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



FEED YOUR WANDERLUST

EDITOR'S LETTER

Elizabeth Jones
Lead-Writer Editor
Stars and Stripes Europe



A majority of the inspiration behind the content within this magazine derives from my own personal adventures of living in Europe the last three years and the lessons I've learned along the way. My goal is to have you leave Europe with no regrets when the time comes to say, "see you later," to this home of yours.

Lesson 1

Visit the iconic cities and judge them for yourself.

When I first started traveling at the beginning of my tour, I went to all the places I've seen in countless movies and read about hundreds of times. Cities such as Rome, Paris, London, and Berlin that host millions of tourists each year were at the top of my bucket list and yet, so many people were telling me how "overrated" or "dirty" they were. While some may experience these locations that way, I chose to determine that for myself and

you should too. There's an addictive thrill you feel when exploring somewhere you have dreamed about visiting for a long time ... so even if you find parts of it that aren't as dreamy, you'll still feel grateful to be there.

Lesson 2

Travel off-the-beaten-path and search for hidden gems.

After visiting all of the must-see cities I had on my list, I started to grow a desire to visit the places that aren't highlighted as being the best of what Europe has to offer. Ironically, these adventures ended up being some of my absolute favorite. There are countless underrated destinations in Europe waiting to captivate you, you just have to know where to look. Start by researching lesser-known locations that speak to your interests ... whether that includes outdoorsy spots, wine villages, seaside towns, cities with often overlooked history or places that have an entirely different yet fascinating culture.

Lesson 3

Travel for experiences and new cultures.

In the age of digital satisfaction, I often struggled with feeling the need to document every second of my travels on social media. However, I grew to learn that traveling has never been about capturing the perfect picture. It has always been about immersing yourself into everything a place is known for, embracing a new culture and finding the right balance between being present and capturing everything to look back at the amazing memories you'll make.

These three lessons have paved the way in how I traversed this continent. I am now saying, "see you later," to Europe after three years and can happily say I have no regrets. I hope this note along with the amazing stories you find inside this magazine will entice you to take advantage of all this opportunity of living overseas has to offer you. Whether you're a seasoned traveler or just beginning your chapter in Europe, let our magazine light the way for all of your adventures and feed your wanderlust. ■

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EUROPEAN

GETAWAYS

Ancient Cities

By Mary Del Rosario

The best part about living in Europe is its accessibility to jet off to countries that are rich in history. One plane ride away and you can walk the ruins of Pompeii, fight alongside the Romans in the Colosseum and visit Zeus and the rest of the Greek gods. These ancient cities transport us to the past and make it possible to relive a period of time that can only be learned about through textbooks and movies.

Athens *Greece*

The birthplace of democracy and Greek mythology, Athens is not only the capital of Greece but is the capital of Europe. Landmarks dating back to the 5th century are scattered all across this ancient city. It is also the home of Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum.

When touring the Greek capital, the Acropolis should be on top of your to do list. Considered to be the most famous landmark in the country, the Acropolis is a fortified part of Athens that is built on a hill to honor the Greek goddess Athena. Perfect photo-op views can be seen atop this citadel as it overlooks the entire city. An archaeologist's dream, the Parthenon is another temple of the Acropolis that will have you feeling awe-struck.

The oldest neighborhood, Plaka, is another example of how much history is embedded in Athens. Hundreds of shops, rustic buildings and marble streets make this street the most pleasant one to stroll along.

Rome *Italy*

Pizza, pasta, wine, beautiful fountains – Rome has got it all! Italy's capital, though sprawling with cosmopolitan vibes can really only be described as one word: ancient. Rome is filled with age-old buildings and memorials and can be seen in the Roman Catholic Church in Vatican City, St. Peter's Basilica and of course, the Colosseum. Known as the impressive gladiatorial arena, the Colosseum is the place one has to visit when in Rome. It is also known as the Flavian Amphitheatre and is covered by a huge canvas awning.

Another famous masterpiece that adds to Rome's archaic charm is Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. Part of the Apostolic Palace where the Pope resides, the famous ceiling is considered to be a cornerstone work of High Renaissance art.

If you've seen pictures of an ornately carved fountain, chances are it's the Trevi Fountain, an intricate fountain that was designed by Nicola Salvi, an Italian architect. This beautiful landmark is one of the oldest water sources in Rome and dates back to 19 B.C.

Pompeii *Italy*

Though the eruption of Mount Vesuvius left the ancient Roman city of Pompeii in ruins, what's left of this city is archeological wonder and the imagination of what could have been. During the 8th century, Pompeii flourished as a rest town for many wealthy Romans. Dotted with lavish villas and beautiful houses, Pompeii was a city of money and wealth.

As you walk through the ruins, you'll notice the tracks embedded in the road from the chariots that serve as a reminder of the city's thriving past. For more reminders of what once was, visit the Forum of Pompeii which was the economic, political and religious city center. Though there aren't any inhabitants living in actual Pompeii, more than one million people live in the cities surrounding Mount Vesuvius.

A European getaway to an ancient city will not only humble you but will also fill your head with imagination, wonder and may even teach you a thing or two about history! ■



off-the-beaten path travels: Slovakia



By Ethan Merrifield

Europe is a historic land known all over the world for its fairy-tale destinations such as France, England, Greece and Germany, but there are many other places that don't have the same nominal recognition. Slovakia is one such country that is just as worth seeing. The capital city, Bratislava, is located closely to Vienna and Budapest, which makes the city very accessible and it welcomes many tourists every year

Check out the **INSANE AMOUNT OF CASTLES**

Slovakia is home to over two hundred and twenty castles and ruins. Paramount of the historical marvels is Devín Castle, which is located on the Danube, near the capital city of Bratislava, and has origins that can be traced back to 864 CE, making it the oldest castle in Slovakia. Spiš Castle is one of the largest castles in the world and is protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Castle of Čachtice served as the residence of a famous Hungarian Countess, Elizabeth Báthory, known to history as the Blood Countess for her heinous murders. This castle is where she lived and where she was imprisoned until her death.

Visit the **GORGEOUS CAVES**

There are over 7,000 caves in Slovakia that are spread throughout the country's mountainous region. Most notable among these caves is an Aragonite Cave. Aragonite is a common formation of Calcium Carbonate, but the way that it has formed in the Ochtinská Aragonite Cave is found in only four caves in the world. The Ochtinská is also one of the 700 Caves of Aggtelek and Slovak Karst, another UNESCO World Heritage Site for the vast number of caves in such a concentrated area.

Stand at the heart of **THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT**

In Kremnické Bane, a small village in Slovakia, you will find a small monument marking the geographic center of the European continent.

Ski the slopes or **ENJOY A HIKE**

As the country is quite mountainous, downhill ski resorts can be found all over the country. Skiing has been popular in the region since the tail end of the 19th century. During the warmer seasons, mountains shed their snow and become perfect spaces for hiking. Slovakia has much to offer the outdoor enthusiast!

Enjoy the **GASTRONOMY**

Slovakia has a variety of unique dishes including the national dish, "bryndzové halušky." This simple dish consists of "halušky," potato dumplings similar to gnocchi, and "bryndza," a soft sheep cheese. Many potato, cheese and cabbage dishes form the bulk of Slovakian gastronomy, but every country needs wine and Slovak wine of the Tokaj region is praised internationally.



Jasovská Cave (Slovak: Jasovská jaskyňa) is a stalactite cave in the Slovak Karst in Slovakia. It is located near the village of Jasov, around 25 km from Kosice.

Slovakia is a lesser-known country with beautiful geography and a lot of culture to be discovered by tourists and adventure seekers. Hopefully you feel inspired to take a look at a little country off-the-beaten-tourist-path that has so many curiosities to discover! ■

From top to bottom, left to right.
Aerial view of Spišský hrad or Spiš Castle.
Ruined walls Lietava Castle
Stunning foot-path in the Tatra Mountains

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Luxembourg

A Little Country A Lot to Offer

Sharing borders with Belgium, France and Germany, Luxembourg is a small country with numerous historical sites. If you are searching for a place to spend a day, Luxembourg City — the country's capital — is the place for you.

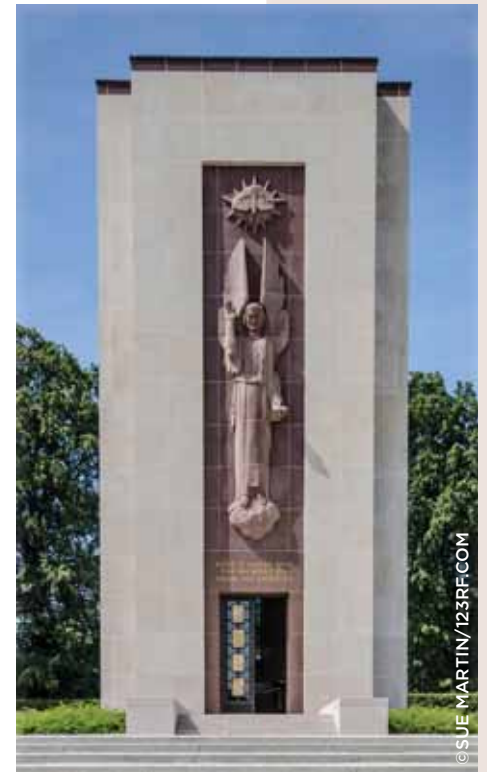


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By Allie Smeeth



Luxembourg is a perfect spot for history buffs, nature lovers and foodies.



Cemeteries and Museums

American Cemetery and Memorial: Connect with our nation's history at Luxembourg's American Cemetery and Memorial, located just outside Luxembourg City. Since December 29, 1944, this site has provided guests with an opportunity to honor some of America's heroic individuals, come to terms with the victories and losses of World War II and realize how far we have come as a country. The complex is home to U.S. Army General George S. Patton's memorial, the Tablets of the Missing and the graves of more than 5,000 military members.

Gëlle Fra: Pay your respects to fallen heroes at the Gëlle Fra or Memorial of Remembrance. Atop a 21-meter-tall column stands a golden statue of a woman watching over a soldier mourning the death of his comrade. The memorial was built in 1923 to honor those who died in World War I and was torn down during the Nazi occupation. After extensive restoration, the golden woman returned in 1985.

General Patton Memorial Museum: Learn about one of America's most honored war veterans, General George S. Patton, his impact

on the military and his aspirations for America at this museum in Luxembourg City. Before you head out, make sure to explore the museum's photo and document collection, which dates back to the May 10, 1940 German Invasion.

Luxembourg City History Museum: Located in the center of the old town, this beautiful complex offers visitors a chance to gain a deeper understanding of the county's past, learn about the city's transformation into an urban metropolis and discover the legend of the nymph Melusina.

Landmarks

Grand Ducal Palace: Since 1980, the city's Grand Duke has resided in this breathtaking palace, which makes it the perfect stop for history buffs of all ages. From its etched stone exterior to the beautiful stairway and exquisite ballroom, this majestic old town hall is a great place to learn about the city's government. Prior to venturing on, explore the building's garden to regroup and enjoy the town's beauty.

Neumünster Abbey: This breathtaking meeting place is the perfect spot to soak up Luxembourg City's beauty. After the original complex was ruined in 1952, monks from across the village came together and constructed the Neumünster Abbey. Today the complex is a central hub for summer concerts.

Bock: Explore the city's underworld with a trip to Luxembourg's Bock, a 23-kilometer-long network of casemates. Known for turning the city into one of the best defended places in the world, these tunnels were once shelters to thousands of soldiers and their horses.

Dining Out

Mosconi: If you are looking for a restaurant dedicated to providing guests with delicious food and a spectacular view, Mosconi is the place for you. This charming establishment offers diners an array of Italian specialties including roasted scallops, green spaghetti with tomatoes and fresh mozzarella, fresh fish and tasty cakes.

La Lorraine: For all the fish lovers out there, head to La Lorraine. Located in the center of the city, this unique restaurant provides guests with a chance to enjoy fish soup, seafood and antipasti platters. La Lorraine also offers freshly brewed coffee and great desserts.

Ambrosia: Treat yourself to a delicious helping of gyros, pita chips and feta cheese at the Ambrosia Greek restaurant. Enjoy a tuna salad, the four-cheese plate with fresh tomatoes, or a plate of lamb skewers, herb butter, French fries and rice. ■

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Kraków

Poland's Greatest Treasure

By Erinn Burgess

If you are searching for a destination rich with history, beautiful architecture, delicious food and vibrant culture, look no further! Kraków is one of Poland's oldest cities and offers a variety of notable things to do and see for travelers of all types.

Explore

Old Town & Wawel Castle

The Old Town main square is arguably the most picturesque part of Kraków. Clean, white streets surrounded by stunning architecture and an assortment of horse-drawn carriages going by — it's like something out of a fairytale!

The main square was originally used for commerce, and one can still shop for a variety of goods from vendors in the Cloth Hall in the center of the square. The square is lined with restaurants and cafes offering outdoor seating, and while you might pay a little more here than in other areas of Kraków, the prices are low compared to other European cities.

Wawel Castle is just minutes away from the main square and sits atop of Wawel Hill overlooking the Vistula River. An assortment of Romanesque, Renaissance and Gothic architecture make up the castle grounds, which may be visited free of charge. The insides of the buildings — the State Rooms, the Crown Treasury, the cathedral and more — may be toured, but it is highly recommended to reserve tickets in advance if you wish to do so.



Polish folk collective on Main Square



Wawel castle hill in Kraków



“Gołka” cheese, traditional Polish smoked cheese with cranberry sauce



Arbeit Mach Frei (Work liberates) sign at prisoner camp Auschwitz



PHOTOS BY ERINN BURGESS

Eat

Pierogi, Cheese & Obwarzanek

Sampling “pierogi” in Poland is a must! These delicious little dumplings come stuffed with potatoes, cheese, meat, sauerkraut or other vegetables. You can find them almost anywhere, but perhaps the best place is at one of Kraków’s milk bars. The milk bars began as government-subsidized cafes where workers could get a low-cost bite to eat. The meals were simple and cheap, using mostly dairy-based ingredients or potatoes and eggs. Today, you can still dine at milk bars in Poland offering a spin on these simple menu items at very low prices.

Try the “Gołka” cheese from a market or from street vendors — some serve it grilled with cranberry sauce on top! This rubbery, smoked, salted cheese is a treat. Also, try “Oscypek” cheese if you get the chance. It is similar but produced with sheep’s milk instead of cow’s milk and is only available April through October. “Obwarzanek”, also know as “the Kraków pretzel”, is a ring-shaped bread that is somewhat of a mix between a pretzel and a bagel, topped with salt, sesame seeds or poppy seeds. You’ll find them everywhere — in every cafe and on every street corner, which is good because they are delightful.

Visit

Auschwitz, Poland

On a somber note, Kraków is an hour’s drive from Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest German Nazi concentration camp. Everyone should experience this place at least once in their lifetime and know that it will be an emotional, yet educational journey.

Renting a car is an option, but traveling to the memorial via public bus from Kraków is a simple and cheap alternative. Touring Auschwitz

without a guide is free but requires a reservation as a limited number of people are permitted inside at one time. You may also reserve a guided tour for a fee, which can be done on the Auschwitz website: <http://auschwitz.org/en/>. Pay close attention to the details — visitors without a guide are only allowed during certain hours, so plan your visit accordingly. Be sure to visit Birkenau as well, the extermination camp down the road from Auschwitz. A free shuttle bus runs in between the two sites several times each hour, and no ticket or guide is required to enter Birkenau.

Tour

Wieliczka Salt Mine

Right on the outskirts of Kraków is one of the world’s oldest operating salt mines — Wieliczka Salt Mine. Excavation began in the 13th century and the mine was used for commercial salt mining until the 1990s. It is now an official Polish historical monument offering tours to visitors. Inside the 327-meter deep mine, visitors have a chance to see exhibits on the history of the mine, an underground lake, statues carved from rock salt and an extravagant subterranean chapel. The 2.2-mile guided tour took approximately two hours to complete, with an optional museum portion at the end. It’s quite incredible to get a glimpse of this underground world.

Between the charming sites, delicious cheap eats, history and abundance of experiences to be had, Poland’s greatest treasure always leaves visitors wanting to come back for more! ■



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BUCHAREST

By Emma Bareihs



Undergoing many regime changes, the architecture in Bucharest ranges from panel buildings from the Communist era to Byzantine influences and French design. Although stunning and historical, the color scheme of the city, like many other old cities, is the typical grey and stone. Color brings the city to life with these hidden secrets within the vibrant side of Bucharest. Hit up some of these color-popping sites when you're in this city.



Egyptian
Cafe Valley
Of Kings In
Bucharest

among the invigorating greens make the gardens an imaginative place to explore. With more than 10,000 species of plants, take your time while you talk through the floral backdrop.

Pasajul Macca – Vilacrosse

Known as the Valley of the Kings, this passage is popular for its shisha. Many cafes and restaurants inside this covered passage sell shisha pipes. With the ceiling made out of colored glass, the light that shines through makes for a fun, moody atmosphere.

Strada Arthur Verona

Known for the popping colors of street art, this street and its surrounding streets have an abundance of designs full of character. The urban art form takes over the city in paintings and graffiti that will catch your eye.

Gradina EDEN

A forested bar in Bucharest, the tables and chairs of Gradina EDEN offer a relaxed setting to have a drink. Not only surrounded by vibrant greens of the foliage, the Eden Garden has colorful walls, hammocks, lights, bean bags and stools.

Food Hood

An easily recognizable turquoise van identifies Food Hood, an urban street food hub. Relax in one of the bright chairs and sink your feet into the sanded area while you munch on a meal from a variety of food trucks. The colorful bunting and music enliven the center of the old town.

Pura Vida Sky Bar

This paint splattered bar against the old architecture of the city skyline is a perfect place to mix the old and the new. Watch the changing hues of the sunset with a drink in hand at this rooftop bar on top of a hostel.

Step off the cobblestone streets and into a brighter space of Bucharest. These locations in the city are vivid sights for when you need a spot of color in your life. Paint away the dull stone images of old cities in your mind with the glowing, vibrant sides that Bucharest has to offer. ■

Rainbow
umbrellas
roof street
in Victory
Passage,
Bucharest



Pasajul Victoria

Under a sea of rainbow umbrellas, you can't miss the photo opportunity of the Victory Passage. Let the sun shine through the multi-colored umbrella panels while you enjoy coffee and food at a cafe underneath.

Çișmigiu Gardens

Designed by Carl Meyer, a German landscape architect in 1845, the public gardens contain exotic plants, lakes and flowers that can bring a smile to your face on sunny days. The natural art of the structure of the gardens is anything but dull.



Cărturești Carusel

The stark white columns of Cărturești Carusel may not seem like the most vivacious of spaces, but with the different tones of the books lining the walls, the bookshop is brilliant. On bright days, the space feels luminous from the glass ceiling.

Acuarela

Acuarela is a cafe you can't miss. Radiating colors and creativity, this cafe is colorful and is covered in plants, lights and offers watercolor paints at your table to play with. The quirky coffee joint has mismatched seating and artwork on the walls. Emulating Pasajul Victoria, Acuarela has a sky of umbrellas on the terrace.

Grădina Botanică

The Botanical Gardens of Bucharest, similar to the Çișmigiu Gardens, are covered in vegetation. Pops of color

“Step off the cobblestone streets and into a brighter space of Bucharest”

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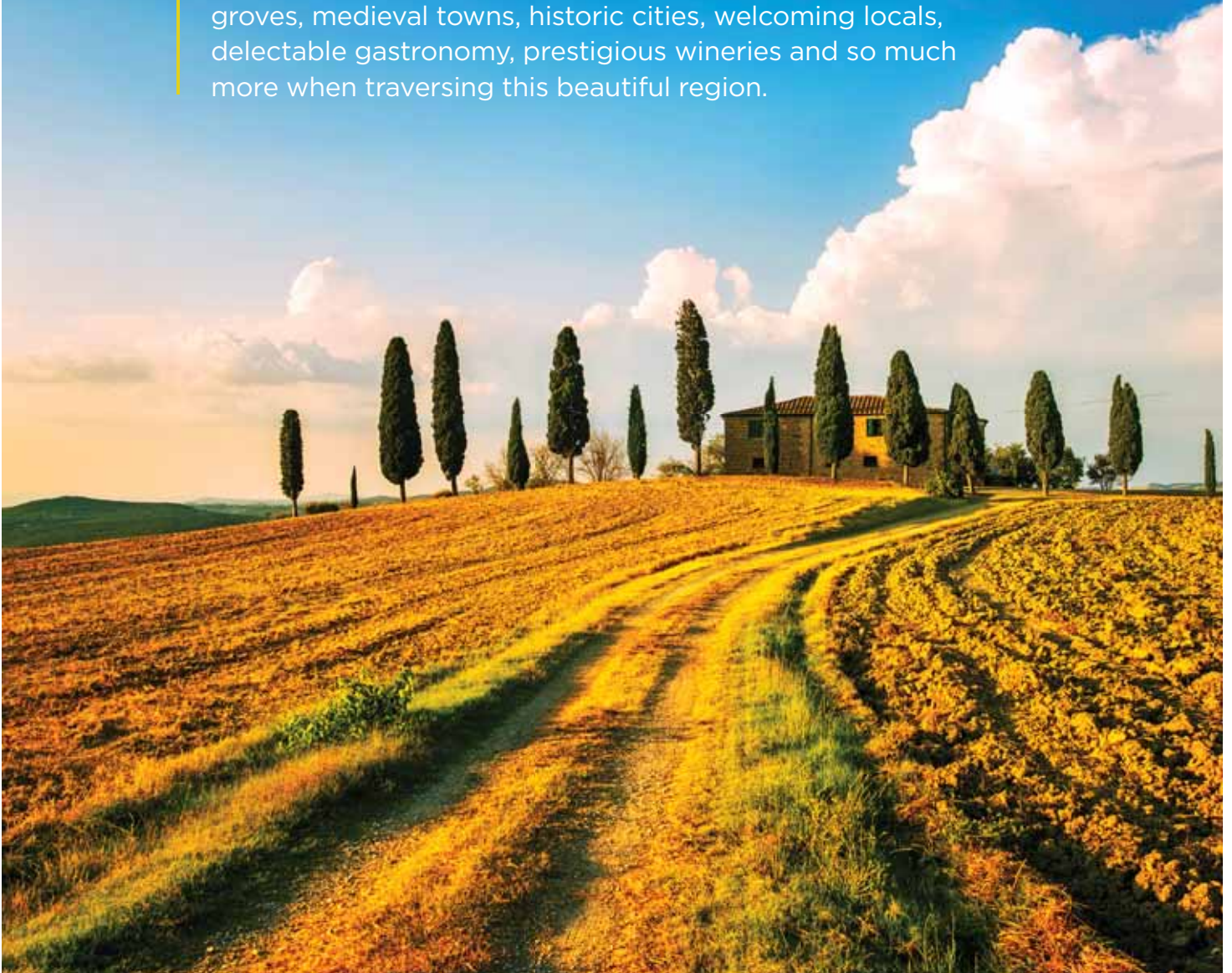
Friday 8:00 – 13:00

SEE OUR AD ON PAGE 63

Discover *Tuscany*

Tuscany is a dream destination for anyone who craves beautiful scenery, incredible food, some of the world's finest wines and once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Stretching from the Apennines to the Tyrrhenian Sea, Tuscany is the heart of Italy.

Travelers will find rolling green hills, sunflower fields, olive groves, medieval towns, historic cities, welcoming locals, delectable gastronomy, prestigious wineries and so much more when traversing this beautiful region.



By Elizabeth Jones

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Enchanting Towns

Tuscany is more than the major attractions of Florence, Pisa and Siena. Although those cities are highly notable and worth exploring, make time for some of the quaint towns boasting contagious Tuscan charm.

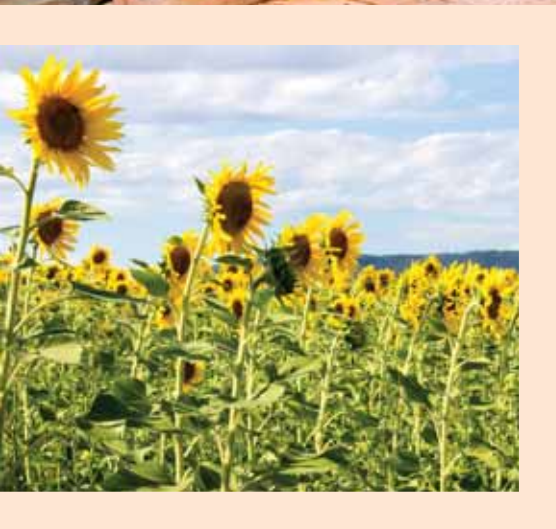


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◀ *Casale Marittimo*

Located on a hill only 12 kilometers from the sea, this medieval town is known for being one of the most beautiful in all of Italy. Dating back to the year 1,000, tourists will adore the old yet, unspoiled architecture found throughout Casale Marittimo. Must-see sights include ancient castle ruins, the 18th-century chapel of Santa Maria delle Grazie and the Church of Sant'Andrea which was built upon the previous church's ruins.



◀ *Lucca*

A tourist-favorite, Lucca is at the top of everyone's list when visiting Tuscany. The picturesque town known as "the city of a hundred churches" due to its vast amount of religious buildings is best explored by foot or bike to embrace its beauty. Walk the city walls, experience the buzzing atmosphere in the city center and visit Amphitheatre Square—a perfect architectural illustration of Roman times filled with cafes, restaurants and live music.

Castellina in Chianti

Underneath the city walls of this town resides a tunnel called Via della Volte that wraps

around the city from underground. In the tunnel, travelers will find a wide array of small family-owned shops showcasing local goods as well as fabulous restaurants. Other places to visit in Castellina in Chianti are the Palazzo Banciardi, Palazzo Squarcialupi and Church of San Salvatore.

Cortona

Cortona is a common bucket list village for many. This hilltop town provides astonishing views from its walls overlooking the Chiana Valley. Even on a clear, sunny day—which is very common in Italy—Lake Trasimeno can be seen from Cortona. Make a stop at the art-filled Diocesan Museum, picturesque Santa Margherita Sanctuary and historic Girifalco Fortress.

Vinci

Does Leonardo di Vinci ring any bells when seeing this town's name? It should since this is the birthplace of the great polymath. Just around almost every corner, this Tuscan town pays

tribute to di Vinci featuring his childhood home and church where his baptism took place, as well as a museum and library dedicated to him and his works.

Pienza

Perched upon a hill overlooking the Val d'Orcia Valley, Pienza is a must when in Tuscany. Known as the "ideal city of the Renaissance," this town is an architecture lover's dream filled with gorgeous 15th-century buildings including the striking cathedral, Piccolomini Palace, Town Hall, and the bustling central square of Piazza Pio II. Pienza is also known for cheese—specifically, the Pecorino of Pienza! This delicacy is made from sheep's milk and varies from subtle to strong in taste depending on how aged it is.

continued on page 24

Gastronomic Scene

One doesn't travel to Tuscany without indulging in some of the finest foods and wines of the world. While there is a plethora of gastronomic experiences to be had in Italy's most popular region, here are the absolute must-haves.

Food Of Tuscany



“Secondi” – Second or Main Course ▼

The main meals in Tuscany feature wild game to include hares, boars and various types of birds. Find them roasted, in stews or in pasta sauces. The main attraction of main courses throughout Tuscany is “bistecca alla fiorentina,” a juicy steak derived from Chianina cattle. The steak bursts with flavor with the seasoning of local spices.



“Contorni” – Side Dishes

Typically, contorni are side dishes to secondi, consisting of vegetable dishes. The options of contorni are endless as you'll find a variety of sides that consist of green beans, brussel sprouts, potatoes, mushrooms, zucchini and so much more.

◀ “Primi” – First Course

Must-have Tuscan soups include “ribollita,” a vegetable and bread soup and “pappa al pomodoro,” a tomato and bread soup with olive oil. For a pasta starter, opt for “pappardelle,” a wide noodle pasta typically served with a wild boar ragu or mushroom sauce. Bread will also accompany all meals and the type served will vary by region, however, it's common for it to be a traditional white, plain and unsalted loaf.

“Dolce” – Dessert

Tuscan meals leave little to no room for dessert with their hearty and filling dishes. However, calories don't count while in Italy so trying “cantucci” will be absolutely worth it. This dessert should be familiar since it is also known as “biscotti,” but there is no better place to indulge in these crunchy almond cookies than in Tuscany.

Wines Of Tuscany



Italy has two exclusive wine ratings—DOC and DOCG. Of the two, DOCG is the most prestigious. DOCG stands for “Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita,” meaning “controlled designation of origin guaranteed.” This is the highest rating that a wine can be awarded due to the many aspects that go into achieving this rating. From grape varieties, ripeness, area of production, winemaking procedures, barrel or bottle aging, color, alcohol levels and other important factors—achieving the DOCG rating is quite the obstacle. While in Tuscany, sample (or hoard bottles of) these popular DOCG wines produced throughout Italy’s finest region.

Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

This red wine is made from at least 70%, but mostly 100%, Sangiovese grapes grown near the town of Montepulciano. Featuring aromas of dark red berries and spice, this wine has a versatile taste making it an exceptional choice to pair with a variety of dishes.

Chianti and Chianti Classico

The difference between these two popular Tuscan wine variations is that Chianti Classico is considered to be higher end than that of Chianti due to being harvested by the finest wineries in the Chianti region. All Chianti wines are required to be made with at least 80% Sangiovese grapes. While most Chianti wines are 100% Sangiovese grapes, many wine producers like to blend with Cabernet, Merlot or Syrah.

Carmignano

Produced in the provinces of Firenze and Prato, this lesser-known wine is a dry red and is a blend of Sangiovese, Canaiolo Nero, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc grapes.

Brunello di Montalcino

Made in the Siena area around the town of Montalcino, this famous red wine is made from Sangiovese grapes features earthy notes of espresso.

Vernaccia di San Gimignano Annata

Tuscany is mainly known for its vast array of red wines, but this white wine is notable as it is one of Italy’s oldest wines. Made from Vernaccia grapes,

this dry white requires no oak fermentation or aging which leaves a crisp and hint of bitter taste.

Super Tuscan Wines

Wine producers throughout Tuscany began experimenting with a variety of foreign grapes like Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Super Tuscan Wines are expensive red wines that are the product of mixing non-indigenous grapes with Sangiovese grapes. The most popular of the Super Tuscan Wines include Tignanello, Sassicaia, Ornellaia, Redigaffi and Messorio.

continued on page 26

Unforgettable Experiences

Traversing Tuscany wouldn't be complete without immersing into various classes, tastings and tours. From Airbnb, TripAdvisor, tourism sites, villa management offices and more, it's simple to find the experiences that will be unforgettable during a trip to Tuscany.



TOURS

Historic spots - Take the stress out of planning and let a guide lead the way on seeing the region's best historic sites.

Hidden gems - Those who prefer to venture off-the-beaten-path can find tours offering to show lesser-known but equally beautiful sites throughout Tuscany.

Horseback riding - Whether you wish to ride horseback through a town or through open Tuscan fields, there's a tour out there for you.

Photo shoot - Don't settle for selfies, so hire a photographer to take you around and snap photos of you and your loved ones.

▶ **Vespa** - Opt for an exhilarating way to travel through the countryside and through the towns dotting the region.

Bike - A great way to see a city's charm without having to walk everywhere is by bike.

Hiking - A hiking tour offers the opportunity to embrace the beautiful nature Tuscany offers.

Cities - Without a doubt, each city or small town in Tuscany will offer a walking tour.



CLASSES

▶ **Cooking** - Learn to cook the region's cuisine so you can bring Tuscan food home with you.

Grape stomping and winemaking - Play a role in a traditional method of winemaking that dates back to the 3rd century C.E.

Photography - No need to be a professional photographer when one can show you the ropes on how to snap gorgeous photos.

Pottery-making - Embrace your inner artist and create a pottery masterpiece.

Painting - Learn to paint a picture of Tuscany's landscape that can decorate your home.

Leather crafting - What better way to take home the perfect souvenir of Italian leather than to create your own product (purses, handbags, totes, belts and more).



TASTINGS

Wine - Knowing all the various wines produced in Tuscany can be overwhelming. Find your favorite Tuscan wine through a wine tasting.

▶ **Gelato** - Don't be surprised if your favorite gelato flavor changes after you're introduced to countless flavors.

Pizza - Indulge in different kinds of pizza made with the freshest ingredients.

Pasta - Try all kinds of pasta dishes and learn how to distinguish them from one another.

Cheese - There are a variety of regional cheeses to discover and delight your taste buds with. ■

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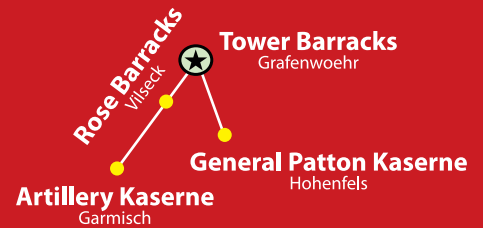


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FAVORITE PLACES TO SPEND

Thanksgiving in Europe

Back in the States, Thanksgiving for you was probably filled with watching the Macy's Day Thanksgiving Parade and shouting matches as the family cycled through countless football games. Plates overflowed with turkey, stuffing, sweet potatoes and pumpkin pie, which usually resulted in a self-inflicted food coma. If you were really hardcore, you would set the alarm for 3 a.m. to battle your way through Black Friday.

EIBSEE, GERMANY

By Elizabeth Jones

NOW THAT YOU'RE

stationed overseas, you've come to the realization that this Thanksgiving may not be as easily filled with all of your favorite holiday traditions. Which means this is the perfect chance to create new Thanksgiving traditions. Swap football games and parades for once-in-a-lifetime strolls through ancient cities, enchanting castles, wine festivals and mesmerizing fall foliage. The great thing about traveling Europe in late November is that it's during the low season. Which means most tourists have left and the locals are back at work. This time of year is perfect to have family and friends from the U.S. fly over to explore with you. Consider visiting these places during your Thanksgiving holiday:

SOUTHERN GERMANY

The southern part of Germany is one of the most charming places in the country. Since cold weather hasn't hit just yet, spend the holiday in the great outdoors hiking the Alps and embracing the colors of autumn throughout Alpine forests. Neuschwanstein castle is found in this part of Germany and is one of the most remarkable sights to see year-round. However, throughout this season the castle is truly stunning with a backdrop of trees shimmering pops of red, yellow and orange.

During this time of year, there are also endless wine festivals to choose from, where you can drink fine wines derived from Bavarian wineries. Thanksgiving coincides with the first weekend of Advent, which means Christmas markets spring to life over the holiday weekend. Christmas markets are a wonderful family event with something for everyone to enjoy during Thanksgiving. You can find all sorts of German delicacies from bratwursts, currywurst, "spätzle" (pasta made with fresh eggs) and so many delicious, warm desserts that are sure to satisfy your craving for comfort foods during this Thanksgiving holiday.

BRUGES, BELGIUM

Travel back in time by visiting the medieval city of Bruges. In November, the city's buildings will be covered in vines showcasing the mesmerizing autumn foliage. Take a boat ride down the canals found throughout the city and see the beautiful fall colors reflecting in the water. Try some famous Belgian chocolate either as a tasty candy bar or warm hot cocoa. Either way, you won't be disappointed.

continued on page 30



ALPINE FOREST, FÜSSEN, GERMANY



BRUGES, BELGIUM



PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC



DUBROVNIK, CROATIA



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LOFOTEN ISLANDS, NORWAY

Visiting Norway promises breathtaking scenery no matter the time of the year. The Lofoten Islands are harder to reach than most places in Norway but are definitely worth the journey. The area is filled with striking beauty thanks to jagged cliffs, deep blue waters, and quaint fishing villages. Visiting in the fall gives you a higher chance to witness one of nature's greatest creations, the Northern Lights.

Indulging in all of the traditional foods back home, the intensity of Black Friday shopping and the ongoing football games may be limited this time around, but it doesn't have to put a damper on your holiday. Thanksgiving is a time to be shared with loved ones reflecting on all that you're thankful for. No matter where you spend it, you won't be disappointed in the variety of fall destinations Europe has to offer. That alone is something to be very thankful for. ■

continued from page 29

PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague is a must-visit for everyone exploring Europe. However, the prime time to visit this extraordinary city is in the fall. The narrow streets are significantly less crowded of tourists making it easier to explore the city. The best views of Prague can be seen at the top of Castle Hill where you can look down upon the autumn glow painting the city with radiant auburn and bronze colors. A trip to Prague isn't complete without indulging in a warm "Trdelník", a cinnamon sugar, breaded pastry that is stuffed with your choice of Nutella, whipped cream, fruit or even ice cream.

DUBROVNIK, CROATIA

Spend your holiday in the Pearl of the Adriatic. During this time of year, you won't have to battle the crazy amount of tourists Dubrovnik hosts during the sizzling summer months which gives you the chance to have a more intimate experience with the city. It may be too cold to jump in the water of the many beaches Dubrovnik has to offer, but you can still soak up warm, sunny days as you walk through the famous city walls, visit all the "Game of Thrones" sites, indulge in fantastic seafood and learn about the city's history.

MALLORCA, SPAIN

The island of Mallorca is home to countless beaches, mountain ranges and picturesque Spanish towns. You may even get a hint of the Thanksgiving as you eat all the tapas this island has to offer. Tapas are an array of foods to be shared as an appetizer or meal amongst family and friends. Very few countries combine food and camaraderie like Spain does with their tapas.



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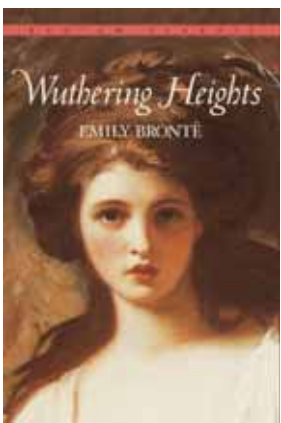
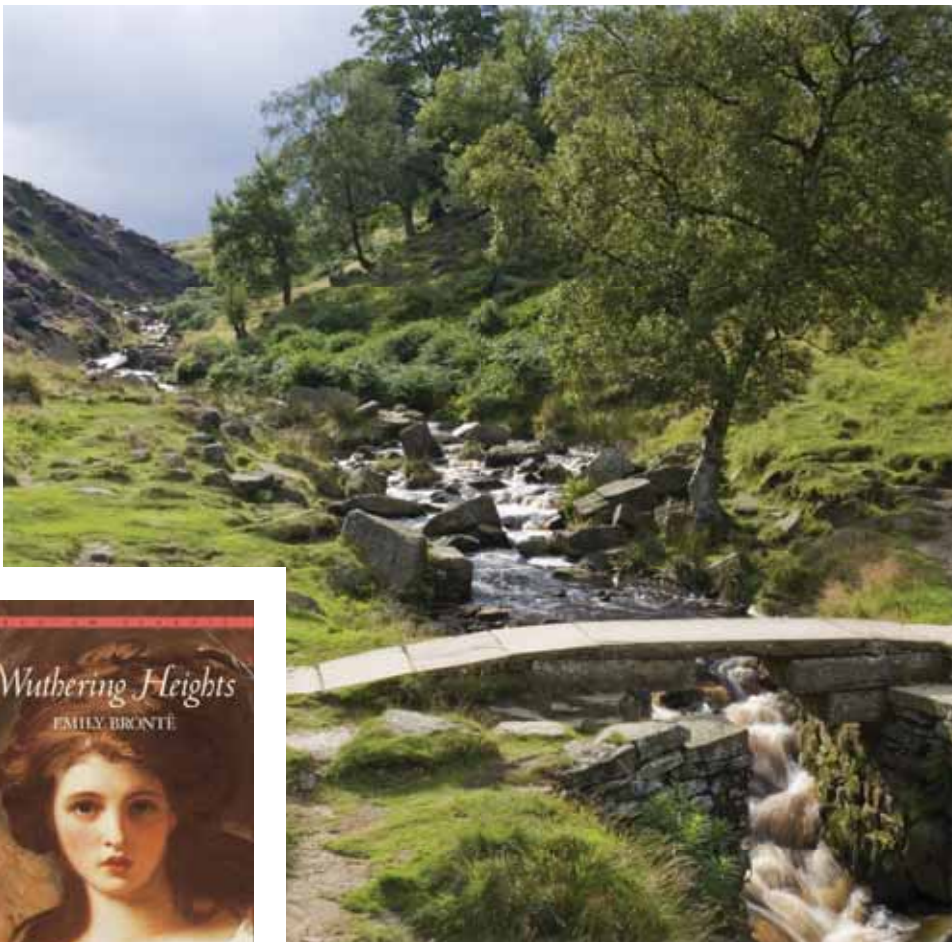


Literary Works

Inspired by
U.K. Locations

The United Kingdom is filled with postcard-picture worthy landscapes. From white, chalky cliffs in the south; green, undulating hills dotting the countryside to craggy peaks in the north, it's no wonder the U.K. has inspired generations of literary heroes. Here are seven locations around the U.K. which have inspired some of the world's greatest authors.

By Stacy Roman



Haworth and the Yorkshire Moorlands, England

“Wuthering Heights”
by Emily Brontë

The tragic tale of star-crossed lovers, death, betrayal and revenge was published in 1847 and was the only novel Emily Brontë wrote. Known for being progressive in tone, the sad love story of Heathcliff and Catherine is legendary. Set in the stunning, yet rather isolating area of the Yorkshire moorlands, “Wuthering Heights” is a literary classic.

The Brontë sisters (Charlotte, Emily and Anne) drew inspiration from the gently rolling hills around them. Brontë aficionados can tour the Brontë Parsonage Museum and see the beautiful panoramas. Visitors can also hike the Brontë trail from Haworth to the Brontë waterfall. The hike will take you past Top Withens, the ruined farmhouse said to be the inspiration for the Earnshaw estate in “Wuthering Heights.”
www.bronte.org.uk

Literary fans will enjoy a look into the Brontë sisters' lives.

continued on page 34

Ashdown Forest, England

“Winnie-the-Pooh”

by A.A. Milne

Published in 1926, Alan Alexander (A.A.) Milne told the story of a lovable bear and his group of friends — Winnie-the-Pooh, Piglet, Eeyore, Owl, Rabbit, Kanga, Roo and Tigger — who live in Hundred-Acre Wood. Full of adventures (and misadventures), “Winnie-the-Pooh” became a beloved classic around the world.

Located southeast of London and known for hunting deer, Milne lived at the edge of Ashdown Forest and would take walks with his son Christopher Robin (for whom the character is named) in the dense, green woods. He so loved the area he once wrote, “In that enchanted place on the top of the forest, a little boy and his bear will always be playing.” Visitors can stroll leisurely through the woodlands. Other hikes within Ashdown Forest lead past World War II-era runways and trenches, stone bridges and ancient Roman roads.

www.ashdownforest.org



Relive your childhood with this classic book as you enjoy the quiet in the forest.

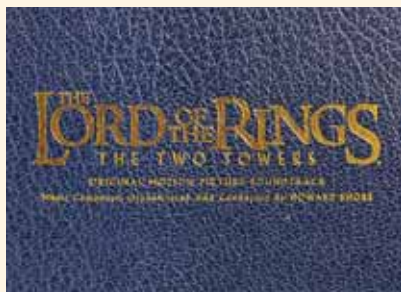
Birmingham and Cheddar Gorge Caverns, England

“The Lord of the Rings” by J.R.R. Tolkien

Originally published over the course of a year, “The Lord of the Rings” was split into three stories — “The Fellowship of the Ring,” “The Two Towers” and “The Return of the King.” This epic fantasy is set in Middle Earth and tells the story of the quest to destroy the “one ring to rule them all.”

Born in South Africa and relocated to Birmingham, England, John Ronald Reuel (J.R.R.) Tolkien drew inspiration for his tales from sites around Birmingham and further southwest in the Cheddar Gorge Caverns. As a boy, Tolkien would spend afternoons near Sarehole Mill – also known as

the Shire. Two towering landmarks around the village of Edgbaston, the Edgbaston Waterworks and Perrott’s Folly towers, became reimagined as the hulking towers of Orthanc and Barad-dûr in “The Two Towers.” On his honeymoon, Tolkien and his wife toured the Cheddar Gorge Caverns. Filled with crystalline stalactites and stalagmites, these caves became inspiration for the White Mountains behind Helm’s Deep. Visitors can hike through the caverns and along the cliff’s edge for a beautiful sunset. www.cheddargorge.co.uk



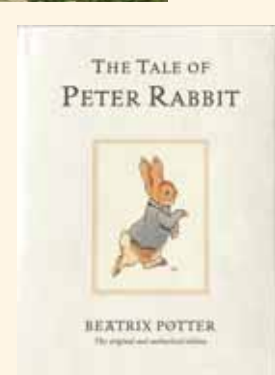
Channel your inner Frodo and be mesmerized by the White Mountains.





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This classic children's story should be read to your little ones.



Near Sawrey, Lake District, England

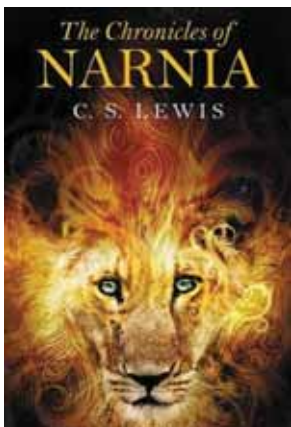
“The Tale of Peter Rabbit” by Beatrix Potter

As a teenager, Beatrix Potter and her family took a summer vacation to Lake Windermere in the picturesque Lake District. It was here where she fell in love with the serene surroundings. Set in the fertile gardens of her Hill Top Farm, “The Tale of Peter Rabbit” tells the story of a mischievous little rabbit traipsing through Mr. McGregor’s garden. Spotted by Mr. McGregor after binging on vegetables, Peter makes a daring escape through the garden only to get lost. When he finally figures out his way home, he gets spotted again and races to his family just in time.

Published in 1902, this iconic tale was literally drawn from Potter’s life. Using her pet rabbit Peter Piper as a character, she looked into her back garden and knew it would be the perfect setting for the story. “The Tale of Peter Rabbit” began as an illustrated letter to a friend’s son, and quickly grew in popularity. Visitors can tour Hill Top Farm, which is exactly as she left it. Owned by the National Trust, you’ll be whisked into the beloved world she knew so well. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hill-top



Mourne Mountain leads to beautiful views of the Irish hillside.



Mourne Mountains, Northern Ireland

“The Chronicles of Narnia” by C.S. Lewis

Initially released between 1950 and 1956, Clive Staples (C.S.) Lewis introduced the world to the magical realm of Narnia in a collection of seven stories. Set in 1940s England, Lucy, Edmund, Peter and Susan are sent to the English countryside to escape the horrors of war. There, they discover a portal into another world within a simple wardrobe.

Born in Belfast, Lewis spent many vacations and holidays in the Mourne Mountains. Isolated in the southern region of Northern Ireland, the forlorn, jagged peaks inspired Lewis’ Narnia. In the winter, with freshly fallen snow draping the mountains, Lewis often felt they were magical. Visitors to Kilbroney Park and Mourne Mountains can hike the Narnia trail, which leads through meadows, forests and beautiful hillsides. www.visitmournemountains.co.uk ■



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By Ruth Cuevas & Amanda Palumbo

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- **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.

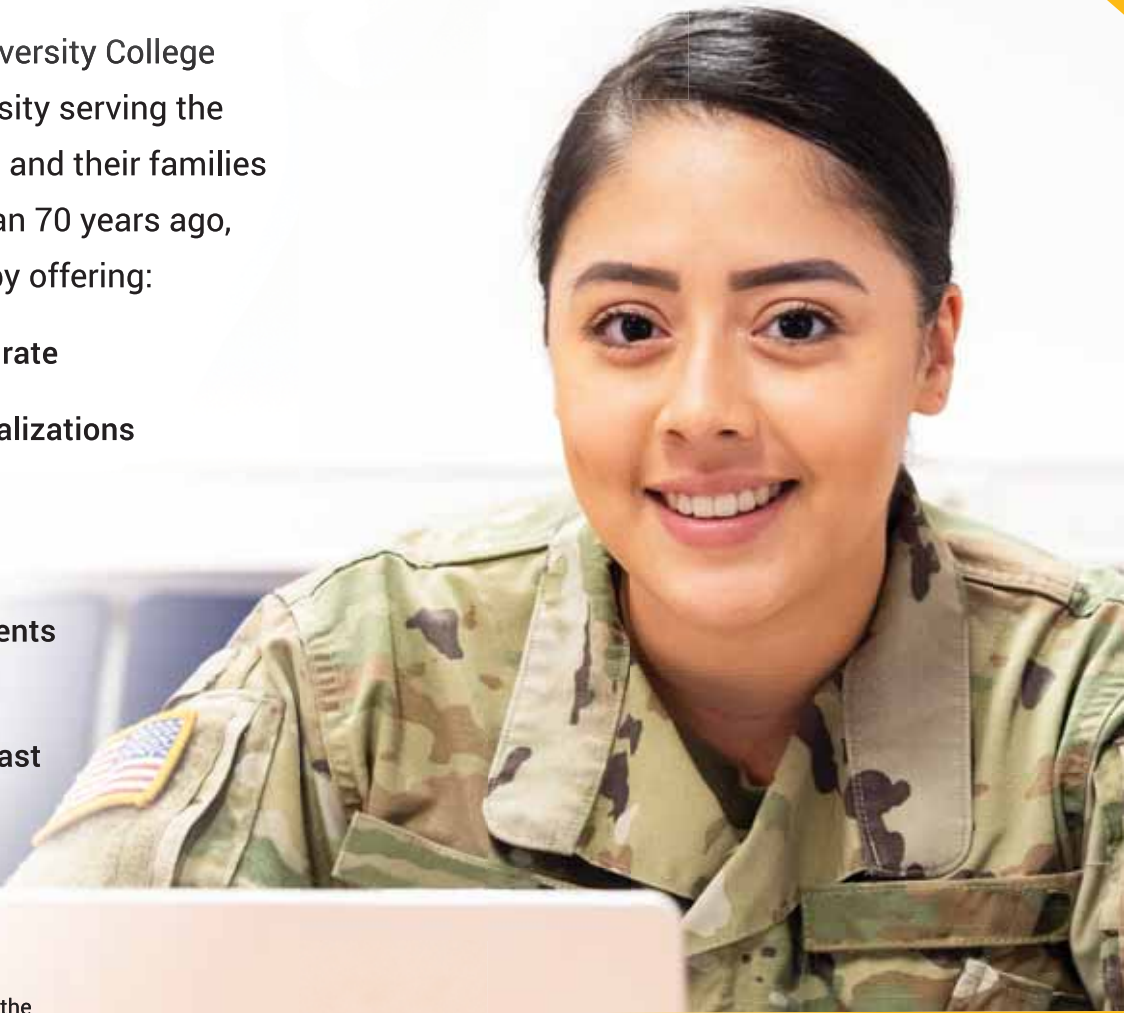
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Effective 1 July 2019, UMUC's name has officially changed to University of Maryland Global Campus.

Lessons Your Children Learn From Traveling

By Mary Del Rosario



To quote Gustave Flaubert, “travel makes one modest, you see what a tiny place you occupy in the world.” Even children can become humble during their travels. Below are eight lessons your kids will learn from traveling.

They will learn to be humble and appreciate what they have. If you're traveling to a third world country or even a country that is less fortunate than the one you live in, children will learn to appreciate their off-brand cell phone when they see other kids their age without any phones or devices.

They will become cultured. By the time your children are of age where they will be off in the “real world,” they will be able to tell their peers and colleagues about different countries and their customs. They may even adopt a custom that they resonate with.



They will see the world from different perspectives. Often times, we tend to only see our side when it comes to having discussions and debates. However, traveling will teach your kids that although it is ok to have your own opinion, they should see the other side of the argument. For example, I feel a bit inconvenienced when shops and restaurants are closed in certain European countries. On the other hand, I always think of the workers' perspectives and whether it be because of the hot weather or the fact that a better work-life balance is needed, I see the need for these closures.

Their confidence will grow. Have your kiddos order from the menu in Spanish if you find yourselves in Spain, especially if they've taken Spanish in high school. After all, immersing yourself is the best way to learn.

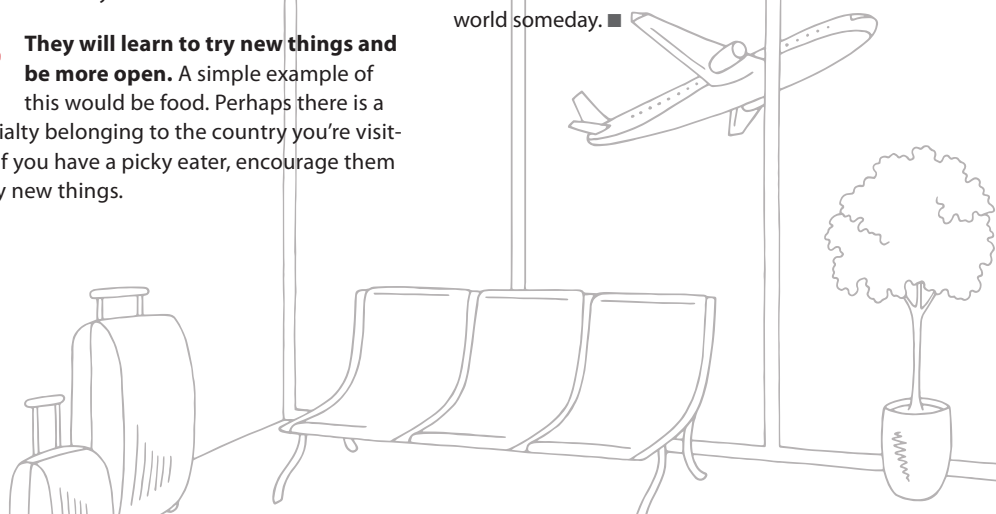
They will learn more about themselves. This is especially true if your children are older. They'll be able to tell you their preferences of what a perfect vacation to them would look like. Would they prefer a city trip, or would they rather lay on the beach? The only way to find out is by traveling and learning about what they like or don't like.

They will learn to try new things and be more open. A simple example of this would be food. Perhaps there is a specialty belonging to the country you're visiting. If you have a picky eater, encourage them to try new things.

They will learn to engage in a world other than their own. You know those people that only want to venture out to their local grocery store and don't even try to explore the newest one a couple of towns away? Urge your children to step out of their bubble! Seeing the world will break them free of wanting to stay in their comfort zone and get them to explore the world around them.

They will learn to unplug from technology and simply be kids. One of the saddest things to see is when a family is out to eat, and all you see is their heads bowed down because everyone is attached to their devices. Traveling will get your kids to put the phone down and live life. No one will be looking at their phone if they have gorgeous views of Santorini as the backdrop! Traveling will also be good conversation starters with your family, so everyone can be engaged in talking about their favorite part of holiday.

Whether you travel near or far, long or short, globe-trotting to a new destination and country will not only be beneficial to you, but also to your children! Who knows? They may be more confident and cultured leaders of the world someday. ■



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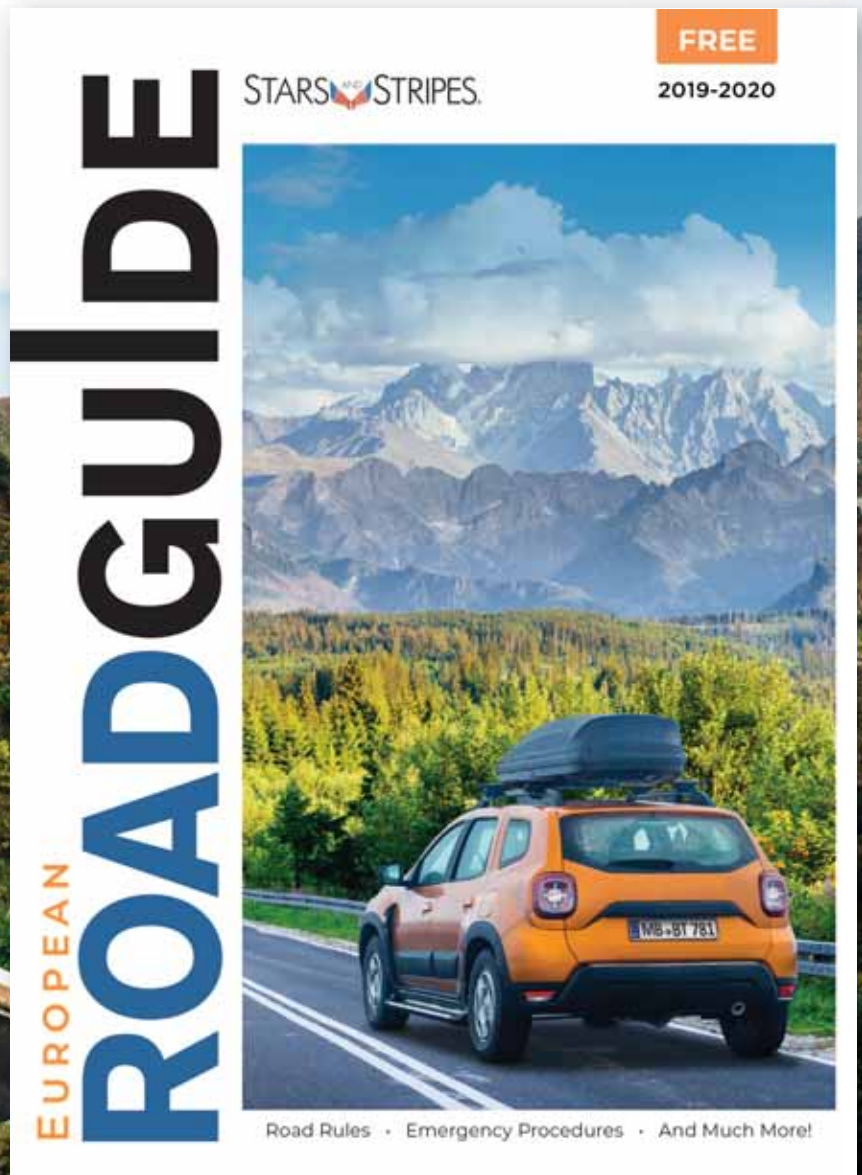
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Grab the free Stars and Stripes European Road Guide to learn Europe's road rules, road signs, child safety laws and helpful resources such as an installation GPS list, European map and more! The guide also features special sections for Italy, Germany and the U.K. In case you ever have an emergency, keep the guide in your car for easy access to the accident report sheet as well as emergency phrases and numbers.

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Europe's Best CHRISTMAS MARKETS

By Addison Takats

One of the best things about living in Europe is the wonderfully festive Christmas markets. One visit to a market will have you writing home wondering when the United States will “up” its Christmas market game! Before the holiday season is fully upon us, start planning your Christmas market trip now! Here are some of Stripes Europe’s favorites ...



Tallinn, Estonia

OPEN NOV. 17, 2019 TO JAN. 6, 2020

The Christmas Market in Tallinn is often considered a must-see holiday event in Europe. This breath-taking Christmas spectacular is the perfect mix of tradition, coziness, history and entertainment. Bundle up the family for fun which includes the real-life Santa, carousels, sweets and more!

Budapest, Hungary

OPEN NOV. 23, 2019 TO JAN. 6, 2020

Experience one of the world's most beautiful Christmas markets! Every year the extensive work put into the market's detail is evident. This massive open-air market offers mouth-watering Hungarian delights and handmade craftsmanship. You can even shop alongside Santa around the Basilica.

Strasbourg, France

OPEN NOV. 22, 2019 TO DEC. 30, 2019

One of the oldest Christmas markets in Europe, Strasbourg will not disappoint. Before you go, you'll want to brush up on your ice skating skills and wear your cozy socks, so you can glide around Strasbourg's ice rink in comfort! Marvel in this historic city's beauty and don't miss Strasbourg's markets this season!

Vienna, Austria

OPEN NOV. 16, 2019 TO DEC. 24, 2019

The Christmas market in Vienna is absolutely magical. As you stroll through the town square the air itself smells like the holidays. Every Christmas season Austria succeeds in seamlessly turning its capital city into a literal winter wonderland!



Erfurt, Germany

OPEN NOV. 26, 2019 TO DEC. 22, 2019

If you're looking for a Christmas market with more of a medieval feel, travel to Erfurt this holiday season. Held in the Cathedral Square, this market hosts some of the most beautiful and intricate Christmas decorations you've ever seen!

Seville, Spain

OPEN DEC. 2019 TO JAN. 6, 2020

Want a slightly warmer holiday? Travel to Seville Spain, one of Europe's sunny Christmas markets! Don't worry though, when the sun goes down, you'll still be left with that holiday feeling. The Seville Christmas Market is absolutely beautiful, and here you'll find uniquely delicious culinary treats!

Chester, United Kingdom

OPEN NOV. 16, 2019 TO DEC. 22, 2019

Described as having a more "nostalgic" feel, the Chester Christmas market offers a truly cozy time with over 70 wooden cottages to be visited around the gigantic city center Christmas tree! Grab a warmed or chilled cocktail as you wander aimlessly, taking in the holiday sights!



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No matter where you are in Europe, bundle up your loved ones and friends and get yourself to a Christmas market. ■

Part of the charm of Christmas markets is all the delicious market foods to eat and souvenirs to buy.



Snowflake Season

Want to travel to an off-the-beaten path destination, or want to see if iconic cities such as Paris lives up to the hype?

Simply head to **StripesEurope.com** and peruse through our awesome travel section! While there, be sure to check out our other noteworthy categories such as community news and our informative PCS section.

*So, what are you waiting for?
Come, see and conquer.... at least Europe!*

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Christmas in **BUDAPEST**

By Elizabeth Jones



Venture out and experience

the holiday season in Budapest, one of Europe's most amazing cities. From world renowned Christmas markets, loads of sights to see, relaxing thermal baths (yes, even in the winter!), unique ruin bars and much, much more — spending Christmas in Budapest will not disappoint!

Christmas Market in VOROSMARTY SQUARE ▾

The most popular market of Budapest can be found in Vorosmarty Square in the downtown area. Full of dazzling lights, colors, delightful smells and countless shopping opportunities, the market in Vorosmarty Square will indeed get you in the Christmas spirit. Come hungry to indulge in a variety of street food and mulled wine, but especially try “kurtoskalacs,” also known as chimney cakes. These heavenly, spiral-shaped pastries are dusted with cinnamon and sugar and served toasty, making it a warm treat your taste buds will love!

In the evenings, take advantage of the free concerts featuring various genres to include jazz, folk, indie, blues, soul and more! Another market highlight is the light show featured on Cafe Gerbeaud, where you can watch the lights flash bright colors against the cafe underneath the night sky — it’s definitely a show you don’t want to miss!



Christmas Fair in ST. STEPHEN'S SQUARE ▲

Find another magnificent market only 10 minutes away situated in St. Stephen's Square directly in front of St. Stephen's Basilica. Walk through the Advent gates to enter this market, also known as the Christmas or Advent Fair. Once inside, peruse along the wooden stalls that showcase the most unique and high quality traditional crafts of Hungary. Shop, eat, drink, and be merry throughout this Christmas Fair.

Feeling adventurous? Skate your way across the ice rink found in the heart of the market. The rink is free for children up to 14-years-old. Once the evening rolls around, at every hour on the hour between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m., watch a Christmas light show on the outdoor walls of St. Stephen's Basilica, displaying festive colors and patterns for all to marvel at.

Know before you go

- Bring cash in Hungarian Forint or euros.
- You can book a Christmas market tour and wine tasting for both markets.
- There are a handful of other very small Christmas markets sprinkled throughout the city.
- Walk to the markets or take public transport.
- Buy a Budapest Christmas market mug as the perfect souvenir for yourself or loved ones.
- Visit www.budapestchristmas.com for all of your Christmas-in-Budapest planning needs.

Things to do outside the market

- Go for a magical ride on the Budapest Christmas Tram (Number 2) which will be decorated with thousands of twinkling, white and blue lights for a festive experience unlike any other. Use the Budapest Card or public transport travel pass for the ride!
- Need another rink to ice skate on? Found in Budapest City Park is an ice rink known as Varosligeti Muejgpalya. Skate rentals are available, and visitors pay by the hour. Be sure to snap a lot of selfies, especially with the spectacular Vajdahunyad Castle in the background.
- Unwind in the thermal baths throughout the city but be sure to pay a visit to the most popular one, the Szechenyi Baths. Take a dip in two open air thermal pools or any of the 15 indoor pools if it gets too chilly outside. Whether you want to try any of the spa services or attend

the fun weekend pool parties, the Szechenyi Baths have something for everyone!

- Marvel at the grandeur of the Parliament building with its lush carpet, gold decor, high ceilings and stained glass windows. Since the building can not be toured without a guide, splurge a little on booking a private tour well before your trip.
- Peruse along the cobblestone streets passing Baroque houses, hole-in-the-wall cafes, historical monuments and more that can be found in Castle Hill sitting 170-meters above the Danube River. A top attraction includes Fisherman's Bastion, a 19th century fortification resembling a fairytale-like lookout tower. Enjoy panoramic views of the sparkling river below and the rest of historic Budapest from the Fisherman's Bastion's intricately-designed

turrets. Also situated on Castle Hill is Buda Castle, also known as the Royal Palace, a must-see attraction with a vast amount of history to share from over the centuries. The palace is open for daily tours.

- Budapest is also known for its spectacular ruin bars. From the outside, these bars are unrecognizable with no lines, booming music or crazy, bright lights. Once you step inside the bars, find mismatched, flea market furniture, graffiti from local artists and a very specific atmosphere catering to each of the bars' individual, quirky themes.
- Known for always being an enchanting city and one of the best destinations to spend Christmas in Europe, Budapest will surely surpass all your expectations this holiday season! ■

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Brandon K. (United States Air Force Veteran) - MBA - Schiller International University Heidelberg Campus - Graduate of 2018
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SEE OUR AD ON PAGE 41

Pumpkins and Christmas Trees at Europa-Park

In autumn, horror fans will get their money's worth as Germany's largest theme park becomes haunted once again. Clacking skeletons, sinister figures and demonic ghosts of the night roam among the impressive autumn scenery will fascinate visitors young and old. For those who look for something more peaceful, in the cold season thousands of lights and baubles and countless snow covered pine-trees give the 15 European themed areas of Europa-Park a festive shine. Even in the winter season, young and old can look forward to many rollercoasters and other attractions and to a trip through wonderful winter wonderland. Plus, from the end of November 2019, curious explorers will finally be able to explore 'Rulantica' - the new water world at Europa-Park.
www.europapark.de

SEE OUR AD ON PAGE 31

UMUC Understands Military Spouses and Families

Nationally recognized as military trusted, University of Maryland University College (UMUC) has steadfastly served the U.S. armed forces since 1947. No one can match our experience and dedication in educating our troops, and their spouses and families.

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Reasons to Choose UMUC

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Flexible learning formats: UMUC offers more than 90 career-relevant programs and specializations. Offered at times to fit your needs, courses are held during the day, evenings, and weekends, or as a hybrid which blends on-site and online learning. With multiple start dates each semester and no entrance exams, we make it easier to balance classes with work and family responsibilities.

From the university's beginning in Europe 70 years ago, the chain of our commitment to students overseas has not been broken. This year heralds a new era as we transition to our new name: University of Maryland Global Campus. To find out why we are the university made for you, contact your local UMUC Europe representative on base or online at www.europe.umuc.edu.

SEE OUR AD ON PAGE 37



Gorgeous Winter Train Rides

By Jessica Zen

Towering mountains covered in blankets of snow, pine trees stretching toward the sky with icy branches and quaint villages are just a few of the reasons you should book a ticket on a European train during the winter. Stay warm and cozy while you experience breathtaking landscapes and nature at its finest. Check “take an epic train ride” off your bucket list with any one of these options!



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Glacier Express

Chug across beautiful stone arch bridges while you stare in awe out panoramic windows starting in either St. Moritz, an elegant holiday resort, or in Zermatt, an alpine village. Enjoy stunning views of the Matterhorn and experience the Landwasser viaduct and the Rhine Gorge. Go through Oberalp Pass on a route that offers eight hours of sheer pleasure. Pass rivers, lakes, valleys and tunnels on the slowest express train in the world! Visit one of Switzerland's oldest settlements of Chur, home to twisting alleys and historic buildings.

Bergen Railway

Bergen Railway is northern Europe's highest railway, with 180 tunnels and 22 stops. This route takes seven hours and stops at Myrdal, where you can get on the Flåm Railway. The ride to Flåm takes you along the innermost part of the Aurlandsfjord, whose wild scenery was developed by melting glaciers. This unparalleled experience allows you to view frozen waterfalls, rivers and farms located on mountain slopes. The Flåm Railway is one of the steepest railways in the world with a 2,841 foot height difference in just 12 miles.

West Highland Line

Head to platform 9 ¾ to catch the Hogwarts Express and be transported to a magical land where nature is so remarkable, you'll think you've entered another world. In reality, you're just on the West Highland Line crossing the Glenfinnan Viaduct. With a staggering 21 arches, it is the longest railway bridge in Scotland at 1,246 feet long. Other highlights include the Erskine Bridge, Dumbarton Castle and Arrochar Alps. Travel through Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. Experience remote wilderness, mountains, deep forests and steep locks during this visual delight!

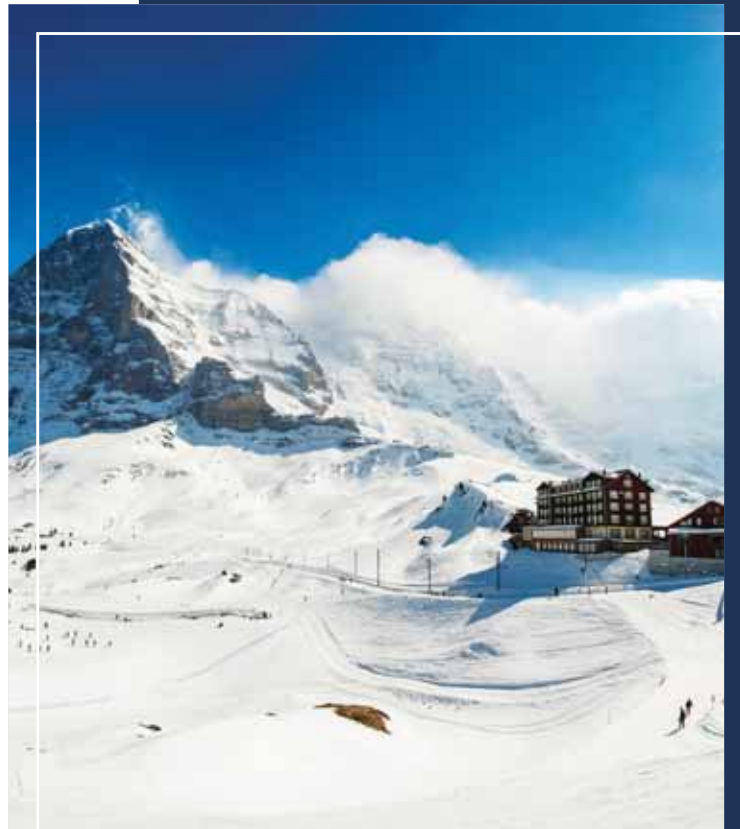
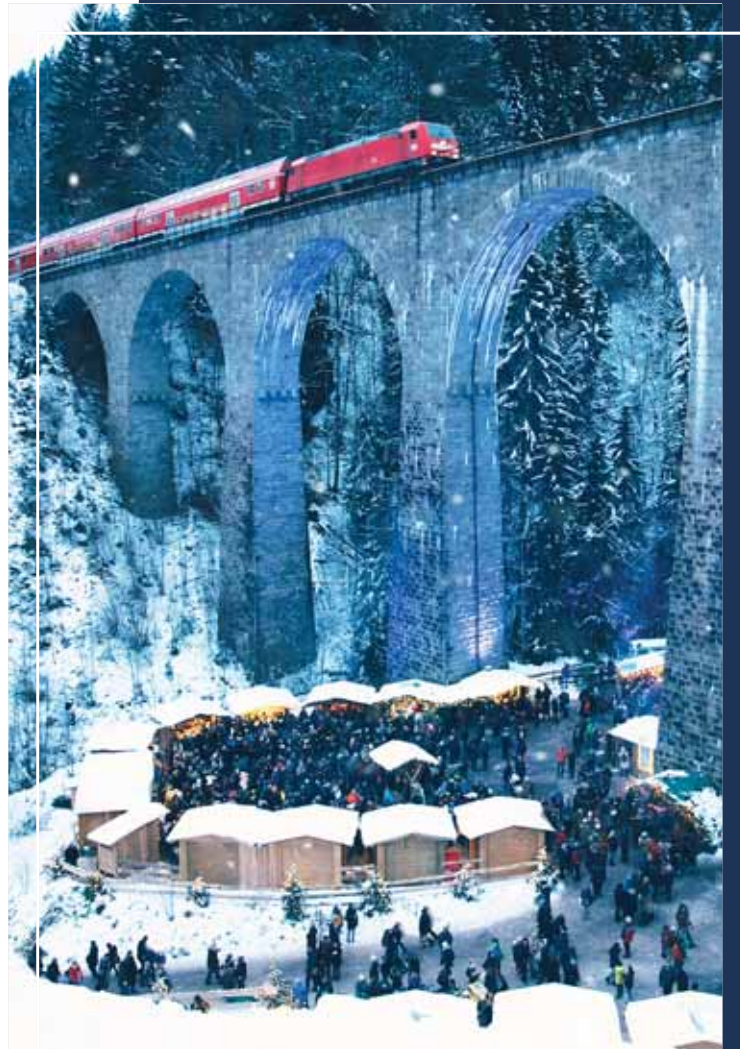
Munich to Innsbruck

via Garmisch-Partenkirchen

This three hour train ride takes you into the Bavarian Alps and through picture-perfect Garmisch-Partenkirchen. See Germany's tallest mountain, the Zugspitze, which dominates the landscape at 9,717 feet. You're also likely to see masses of skiers and countless wooden huts, idly resting in the valleys below mountains. This lovely town is dripping with traditional Bavarian ambiance with its cobblestoned streets and half-timbered buildings. Start or end your journey with a fantastic ascent or descent along the Inn Valley in Innsbruck.

Golden Eagle Danube Express

This train is a luxury hotel on wheels. Watch the world go by as you get to know fellow passengers. For 11 days experience a blend of culture in the following places: Venice, Italy; Trieste, Italy; Ljubljana, Slovenia; Zagreb, Croatia; Sarajevo, Bosnia; Mostar Herzegovina; Dubrovnik, Croatia; Belgrade, Serbia; Skopje, Macedonia; Thessaloniki, Greece; and Sofia and Plovdiv, Bulgaria. From canals to mosques to the glittering sea, there is so much to experience on this voyage of a lifetime!

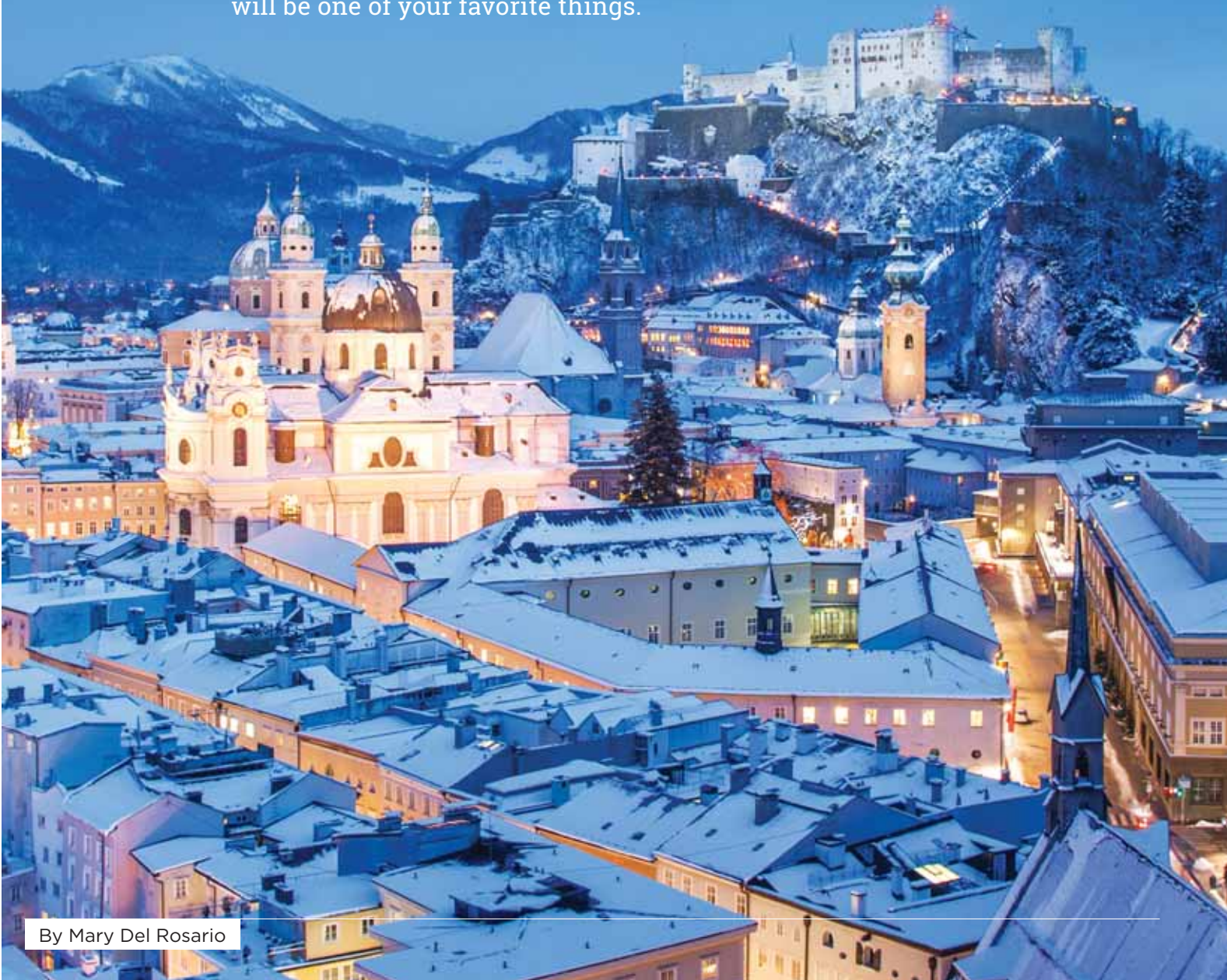


Explore Europe's picturesque winter scenery on this convenient way of transportation.

Austria

A Winter Wonderland

Austria is undeniably a beautiful country to visit no matter the time of year. However, once snow falls on the Alps, Christmas markets adorn enchanting cities and warm drinks enter your stomach, winter in Austria will be one of your favorite things.



By Mary Del Rosario



Whether you say ‘oohrah’ or ‘hoorah’, whether you prefer the land, sea or air, we salute you, and we’re proud to serve you.

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CITIES

Whimsical towns, friendly locals and delicious “sachertorte,” chocolate cake native to Austria are what make this country worth visiting, especially during this magical season.

Vienna

Rendering itself as a cultural mecca, snow-covered Vienna is a sight to behold with its twinkling Christmas lights and Christmas spirit. To make the experience complete, be sure to warm your cold hands with a cappuccino as Vienna’s coffee culture is not to be missed. Though you can’t go wrong with any of the coffee houses, Café Mozart is a fan-favorite place to refuel after a day exploring the city’s highlights to include Schönbrunn Palace, The Hofburg, St. Stephen’s Cathedral and the Belvedere Palace. For those who want to feel like royalty, don a white ball gown and a tux and head to the Viennese balls, which takes place from December until February. With over 450 balls to choose from, you’re sure to leave Vienna cultured and a Viennese Waltz expert.

Innsbruck

With the sound of skiers coming down the Alps and snow silently falling, Innsbruck truly comes alive during the winter. Being the host of three Winter Olympic events, Innsbruck is a snow-lover’s dream with its ideal mountains perfect for skiing, snowboarding and snowtubing. The jaw-dropping views of the Alps are one you won’t forget! Taking the cable car and a funicular from the city center to the Nordkette Seegube ski area is also a popular activity as panorama views of the city demand your attention. Be sure to head to Cloud 9, the Alp’s highest igloo bar, to indulge in drinks and stunning snapshots of the Alps. Before delving into all the snow activities, pay a visit to the Altstadt (old town center), the Imperial Palace, the Zaha Hadid Bergisel ski jump tower and of course, The Swarovski Crystal World.

Salzburg

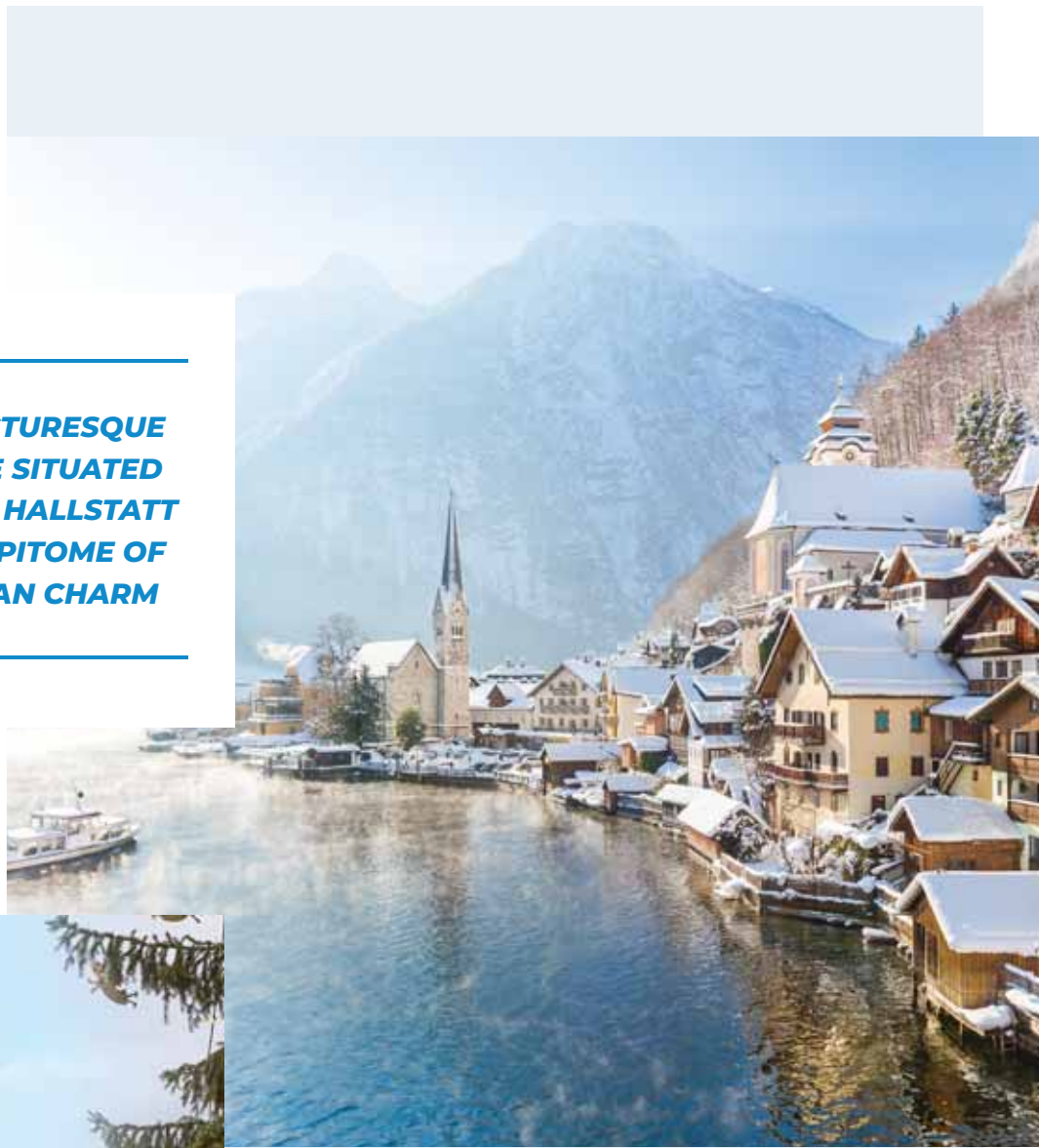
Peppered in Baroque architecture and being the birthplace of Mozart and the beloved Von Trapp family, Salzburg is a city you need to cross of your Austria bucket list. Much like Vienna, Salzburg has a vast cafe culture and offers an abundance of cafes to get cozy in, so be sure to warm yourself up after a day of seeing the Hohensalzburg Fortress and the Hellbrunn Palace and Trick Fountains. Popular winter activities include attending the Christmas markets, seeing a winter concert comprised of Mozart’s famous pieces held at the Mirabell Palace and visiting the origin of the popular Christmas carol, “Silent Night,” which is just outside of Salzburg.

Hallstatt

This picturesque village situated on Lake Hallstatt is the epitome of Austrian village charm. Named a UNESCO World Heritage site, one glance can lead your eyes to the beautiful Lake Hallstatt surrounded by quaint shops, or the Dachstein Mountains blanketed in untouched snow. Though taking a ferry ride across the lake and visiting the ice cave won’t be an option for the winter, activities such as walking the Skywalk Viewing Platform, roaming the Christmas markets, visiting the Charnel House – a small catacomb – are not to be missed. If you’re a fan of skiing and have a valid guest card, be sure to take advantage of the free ski bus that runs from Hallstatt Dachstein Salzkammergut to nearby ski centers such as Gosau and Obertraun.



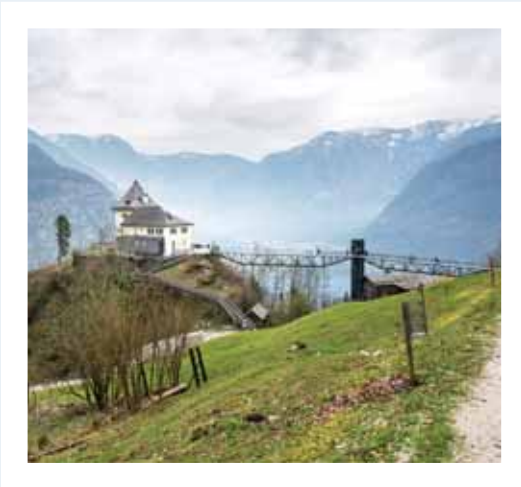
**THIS PICTURESQUE
VILLAGE SITUATED
ON LAKE HALLSTATT
IS THE EPITOME OF
AUSTRIAN CHARM**



continued on page 54

EXPERIENCES

Austria doesn't just provide striking mountain villages and upscale cafes but also lures visitors to indulge themselves in all the activities this beautiful country has to offer. Whether you're after an adrenaline rush or looking for a relaxing retreat, there are no shortages of experiences to be had in Austria.



Salt Mines

The salt mines in Austria are a sight to behold. Known as “white gold,” this mineral we use today to enhance the flavor in our food helped ensure towns such as Hallein, Hallstatt and Berchtesgaden to become powerful trading communities thousands of years ago. In the salt mines of Hallstatt, Berchtesgaden and Hallein, visitors will gain first-hand experience on how salt was mined by sliding down and discovering these mystical tunnels as well as salt lakes. It's also an informative place to learn about the life of salt miners. Be sure to dress warm as the temperatures in these mines are at a constant 54 degrees Fahrenheit.

Thermal Spas

Alongside its coffee culture, Austria's spa culture is unbeatable and should be an experience to partake in. Feel like a new, rejuvenated person in the spas of Therme Wien near Vienna, Alpentherme Gastein in Salzburg, Aqua Dome in Tyrol, Therme Laa in Laa an der Thaya and Heiltherme & Quellenhotel Bad Waltersdorf in Styria. These thermal spas are among the top five spas to immerse yourself in. From an array of saunas to the soothing thermal waters, Austria's health facilities make for a revitalizing getaway. Pair your winter-sports adventure with a day at these thermal spas for the ultimate mix of fun and relaxation!





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Skiing/Snowboarding

Native to Austria, its ski resorts are aptly known for its “Gemütlichkeit,” coziness. Other than the snow-covered Alps, sitting beside a fireplace with a hot drink in hand in a rustic skiing hut is the ultimate experience to be had when in this winter wonderland. If you’re a winter-sports enthusiast, bust out your ski and snowboard gear as Austria is heaven on earth for all things snow related. Endless amounts of perfect, powdery snow, high altitudes and many north-facing slopes make for ideal conditions for skiing, snowboarding and snowtubing. However, if you’re new to the winter-sports scene and don’t have the confidence to try by yourself, Austria provides the best ski schools with having at least one English-speaking skiing instructor. The Arlberg ski region, which includes St. Anton, St. Christoph, Lech and Zürs are the more popular slopes to hit. However, Kitzbühel, Mayrhofen, Ischgl, Galtür, St. Johann and Sölden are also resort areas that can’t be missed! To reward yourself after a long day, be sure to take part in Après-ski, which are after skiing social activities to include dancing, food and merriment.

Christmas Markets


Every year from the middle of November until a few days after Christmas, Austria’s Christmas spirit comes alive with lights twinkling above the beloved holiday stands, pine trees adorned with red and gold ornaments and glühwein warming your cold hands. The Christmas markets are the tell-tale sign that the holiday season is here. Though you can’t go wrong when it comes to Christmas markets, the ones to put on your radar include The Viennese Dream Christmas Market and Christmas Village Belvedere Palace in Vienna, the Old Town Christmas Market and the Family Christmas Market at Marktplatz in Innsbruck, Salzburg’s Christmas Market and the Christmas Market on the Main Square in Linz. From lebkuchen to handmade crafts, Austria’s Christmas markets have got it all to put you in the holly-jolly mood. ■



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Iceland

Mother Nature's Favorite Place

Iceland has an impressive reputation for its abundant natural wonders. Where else can you visit a country that has active volcanos, glaciers, hot springs, northern lights and to top it all off, is being pulled apart constantly by the Earth's tectonic plates? With an extensive list of things to do, it's hard to know where to start, so here's a list of the best places to visit including some hidden gems!

By Emily Alvarenga



BRUARFOSS WATERFALL



THERMAL BLUE LAGOON



AURORA BOREALIS

THINGS TO DO

Soak in one of the many geothermal pools.

Bathing in thermal spas is a deep-rooted Icelandic tradition and you can find outdoor heated pools just about anywhere. Make your way to the Blue Lagoon, Iceland's most iconic spa, for an otherworldly experience. This huge, geothermal spa has naturally heated, milky-blue water filled with minerals that are great for your skin. Add the jet-black volcanic boulders that surround the lagoon, thick blanket of steam and people covered in white mud, you'll feel like you're on the set of a sci-fi film. Then, take a hike to Reykjadalur valley because nothing comes close to finding a natural hot spring in the middle of the mountains. The 45-minute hike leads you past a waterfall cascading down into the valley, boiling mud pools, steaming vents and finally to a hot river where you can bathe and relax in the warm waters.

Search for the northern lights.

Seeing the northern lights is not as easy as it may seem as they are actually extremely elusive and unpredictable. Although there's no guarantee, if you're visiting Iceland between September and April, you have pretty good odds of spotting the Aurora Borealis illuminating the night sky. The lights are best seen in a remote place away from the city lights, so taking a trip outside of Reykjavik can also increase your chances of catching them.

“Iceland is truly one-of-a-kind and filled with grand adventures, so start packing and prepare for the trip of a lifetime!”

Visit the black sand beaches.

Though Iceland certainly isn't tropical, the dramatic shorelines shaped by volcanoes and glaciers are still breathtaking. Reynisfjara beach on the south coast is widely considered to be the most beautiful black sand beach in the world. With its enormous basalt columns, roaring Atlantic waves, towering sea stacks and unique basalt caves, it's not hard to see why.

See a geyser erupt.

Visiting the Haukadalur Valley means seeing more geothermal activity in action. Every few minutes you can see the Strokkur geyser shoot boiling water 100 feet into the air. Also astonishing to see is Geysir, the hot blow-hole which lent its name to all other geysers around the world and gave rise to the word "geyser." It has been dormant for years but was known to reach heights of over 500 feet in the 19th century.

Discover waterfalls big and small.

With frequent rain and snow, combined with the multitude of glaciers, Iceland is a country with waterfalls around every corner. One of Iceland's most impressive waterfalls is Gullfoss, which plunges down through a tight canyon, turns almost 90 degrees, then drops again. Its power offers a remarkable insight into the forces of nature at work. Although small, Bruarfoss is another unique waterfall that cannot be missed. Its bright blue water runs through the center of a volcanic rock formation creating sky blue rapids that are one of a kind.

Walk between continents.

The Eurasian and North American tectonic plates are continuously drifting apart. While this typically happens deep in the ocean, in Iceland, it's literally causing the island to be ripped apart, exposing the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. It's best visible at Thingvellir National Park, where you can walk in the valley between the plates and clearly see the cliffs that are the edges of North America and Eurasia. If you're up for braving the glacial water, you can even snorkel in the rift. Silfra is the only place in the world where you can snorkel directly in a crack between two tectonic plates and see down into the center of the earth.

Tour the Golden Circle.

A quintessential day trip from Reykjavik, taking this 200-mile loop is an easy way to see some of Iceland's best-known features including some that have been featured above. This route takes you through amazing terrain with stops at Thingvellir National Park, Geysir and Gullfoss.

Spend some time in Reykjavik.

This colorful, capital city has a lot to offer despite its small size. There are a multitude of delicious restaurants, a stroll-worthy harbor, a legendary nightlife scene and a picturesque old town to explore. Be sure to visit Hallgrímskirkja, a church whose concrete columns resemble volcanic formations, and go up the tower for fantastic views of the cityscape.



TIPS AND TRICKS

Decide when to visit.

The time of year you choose to visit has a great impact on what you will be able to do and see during your trip. The summer months are the main tourist season when the weather is the mildest, everything is accessible and you can take advantage of the longer daylight hours, but they will also be the most expensive. Visiting in the winter can save you a fortune. Although you'll trade the warm days for snow and less sunlight, you'll get stunning sunsets, less crowds and a chance to visit some ice caves and see the northern lights in return. Some attractions do become inaccessible during the winter, but many of Iceland's most famous spots are still easy to visit.

Sacrifice your healthy eating habits.

Eating out in Iceland can be very expensive, so you'll have to opt for fast food if you want to stay within your budget. Trading a sit-down lunch for a popular Icelandic hot dog can save you \$20 or more. If you're itching to try the local cuisine, do so at lunchtime as dinner prices are often much higher. If you have access to a kitchen, grocery shopping can allow you to still be healthy while staying cost efficient.

Rent a car.

There's no better way to see Iceland than by car. It will not only be cheaper if you rent a car, but you will also acquire both the freedom to control your own pace and the power to go where you choose.

Balance is key.

The last thing you want to do is visit Iceland and miss out on everything because you were trying to save money. The key is to balance a few sacrifices while still leaving yourself some room to splurge.

ESCAPING THE COLD: 5 Sunny Spots to Visit this Winter

By Mary Del Rosario

As fun as skiing in the Alps may be, winters in Northern Europe can be bleak and dreary. Cold, dark days and frosted windshields can make even the most winter-loving person turn into the Grinch over time. Unless you're in Southern Europe, feeling the warmth of the sun seems like more of a distant memory.

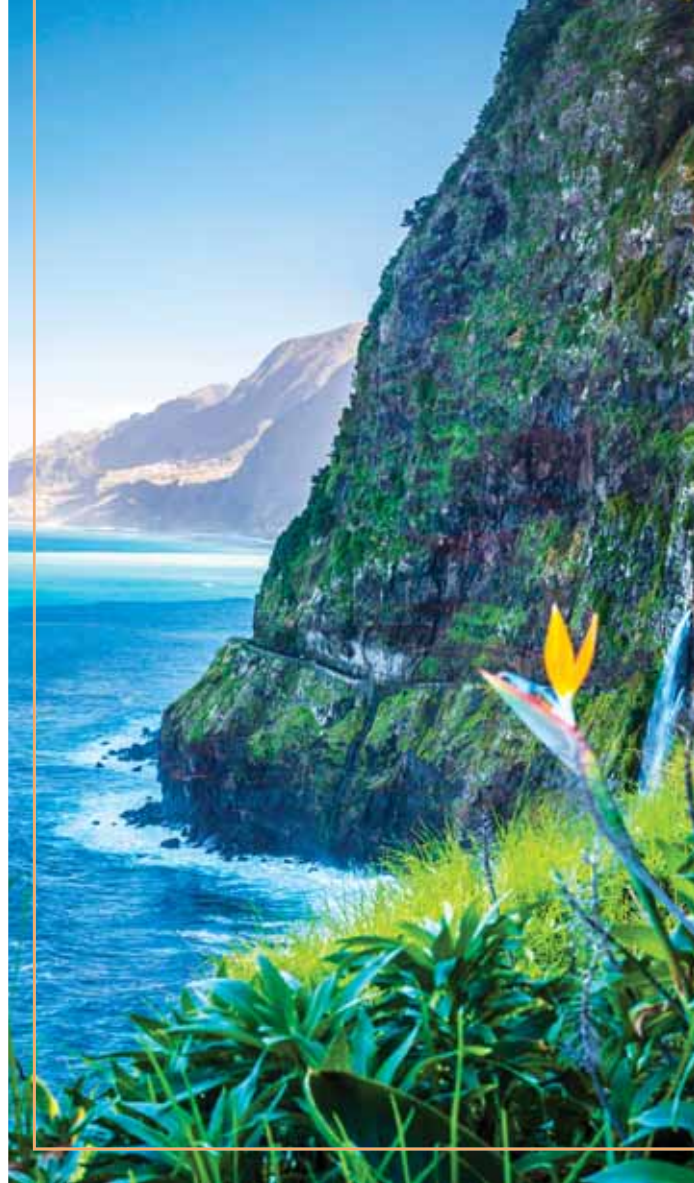
Instead of plopping yourself on the couch curled up in a blanket, try escaping to these sunny European destinations this winter.

1 SICILY, ITALY ▾

Boasting as the largest Mediterranean island, Sicily is an ideal place to visit during the cold winter months. With bright blue skies and lush trees, winter in Sicily is not only an escape from the freezing temperatures, but it also means having the island mostly to yourself. The average temperature is between 41 and 53 degrees Fahrenheit, so although you'll still need a light jacket, your body won't feel like an icicle!

For those who can't get away from the pow pow, try skiing in Mount Etna, an active stratovolcano on the east coast of Sicily. Though the slopes may not be as exciting as skiing in northern Italy, to say you skied on a volcano would be a great story to tell!

For the travelers who want to explore the sunny streets of this beautiful island, head to Palermo where you can shop till you drop. Palermo has many outdoor markets filled with fresh fruit. Be sure to stop by and sip on sweet organic orange juice, as they are surprisingly in season during the winter.



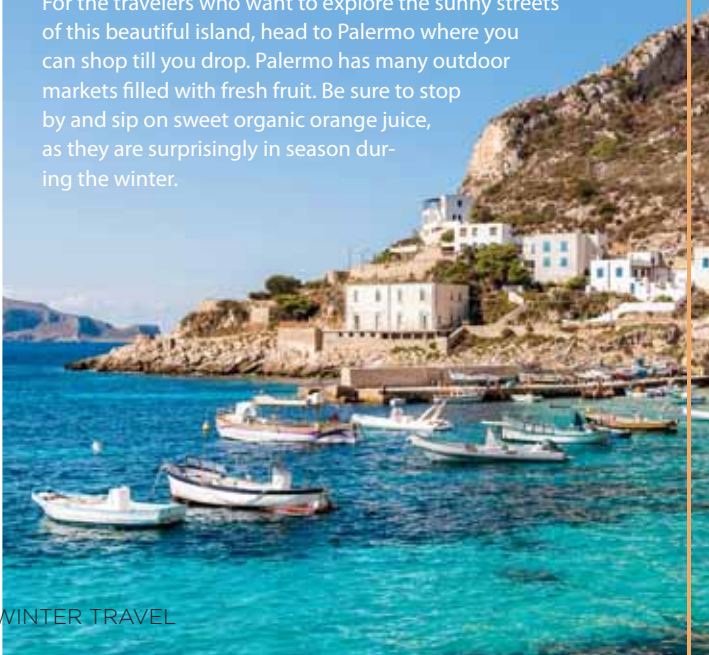
2 MADEIRA, PORTUGAL ▲

With an average winter temperature of 61 degrees Fahrenheit, who wouldn't want to escape to this Portuguese island? Madeira, an island 1,000 miles from mainland Portugal, is considered to be one of Europe's most exotic islands. Blanketed in lush green landscapes and a tropical garden, it's easy to see why visitors want to migrate here for the winter.

The more active tourist can enjoy outdoor activities such as mountain running, golf and hiking along the levadas which are aqueducts. Some of the more popular hikes can be found at Levada do Caldeirao Verde, Vereda do Arieiro (the hardest hike), Levada das 25 Fontes and Vereda da Ponta de Sao Lourenço.

If sports aren't for you, sun bathe the day away at one of the many beaches such as Porto Santo, Praia de Calheta and Reis Magos Beach. Porto Santo has soft golden sand, perfect for walking along the shores while Reis Magos Beach, though pebbly, is ideal for snorkeling due to its crystal-clear water.

Be sure to bring rain boots and a rain jacket because while balmy temperatures are perfect, rain is in the forecast for most of January. After all, the landscape isn't green without a reason!





3 Málaga, Spain ◀

Situated in the Andalusia region in Spain is Málaga, a port city that serves as a popular winter destination. With resort towns along the coast of Costa del Sol (Sunny Coast), forgetting about the cold is an easy task. Many historic sites, restaurants and museums will be sure to keep you busy. A personal favorite area of mine is Calle Larios, a marble-lined pedestrian street filled with shops, both international and specific to Málaga.

To catch a spectacular view that can only be found in an area where sun is abundant, head to Puerto de Málaga where you can watch a beautiful sunset and stroll down the harbor. This port also has many shops and restaurants which make for a relaxing evening.

4 Fuerteventura, Spain ▼

Sun, sand, surf, tapas and sangria. What could be any better? At Fuerteventura, the jewel of the Canary Islands' crown, winter is enjoyable and pleasant! The sun is out almost 300 days a year with the average temperature being 64 degrees Fahrenheit during this season.

If the beach is what you're looking for, walk along the beach at Corralejo, one of the most popular beach resorts in the northern part of Fuerteventura. Corralejo is a bustling, small town that provides a mix of modern and traditional city vibes. Meander through the streets and find street performers, fisherman hoisting their fish for display and eating, old shops and the locals chatting alongside one another while sipping on sangria.

As you go further south on the island, you will find Sotavento Beach, which is home to the kitesurfing and windsurfing championships held every year. Playa de Sotavento is divided into two sections: Playa Risco del Paso and Playa Barca. Note that because this beach is so windy, you may experience a sandstorm!



5 Malta ▶

Known as the archipelago with the gorgeous turquoise sea, Malta is just a short trip from a warm getaway. Since the average winter temperature is a comfortable 55 degrees Fahrenheit, enjoy the quaint cities and laid-back atmosphere this island offers.

Marsaxlokk, a picturesque fishing village is a must-see! This village hosts a popular open-air market daily and offers a fine selection of fresh fish from the island. There are also swimming areas for those who love the water.

While rain may be a familiar sight in most of Europe during the winter, in Malta it hardly rains, making it pleasant to stroll through Valletta, Malta's capital. It's also known as a European art and world heritage city.

With this list of warm getaways, fixing your winter blues will be easy! Grab your sunglasses, a beach towel and sunscreen to forget about the snowy, grey days for just a while! ■



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10

GREAT BREWERIES

IN EUROPE

By Karen Bradbury and Shereece Spain

You may know and love the taste of your favorite back-home brews, but why not use your time on the continent getting to know the ales of the Alsations or the whites of the Walloons?

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To help you add some hops to your pit stops, consider this handy beer bucket list to guide you to some of our favorite cities and towns.



STIEGL

SALZBURG,
AUSTRIA

Within the walls of an old malt house, an exhibition traces the history of beer brewing as practiced in these surroundings since the 15th century. Following a group or private tour of the premises, visitors sample three different beers and receive a gift from the brewery shop.

Sample: The Stiegl-Paracelsus Bio-Zwickl, an amber-shaded, naturally cloudy organic beer made of an ancient grain cultivated and malted at the Stiegel's own farm.

Learn More:
brauwelt.at/en/visitor-information/info



CHIMAY

BOURLEURS, BELGIUM

A list of Europe's breweries wouldn't be complete without a mention of the Trappist monasteries and their highly-sought products; unfortunately, few such breweries open their doors to the public. "The Espace Chimay" is a visitor center offering a self-guided tour revealing the secrets of these coveted brews and a second monastery product which pairs surprisingly well with beer: cheese. The Poteaupré Inn, an affiliated pub, restaurant and hotel, is the place to sample Scourmont Abbey's cheese, beer and other culinary delights.

Sample: Try "Chimay Gold," a Belgian pale ale available exclusively at the Poteaupré Inn.

Learn More:
chimay.com/en/lespace-chimay/



STELLA ARTOIS

LEUVEN, BELGIUM

Stella Artois, the best-known Belgian brand on the global market, is brewed in a state-of-the-art facility offering English language tours to private visitors on weekends. The two-hour tour entails extensive walking, but participants are richly awarded at the end with tastings of fresh, ice-cold pours and a generous gift bag with samples to take home. Pre-booking your tour is essential and can be done online through the city's tourist office.

Sample: If your tastes run to fruity Lambic beers, look for the range of La Becasse cherry and raspberry variations.

Learn More:
visitleuven.be/en/brewery-stella-artois



FULLER'S

LONDON, ENGLAND

Fuller's are the makers of London Pride ale and other tasty brews. A tour through the Griffin Brewery promises history and heritage, an insight into the making of ales, and superb sampling. The guided tour lasts about 1 and a half hours and concludes with a tutored tasting of some of the brand's finest ales.

Sample: The Fuller's 1845 is an unfiltered strong ale with plenty of malt, nutty and caramel notes.

Learn More:
fullersbrewery.co.uk/brewery-tours/



BITBURGER

BITBURG, GERMANY

The Bitburger Brewery, founded in 1817, is one of Germany's biggest producers of pilsners. See how the most frequently tapped beer in all Germany is made on the guided hour-long "Bitburg World of Beer Brands" tour covering the brewing process from ingredient selection to bottling. The cost of admission includes two beverages of choice and beer's best friend, a pretzel.

Sample: The company's most recent creation, a Premium Kellerbier, is light-bodied, malty and slightly herbal in style. Can a commercial brewery get this style right? You be the judge.

Learn More:
trier-info.de/english/bitburg-world-of-beer-brands-info



PAULANER

MUNICH, GERMANY

This brewery established by monks in 1634, is one of the six breweries to provide beer for the Oktoberfest. In addition to its classics such as Weißbier and Hell, the forward-looking company is willing to experiment with new tastes, too. A tour through the brewery lasts 35 minutes and includes both a welcome drink and a seasonal beer paired with a savory snack.

Sample: A Paulaner Ur Dunkel will take you back to the time when dark beers were the preferred drink of Bavarians. Mahogany brown in color, it serves up notes of spice and a hint of dark chocolate.

Learn More:

paulaner-brauhaus.de/en/brewing-tours/



GUINNESS

DUBLIN, IRELAND

Dublin's number one attraction isn't a brewery tour in the traditional sense but rather an exploration of the brand. The journey begins by stepping into the world's largest pint glass and exploring seven floors with interactive experiences fusing Guinness' brewing heritage with the history of Ireland itself. At the end of the tour, visitors are treated to a pint of perfection in the rooftop Gravity Bar.

Sample: Behind St. James' gate lurks the tap room, the place to sample exclusive beers crafted by experimental brewers. Who'd ever believe that a Nitroatmeal Stout or a Hibiscus Helles could be a product of Guinness?

Learn More:

guinness-storehouse.com/en



HEINEKEN

AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

This wildly popular tourist stop is much more than a tour, reflected in its name "The Heineken Experience." Learn how the brew born in 1864 has conquered the world by means of a one-and-a-half-hour self-guided tour through the premises of a former brewery offering plenty of interactive and sometimes quirky exhibits. The tour concludes with the chance to indulge in two fresh pours on the famous Dutch brand or to try your own hand at pulling the perfect pint.

Sample: If you're traveling to Amsterdam around the holiday season, be on the lookout for the highly rated Affligem Noël Christmas beer, full of dark fruity sweetness and spice.

Learn More: heineken.com/heineken-experience



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ESTRELLA DAMM

EL PRAT DE LLOBREGAT, SPAIN

Learn all about the light and easy drinking Mediterranean beer that's still brewed to the original 1876 recipe of August K. Damm by means of a brewery tour concluding with a tasting of Estrella and other beers produced by one of Spain's biggest brands.

Sample: An Inedit, the love child of a collaboration between brew masters, a top chef and sommeliers; this Belgian white ale has all the typical notes of coriander, licorice and orange peel.

Learn More:

visitas.estrelladamm.com/en/#Home



ŻYWIEC

ŻYWIEC, POLAND

A side trip southwest of beautiful Krakow brings you to a museum set in the former aging cellars of a brewery. Following a guided tour through the 160-year history of the facility and the beers produced there then and now, visitors can sample the beer and buy souvenirs. A tour through the brewery itself is available as an add-on. Reservations are essential.

Sample: For something a little different, ask for a Żywiec Białe, the brewery's take on a Belgian white ale.

Learn More:

muzeumbrowaru.pl/en

Be on the lookout for this beer lover's map coming soon!



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bucket list

FOODIE EDITION

By Ethan Merrifield

THE DIVERSE CULTURES OF EUROPE HAVE AN INCREDIBLY VAST RANGE OF FOODS TO ENJOY.

European cuisine is known for its variety and quality all over the world. Some dishes may be grand and Instagram worthy, while others are simple and delicious. Here are some suggestions of both for your European foods bucket list!

FULL ENGLISH BREAKFAST London, England

There's no way you'll still be hungry after this comforting serving of eggs, bacon, sausage, toast, beans, tomatoes and mushrooms.



MARGHERITA PIZZA Naples, Italy

This Neapolitan classic will excite your taste buds with quality ingredients and simple bliss.

COQ AU VIN Paris, France

Translated as "Rooster in Wine", this juicy meat dish is usually served with potatoes and vegetables simmered in wine.



GOULASH Budapest, Hungary

A hearty beef stew is the national dish of Hungary and it has variations to fit any taste.

continued on page 68

CURRYWURST

Berlin, Germany

A popular staple of the city of Berlin, usually served with french fries.



SMØRREBRØD

Copenhagen, Denmark

An open-faced sandwich of rye bread, butter, and a variety of toppings.



CRNI RIŽOT

Dubrovnik, Croatia

Known as black risotto. This risotto is made with squid or cuttlefish ink and will give you a dark smile, but the taste is worth the mouthwash later!

GYROS

Athens, Greece

Fill them up with "tzatziki" yogurt and feta cheese and you will have a fresh taste of Aegean cuisine.



PAELLA

Valencia, Spain

A classic Spanish rice dish seasoned with saffron and rosemary, with flavors abound to suit anyone's taste.



SARMALE

Bucharest, Romania

These cabbage rolls stuffed with minced meat are the national dish of Romania and known for being incredibly good.







There are many more cuisines to try and your list may be different, but hopefully this has made you drool for these tasty treats. Go and discover cuisine to your heart's (and tongue's) desire! ■

Germany DIRECTORY

Restaurants

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Hand-Painted Treasures Abound in
Bolesławiec

Gravy boats, butter dishes, bowls, vases and more in creative, colorful patterns await your discovery at the multitude of Polish pottery shops in Bolesławiec. This small Polish town is home to over 20 pottery manufacturers who share their beautifully handmade items with customers who flock to their doorsteps. The pottery, a symbol of Poland, is perfect for gifts, displaying as a work of art or using as your everyday dishware. Pick a date and get ready to shop until you drop!

By Jessica Zen

Pottery

The pristine pottery, lovingly decorated in gorgeous hues from all colors of the rainbow, isn't easy to make. In fact, the process is pretty labor intensive. The products have to be hand molded from local clay and then fired in a kiln. It is then cleaned, hand-painted and decorated by talented artists. The piece is finally glazed and fired in a kiln, which takes several hours. The final products are made to withstand the oven, microwave, freezer and dishwasher. Each piece of pottery comes with a quality rating (Gat), varying from one to five. One is the highest quality and means the piece has no imperfections. Two means the piece may have a slight imperfection in the painting, but is still safe for the oven, etc. Three is an indication that there is a crack in the glaze. Four is a chip in the pottery itself. Five means the piece, while potentially still quite beautiful, should be used strictly as decorative.

Though there's an abundance of stores to choose from, a good place to start is Andy. It's a bit out of the way from the other stores, so it's a good place to start before you head to a more central location. Get ready to do some digging, as this location groups its items by style (cups together, plates together, etc.) and not by pattern. You don't have to work particularly hard to find what you are looking for, though you oftentimes will have to move an entire stack of plates to get to the pattern for which you are searching.

Next, head to Ceramika Artystyczna, where you'll find even more intriguing patterns. This store was home to my favorite pattern that featured polka dots, flowers, a prince and a princess. Did I need a teapot with a fairytale theme on it? No. Did I need the matching cup and saucer? Also, no; however, it all found its way into my car, along with a few other items to be used for gifts. This store had an interesting configuration, as the front seemed to be organized by pattern, while the back grouped items by style. Think towering stacks of bowls, plates, mugs, and vases perched on top of a shelf just out of reach. After you are done, walk across the street to a small strip mall that has several more stores and some great discounts, including Vena Ceramika Sklep Firmowy Manufaktura, Tyrz Ceramika, WR Ceramika and Kalich Ceramics Outlet Store.

Finally, hit up Henry's. Even though I bought the least here, it was by far my favorite. There was a bargain tent set up outside and the inside was arranged by pattern. No more digging through plates to find the one with a red flower and blue butterfly! Depending on what you are shopping for, this could be a blessing or a nightmare.

Food

Picking out the perfect pattern and sorting through thousands of items is tiring, so be sure to refuel at Opalkowa Chata. This adorable, log cabin-style restaurant is cozy and inviting. It serves fresh food made from local and natural products. For a taste of several regional foods, try the platter, which comes with pork chops, three types of pierogis, two cabbage rolls, potato pancakes and hunter's stew.

Lodging

One day in Bolesławiec just isn't enough, especially if you drove hours to get there or are shopping for multiple days. A great little overnight location is The Blue Beetroot, an 18th century renovated barn filled with chunky wooden beams, vaulted ceilings and handmade furniture.

Currency

The only time my group of shoppers had to use cash was when we paid the massage therapist at the hotel, and we were able to use euros. Otherwise, swipe that card like you are spending monopoly money! One Polish złoty is currently 27 cents.

Now that you've got a good idea of what to look for while you are in Poland, gather a group of friends and hit the road! Just make sure you have plenty of room in the car for several boxes of pottery, plus all of your passengers. Bonus points to anyone who can pronounce the name of the town by the time you leave Poland. ■



Beautiful handmade pottery that makes the perfect souvenir during your trip to Poland.




Souvenirs

from European Countries to Snag


By Ethan Merrifield

Collecting souvenirs is an important part of travelling for most people. But how do you avoid tacky figurines of famous landmarks? I found that the best way to get souvenirs that you actually like is to focus your search on a few themes. The most universal themes are "Something to eat," "Something to use" or "Something to wear". Thankfully, these categories can make the difference between an item that will remind you fondly of your travels and resenting a space-wasting souvenir. Here are a few suggestions for interesting and valued collectibles to keep in mind when travelling in Europe.

Switzerland


 **Chocolate** - Everyone has heard of the quality of Swiss chocolate. Whether it's Lindt, Toblerone or any of the local chocolate shops, you are sure to enjoy the world-famous sweets.

Swiss Army Knife - These multi-tools have long held international recognition for their quality and versatility. You can be sure that you will use this tool often and for many situations that may give you a warm remembrance from your trip to Switzerland.

 **Watches** - As the pinnacle of luxury and craftsmanship, Swiss-made watches are a souvenir that could last a lifetime of wear.

Poland


Amber jewelry - The warm color of these precious stones will light up your eyes when you remember where you picked them up.

 **Ceramic pottery** - The quality of this pottery will stand out to guests when you bring out the fine dishware at dinner parties.

"Krówki" (Polish fudge) - A snack with a unique texture, firm on the outside and almost runny on the inside, definitely a novel experience to take home with you.

France


Beret - Berets are still a fashionable piece of clothing all around the world and it will certainly look chic.

 **Books or postcards from the bouquinistes in Paris** - All along the Seine River you will find little

shops selling books, postcards and street art. Pick up something to remember.

Wine - Bordeaux, Provence, Rhône or Burgundy all are well known for quality and what better wine to break out than French wine to accompany the memories of your trip as you sip it.

Greece

 **Anything to do with olives** - Enjoy the salty and bitter fruits that define the Mediterranean region.


Leather sandals - With the humidity of Greece, open shoes are essential for your feet and back home, sandals are a summer favorite.

"Tavli" (Greek Backgammon) - This board game is well known in the region around Greece and Turkey. Similar in style to Backgammon, the game would be a hit at board game night.

Germany

Beer stein - What better way to remember your time in Germany than by drinking beers from a stein.


Hugo Boss - Invest in a sleek suit that you can use for many formal events, you'll look great and Hugo Boss is known for quality all around the world.

 **Sausages and bread** - These hearty foods will stick in your memory like they will stick to your hips.

Hungary


"Pálinka" (fruit brandy) - This special alcohol is made purely from fruit exclusive to Hungary.

Porcelain jewelry - Pure and white, these delicate pieces are a lovely accessory.

 **Rubik's cube** - Believe it or not, this little puzzle fad was created by a Hungarian sculptor and architect.

Ireland

Claddagh ring - Symbolizing love, loyalty and friendship, this ring is great to give your significant other as it indicates your relationship status depending on how its worn.


 **Guinness or Irish whiskey** - Bring home the warm character of Irish people by sharing a drink with your buddies.

Irish music (The Dubliners) - Easily the best kind of music for sharing a sing along with strangers in the pub.

Denmark

Butter cookies - These blue tins won't have your grandmother's sewing supplies for once.

Big sweaters - Denmark is renown for the concept of "hygge" which is a feeling of coziness and well-being. Think of sitting around a comfy fire or snuggling up on the couch in your new sweater.

 **Legos** - Taking its name from the Danish words "leg godt" meaning "play well," these little bricks have captured the imagination of kids since 1932.

There are far more souvenirs in Europe than what is listed here, but hopefully these suggestions will help guide your souvenir hunt and ensure that the things you take home with you bring happiness (and not clutter) to your house. ■



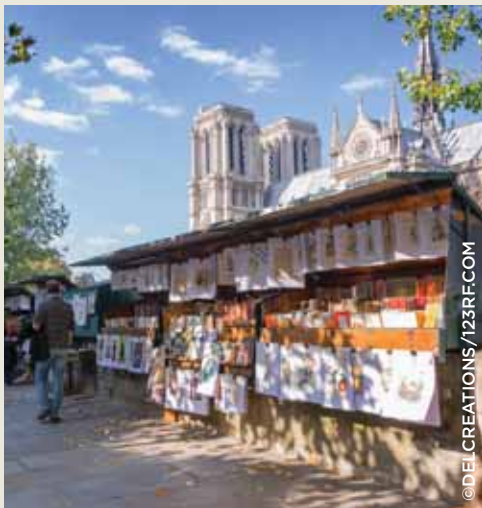
Toblerone is a legendary triangular Swiss chocolate with honey and almond nougat.



The TAG Heuer Stopwatch was the first Swiss watch in outer space and also the first to circumfernce the Earth at least once.



Colorful ceramics in traditional polish market. Polish Pottery is oven- and microwave-safe and can be cleaned in the dishwasher.



Famous bookseller's boxes (bouquinistes) along the Seine River near Notre Dame in Paris, France.



The Greek word for olives is "elies," pronounced el-YES. The Romans romanized the word, calling them olivas.



Traditional german food of pretzels, sauerkraut, bratwurst and beer.



Rubik's cube invented by a Hungarian architect and sculptor Erno Rubik in 1974 was originally called Magic Cube.



Guinness is a world famous Irish dry stout created in the brewery of Arthur Guinness (1725-1803) at St. James.



The LEGO Group began in 1932 in Billund, Denmark and was founded by Ole Kirk Christiansen.

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