails with interactive stations that play on the senses. Kids can run through mazes, walk a barefoot path, balance like a bug on a leaf and swing from a zipline. Many of the trails are stroller-friendly and low-elevation. The top ones to check out are Frick Sensory Trail, Seebach Sensory Trail, Zugerland Sensory Trail, Zugerberg and Sihlwald Nature Trail.

In Baar, families can explore the 3,000-year-old Höllgrotten Caves filled with colorful stalactites and stalagmites. For indoor fun, hit up the Aathal Dinosaur Museum, just 20 minutes southeast of Zurich. Fossilized skeletons and life-size models teach families all about paleontology. At Baden's Swiss Children's Museum, kids can experience how children their age lived up to 300 years ago. This is a great interactive museum that will keep children occupied on a rainy day.

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**PHOTOS, GOING CLOCKWISE:** Alpine spa resort; Aare Gorge near Meiringen; overlook near the Engelberg Resort; First Peak Cliff Walk near Grindelwald (top and bottom)

*continued from page 25*

## Springtime Hiking

Many trails in Switzerland won't open until June but there are a few gems open for spring hiking. The trail that leads to Aare Gorge, one of Switzerland's most photographed sites, opens in mid-April. Hiking through a gorgeous alpine river gorge with stunning rock formations and light blue water piercing through it will help you forget about the dark days of winter.

Another great trail to hit in the spring is Trümmelbach-Waterfalls, which opens at the start of April. The UNESCO natural heritage site has 10 glacial waterfalls inside a mountain. This is a photographer's dream, catching these fast-moving waterfalls while hiking through incredible caves.

One can't-miss trail is Grindelwald-First. This is no ordinary trail. It is filled with not only stunning sites but attractions that give you a literal bird's eye view. If you're not scared of heights, take the First Cliff Walk by Tissot. This is a sky bridge hugging a cliff that gives wide views of valleys and pastures so green, they almost don't look real. Don't worry, if you're not a fan of heights the bridge only takes about 10-15 minutes to cross if you're not stopping for pictures.

If you love heights, this area also offers the First Glider ride. You'll feel like an eagle as you and three others glide over the mountains going as fast as 50 miles-per-hour! It's definitely a rush any dare-devil is looking for.

Advanced hikers can hit the trail that leads from Grindelwald-First to Schynige Platte. This trail takes a good 6-8 hours but is absolutely worth it. Along the way, the path offers six astonishing viewpoints of mountains, valleys and sparkling lakes. This is one for the hiking bucket list.

## Thermal Baths

In need of some serious R&R? Switzerland has thermal baths and spas that can warm you up after a long winter and melt away stress. Walliser Alpenherne and Spa in Leukerbad is the largest spa complex in the country. You can gaze upon the still snow-capped Swiss Alps while floating in a very big bath of very warm water.

Alpenbad Spa in Hinwil is one of Switzerland's top-rated spas. You can relax in your personal "alpenbad," a heated wooden tub filled with spring water. Feast on fancy fondue while admiring the mountains sitting alone in your steamy tub.

*continued on page 28*

*Feast on fancy  
fondue while  
admiring the  
mountains sitting  
alone in your  
steamy tub*



*continued from page 27*

# Cities

## Zurich

While it's hard to beat an exploding snowman, Zurich has other fantastic events in the spring. The city throws a fabulous "Fasnacht" or Carnival. It's similar to the parades in Germany, but with Caribbean, Latin American and New Orleans jazz weaved through the celebrations. There are colorful parades and parties for all age groups.

Hit the water to see the gorgeous skyline with several companies offering guided sailboat tours and cruises around Lake Zurich. If rain clouds move in, Zurich has more than 150 museums and art galleries.

## Geneva

For a taste of France, head to Geneva where modern meets Medieval in the "Capital of Peace." Cafes line narrow streets in the city's historic area that give you that quintessential European experience. The old town's centerpiece is St. Pierre Cathedral, a 4th century Roman Catholic cathedral turned Protestant during The Reformation.

Science-lovers can head to CERN, an impressive gold globe that houses the European Organization for Nuclear Research. The ground floor is the "Universe of Particles" exhibit that takes you all the way back to the Big Bang.

## Lugano

If you and your traveling partners can't decide whether to go to Switzerland or Italy, you're in luck. You can do both. The Swiss region Ticino is an Italian-speaking state along the Swiss-Italian border. Swiss collided with Mediterranean culture in the 15th century when this Italian area was annexed to the Swiss Confederacy. Lugano is on the northern shore of a lake where palm trees dot the shores with mountains in the background. You can spot the Swiss-Mediterranean fusion in the city's food and architecture. Experience a very different hike by hitting the Olive Tree Trail and learn about the area's centuries old groves. ■



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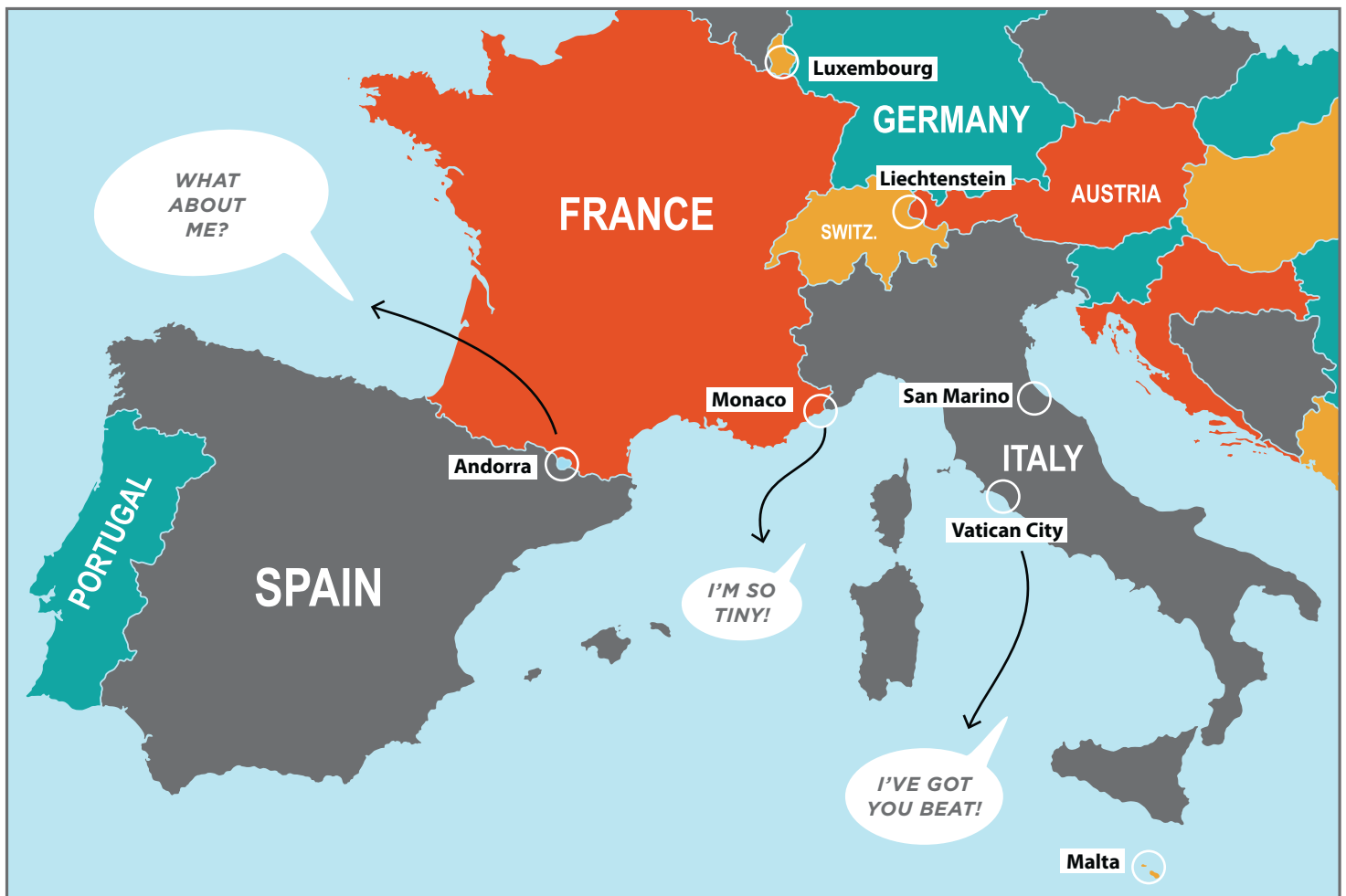
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# SIZE DOESN'T MATTER

## ⑦ Tiny European Nations to Visit

During rather brief geography lessons as young students, we learned where the “big” European countries were—England, France, Italy, Germany, Spain and maybe a handful of others. However, hiding among the bigger nations are smaller, almost minute locales filled with spectacular scenery, glamour and fascinating stories just waiting to be discovered. Here are seven tiny countries worth putting on your bucket list.



By Stacy Roman

# 1 Andorra

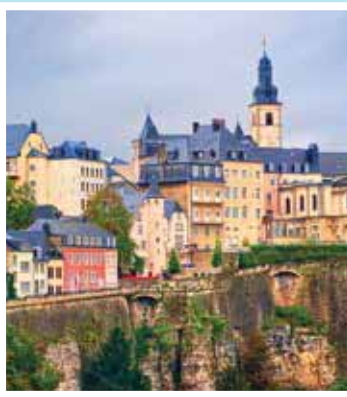
Perched in the valleys of the Pyrenees between France and Spain is the alpine nation of Andorra.

This small but mighty country is the home to the highest capital city in Europe, Andorra la Vella. Ruled jointly by France and Spain for more than 700 years, the official language is curiously Catalan (and also French and Spanish). The jagged peaks lend themselves to excellent winter sports with more than 180 miles of ski slopes. Dense forests are home to fantastic hiking trails in the summer. Only accessible by land, walk across the serene landscape via the Gran Recorrido País trail, or slide your way through three miles of the La Rabassa forest on an alpine coaster.



# 2 Liechtenstein

Doubly landlocked (meaning it's landlocked and its neighbors are as well) between Austria and Switzerland, Liechtenstein is the fourth smallest country in Europe—measuring 160 square kilometers and 40,000 inhabitants. With awe-inspiring mountains, it's no wonder Liechtensteiners excel in skiing. Earning 10 Winter Olympic medals, the country has never medaled in the summer games. They share a strong customs union and alliance with Switzerland; however, because of the unmarked border, Swiss troops accidentally invaded the country in 2007. The Liechtenstein government had no idea until it received a formal apology for the incident. At one point, rapper Snoop Dogg once tried to rent the entire country for a music video, whose request was politely declined by the government.



# 3 Luxembourg

Coming in at a whopping 999 square miles, Luxembourg is the largest country on this list. The only Grand Duchy in the world, this regal nation is landlocked by France, Germany and Belgium. Home to many European Union (EU) functions, the capital of Luxembourg City sits atop stunning cliffs cut from the Alzette and Pétrusse rivers. Beneath the city stretches 17 kilometers of underground tunnels. Originally built in 1644, the tunnels were used as air raid shelters during World War I and World War II. Venture to the Mullerthal region, also known as Little Switzerland, where visitors can hike through lush forests, view tumbling waterfalls and explore castle ruins.



# 4 Malta

Once an important trading post dating back to the Phoenicians, Malta is a mere 316 square miles. Just south of Sicily in the Mediterranean, this impressive nation was unfortunately occupied throughout much of its storied history. This former British colony gained independence in 1964, after rebuilding much of its infrastructure that was destroyed by the Germans and Italians during WWII. The country is actually an archipelago comprised of seven islands—Malta, Gozo, Comino and four uninhabited islands. Sunken WWII ships dotting the pristine coastline provide great adventures for divers. Dating back to 3600 B.C., Malta boasts Megalithic Temples, which are some of the oldest man-made structures in the world.

*continue on page 32*

## 5 Monaco

Full of glitz, glamour and plenty of vacationing celebrities, the second-smallest country in the world is situated along the crystalline waters of the Mediterranean. Bordered by France, Monaco is ruled by Prince Albert II, whose mother was Hollywood starlet Grace Kelly. The elegant Place du Casino beckons high-stakes gamblers from around the globe. Adrenaline and racecar enthusiasts revel in the pageantry and excitement of the Monaco Grand Prix each May.



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## 6 San Marino

Completely landlocked by Italy and founded on the craggy slopes of Monte Titano is the world's oldest surviving republic. Founded in 310 AD, San Marino is the fifth smallest in the world. During WWII, San Marino stayed neutral despite being surrounded by Italy. Although occupied and invaded several times over, three medieval towers perched on cliffs watch over the nation. Interestingly enough, President Abraham Lincoln was an honorary citizen.

## 7 Vatican City

Last, but certainly not least, is Vatican City. The smallest country in the world in population and size is also one of the most visited places in the world. Just a mere .44 square kilometers, the Vatican's population consists of Roman Catholic clergy from around the world. Home to St. Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel, the entire country is the only one in the world to be designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. Beneath the foundation of the basilica is a complex of catacombs, including what is believed to be the tomb of St. Peter. ■



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# Public Transportation

## IN EUROPE'S GREAT CITIES



By Karen Bradbury

**H**op-on, hop-off city buses are a fun and convenient way of taking in the best sights of Europe's greatest cities. There is, however, a downside: generally speaking, this kind of tour is a pricey proposition. A possible work-around is to forgo the tour bus in favor of the city's public transportation network. Of course, this isn't a great option during peak commuter times, or for when you're hauling about great quantities of luggage. However during the off-hours, it can make for cheap sightseeing. And if you'd ever wondered what it might be like to be a resident of the place you're visiting, this form of tourism provides a snapshot of a day in the life in real time. A word of caution: wherever there are distracted tourists, there are pickpockets ready to prey on them. Don't fall victim to their evil ways by keeping an eagle eye on your possessions at all times. Here is a roundup of some scenic, regularly scheduled routes to aid you in your urban exploration.

*continued on page 36*





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## Berlin

East meets West on this half-hour tour through recent history. Board bus 100 at the Zoologischer Garten train station. Its 19-stop route passes by the Emperor Wilhelm Memorial Church, the spacious Tiergarten park, Victory Column, Reichstag and Brandenburg Gate. It rolls by the classical buildings lining the bustling Unter den Linden, the Museum Island with its world-class museums and the Television Tower before ending at Alexanderplatz, Germany's largest square.

## Lisbon

The quaint yellow trams rattling along the steep city streets resemble relics from the past because they are: the trams serving the E28 route date back to the 1930s. This classic route passes through the popular tourist districts of Graca, Alfama, Baixa and Estrela. Sights you'll see include the Basílica da Estrela, the main plaza of the funky Bairro Alto, the Se Cathedral and Saint Anthony Church and the Portas do Sol, from where splendid views over the Tejo Estuary can be taken in. During peak hours, your best shot at a seat may come by boarding at the Martim Moniz or Campo Ourique departure stations.

## London

Board bus number 11 on the upscale King's Road in Chelsea and travel in a northeasterly direction, passing the posh residences of Belgravia, Westminster Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, Big Ben, Houses of Parliament, Trafalgar Square, the Royal Courts of Justice, through the financial district, St Paul's Cathedral, the London mayor's official home known as the Mansion House and on to the bus's terminus at Liverpool Street station. Just a short walk from there, you'll find Spitalfields market, along with trendy Brick Lane and Shoreditch.

## Milan

The city's excellent public transportation system includes several delightful vintage yellow trams. A great introduction to the city is provided by the route of Tram 1. Sights along the way include the Sempione city park, the Arco della Pace, Castello Sforzesco, Cadorna, Piazza Cordusio, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, La Scala opera theater, Montena-  
leon, Piazza della Repubblica and Giardini Pubblici before terminating near the grand Centrale Station. Note you don't have to purchase the Tramilano tour package which comes with an audio-guide in order to ride the old, wooden-benched trams. Those who've posted in tourist advice forums stress the importance of validating one's ticket before boarding the tram, as zealous inspectors eager to fine unwitting tourists are on standby.

## Paris

Tour along the Right Bank of the Seine with bus line 72. This route runs alongside the river from the Eiffel Tower to the Hotel de Ville and circles around the Louvre and the Tuileries for good measure. When traveling from west to east, sit on the right-hand side of bus to soak up the best views.

## Prague

A ride on Tram 22 will take you past countless landmarks. Boarding in Vinohrady, where vineyards once stood, you'll pass by the Gothic New Town Hall, Diamant cubist house, a giant model of Franz Kafka's head and the National Theater with its golden roof. As you cross the river, Prague Castle looms in front of you. From here you'll pass through the Mala Strana and steeply upward before reaching the castle and its sprawling grounds. You'll also be close to the Strahov Monastery, which has a lovely library and a brewery.

## Stockholm

Bus 2 moves from north to south, cutting through the heart of the city as it takes in and spits off passengers along 22 stops. Should you board by the Royal Library, you will pass by Kungstradgaden and the pretty red Saint James Church before crossing over into the Gamla Stan, or Old Town, where Stockholm Castle and the colorful houses of the Stortorget square await exploration. The bus continues to Södermalm, an island and city district with charming cafes and an artsy vibe.

## Vienna

The trams traveling along the Ringstrasse pass by this majestic city's best bits. Hop on board Tram 1 at Schwedenplatz, heading in the direction of Stefan-Fadinger-Platz. This circular route takes you past the Monument to the Victims of Fascism at the former Gestapo headquarters site, the Stock Exchange, the Votive Church and City Hall. Change onto Tram 2 at Staiongasse/Parlament and pass by Parliament, the Athena Fountain, the statue of Empress Maria Theresa and State Opera House before returning to your starting point. ■





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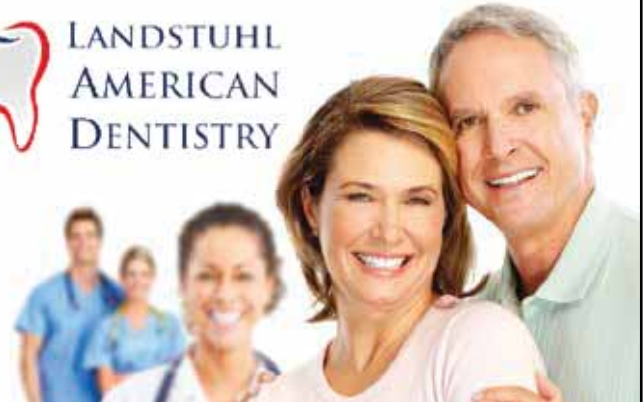
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# 10 Can't Miss

By Stacy Roman

# EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES

**Congratulations! You've survived your move to Europe!** The vast ocean of cardboard and packing paper has finally ebbed and you're ready to start exploring your new home. It's an understatement to say there's a lot to see and do. Maybe you're itching to see the Eiffel Tower in Paris or listen to a gondolier croon as you glide along the canals in Venice. After living in Europe more than four years, I can definitely say there are plenty of things you don't want to miss out on. From nature's beauty to amusement parks to festivals, here's my list of 10 things to see and do while you're here.

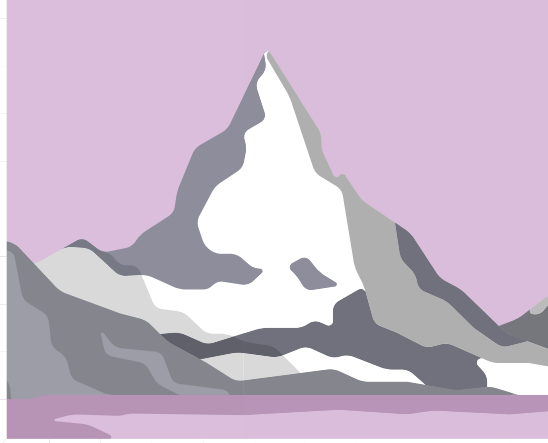


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BARCELONA



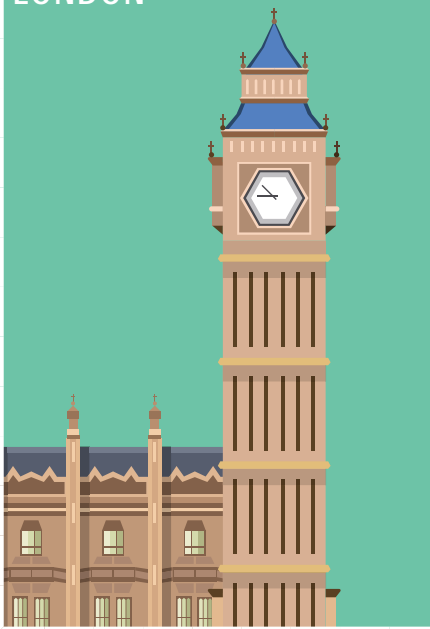
THE ALPS



PARIS-DISNEYLAND



LONDON



COLOSSEUM



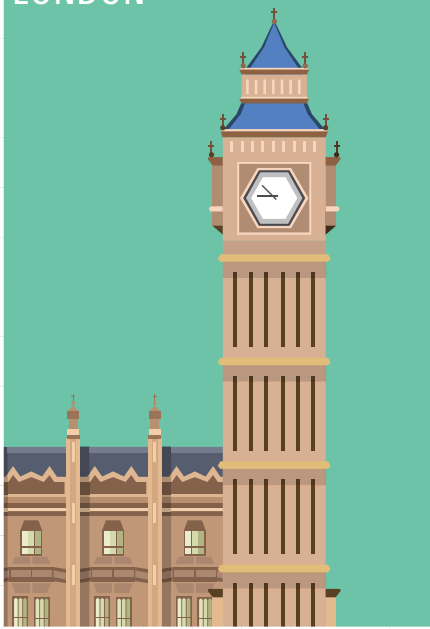
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THE HIGHLANDS



EUROPA-PARK





**1 The Alps.** I will never forget the first time I saw the hulking peak of Germany's tallest mountain breaking through the clouds. The Alps (Austrian, French, German, Italian and Swiss) are absolutely breathtaking. Jagged crags pierce the horizon magnificently and provide stunning backdrops. During the summer, visitors can hike and backpack their way through idyllic meadows and lakes, up rugged hillsides and enjoy spectacular panoramas along their journey. Or, take a lift up to the top of a hill and zoom your way back down via one of the many "rodelbahns" or alpine coasters found in the Alps.

**2 Explore the vast wilderness of the Scottish Highlands.** If you've ever watched an episode of "Outlander," or the infamous James Bond movie, "Skyfall," you've likely seen the fantastic scenery of the Scottish Highlands. However, their majesty is absolutely worth visiting first-hand. Visitors can glamp and camp along the shores of the different lochs (lakes), and check out the tallest mountain in the U.K., Ben Lomond. If you're not quite feeling the hiking vibe, take a train trip a la Hogwarts Express through the lush valleys and gorges on an old Jacobite steam train.

**3 The best of the "wurst" at Bad Durkheim Wurstmarkt.** This charming village just west of Mannheim is home to one of the oldest and largest wine festivals in early September. For more than 600 years, this fabulous festival celebrates the wine harvest, authentic German food, live entertainment and plenty of rides and activities for everyone.

**4 Or bypass Paris and meet up with Ed Euromouse at Europa-Park.** Nestled in the heart of the Black Forest between Freiburg and Strasbourg, Europa-Park is the largest theme park in Germany, and the second-most visited in Europe. With five hotels, 18 themed areas, a plethora of thrilling rollercoasters and play areas for little ones, it's a fantastic spot for a long weekend.

**5 Witness the impressive military might of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.** No, this isn't a royal ink tattoo convention. Rather, a spectacular display of military performances from the Royal Armed Forces throughout the United Kingdom and the British Commonwealth. Set against the mighty Edinburgh Castle, the tattoo runs through most of August with performances usually twice a day. Evening shows are capped off with a volley of fireworks.

**6 Discover the Colosseum in Rome.** This amazing architectural wonder has stood the test of time and is well worth the visit. Although it's likely to be on almost everyone's bucket list, there's a good reason for it. This Roman amphitheater was home to grisly gladiator battles during the Roman Empire. Visitors can tour the main building and also take a peek below the ground where animals and gladiators were held. For a unique experience, sign up for a nighttime tour. With fewer crowds, you get a completely different perspective.

**7 See a beautiful failed planned community in Barcelona.** Perched on Carmel Hill above the bustling city of Barcelona, Spain is one of the most dazzling failed planned communities in Europe. Designed by master architect Antoni Gaudí, Parc Güell is reminiscent of something out of a whimsical fairy tale. With beautiful mosaics adorning the serpentine benches throughout the park, it's easy to see the natural influences. Wave-inspired colonnades and quirky cottages built in the unmistakable Gaudí style dot the surrounding area.

**8 Say "Bonjour!" to Mickey Mouse and company at Disneyland Paris.** If you're a fan of Disney or are looking to visit as many parks around the world, you won't want to miss this one. Although not quite as large as its parks in the States, Disneyland Paris has all the Disney charm with a distinct Euro-

pean flair. While it's a bit pricey on the pocketbook, active-duty military can get a 50% discount by showing their ID at the gate when purchasing tickets.

**9 Take in a show on London's West End.** Known as Europe's Broadway, London is home to an amazing array of theater. Often, smash hits will make their debut here before being exported to the States, as was the case with "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child." With some of the longest running musicals including, "Phantom of the Opera" and "Wicked," and new ones popping up such as "Dear Evan Hansen" and "Mary Poppins," there is always something for every theatrical taste. Tickets are often less expensive on the West End than they are on Broadway for the same caliber show.

**10 Marvel at the Brussels Flower Carpet in Belgium.** Every other August, more than 600,000 fresh flowers transform the Gran-Place in Brussels into a stunning work of art. Measuring 75-meters long by 24-meters wide, the Brussels Flower Carpet is an absolute must-see. With the help of over 100 volunteers, it only takes approximately four hours to assemble this monstrosity. The best view of the aromatic work of art is from the balcony of the Town Hall. Each night, visitors can experience the carpet along with a concert and accompanying light show. ■

BE SURE TO GET A COPY OF OUR "18 CAN'T MISS EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES" MAP IN THE MARCH 26<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF OUR NEWSPAPER

Grab a towel, snorkel gear or even a body board and get ready for a fun-filled beach trip.

# MARTINHAL

on your radar

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# BEACH



By Jessica Zen

There's just something about the thought of a beach that makes everyone yearn to go on a vacation. To stroll through the fine sand while the waves lap over your feet and the sun sets in the distance is a magical experience. Add a drink to the mix and you have a recipe for a fabulous getaway! Martinhal Beach in Portugal is the perfect place to forget your troubles and relax.

Located east of Sagres in the Algarve, Martinhal Beach is a hidden gem just waiting for you to ascend upon it with your finest beach gear. Grab a towel, snorkel gear or even a body board and get ready for a fun-filled beach trip. Over 2,000 feet of glittering, turquoise Atlantic Ocean waters await your arrival in southern Portugal. The beach is lined with fine, white sand and couldn't be more perfect

for constructing epic sand castles. The mostly calm waters are irritated only by the wind, which creates enough gentle waves for water sports like windsurfing or body boarding.

The backdrops to this little slice of heaven are varied and beautiful. The middle of the beach is backed by rolling dunes, whereas the east holds picturesque cliffs. The photography opportunities here are amazing! Just off of the beach you'll find limestone islets. Take a boat to one of these islets and go diving or snorkeling in the caves and underwater grottos where you'll see a colorful variety of marine life. If you'd prefer to stay dry, take a leisurely stroll along the beach or sunbathe. There's certainly plenty of sand for you to find a spot for your towel.



Explore the coastline with stunning views near Sagres.

Once you've worked up an appetite, there are two restaurants close to the beach where you can satisfy your hunger. Nortada is a quick walk down the boardwalk to a vibrant blue building with a seriously beachy vibe. Here you'll find fresh seafood and a perfect view. Grab an ice-cold drink or a piece of cake and enjoy watching the boats and windsurfers as they pass by. Restaurante Martinhal is a beach bar on the eastern part of the beach. Fish are served up fresh here in a friendly atmosphere. If you're feeling daring, try a squid salad or arroz con marisco, a signature Portuguese seafood and rice dish. Regardless of where you choose, you're sure to be pleasantly surprised by the catch of the day specials and incredible freshness of the seafood.





Dip below the surface to observe the colorful sea life.



## Why Visit

Though beach fans will flock to almost any sand and sea combination they can locate, at Martinhal Beach, you'll find it never gets overly crowded. Even the summer months don't draw a huge crowd and you can certainly find room for the whole family to relax. If you visit outside of the summer months, you will be pleasantly surprised to find you have almost the entire area to yourself. Talk about paradise!

If you've been looking for a low-key, less touristy beach location, you've hit the jackpot. Bring the family to Portugal for as much activity or relaxation as you require. Hop on a plane to Faro and enjoy the Algarve region as you make your way to the beach. From lazy days in the sun to windsurfing the hours away, all family members can enjoy Martinhal Beach. The glittering ocean water is calling your name. ■

If you've been looking for a low-key, less touristy beach location, you've hit the jackpot.

# EUROPEAN BUCKET LIST: COUPLE'S EDITION

By Elizabeth Jones

Whatever romance and adventure looks like to you and your significant other, there's something for every couple in Europe. Whether it's witnessing gorgeous landscapes, discovering new foods, partaking in outdoor activities or walking through historic cities, Europe has it all. Add these experiences to your bucket list and cross them off with your soulmate!



1

Eat tapas, drink sangria and dance the night away in Spain's most popular cities.

2

Splurge on an all-inclusive resort in Malta for a beach getaway.

3

Take a road trip through the Scottish Highlands in a campervan.

4

Reserve a glass igloo in Iceland and witness the beauty of the Northern Lights.

5

Take a cruise down the Danube River and relish in the sights of Budapest.

6

Explore Amsterdam from a different point of view from the city's canals.

7

Get sporty and hit the slopes of the Matterhorn in Zermatt.

8

Walk the walls of Dubrovnik's historic Old Town for gorgeous views of the Adriatic.

9

Visit Germany's fairytale castle of Neuschwanstein.

10

Relax and unwind in spa houses in the picture-perfect city of Karlovy Vary.

11

Spend a weekend in Paris, the "City of Love," because it's a must.

12

Traverse the quaint towns of Tuscany while indulging in Italian delicacies.

13

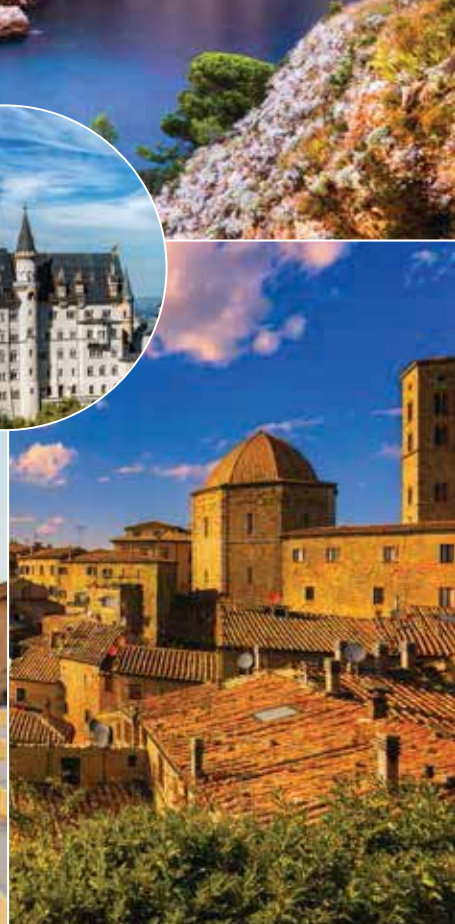
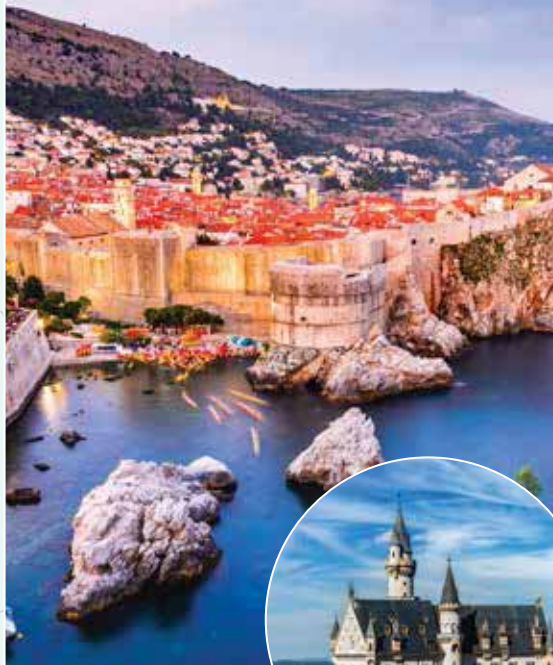
Take a rowboat out on the sparkling waters of Lake Bled followed by a picnic.

14

Feel like a king and queen by staying overnight in an Irish castle.

15

Island hop your way through idyllic Greece.





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# island hop through the **CHANNEL ISLANDS**

By Stacy Roman



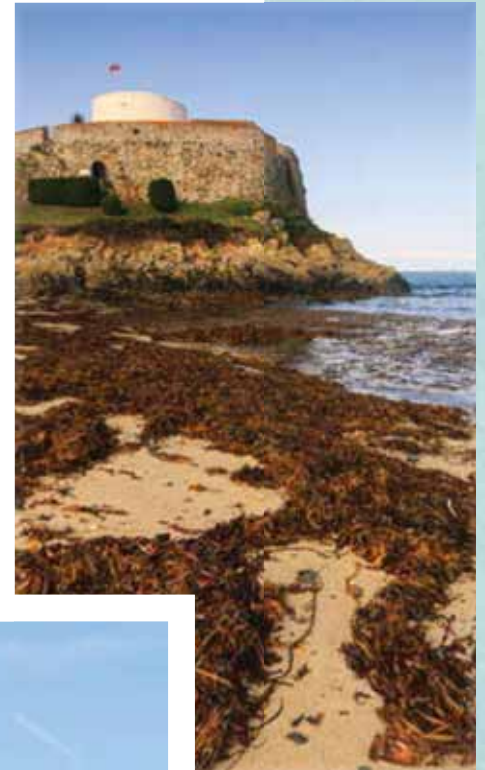
**R**ugged coastlines with pristine sandy alcoves and crystalline turquoise water lapping at the shore. A description worthy of almost any city lining the Mediterranean. However, these scenic spots are actually located in the English Channel, just off the coast of Normandy, France. Welcome to the Channel Islands, an archipelago of eight small islands (three of which are uninhabited) falling under British crown dependency. With its own government, laws, storied history (the only bit of British soil occupied by the Nazis during World War II) and unique mashup of British and French culture, the Channel Islands make a perfect weekend getaway.

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*continued on page 48*



LEFT: La Coupee causeway—that joins the two landmasses together—on the car-free isle of Sark.



TOP: Fort Grey, on Rocquaine Bay, on the isle of Guernsey.

*continued from page 47*

## JERSEY

The largest of the islands, Jersey is the southernmost. Just 45.5 square miles, it's easy for visitors to explore. Discover secret rooms hiding deep within Mont Orgueil Castle (also known locally as Gorey Castle). Or depending on the tide, walk or sail your way to Elizabeth Castle. Dating back to the 16th century, this bastion commands sweeping views of the island. Feeling hungry? Head to a charming beach cafe for cream tea or hit up one of the Michelin-starred restaurants. History buffs won't want to miss the Jersey War Tunnels. Excavated by the island's own residents under the helm of the Third Reich, the tunnels have become an homage to the suffering and heroism of the islanders during the war.

## GUERNSEY

The second largest of the Channel Islands, Guernsey was once home to the famed French author, Victor Hugo, while in exile from 1855–1870. Visitors can stroll through the five-floor home overlooking

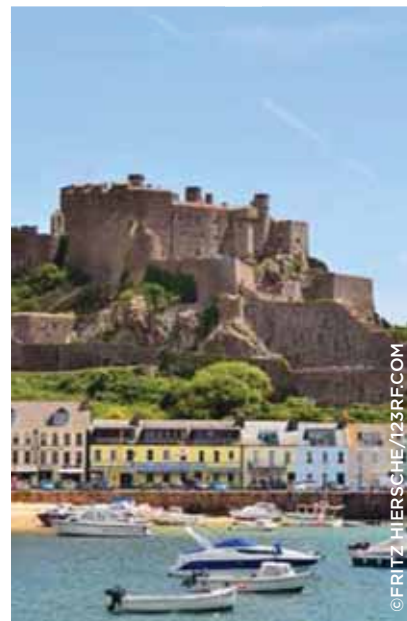
the English Channel and French coastline or walk through the fragrant gardens where his imagination let loose. Those seeking a little more adrenaline can check out Portinfer, which boasts some of the best surfing, highest tides and tidal fluctuations in Europe.

## ALDERNEY

The northernmost island is also the most remote with very limited flights to and from Southampton and Guernsey. Lined with deteriorating war fortifications, Alderney is best explored by bicycle or on foot. Keep an eye out at night for the elusive and rare blond hedgehog which is native to the island. Visitors can walk along the cobblestone streets and alleys lined with charming storefronts.

## HERM

Step away from the hustle and bustle and go completely car-free on a small slice of beach heaven. Just three miles off the coast of Guernsey, Herm is a great spot for relaxing, unwinding and unplugging.



LEFT: Gorey Castle (also known as Mont Orgueil castle) on the isle of Jersey.

ging. Camp out on the white sand beaches and bask in clear, turquoise waters.

## SARK

Another car-free island, the smallest of the Channel Islands is a mere 2.1 square miles. Designated one of the world's first Dark Sky Islands, the stargazing is almost unparalleled on Sark. Adventure seekers can traverse their way around the rocky island by coasting, kayaking, hiking and paddle boarding. ■



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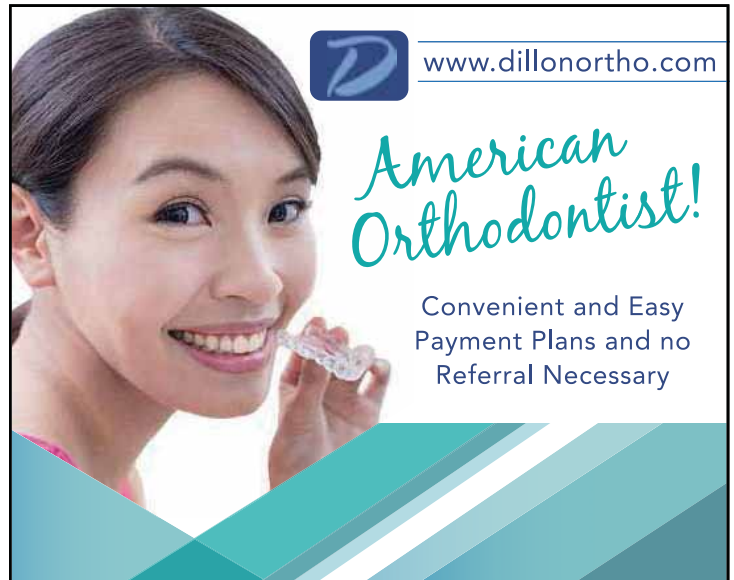
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# *Southern Spain*

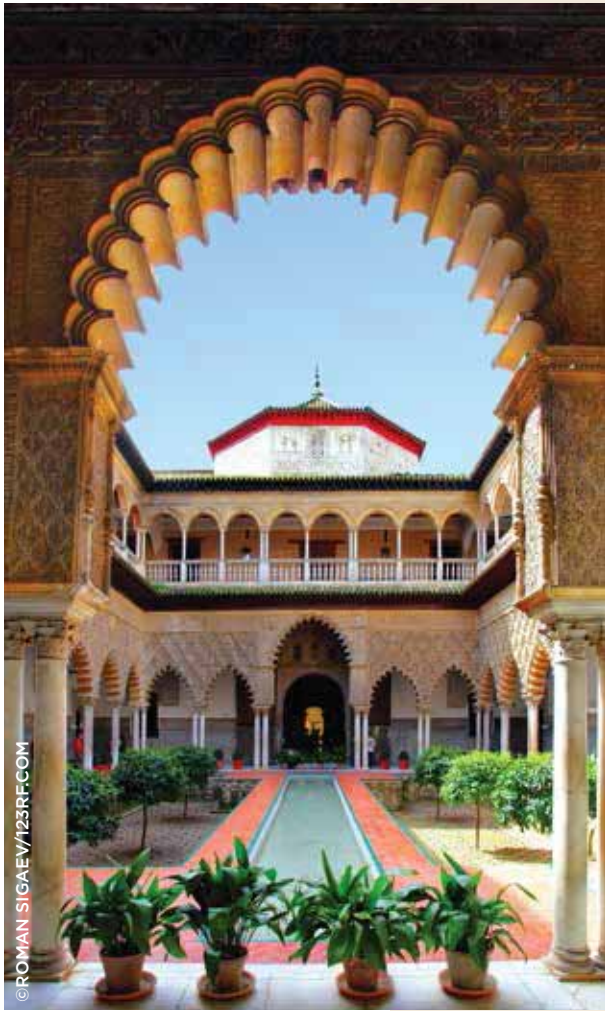
## The Perfect Trip

By Mary Del Rosario

As summer comes into full swing and the days get longer, sunnier and warmer, the Mediterranean becomes a popular playground for sunseekers. Filled with inviting turquoise waters, Moorish architecture, diverse landscapes and fabulous resorts, Andalucía will steal your heart and is the perfect location to make the most of your summer.

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**TOP:** Courtyard in Real Alcazar, Seville. A royal palace that was built for the Christian King Peter of Castile and showcases Mudejar architecture which encompasses part Gothic, part Islamic style.

**RIGHT:** Seville Cathedral. This Roman Catholic cathedral is the third-largest church in the world and is also the largest Gothic one of its kind.



©RAUL GARCIA HERRERA/123RF.COM

**Held under Moorish rule...** from the 8th to 15th century, the Andalucía region truly captures the essence of Spanish culture. From the food to its cities, this region in Spain is home to some of the country's best cities. Below are four well-known places to add to your itinerary.

## SEVILLE

The capital of Andalucía, Seville is the epitome of what you think of Spain to be—Flamenco dancers (the birthplace of this dance), sangria and tapas. However, it is also arguably one of the most beautiful cities in this region. One thing you'll notice as you're meandering through the streets is

how many awe-inspiring buildings Seville has. Bombarded with Gothic architecture, the Seville Cathedral is a sight to behold and commands your attention with its intricate façade. This Roman Catholic cathedral is the third-largest church in the world and is also the largest Gothic one of its kind. Another jaw-dropping building is the Real Alcazar, a royal palace that was built for the Christian King Peter of Castile and showcases Mudejar architecture which encompasses part Gothic, part Islamic style. If you're a "Game of Thrones" fan and think to yourself how this palace resembles Dorne, you'd be right as this was the location for the kingdom. Because of its popularity, buy tickets online ahead of time as they are likely to sell out quickly. The amazement in popular landmarks continues with Plaza de España, a plaza in the Parque de Maria Luisa. Here you'll find clashes of Baroque, Renaissance and Moorish influences. Lined with orange trees, exotic flowers and an impressive water fountain, the plaza can be described in one word: breathtaking.

## MÁLAGA

Located on beautiful Costa del Sol, Málaga is a popular port city that attracts many throughout the year. Resorts, ranging from kid-friendly to adult-only, dot Costa del Sol's shoreline. Beach bums are also spoiled for choice when it comes to beaches to soak the sun's rays. However, like Seville, Málaga's infrastructure is also dominated by Moorish and Renaissance elements such as the Alcazaba, the well-preserved citadel in Spain that sits mighty on top of the city's hill and the Málaga Cathedral. This Roman Catholic Church is nicknamed "La Manquita," or "the one-armed woman," due to a second incomplete tower. Because the Alcazaba is perched on top of a hill, you can catch the best views of Málaga and can see where the old town meets the new.

Since Málaga is a port city, people watching and taking in all the sights at the port is a must. Puerto de Málaga is peppered with many restaurants with fresh seafood





options and ritzy yachts. There are also a handful of beaches to enjoy, for those who want to escape from the city life, even for a few hours. If you want to forget you're in a city, step foot in La Concepción Botanical Garden, located outside the city center. With over 2,000 plant and bird species from all over the world, the garden welcomes you to an oasis like no other. For those who love to shop, Calle Marqués de Larios is the ideal spot to either window shop or fill your shopping bags. The street is one of Málaga's busiest shopping areas lined with marble floors and houses all the best names in retail.

For the more active traveler, put "hike up Sierra Nevada" on your to-do list while here. Translating to "snow-covered mountain range," Sierra Nevada is every trekker's dream. This natural park is considered to be continental Spain's highest point and offers seven popular hiking trails to include Hoya de la Mora-Veleta-Mulhacén, which is arguably Sierra Nevada's hardest hike.

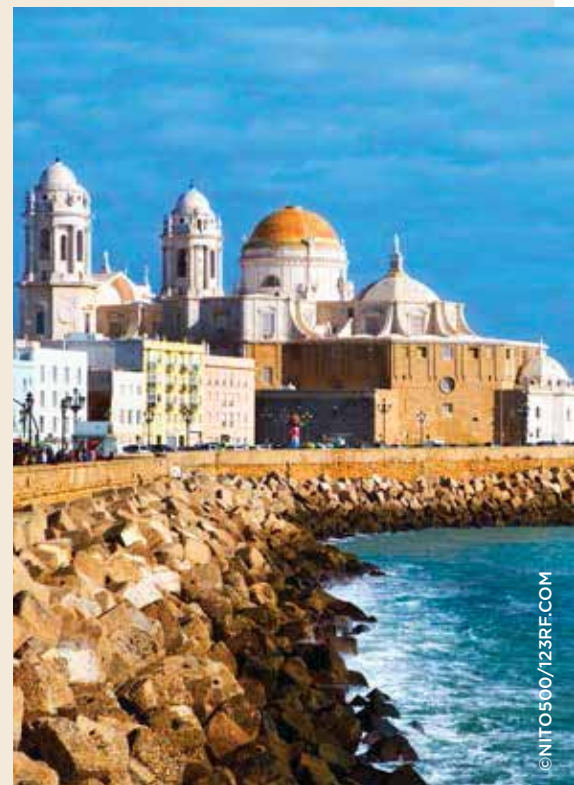
## GRANADA

This city may seem familiar to you if you've taken Spanish in high school. Along with Seville, Granada was always mentioned by many Spanish teachers, and for good reason. Known as "the Moorish jewel," Granada will not disappoint. Of all the sights in this city, the Alhambra is the best-known attraction and calls roughly 8,500 visitors every day. The Alhambra is a palace that was originally constructed as a small fortress in AD 889 but then became a royal residence. The intricate palace is broken up into three parts: the Nazrid Palace, the Alcazaba and Generalife. Deriving from the Arabic word "Al-Hamra" meaning "the red one," the impressive palace is one to put on your itinerary.

Though Granada is now mostly a Catholic city, traces of its Moorish routes can still be found in not only the architecture, but also Alcaieria, a grand bazaar. Selling spices, leather, silk and other Arab goods, you will be transported to a time when the Moors still conquered Spain. If you're unsure what to take as a souvenir, buy "fajalauza," painted ceramics and "granadino," stained-glass lamps. Be wary of pick pocketers.

## CÁDIZ

Situated on the Costa de la Luz, Cádiz is a port city that is often overlooked. However, this gem of a city has many traces of history mixed with mythology. This city was named after Neptune's (the god of freshwater and the sea) son and was an important sea route for commercial trade from the 14th to 18th century. Today, you can still see the importance of this once-booming trade route in landmarks such as Torre Tavira, which is Cádiz's impressive watchtower. Other historic, yet gorgeous landmarks include Cádiz Cathedral, which has Baroque, Rococo and Neo-Classical elements, and Castle of San Sebastián, although the castle is closed to visitors until further notice. Because Cádiz is located right on the water, the beaches are definite must-do activities. Playa la Caleta and Plata de la Victoria are the popular ones among beachgoers. Be sure to visit the old town, Barrio del Pópulo, which has many local restaurants, bars and quaint shops that will transport you back in time.



Panoramic view of Cadiz, bordered by the Mediterranean sea and its Cathedral, called Catedral Nueva

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## CULINARY AND REFRESHING DELIGHTS

Because many dishes are heavily influenced by the Mediterranean and Arabic cuisine, the gastronomy scene in Andalucía is one many come to enjoy. From the tapas you can fill yourself from to the sangria you can endlessly sip, here are a few must-tries to please your palette.

**RIGHT:**  
“Churros” – Fried pastry dough sprinkled in sugar. It’s best paired with hot chocolate.



“**Jamon serrano**” – Dry-cured ham that’s widely known throughout Spain. Try it with bread drizzled with olive oil.

**Tapas** – Small plates of anything ranging from paella to cheese. Popular choices include a Spanish omelet, Patatas bravas (fried potatoes in sauce), cured ham, cheese, olives, calamari, mussels, paella and cuttlefish. In Granada, Moroccan specialties such as couscous and kebabs are offered as tapas.

“**Gambas al Ajillo**” – Garlic shrimp drizzled with olive oil and garnished with crushed red peppers. It’s also best served as a tapa.

“**Arroz con mariscos**” – Though Valencia was the birthplace of paella, over half of Spain’s rice is grown in Seville. Their Andalusian take on paella will leave you wanting more.

“**Coquinas**” – Clams with a generous amount of garlic, lemon juice and parsley.

“**Pringá**” – Slow-cooked pork or roast beef, chorizo or morcilla, and beef or pork fat. This dish is served with crusty bread.

“**Cola de Toro**” – Slow-cooked bull tail with a red wine and vegetable stew. It’s served with potato wedges.

“**Huevos a la Flamenca**” – Fried eggs with potatoes and vegetables served in a clay pot.

“**Patatas a lo Pobre**” – Thinly sliced roasted potatoes served with onion, pepper and garlic.

“**Churros**” – Fried pastry dough sprinkled in sugar. It’s best paired with hot chocolate. Tejeringo is a version of churros specific to Andalucía.

**Gazpacho** – Refreshing, cold soup that consists of raw, blended vegetables.

**Jerez Fino** – Strong, dry white wine. The grapes used for the wine are from Jerez.

“**Granizadas**” – This kid-friendly drink is made from crushed ice and flavored syrups.

**Sangria** – A perfect drink for those hot Andalusian summer nights that consists of red wine and citrusy fruits. Some restaurants will add brandy for an extra kick.





**LEFT:** Attend a fiesta. The festival of San Juan is also popular with a blazing bonfire.



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**TOP:** Visit La Mezquita in Cordoba. This intricate mosque is beautiful beyond words.

**LEFT:** Rent a yacht and sail on the Costa del Sol.

## ANDALUCÍA BUCKET LIST

Now that you have some knowledge of what popular cities to see in this beautiful region, it's time to have your pen and paper ready and write these bucket list items on your ever-growing list.

**Attend a fiesta.** During Holy week (Semana Santa), many cities in Andalucía are transformed into a Catholic Procession. The festival of San Juan is also popular with a blazing bonfire.

**Surf the waves.** Due to windy conditions, kite and wind surfing are popular sports here.

**See a flamenco show.** In Seville, there are plenty of shows to choose from.

**Or learn it.** The best way to appreciate Flamenco is by taking lessons and experiencing it hands (and feet) on.

**Climb La Giralda in Seville.** The view from this bell tower makes for a gorgeous picture.

**Hike up Sierra Nevada.** If you want to climb the highest peak, Mulhacén,

it's recommended to have a guide with you.

**Travel to another country in Gibraltar.** You can get a stamp in your passport since this rock belongs to England.

**Rent a yacht and sail on the Costa del Sol.** Sailing while watching the sunset will be the best memory.

**Eat tapas to your heart's content.** Your stomach will be happy you did.

**Visit Ronda.** The view alone will leave you breathless.

**Tour Pablo Picasso's house in Málaga.** Art-lovers will appreciate where the popular artist came from.

**Party it up in Marbella.** Puerto Banús is the place to be seen.

**Be amazed by the Nerja Caves.** Located in Málaga, the series of caverns is a sight to see.

**Be one with nature in Cabo de Gata-Níjar Natural Park.** You can even see flamingoes at Las Salinas.

**Take a ferry ride into Morocco.** There are many ferries going from Málaga to the port of Tangier, Morocco.

**Visit La Mezquita in Cordoba.** This intricate mosque is beautiful beyond words. Though Cordoba is another great city, it can be explored in half a day.

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# 5 Family-Friendly Summer Vacations

## IN EUROPE

The words “summer vacation” brings memories of packing into the family station wagon and driving cross-country to Wally World, with a pit stop in Kansas to visit Cousin Eddie. Okay, that is the plot to “National Lampoon’s Vacation,” but you likely had something similar growing up. With your family now living in Europe, you can avoid station wagons, Wally World and cousin Eddie. Here are five family-friendly vacation spots in Europe.

By Amanda Palumbo

### 1 STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN ▲

Even on its tourism website, Stockholm boasts itself as a city for children. Aside from having loads of attractions that cater to families, it’s also considered one of the most stroller-friendly cities in Europe, with ramps that run alongside stairs, elevators in most buildings and free bus fare if you have a stroller. One of the best sites to hit up is Djurgården Island, where you’ll find an open air-museum, petting zoo and aquarium. The city also says all its restaurants and cafes are kid-friendly.

### 2 VIENNA, AUSTRIA ▶

Vienna is easy to get to whether you’re driving or hopping on a train. There are even sleeper trains you can take. Kids will no doubt have a blast at Prater Theme Park, which claims to be the oldest amusement park in the world, with its origins dating back to 1162. It’s free to get in and you pay for the individual rides you want to take. Inside Prater is the Wiener Riesenrad, a supersized Ferris wheel that opened in 1897. Kids can run out their energy at Bogi Park, the city’s largest indoor playground. Rainy day? Visit Kaiser Kindy, a children’s museum where kids can dress up as kings and queens.



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### 3 PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC ▲

Prague is often overlooked for families but the City of a Hundred Spires is a kid-friendly destination. Families can take a hike through beautiful Petřín Hill, where there is a mirror maze inside a castle and pony rides for children on the weekends. Prague also has several children's museums, including the Art Gallery for Children, an interactive gallery where kids can touch, create and even alter art installations. Prague is also known for its marionette shows, which I find to be the creepiest thing next to clowns and mannequins, but my niece loves them and she's the smartest kid I know. The Divaldo Minor has puppet shows geared to specific age groups and offers deals on its website. Just remember, Czech Republic is not officially on the Euro. Some businesses accept it but at a higher exchange rate. You'll get more bang for your buck by getting some Czech Koruna.

### 4 LAGOS, PORTUGAL ◀


If you're craving a beach vacation this summer, Lagos, Portugal is a good family spot. Porto De Mos is said to be one of the most family-friendly beaches in Europe with clean water, lifeguards on duty and restaurants that serve alcohol, because what parent doesn't need a cocktail after dealing with overly stimulated children all day? Lagos also offers boat trips where kids can go dolphin watching. There's also an adventure park that will ensure your children will sleep through the night, as well as the Lagos Zoo.

### 5 CRETE, GREECE ◀


Another good beach vacation spot for families is the island of Crete. There are beaches that specifically cater to families with shallow, clean water and soft sand. Those include Elafonisi, Falassarna and Bali beaches. If you want to take a break from the beach, Crete has the Acqua Plus, a massive water park with a kid-proof area filled with safe water slides and pools. Younger children will no doubt enjoy the island's Dinosauria Park, an interactive dinosaur park where kids can even dig for fossils.



As a girl who grew up in the sticks of Oklahoma, I couldn't imagine being a child growing up in Europe, with so many magical destinations a short plane or train ride away. The memories you make with your family on these European excursions will be something they will always cherish as the tiny humans become life-sized adults. ■




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SEE OUR AD ON PAGE #49

# CAGLIARI

Sardinia's City by the Bay

By Amanda Palumbo

There is a tiny city on a tiny island in a very big ocean. Sardinia's capital, Cagliari, is only 33 square miles, a blip on the radar when compared to the major Italian cities like Rome, nearly 500 square miles. But Cagliari doesn't care it's often overshadowed by the behemoths Rome, Venice and Milan. There is a very different culture here, one you will find nowhere else.

## A City With Personality

Those lucky to call this beachside city home often joke they're not 100% Italian, thanks to Sardinia's long and interesting history. The island has been under Roman, Pisan, Spanish, Austrian and eventually Italian rule in 1861. Over the course of several centuries, Sardinia became a melting pot of European culture. It's also one of the most welcoming cities for immigrants. New culture is infusing with old. Cagliari is the oldest continuously inhabited city in Italy, with residents dating back to 5,000 BC living in the area's vast caves.

It gives Sardinia and its capital a very different personality. Cagliari still has the richness of Italy but with a more laid-back reserved mentality. Don't mistake this for disinterest or aloofness. The people here want to share their city with the world, they're just not pretentious about it. Cagliari is sort of like your really "chill" friend. People tend to move a little slower here, take in the scenery a little more and spend more moments making memories over a good meal and glass of wine. It's a city made to lose track of time.

## Walk Through History

Cagliari's history goes back a few millennia and much of it has been preserved over time. The city's Castello district, a hilltop fortified citadel, is still surrounded by ancient walls and towers. The "old town" still sits high above the rest of the city and is only accessible by two 14th century gates. Both the Tower of St. Pancrazio and the Elephant Tower offer amazing panoramic views of the city with ocean and mountain backdrops.

The city is also home to a Roman Amphitheatre built in the second century that once sat 8,000 - 10,000 people. When you walk through the ground level, with the rock and limestone towering above, you will be standing in the exact place gladiators once battled and men fought wild beasts for entertainment. If you hike to the top, you'll see Cagliari's famous skyline.

The churches show you how architecture not only changed over time but with whom was ruling the area. There are seven churches in the heart of

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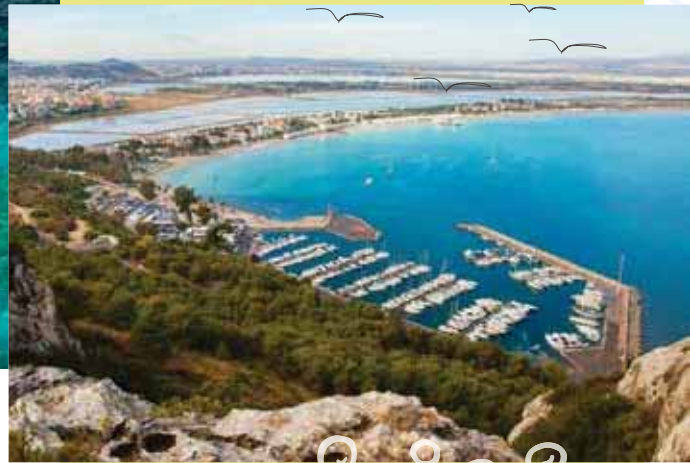
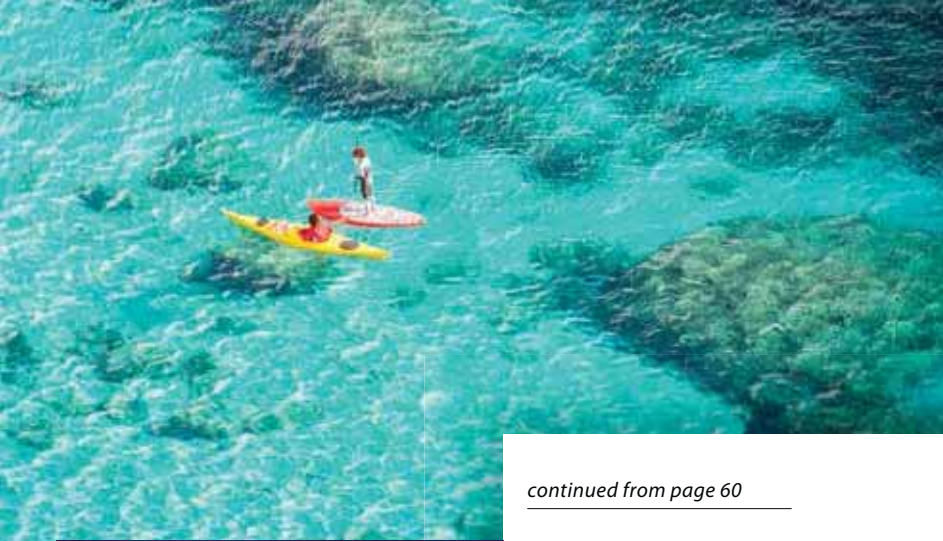


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Cagliari. Four are Gothic, two Baroque and one in Pisan-Romanesque. The Pisans built the Cathedral of Santa Maria in the 13th century and it has been transformed into many styles of the centuries. The church is home to the Sanctuary of the Martyrs, a crypt beneath the altar with nearly 200 preserved relics. Also inside, the “Madonna col Bambino,” or “The Virgin and Child” wooden statue dating back to the 14th century.

### The Affordable Italy

Italy can be an expensive destination but there is relief in Cagliari. According to travel organization, Budget Your Trip, the average cost per day for tourists visiting Cagliari is 96 euros per day. Compared to Rome’s average 130 euros, Sardinia is a steal. Remember, 96 euros is the average, so if you’re a thrifty traveler like me, you can get that number a lot lower. Switching hotels for hostels and public transport

for cabs and cars will save you a bundle. Not to mention, Cagliari is small and beautiful, so walking is the best method and it’s free.

### Food

You can’t write about any Italian city without mentioning the food! There will be the usual Italian dishes like pizza and pasta but it’s best to live like a true Sardinian. Swap pasta for “fregula,” a toasted couscous very similar to a risotto. Another favorite is “culurgiones,” dumplings native to Sardinia. They can be filled with vegetables, spices, meats or cheeses. Since Cagliari is a coastal city, you’ll naturally have the freshest and best seafood. Wander the sights and smells of the city’s fish markets.

### Best Beaches

If you’re a beach bum at heart, Sardinia’s coast will give you everything you need from adventure to serene and relaxing views. A word of caution: do not take any sand or rocks from the beaches. It is illegal and strictly enforced with a fine up to 3,000 euros.

#### POETTO

Poetto is Cagliari’s main beach and runs nearly five miles. It is also considered one of the most photogenic beaches, making it an Instagram-worthy dream. Poetto is flat; its water clear and shallow, making it perfect for families with young children. There are also lifeguards on duty and entertainment for children. Locals come here to exercise, so you’ll see plenty of people getting their morning walk or bike ride in. They won’t mind if you join them.

#### CALA FIGHERA

Poetto can get a bit crowded and windy in the summer. If you’re an introvert like me, head to Cala Fighera. While the beach has more pebbles than sand, this small inlet is much more secluded and quiet. Its turquoise waters splash alongside sandstone cliffs providing a peaceful view. This is also where daredevils will leap from the cliffs and into the water, though you should be careful. Cala Fighera is considered “nudist-friendly” so keep that in mind.

#### CALA REGINA

If you’re wanting a more authentic “stranded-on-a-beautiful-desert-island” feel, head to Cala Regina. This is about a 40-minute drive southeast of the city but worth it. Cala Regina is another pebble beach but because it’s located within a small cove, it’s protected from the strong winds that blow over many beaches. An old Spanish watchtower perched on a hilltop gives you a view of the ocean you will never forget. Since the water is so clear here, it’s a fantastic place to snorkel and experience life under the sea.

If you’ve already knocked out your big European bucket list destinations, I encourage you to go off the beaten path and experience parts unknown to the average traveler. The memories you’ll make on those trips will no doubt stay with you forever. A good starting point is Sardinia’s Cagliari. ■





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## OXIDIO

Great news from the dental practice OXIDIO in Gärtringen! Starting this summer, Dr. Reinhard Winkelmann will manage the practice side by side with his son. Lukas Winkelmann DMD recently completed his studies in medical dentistry at University of Pennsylvania (UPenn) and will come home after seven years in the U.S. Not only is he an ace in dentistry but also in sports and was elected a member to the hall of fame at Tusculum University.

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SEE OUR AD ON PAGE #15

# Exquisite Food Markets in Europe

By Kalli Jihee Yoon

Having a meal at a nice restaurant in tourist destinations is nice. But as global tourism is becoming more accessible, many restaurants serve more modernized dishes to appeal to the mass public rather than representing traditional flavors. This is why I find restaurants and cafes that serve local dishes made with fresh ingredients from the market to be important. It may be a bit of hustle and bustle, but I guarantee you won't find more fresh and true local flavors than you'll find in these markets. So next time you travel to these destinations listed below, take a detour to experience it yourself and see what they're all about.



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## Viktualienmarkt/Dallmayr Premium Food Market

MUNICH, GERMANY

Viktualienmarkt is right around the corner from Marienplatz in Munich where you will likely visit to watch the elaborate St. Peter's Church's clock tower performances. The market is consisted of various vendors including fresh produce, souvenirs, cured meat, spices, bakeries and small cafes. While the market itself offers several choices of sandwiches and baked goods to choose from, at Café Frischhut located across the street from the market, you'll find local "schmalzknudel," fried dough. There are many kinds for you to choose from. If you're looking for fancier offerings, head to Dallmayr Food Market. It offers top-quality food ingredients and ready-made food items from all over Europe. On the second floor of the shop is a bistro and cafe where you can stop for an espresso and some cake.

## Borough Market

LONDON, ENGLAND

London is not well known for its cuisine but if you visit Borough Market, you may think otherwise. Yes, it has vendors for fresh produce from all over Europe, but I'd suggest that you visit the market with an empty stomach to make sure you can sample all the food vendors. These vendors offer European dishes as well as Asian flavors and some offer a modern twist to it.

## Les Halles Paul Bocuse

LYON, FRANCE

Chef Paul Bocuse was a legendary chef in France known for his quality and innovative cuisines. So, you can be assured that the market named after such a legend in a country that takes culinary arts very seriously will not disappoint. It's heaven to any serious foodie as the vendors showcase any food ingredient you can possibly think of. Take a pick among numerous cafes and bistros located in the market to have a meal and take a break while you soak up the market scene. To name a few, Chez Antonin offers fresh seafood, Les Garçons Bouchers is a meat-heavy restaurant and Boulangerie Jockey is a well-known bakery within the local area.

## Mercat de la Boqueria

BARCELONA, SPAIN

All the robust flavors of Spain can be found in this market to include tropical fruits, fresh produce, nuts, sweets and an amazing selection of fresh seafood. One thing you don't want to miss is a chance to stock up on supply of Spanish jamón, or ham. Be sure to pay close attention to "jamón Ibérico de Bellota," a traditionally acorn-fed Spanish ham, which is one of the most expensive hams in the world and is wildly popular around Europe.



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### Great Market Hall (Central Market Hall) BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

Popular with locals and tourists, this market houses thousands of stalls. Other than the usual suspects of various sausages and pickled veggies, you'll find "lángos," deep-fried dough with toppings, pretty easily. If you love having this Hungarian specialty at fests, compare how it tastes in its origin country in a main menu and dessert form. You may never want to go back to the ones you tried at your local fest.

### Albert Cuyp Market AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

Conveniently located in the streets behind the Heineken Experience in Amsterdam, Albert Cuyp Market is filled with food stalls that will satisfy your cravings after a couple of pints at the Heineken Experience. The market is outdoors filled with different stalls offering fresh food ingredients but also surrounded by numerous restaurants and cafes. Among them, these are the two stalls to visit; the spicy chicken sandwich and stoop waffle ones.

### Privoz Market ODESSA, UKRAINE

Due to recent popularity over a TV show depicting the Chernobyl nuclear incident in 1986, Ukraine is gaining tourism. So, why not explore the Ukrainian food market? This market in Odessa is more of a traditional open market rather than modernized facilities in other European food markets. But because of its proximity to Asia and Europe, you'll find a wider variety of flavors here than any other European market. While various pickled vegetables and spiced sausages have deep eastern culture roots to them, pastries and sweets similarly represent those found in western cultures.

### Sant'Ambrogio Market FLORENCE, ITALY

In the heart of Tuscany, this market brings all the Italian goodies in one place: wine, olive oil, parmesan cheese, ham and Modena vinegar. It's not as touristy as other markets on this list as you'll find more locals shopping for their own, which means you can treat yourself to a real Italian food experience.

### Time Out Market LISBON, PORTUGAL

This popular market is crowded with tourists and locals for a reason. It's filled with vendors offering fresh food ingredients and gourmet foods. Along with "pastel de nata," custard tarts, fresh seafood dishes and croquettes, you'll find port wine and wine tasting menus as well. As it's often crowded, you may have a hard time finding a table, but your patience will be rewarded with the next few hours of tasting great food and wine.

### Eataly MILAN/ROME, ITALY

Eataly is a high-quality Italian food store and restaurant chain with over 40 stores around the world. Here, you'll find fresh food ingredients and authentic Italian cuisine as well as cooking classes. It's obvious that you won't have a hard time finding a highly-rated Italian food market in Milan and Rome, but it's also hard to judge authenticity of good value due to heavy saturation on tourism. When in doubt, avoid the hassle and head to an Eataly location for a guaranteed, top-quality food experience. ■

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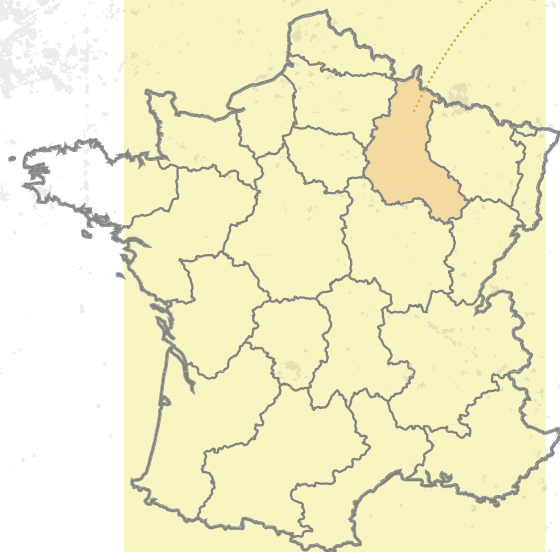
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Less than an hour's drive east of Paris, Champagne is the most northern wine region in France



“ In the Champagne region, you won't need a special occasion to clink your glasses ”



# Fabulous CHAMPAGNE HOUSES of France

By Mary Del Rosario

For many, champagne has become the go-to drink for milestones in your life. Got a job promotion? Celebrate with a glass of bubbly. Giving a speech for a wedding? Toast with the finest sparkling wine. However, if you find yourself in the Champagne region of France, you won't need a special occasion to clink your glasses as you sip on this refreshing bubbly at these five champagne tours.

## **Veuve Clicquot, Reims**

The well-known champagne with the vibrant yellow-orange label doesn't just boast as being delicious but is also known as being one of the largest champagne houses in the world. At their Champagne house, happy adults will be wine connoisseurs when participating in a public tour located in the cellar. There are several types of cellar tours ranging from visiting the flowers and fruits in the garden to uncovering the process of making cuvées, tanks of wine.

## **Billecart Salmon, Mareuil-sur-Ay**

If you roamed the more expensive aisle in the grocery stores back in the States, you may be familiar with this brand as the U.S. is Billecart Salmon's largest market. Lovers of French-country style can lose themselves in this smaller, yet gorgeous, champagne house with its quintessential French-country flair. A site to also see is the chalk cellar where only an expert winemaker can give the green light of when the bottles are ready to leave the cellar. If you'd like to visit this house, be sure to fill out the form online prior to going due to the high number of requests.

*continue on page 68*



### Nicolas Feuillatte, Chouilly

Unlike Billecart Salmon, the owners of Nicolas Feuillatte have a different vision in mind: to produce champagne in a modernized way. Tucked in the Côte des Blancs Vineyards, this brand creates its wines in a contemporary setting where the buildings are vast with glass walls from top to bottom dominating the façade. An array of varieties of this fine bubbly range from The Essential Collection to The Unexpected Collection. Be sure to visit the vineyard as a wide range of lush-green vines can be seen for miles away!

### Moët & Chandon, Epernay

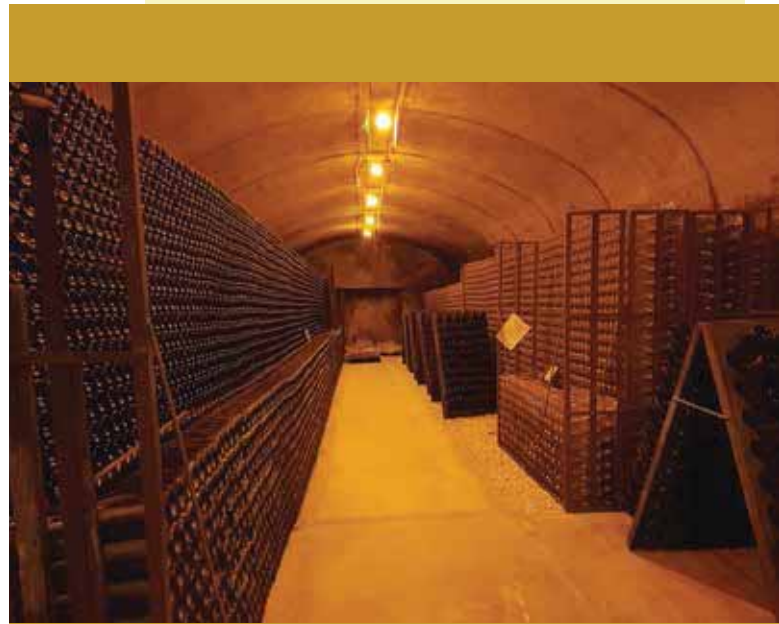
One can't talk about France's champagne house and not discuss this signature bubbly. From movies to hip-hop songs, Moët & Chandon has made a name for itself. In the prestigious cellar in Epernay, there are three tours to partake in, so you can see for yourself how this signature champagne is made and also see if the name lives up to the hype. If you'd like a private tour, be sure to contact them directly via email [visites@moet.fr](mailto:visites@moet.fr).

### J. de Telmont, Damery

Boasting as the friendliest champagne house, J. de Telmont feels as if you've stepped into someone's upscale home with four generations of family history greeting and delighting guests. For the true champagne lovers, immerse yourself in their stunning vineyard, which is open in September during harvest season. Aside from the breathtaking vineyard, four wine tours are available ranging from tasting wines before they enter the cuvée to a champagne and cheese pairing.

Whether you're on a romantic getaway or want to know more about the creation of this bubbly, these champagne houses will leave you clinking your flutes for more! ■

Lose yourself in the beauty of the French-style garden on the grounds of Billecart Salmon



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# DISCOVER THESE European Shopping Villages

By Jessica Zen

Shopping in Europe is every fashionista's dream. From designer label steals to bargain buys, the European shopping villages are full of treasures at discounted prices. If you're a shopping enthusiast, nothing makes your heart beat faster than a sign that says "Sale!" Imagine inhaling the fresh scent of leather or feeling luxurious fabrics that glide across your skin as you sip your latte and shop until you drop. And then, suddenly, an item catches your eye; the thing for which you have been endlessly searching! It's the thrill of finding the last item in your size for 70 percent off or locating the perfect gift without breaking the bank. Regardless of what you are after, spend an exhilarating day looking for deals at any one of these European shopping villages.

## Bicester Village, England

Located just an hour outside of London, this village boasts 160-plus boutiques. With discounts up to 60 percent off, you're sure to leave here with something extraordinarily stylish. Boutiques include Belstaff, Mulberry, Sweaty Betty, The White Company, The Cosmetics Company Store and more. Savings are already great, but you can also get tax free shopping prices for non-EU residents. This particular location allows you to claim your taxes for cash right at the village with a VAT refund form (or at the airport). Other customer services include hands free shopping, which allows you to leave all of your purchases at the counter and collect them all at the

Savings are already great, but you can also get tax free shopping prices for non-EU residents.

end of your visit, eliminating lugging all of your purchases from store to store. You can also get a personal shopper, utilize luggage drop, valet parking, and even home delivery. If you're feeling famished after all that shopping, grab a snack at Creperie Angélie and keep moving!



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### Ingolstadt Village, Germany

Located in the heart of Bavaria and designed with 19th century industrial architecture, this village is home to over 130 boutiques. Their commitment to going above and beyond includes customer services like personal shoppers and hands-free shopping. Here you'll find boutiques like Polo Ralph Lauren, Asics, Prada, Superdry and more. Once you've worked up an appetite, grab some Bavarian street food from a local vendor or coffee from Coffee Fellows. Satisfy your sweet tooth at the Lindt Cafe or hit Samui Thai for a light lunch. Whether you're searching for clothes, perfume, jewelry, watches or shoes, you're sure to walk away happy with your purchases.

### Kildare Village, Ireland

This lovely village is located in the heart of Ireland's horse racing country, less than an hour from Dublin. Over 100 boutiques are modeled to resemble the charm of the region's horse stables. If you really want to get a feel for the area, take the village's complimentary shuttle service to the nearby Irish National Stud & Gardens. Some of Ireland's best thoroughbred studs are housed here, as well as stunning outdoor gardens and a horse museum. Horses aside, the shopping village offers savings up to 60 percent. Boutiques like Anya Hindmarch, Brooks Brothers, Cath Kidston, Church's, Coach, DKNY, Furla, Hugo Boss, Juicy Couture, Pandora and Wolford can all be found here. Once you've shopped to your heart's content, enjoy a sit-down dinner at Alchemy Juice Co., which serves up natural, unprocessed whole foods.

### Valdichiana Outlet Village, Italy

The terracotta-hued store fronts of this village can be found in sunny Tuscany. Of course, this location showcases Italian designers, but you can also find brands like Adidas, Nike, Samsonite and more. With over 140 shops and savings up to 70 percent off, you'll likely walk away with a few new items! Additional customer services here include a beauty center, playground, library and several food courts where you can find local wine. Since you're in Italy, you can't leave without some tasty gelato for a snack. Call it a reward for all the money you saved!

### Las Rozas Village, Spain

Just 30 minutes from Madrid, this village has over 100 boutiques. The stunning Neoclassical storefronts create the perfect backdrop while you stroll through the elegant pedestrian boulevards. Michael Kors, Longines, Brooks Brothers and Burberry are just a few of the brands featured here. Customer services include personal shoppers. Indulge in some serious retail therapy with savings up to 60 percent off.

### La Vallee Village, France

Who doesn't dream of shopping like a royal near Paris? Just 40 minutes away from the city you can find over 110 world-famous designer's boutiques. Oh là là! Enjoy hands-free shopping and valet parking. Give your car the five-star treatment with a hand wash, so when you roll out, your car looks as fabulous as you do! Certainly you can't leave the village without having at least one macaroon. Stop at Ladurée for a sweet treat or even afternoon tea. Look for treasures at Marc Jacobs, Armani, Max Mara, Balenciaga, Chloé and Givenchy.



## Helpful tips for a successful shopping trip

While you're out and about swiping your card as fast as you can, remember these tips for the best possible experience:

- Greet the store associates, preferably in the local language.
- Carry cash.
- Remember you may need to have your own shopping bag.
- Ask for help for other sizes or reaching merchandise that is up high or in a display.
- For each purchase, get a VAT refund form to turn in at the airport (money will be refunded to a debit/credit card).
- Make sure you have your passport info to complete the forms.



How many bags can you carry? Best to hit the gym now to get prepared... or just opt for hands-free shopping for all the fantastic items you're sure to find. Whether you're shopping for a gift, something practical, or a little something special, you're sure to find exactly what you need (or don't need)! Don't miss out on tremendous deals and affordable prices at these European shopping villages. ■

# THE FASCINATION WITH ITALIAN LEATHER

By Stacy Roman

Perusing through narrow alley ways in almost any city in Italy, you're bound to smell it first — the subtle, yet indelible musky scent of leather. Brightly colored handbags hang precariously from market stalls, belts are neatly hung on racks against the walls, wallets and coin purses lined up on shelves, all waiting to be purchased as the perfect souvenir. Italian leather is synonymous with high-quality and luxury. With secret processes dating back thousands of years, it's no wonder there's a slight obsession with these fascinating goods.

## HISTORY OF Leatherworking

The art of making leather is handed down from generation to generation. With the industry beginning its boon during the Renaissance and Middle Ages, leatherworkers and tanners found their niche in the lush countryside of Tuscany. Intricate handiwork and practices were so closely guarded, many laborers formed special guilds and associations for their trade. Currently, more than 15 percent of global and two-thirds of all European leather production originates in Italy.

Most Italian leather is processed using vegetable tanning. Derived from the bark of oak and other trees, as well as various native plants, tannins are drawn out and mixed with an acidic solution to preserve and protect the leather. Tannins are also responsible for the varying and distinctive hues. Leather is made from various animal hides, but primarily cows from the surrounding area. The tanning process can take anywhere from 20 to 30 months to complete before the material is ready for cutting, stitching, embroidering, cobbling and more.







When shopping for leather, there are two main types to look for: top grain and full grain. Top grain is thinner where the outermost layer of hide is removed. Because the leather is thinner than full grain, it is easier to work with. This type of material isn't as expensive, yet it is much more stain-resistant and yielding — making it much more appealing and practical to the masses. Full grain leather is the highest quality leather you can get. Once tanned, you still have the rough spots, rawness and toughness of the animal.

### FAMOUS PURVEYORS OF Italian Leatherwork

Most notably known for over-the-top designs, killer sky-high stilettos and stunning haute couture, many Italian fashion houses have humble beginnings tracing back to the leather trade. One of the oldest icons, Prada, was founded in 1913 in Milan. Brother Mario and Martino Prada opened "Fratelli Prada," a store supplying luxury leather bags, steamer trunks and other travels goods to the local upper-crust society. Similarly, in 1921, Guccio Gucci began selling luggage and custom-made equestrian equipment in Florence. Gucci expanded his vision and has become known for exquisite fashion and merchandise.

One of the first to expand into the U.S. was Salvatore Ferragamo. Starting as a novice apprentice in a cobbler's shop, Ferragamo opened a small business repairing and creating made-to-measure leather shoes and boots. His designs proved so popular, he moved to the States and quickly became favored with the Hollywood elite. Starlets such as Marilyn Monroe and Greta Garbo gave his creations an air of glamour.

Another recent designer more known for his sand-blasted jeans also began his career work-

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## MORE THAN 15 PERCENT OF GLOBAL LEATHER PRODUCTION ORIGINATES IN ITALY.

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ing with leather. Showing artistic talent from a young age, Roberto Cavalli was destined for fashion greatness. He had a knack for working with intricate designs on various types of textiles. He pioneered and patented a unique way of printing designs on the supple material. He also came up with a trademark patchwork pattern created of different types of fabrics, including leather. He quickly expanded his business to include high-end fashion. Although many of his flagship stores in the States have closed, he still maintains a strong presence in his native Italy.

Granted, not everyone can afford to walk away from their dream Italian vacation with a Prada bag. However, there are plenty of affordable options to choose from. With vendors filling the stalls at local markets, and plenty of shops tucked along cobblestone streets, the opportunity to browse and pick the perfect piece of handcrafted leather abounds. Most goods are still made the old-fashioned way — by hand. You'll be sure to have an incredibly unique souvenir which may have just been made by a future famous Italian designer. ■



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# AFN Staff Picks

STRIPESEUROPE.COM

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

In this edition, we asked our friends at AFN "Out of all the destinations we covered in this edition, which one would you prefer?"

Check out what they picked and why!



SSG Joshua L. Tverberg, USARMY  
JOINT FORCE RADIO

**JOSH'S PICK:**

"I would have to pick Norway. I am of Scandinavian descent and have always wanted to visit somewhere that they can pronounce my last name. Plus, my wife has always wanted to see the Northern Lights and there are some amazing places to view them in Norway."



SSgt Nick Koetz, USAF  
JOINT FORCE RADIO

**NICK'S PICK:**

"I would definitely love to visit Finland. My great grandmother could speak Finnish fluently and I'm a huge fan of Finnish food. Not to mention I love the winter and outdoor activities that come along with it like Hockey, Ice Fishing and snowmobiling. Plus the country of Finland is so beautiful with all of the forests and lakes. I'd love to sit out at night and watch the northern lights!"



PO2 Bobby Baldock, USN  
JOINT FORCE RADIO

**BOBBY'S PICK:**

"My wife and I absolutely love the Netherlands. Amsterdam has become our favorite destination so far. The people, culture, and scenery are all amazing. And you can't beat the cheese! For the beer drinkers, the Heineken Experience is the most interactive brewery tour I have ever experienced. The Netherlands is a must see if you're traveling Europe."



SrA Sean Hudson, USAF  
JOINT FORCE RADIO

**SEAN'S PICK:**

"Lisbon! As a junior-enlisted, single service member I need three things on vacation: good weather, cheap eats, and a great party scene. Lisbon checks all three boxes. Not having to break the bank for lunch and dinner gives you extra room in the budget to have fun on the nightly pub crawls hosted by some of the top party hostels in the world. If you feel the need to learn about the city's history to justify your party antics, Lisbon provides guides for free walking tours around the city, which for most of the year can be enjoyed in shorts and a t-shirt. Lisbon's coastal location means being a beach bum for the day is also an option. Plus, people who live near the ocean are always so good looking. What's up with that?"

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