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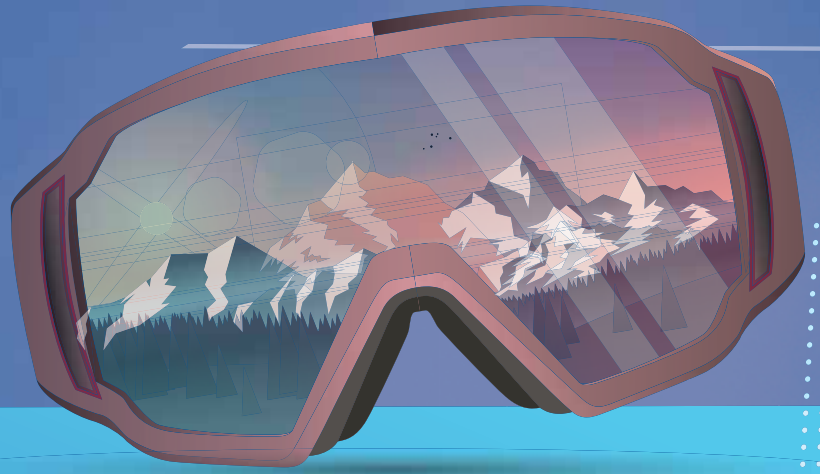
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Navigating
NORTH
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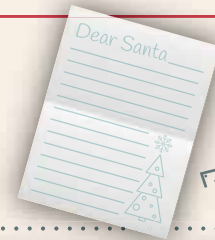
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November Events

EDITOR'S

PICKS

By Tamala Malerk

Fall is ending and as Ned Stark would say, "winter is coming." Fret not for we have a list of indoor and outdoor events to let you stay cool outside or warm up inside. Always check an event's website before traveling.

JazzFest Berlin Berlin, Nov. 2-5



JazzFest features icons of the genre as well as talented up-and-comers. In existence since 1964, it is one of Europe's longest-running festivals known around the world.

RuPaul's Drag Race Werq the World®, 2023 World Tour: **Cologne, Nov. 4**



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Sashay your way to this internationally renowned drag show. Set in a Sci-Fi dystopian future, the queens, featuring past Drag Race contestants and winners, must decide between the artificial and real worlds. Other dates and locations can be found at vossevents.com/werq-the-world-tour.

Handmade Creative Market, Leipzig, Nov. 4-5



Shop from vendors and exhibitors. Craft by numbers, decorate with flowers, participate in dot and acrylic painting, make a bracelet, necklace or table lamp, and so much more on Saturday and Sunday. For more dates and locations go to kreativmaerkte.de.

American Football in Germany Frankfurt, Nov. 5 and Nov. 12



Tickets for these games sold out quickly. But that doesn't mean you cannot cheer for your team. Check with your MWR, FSS or USO for on-base opportunities for game-related watching events.

The Irish Folk Festival Kaiserslautern, Nov. 8



Celebrate 50 years of this festival and "living the dream" with Irish music, singing and tap dancing.

34th International Pigeon Market, Kassel, Nov. 12



Interested in the world of racing pigeons? Did you, like me, just learn that this is a thing? Attend this market featuring pigeons, over 300 exhibitors, expert lectures, a miniature Bavarian Oktoberfest, music and more.

Red Hot Chili Pipers, Lunen, Nov. 17



@LEOKREISSIG.DE

Donning kilts and bagpipes rather than strategically placed tube socks, you will want to check out this band combining Scottish music with rock and pop. For more dates and locations across Germany go to rhcp.scot.

Tollwood Winter Festival Munich, Nov. 23-Dec. 31



Play games, get on rides, catch a show, eat some great food, shop the market (closes Dec. 23) and much more at Munich's "alternative Christmas market." On New Year's Eve, join the midnight waltz on the Theresienwiese.

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. ■

PHOTO of the month

Situated on a cliff edge trail up to the Ebenalp summit, the Berggasthaus Aescher is one of the oldest mountain guesthouses in Switzerland. The many caves along the route have been home to Ice Age cave bears, Neanderthal hunting parties and medieval religious hermits. Nowadays, visitors can enjoy a cable car to the peak for hiking, mountain guesthouses and traditional restaurants.

Photo by Kat Dierickx

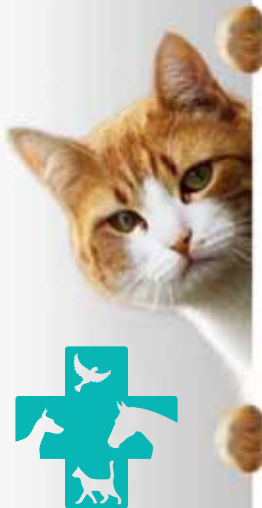
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One of Munich's Museums

By Kat Nickola

November in Germany can bring chilly rain, fluffy snow or sunny skies, and sometimes all three in one day. It's the time of year many of us retreat inside, making it a great month to explore the world-class museums Munich has to offer. Spend a day enjoying the displays, learning something new and avoiding the unpredictable weather.

Deutsches Museum

It takes an all-day excursion to visit the world's largest science and technology museum which takes up most of Munich's Museumsinsel, an island in the Isar river. The Deutsches Museum has something for everyone, and displays are in both German and English. You can walk through the human body, discover the details of the model railway, try the hands-on atomic physics exhibits, see historical robots or wander in and around space labs and airplanes. The Deutsches Museum App can help you get the most out of your visit with self-guided tours, in-depth additional information and an interactive map. There are also fun scheduled workshops that are included in your admission and a planetarium show at an extra cost. To break up the day, there are two restaurants and a picnic area. Entry costs 15 euros for adults and eight euros for those under 18.



BONUS: If the natural sciences are more your style, try a visit to the Museum Mensch und Natur (man and nature) for animal dioramas, minerals on display and a hands-on space called BIOTOPIA, a preview of how the museum will be reworked in the future.

Pinakothek

The Pinakothek is an art lovers' journey through time. This conglomerate of five museums houses old artworks from the Middle Ages, masterpieces by Rubens, Manet and Van Gogh, and contemporary art by Andy Warhol and Cy Twombly. The art is sorted across the museums by time period. The Alte Pinakothek houses the oldest masterworks and is also currently home to the impressionist works that usually belong in the Neue Pinakothek, which is under construction. The Pinakothek der Moderne Kunst displays modern art, including an original Futuro House in the gardens, while the nearby Brandhorst focuses on contemporary pieces. The fifth museum, the Sammlung Schack is devoted to German 19th century fantasy works. You can buy tickets to individual museums online, or visit in-person for a day pass to all museums for 12 euros. People under 18 are free. Many of the state-run museums in Munich, including the Pinakothek, cost only one euro on Sundays.



BONUS: The Kunstareal (art district) around the Pinakothek museums houses lots of other museums devoted to classical art and antiquities like the Glyptothek and its displays of Greek and Roman sculpture or the Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst which showcases Egyptian art.

BMW World and Museum

In northern Munich, near the Olympic Park, is the headquarters for the Bayerisches Motoren Werke, or BMW. For those who like all things new, visit the free BMW Welt (world) where you can check out the latest models of BMW cars and motorcycles. You can also book ahead for a guided tour of the main BMW manufacturing plant whose campus is located across the street. For a more in-depth look at this iconic brand, take the futuristic pedestrian walkway to the BMW Museum (admission is 10 euro, with discounted family tickets available). Divided into different 'houses' dedicated to the history, design and unique series of BMW vehicles; this slick museum is a must-see for any car enthusiast. You can explore nearly every model ever made, including legendary Formula One champions. The company doesn't shy away from its exploitative history, either, with its no-holes-barred Place of Remembrance exhibit. When you are ready for a break, there are numerous restaurants and shops to choose from at the BMW complex.



BONUS: If you cannot get enough vehicles, the Deutsches Museum also manages the Verkehrszentrum branch, a massive museum full of cars, trains, airplanes and more. ■

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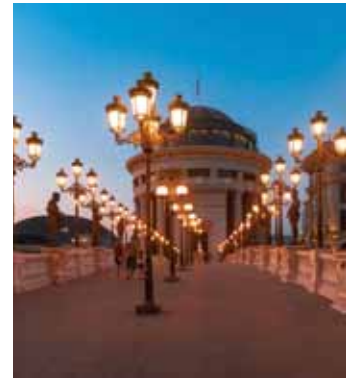


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Navigating NORTH MACEDONIA

By Kat Nickola



WHERE IS MACEDONIA?

Defining modern Macedonia can be thorny, so a little background is helpful. In the fourth century BC, the ancient kingdom of Macedonia under Alexander the Great became an empire stretching south to Egypt and east to Pakistan. But it didn't last. The area was fractured and lost power while part of the Roman and Byzantine Empires. Ottoman occupation in the 14th century ended the use of the term Macedonia.

It wouldn't resurface again until the end of the Balkan Wars in 1913 when the modern Greek state of Macedonia was formed. Then, at the end of WWII, Yugoslavia redefined the most southern constituent republic as the People's Republic of Macedonia. Both regions have a shared history and culture. After Yugoslavia's breakup in 1991, Greece disputed the new country's use of the word Macedonia by claiming it was cultural appropriation, but in 2019 the UN mediated an agreement adding the descriptive "North."

We now distinguish between the Republic of North Macedonia as an independent country, and Macedonia, a large state within the country of Greece. The tumultuous history of the region has left behind a rich heritage of Greek, Byzantine and Ottoman influences that make visiting the mountainous country of North Macedonia a magnificent treat.



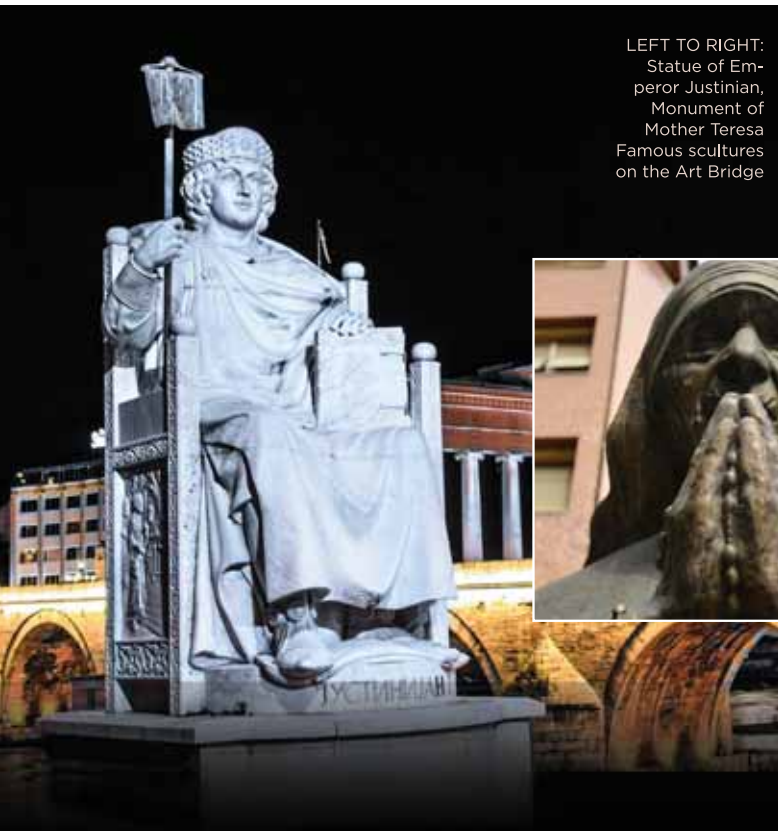
SKOPJE

The capital of Macedonia, Skopje, gives off a dingy Soviet-era vibe from the outside, but it's worth a day of exploration to see the unique brand-new, yet ancient-looking, government buildings and statues in the city center. Start at Macedonia Square to see a massive fountain monument of Alexander the Great riding Bucephalus. The city's eclectic bronze statues get more interesting as you wander. Look for the skeletal beggar while heading south toward the Memorial House of Mother Theresa's birthplace, or keep your eyes peeled for the divers below the statue-lined Stone Bridge.

Escape the quirkiness by venturing to the narrow alleys of the Old Bazaar where time stands still, and you can still haggle for your souvenirs. It's also a great place to try *tavče gravče*, a baked bean casserole, or have a *sarma*, a tasty meat-stuffed cabbage leaf. There is also the delicious *burek* pastry filled with meat or cheese, and Macedonian *Rakija*, a fermented fruit brandy.

Above the town is the Kale Fortress, a sixth-century bastion which was likely built by Emperor Justinian on a spot occupied since prehistoric times. It is free to meander through the gates and explore the walls for a perfect photo of the city. In the evening, venture west of downtown to the Debar Maalo neighborhood where the concrete is masked by trees and the calm cafes and bars are open late.

LEFT TO RIGHT:
Statue of Emperor Justinian,
Monument of Mother Teresa
Famous sculptures on the Art Bridge





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Logistical Details:

• **VISA:** Until December 2023 U.S. passport holders do not need a visa for trips less than 15 days. The policy will be reevaluated in 2024. Visit [DO](#) for current regulations.

• **MONEY:** You will need to exchange money for the Macedonian Denar (MKD), currently one U.S. dollar is worth roughly 55 MKD.

• **TRANSPORTATION:** Public transit is slow; a car rental is recommended.

• **ITINERARY:** On a long weekend you can loop in the highlights of Skopje and Ohrid, taking in Matka Canyon along the way. With a week you can add on outdoor adventure in Mavrovo National Park or wine tasting in Tikveš.

TOP TO BOTTOM:
Matka Canyon,
Church of Saint John at
Kaneo, Mavrovo
National Park



MATKA CANYON

This must-see natural beauty is only 15 kilometers outside of Skopje. The gorge has beautiful green waters backed by jagged mountains and a three-kilometer trail carved into the canyon wall. You can even hike to the canyon in good weather by taking the cable car in Skopje up to Mount Vodno and following the 13 km trail to the canyon rim. Alternatively, rent a kayak or take a small motorboat down the canyon to Vrelo Cave, which has one of the deepest underwater cave systems in Europe.

MAVROVO NATIONAL PARK

With activities for all ages and seasons, this national park is a highlight. There are numerous hiking and biking trails throughout the mountainous terrain. In winter, the ski resort above Mavrovo village boasts 15 km of slopes and 13 lifts. Interestingly, when Mavrovo Lake was dammed, the old village church was partially submerged and can still be seen peeping above the water line. If possible, stay a night in one of the numerous scenic high mountain villages like Galičnik or Lazaropole which are known for their traditional woodcarving. Don't miss a visit to Saint Jovan Bigorski Monastery, a fortified complex whose 1000-year history is displayed in the numerous relics, beautifully carved iconostasis and frescoes that completely cover the church interior.

OHRID TOWN & LAKE

The town of Ohrid oozes history. Inhabited since the Iron Age, this UNESCO Heritage Site includes the cultural sites within one of the oldest human settlements in Europe and the unique lake ecosystem. Within the walled old town is the ancient Macedonian theatre, a Greek open-air amphitheater dating from 200 B.C. The Church of Saints Clement and Panteleimon is a Macedonian-style gray stone struc-

ture with red brick trim and intricate mosaics. Nearby is the Plaošnik archaeology park where you can wander around the Byzantine ruins and then head to the local Church of Saint John at Kaneo, angelically perched on a cliff above the lake. A waterfront boardwalk connects the pebble beaches along the cliff-backed shoreline.

Above Ohrid is Samuel's Fortress – a massive walled fortification atop the hill in old town built by Tsar Samuel of Bulgaria in the 11th century. Recent archaeological excavations have shown that it was built on an earlier fourth century B.C. fort, possibly built by King Philip II of Macedon (Alexander the Great's father). To go back even further in time, drive roughly 17 kilometers south of Ohrid to the Bay of Bones Museum, a reconstructed village of stilt houses from the prehistoric pile-dwelling peoples who lived in the area from 1200 to 700 B.C.

TIKVEŠ WINE REGION

Since the fourth century B.C., the climate and vines of this region have produced quality wines. The biggest concentration of wineries is located in the area north of Kavadarci near the many arms of the Vardar River where the rolling hills are reminiscent of Napa Valley. Try visiting the large eponymous Tikveš Winery or the small family Winery Peshkov. For a great overnight, the Winery Lazar is situated in a lush green oasis along the river and offers overnight accommodations and a restaurant with four to six-course menus. ■





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YOUR NEXT FAVORITE SOUVENIR:

Ohrid Pearls

Kat Nickola

There is a small town in North Macedonia vying for the next top spot in your jewelry box. European queens and princesses have been seen wearing pearls from Ohrid in the last decades, but only recently have they become popular with mainstream tourists (not that North Macedonia is a conventional destination).

The pearls' unique structure is a well-kept secret. They are created by forming a small ball with mother-of-pearl from local shells, then coating it with multiple layers of a mysterious emulsion. Only one ingredient of the emulsion has been divulged: scales from the plasica fish (or Ohrid trout), which is only found in Lake Ohrid and only harvested in the winter. To add to the mystique, two Ohrid families have maintained the secret for the last 100 years. With four shops in Ohrid and unique pieces that incorporate pearls into silver settings, the Filevi family workshop offers a wide variety of jewelry styles. The Talevi family has a small workshop focusing on traditional single pearl drop and strand necklaces. Their store is along the Old Bazaar Street where you can shop for other traditional souvenirs like pottery, woodcarvings and religious icons.

Prices are based on the size and number of the pearls. Macedonian Denar (MKD or ден) is the currency in North Macedonia. Expect to pay about 800ден (\$15) for a lovely, small single drop pearl necklace, 2,500ден (\$45) for a pearl pendant with silver filigree, and 5,500ден (\$100) for a nice strand of small pearls. Large intricate pearl strands can be in the hundreds. ■



If you can't make it to Ohrid,
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