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# March Events

# EDITOR'S

# PICKS

By Tamala Malerk

Spring is coming and the sun is starting to peek out more. We have all kinds of ways to celebrate both indoors and out. From horses to comedy shows, model trains and music festivals, we have something for everyone young and old to enjoy. Always check the event's website before traveling.

## "Weird Al" Yankovic March 4, Dusseldorf



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Sing along to all of the parodies of your favorite artists such as Backstreet Boys, Aerosmith and Billy Joel on the "The Unfortunate Return of the Ridiculously Self-Indulgent, Ill-Advised Vanity Tour." For more dates and locations, go to [weirdal.com/tour/](http://weirdal.com/tour/).

## Equitana March 9-15, Essen



Horse lovers will want to go to the largest fair in the horse industry. Get up close to some beautiful horses while taking part in seven days of shopping, training, lectures, competitions and shows.



## Fascination Model Railway March 10-12, Mannheim



Grab your conductor's hat and train whistle and make your way to this three-day convention for model train enthusiasts. There will be displays, brand-new products and the latest in industry innovations.

## Pirates of the Caribbean: Disney in Concert March 19, Stuttgart



Almost as iconic as Jack Sparrow's "Why is the rum gone?" line is the music behind these famous films. Remember all your favorite scenes as you listen.

## CREATIVA 2023 March 15-19, Dortmund



Shop all your crafting needs such as quilting, sewing, jewelry-making, painting and more. There are also workshops to learn new hobbies and techniques. Shop and learn across 40,000 square meters.

## English Improv Comedy Show March 22, Munich



Laugh out loud at this improv night featuring the improv troupe "Bake This." The night will include hilarious songs, scenes and stories suggested by the audience.

## Irish Heartbeat March 17, Hamburg



Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with authentic Irish Gaelic and Celtic music. Go to [st-patricksday.de/tourdates](https://st-patricksday.de/tourdates) for more locations and dates.

## Thuringia Bach Festival March 31-April 23, Erfurt



Enjoy a month of entertainment at one of central Germany's "major" music festivals. It specializes in the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Authentic Bach locations serve as the various concert venues throughout the festival.

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# Tell Your Story!

## Editor's Pick Call Out:

Did you attend one of previous Editor's Picks events? We want to hear all about it! Please share something memorable about your experience in about 50-70 words and you could be featured here. Send your submissions to [contentteam@stripes.com](mailto:contentteam@stripes.com). ■

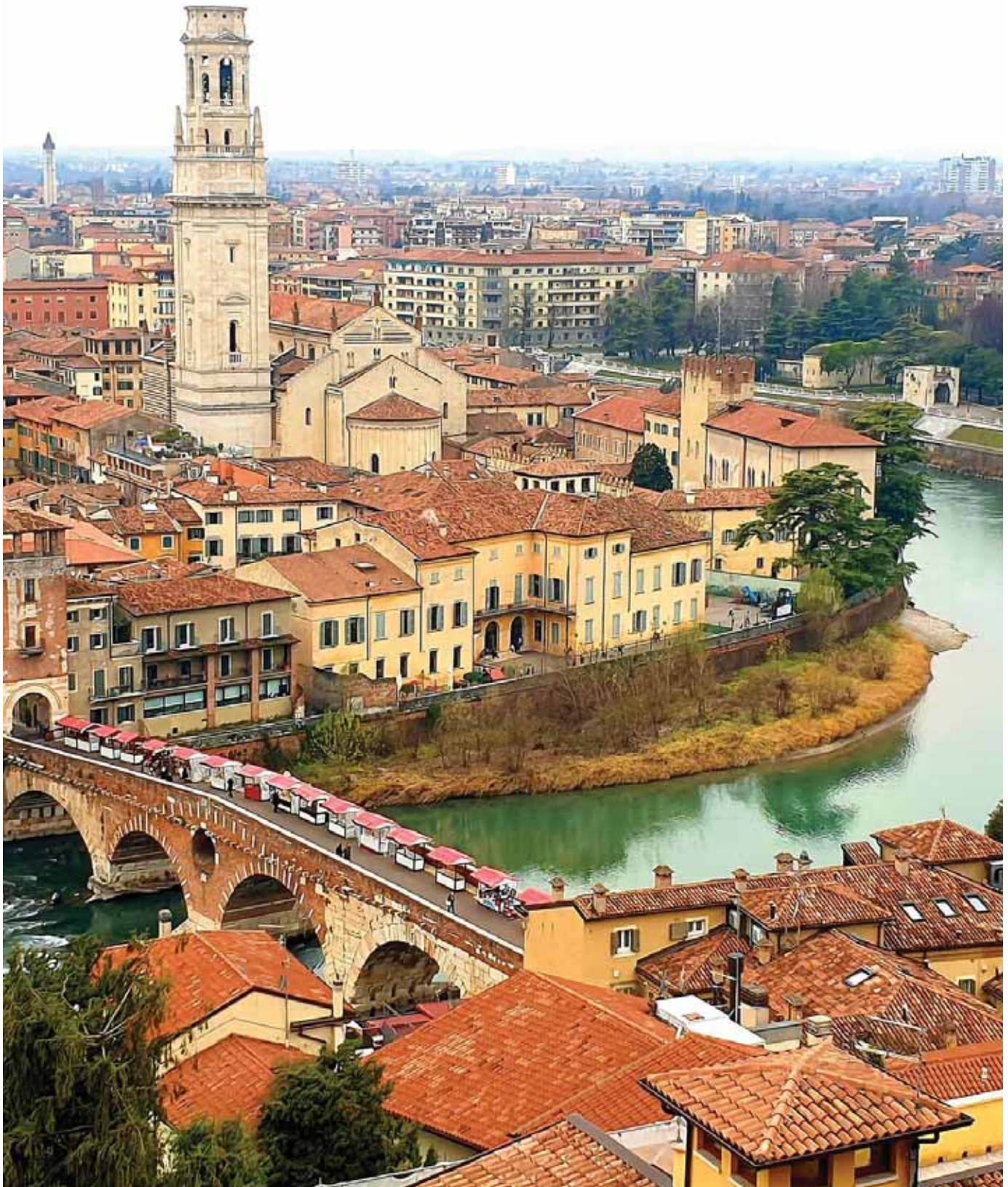


# PHOTO of the month

The Ponte Pietra in Verona, Italy is a bridge that has been destroyed and renovated many times since the Romans built the crossing in 148 B.C. After a fifth complete rebuild following the destruction of World War II, it was reopened in 1959, and it keeps faithful to its original Roman archways. The Verona Cathedral lies beyond, which was finished in 1187 in the Romanesque style with later added gothic accents and contains marvelous frescoes from Renaissance artists.

Photo by Nicole Kearby.

For a chance for your photo to be featured, email [contentteam@stripes.com](mailto:contentteam@stripes.com).





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A DAY IN

# Böblingen

By Tamala Malerk



**Located 30 minutes from Stuttgart, roughly two-and-half hours from Bavaria or a short eight minutes from the Panzer Main Gate is Böblingen. With classic cars, quirky museums and nature parks, Böblingen has a way for everyone to have a great day.**

Car enthusiasts will enjoy more than 50,000 square meters of all things vehicle, including multiple floors of vehicles on display at MOTOR-WORLD Region Stuttgart. Not only are there vehicles on display, but on the same lot, you can play pilot of a Boeing 737 or Cessna 172 on the SimINN Flight Simulator. While there, you can shop all things car culture, plus related accessories. There are several pop art pieces for sale as well. Those looking to add to their vehicle collection can peruse the many cars and trucks for sale onsite. When you inevitably get hungry, there is a coffee shop, brewery and several restaurants to

satisfy your needs. If you cannot fit everything in one day, there are two hotels onsite containing themed rooms where you can relive your childhood (or childhood dreams) of sleeping in a car bed.

If museums are more your style, Böblingen has you covered. It is home to Germany's largest Butcher Museum. In the middle of Old Town, on top of the Schlossberg and across five floors of exhibits, you can learn about meat consumption, making sausage, butchers and the associated handicrafts in the form of ever-changing exhibits. There is art, lectures and a documentary to watch.

The German Peasants' War Museum commemorates one of the most memorable days in Böblingen's history. In 1525, the peasants were defeated by the Swabian League outside the city gates and the Peasants' War was officially lost. Learn about the War and the lifestyle of the "common man" of that era.

The City Gallery contains a permanent exhibition of paintings and sculptures reflective of German art styles. Their temporary exhibit, "Böblinger Bilderbogen 1900 to 1950: The Past in Colour," features the works of Reinhold Nagele (1884–1972) and Fritz Steisslinger (1891–1957) until April 23, 2023.

If nature is more your scene, just a short thirty-minute drive away is Schönbuch Nature Park. The park contains over 400 kilometers of marked hiking trails. Bring some bratwurst and hamburgers and take advantage of one of their 40 barbecue areas, while the kids enjoy one (or more) of their 20 playgrounds. You may be able to spot wild deer, bats or one of the different species of birds. They have events year-round, so there is always something new to do at the park.

If you want a snack and a drink while being surrounded by great art, check out Tacuba Salsa Bar. While they don't have draft beer (bottled only), you won't miss it with their selection of wine and cocktails. One drink that I cannot wait to try is their combined pina colada and margarita. Bring euros because this bar is cash only. There is so much art and so many decorations adorning the walls that you are bound to discover something new every time you visit. It is a great way to end a day in Böblingen. ■





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# BELGIUM

## DISCOVERING POIROT'S TRAIL

By Erica Fowler

As Monsieur Hercule Poirot would like it, his origin story is shrouded in mystery. The fictional Belgian detective won his way into fame firstly in the British novelist Agatha Christie's stories, then shows and movie adaptations. This led to a cross-generational appreciation for his sleuthing adventures, right up there with Sherlock Holmes. The most recent was the 2022 film, "Death on the Nile," which has re-invigorated the "little grey cells" of all who love this genre.





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“ IT IS THE BRAIN, THE  
LITTLE GRAY CELLS ON  
WHICH ONE MUST RELY.  
ONE MUST SEEK THE  
TRUTH WITHIN—NOT  
WITHOUT. ”

– HERCULE POIROT

---

I grew up watching detective shows as a joint pastime with my mom, who could often figure out the whodunit before the episode's end as I sat back in wonder. Like Poirot, she would conquer my expectations of the plot as he would conquer the expectations of those around him as a boastful, diminutive foreigner. He laid out evidence that he had been meticulously collecting the whole time, often rooting out the killer and motivations surrounding heinous crimes. I found it interesting that he was transplanted from his homeland of Belgium and solved many cases in his adoptive England, and also around Europe and North Africa. He became an idealized world traveler to many readers, set on providing justice for many wrongs committed.

## SPA, BELGIUM

There are two theories that Belgians and Christie fans have about where Poirot came from and one is the town of Spa in the Ardennes mountains, about 40 minutes from Liège. Spa's actual history lends credence as to why Poirot left Belgium, which was represented in the form of the German Army taking up headquarters in the town during World War I. Poirot shared that he left his homeland to escape the ravages of the Great War, but not without the silver-swan tipped cane that he was known to carry throughout his many cases.

As the name suggests, Spa is a place renowned for its “healing” mineral springs, and visitors aim to relax with recreational activities amongst nature. Today's town allows visitors to get lost in the woods at fun loca-





tions like SpaForest, an adventure park with treetop free falls, survival workshops, treasure hunting and mountain biking. Spa is part of the network of RAVeL hiking and biking trails that totals more than 900 miles (1,480 kilometers) of paved paths that never have more than a 2 percent gradient, perfect for kids and adults to traverse.

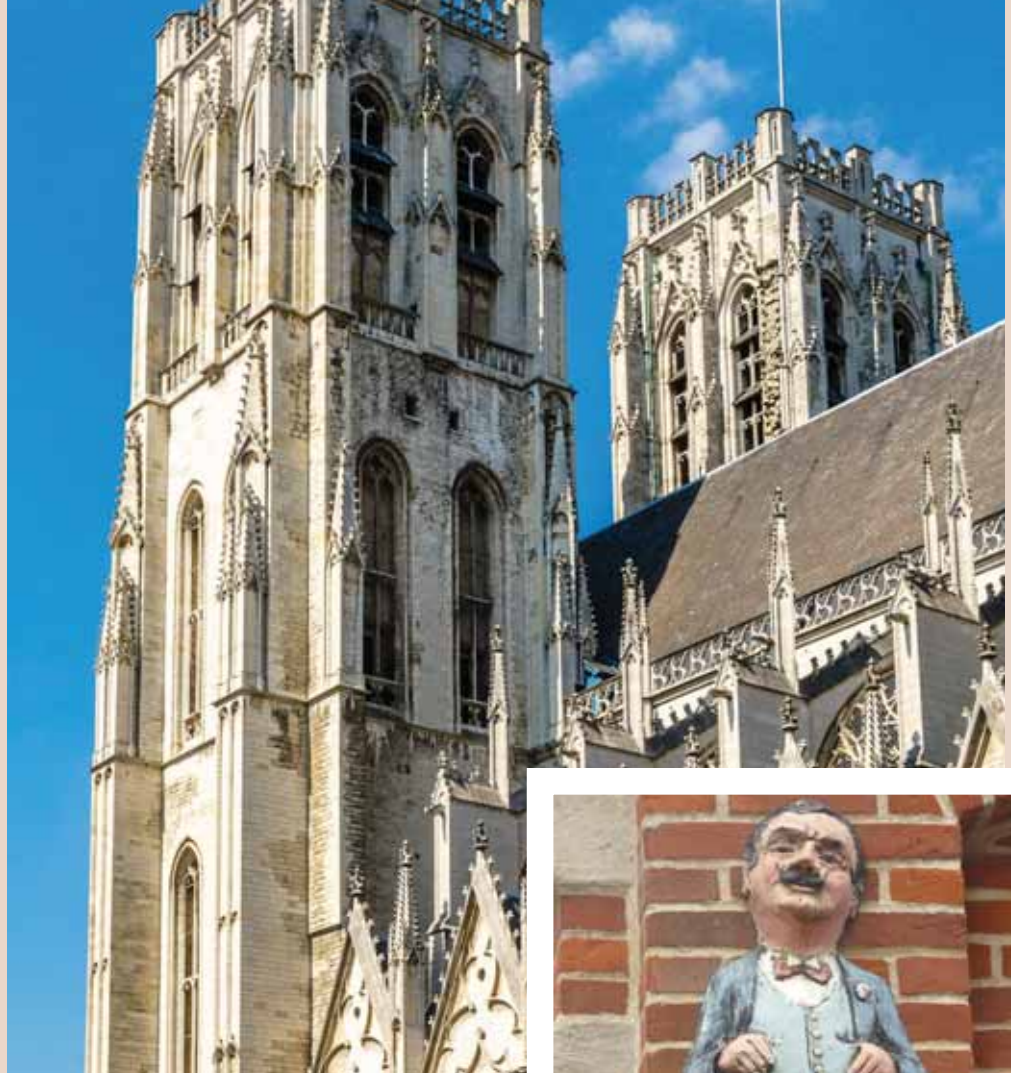
If you aim to release tension from a hike in the woods, the Thermes de Spa is located in the town center and has promoted aristocratic self-care since the 16th century. Spa has made the UNESCO World Heritage List as one of the top 11 European spa towns, and that sure sounds relaxing to me.

A 15 minute drive away from Spa, the Château de Franchimont still reigns over the landscape, despite being in ruins. The castle-side La Brasserie de Franchimont offers cozy interior or exterior seating to grab a local beer, and a nice meal like raspberry sauced duck with chive pureed potatoes. In other words, a perfect place to muse over this region's timeless beauty and what it must have been like to grow up here.

## ELLEZELLES, BELGIUM

The town of Ellezelles also claims Poirot as a native of their town and has paid tribute to him with a relief sculpture of him, hands on his vest pockets as if reaching for his pocket watch or glasses. The town also proudly possesses his birth certificate, stating his parent's names on the document. Best of all, Poirot's birthday is declared to be April 1, 1850, or April Fools' Day. Even one of the best-known actors to portray Poirot, David Suchet, made sure to visit this Belgian town on a nostalgia trip.

There's plenty close by to round out your trip, including the town of Ath, which has the Gallo-Roman Museum containing 2,000-year-old shipwrecks with countless artifacts of ancient life. Afterward, be sure to take a tour of the Brasserie des Légendes, which brews an English-style stout called "Hercule" in honor of the mustachioed figure, who is emblazoned on the flip-top bottle. The zoo and botanical garden Pairi Daiza is also an 18-minute drive from Ath, and in a unique twist, allows guests to stay overnight beside the animal habitats. If you've ever thought, "I want to hang out with wolves, bears or penguins," here's your shot!



## BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

A notable portion of Poirot's sleuthing career came from his experience as the Chief of Police in Brussels. If you have not yet walked through its Grand Place in front of the Gothic-style 15th century town hall, you should dedicate at least a day to wandering the streets of this vibrant city. The city is full of Art Nouveau architecture, museums and one of my favorites, the St. Michael and St. Gudula Cathedral. Be sure to sample and bring home a box of rich Belgian chocolate... as long as it is not poisoned like the one in the Poirot episode, "The Chocolate Box." This was the failed case that Poirot lamented to Arthur Hastings that he was never able to solve in his early days.

When Agatha Christie inevitably wrote her longest-lived character's end in the 1940s, she kept the manuscript in a safe for three decades until 1974. The beloved Poirot was the only fictional character at the time to be given an obituary in The New York Times. After Christie's 33 novels and 54 short stories sharing him with the world, the adventures of Poirot came to an end. His deeds now live on through the love of his character, both in Belgium and around the world. ■





# 10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT *Brussels*

By Erica Fowler



**1** Brussels is also considered the capital of Europe because it hosts the European Union headquarters.



Brussels is a haven for urban artists. You can follow the Street Art Trail depicting a variety of art styles in countless murals.



**8**



One of the best panoramas in the city is from the Atomium, a giant iron molecule housing a museum, which overlooks the city.

*Nine*

*Two*

French, German and Flemish Dutch are the official languages of Belgium, but Brussels is a very international city, with up to a quarter of its residents being non-citizens.



The Manneken Pis, the famous little boy fountain, has several outfits themed for various holidays displayed in the nearby City Museum.



**4**

**3**

Brussels is not only the capital of Belgium, but is also the capital of Flanders, the largely Dutch-speaking northern half of Belgium.

**FIVE**

There is no such thing as a "Belgian waffle" to a Belgian. The Liège waffle is the sugar-crusted one, and the Brussels waffle is the yeasty, powdered sugar, whipped cream or fruit-topped one. Either way, both are a must-try.



**6**



The Mont des Arts is a historical and cultural hot spot of the city, with at least 15 intriguing museums within a 7-minute walking range.



**7**

The food scene features creamy chocolate and street fries drizzled with Andalouse sauce, but also make sure to feast on steaming fresh mussels, a specialty of the region for hundreds of years.



**10**

For Belgian beer lovers, there are about 1,500 varieties of beer brewed in Belgium and 45 active breweries in the capital region alone. You can say cheers with the French "Santé!" which means "to your health."





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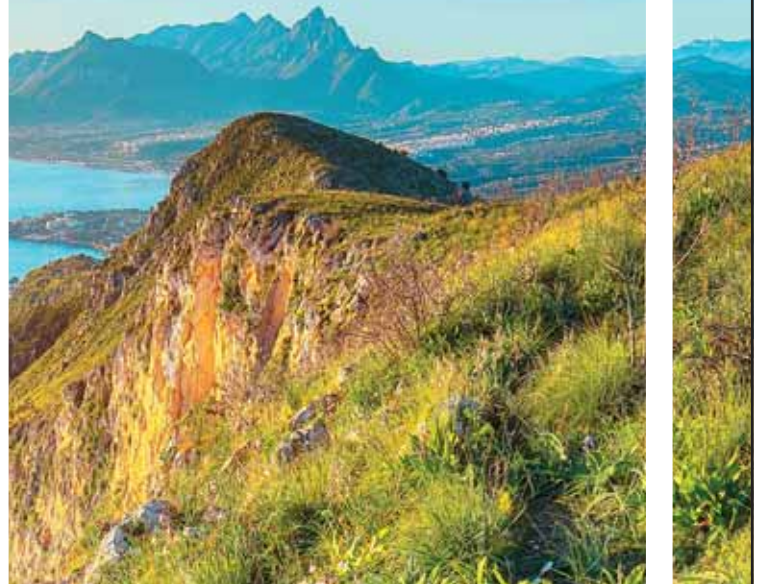
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