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FEB 2024

STARS AND STRIPES

WIESBADEN

WHAT'S UP

Eat. Stay. Love.

Spotlight on
Alta, Norway

Fan the Flames
at a German Therme

Pub
Crawling

IN CAMBRIDGE

THE INMOST LIGHT

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WHAT'S UP

A Stars and Stripes Community Publication

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GERMANY

Hot-Air Balloon Festival | Lake Tegernsee | Jan. 28–Feb. 4

“Lobby Hero” at The English Theatre of Hamburg
Feb. 5–Apr. 6 | Hamburg

Fasching/Karneval/ Fastnacht | Throughout Germany
Feb.–Mar. 2024

Cologne Pride 2024 | Cologne | July 6–21

Dürkheim Sausage Market (World’s largest wine
festival) | Bad Dürkheim | Sept. 6–10 and Sept. 13–16

Berlin Beer Week | Berlin | Sept. (TBD)

AUSTRIA

Snowbombing | Mayrhofen | Apr. 8–13

Genuss Festival (Austria’s single largest food festival)
Vienna | May (TBD)

Long Night of the Stages | Linz | June 22

Salzburg Festival (Theater and Opera Festival)
Salzburg | July 19–Aug. 31

World Body Painting Festival | Klagenfurt | Sept. 17–21

FRANCE

“Fête du Citron” (Lemon Festival) | Ville de Menton
Feb. 17–Mar. 3

Cerfs Volants (International Kite Festival)
Berck Sur Mer | Apr. 20–28

International Garden Festival | Chaumont-sur-Loire
Apr.–Nov. (TBD)

Le Nouveau Printemps (The New Spring) | Toulouse
May 30–June 30

Chorégies d’Orange (Oldest Festival in France)
Orange | June 14–July 22

Festival Photo La Gacilly | Brittany | June–Oct. (TBD)

Festival d’Avignon | Locations across Avignon | July (TBD)

Habits de Lumière | Epernay | Dec. (TBD)

Festival of Lights | Lyon | Dec. (tentatively)

La Grande Odyssée (Dog Sled Event)

20 Location across Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes
Jan. 2025 (TBD)

ITALY

Venice Carnival | Venice | Feb. 3–13

Ivrea Carnival: The Orange Fights

Ivrea | Feb. 10–13

At one of the oldest carnivals in Italy, you can witness the culminating event: pelting oranges at one another. The event dates back to the end of World War II. Today, nine teams donning tunics in their team colors throw oranges from their designated areas. Don’t worry, there are safe spaces where you can stay orange-free throughout the city.

Palio di Siena | Siena | July 2 and Aug. 16

BELGIUM

Binche Carnival | Binche | Feb. 11–13

Brussels International Animation Film Festival
Brussels | Feb. 27–Mar. 3

Carnival of Bears | Benelux | Mar. 10

46th Cat Parade | Ypres | May 12

Brussels Pride | Brussels | May

Zinneke Parade (“Europe’s craziest festival”)
Brussels | June 1

Brussels Carpet of Flowers | Brussels | Aug. 15–18 (TBD)

CROATIA

Karneval | Rijeka | Jan.–Mar.

Animafest Zagreb: World Animated Film Festival
Zagreb | June 3–8

Korkyra Baroque Festival | Venues across Korkyra
Sept. (TBD)

CZECHIA

Masopust Prague—Prague Bohemian Carnival
Prague | Feb. 8–14

Prague Beer Festival | Prague | Apr. 12–13

Znojmo Historic Vintage | Znojmo | Sept. (TBD)

FINLAND

Midnight Sun Film Festival | Sodankylä Lapland
June 12–16

Juhannus, the Midsummer Festival
Throughout Finland | June 22

Helsinki Pride | Helsinki | June/July (TBD)

Seinäjoki Tango Market | Seinäjoki | July 10–14

Helsinki Festival | Helsinki | Aug. 15–19

Baltic Circle: International Theater Festival | Helsinki
Nov. 15–23

IRELAND AND THE U.K.

Dark Skies Festival | North York Moors and Yorkshire
Dales | Feb. 9–25

Jorvik Viking Festival (Europe’s Largest Viking Festival)
York | Feb. 12–18

Glasgow International Comedy Festival | Glasgow
Mar. 13–31

St. Patrick’s Festival | Dublin | Mar. 17

Gemini Boat Race | London | Mar. 30

Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival | Speyside | May 1–6

Galway International Arts Festival | Galway | July 15–28

The Galway Races Summer Festival | Galway
July 29–Aug. 4

Puck Fair (Ireland’s Oldest Fair) | Killorglin | Aug. 10–12

Rose of Tralee International Festival | Tralee | Aug. 16–20

THE NETHERLANDS

Chinese New Year | Amsterdam | Feb. 10

Keukenhof Flower Parade | Keukenhof | Apr. 24

“Koningsdag” (King’s Day) | Amsterdam | Apr. 27

Summer Carnival | Rotterdam | July 26–27

Pride Amsterdam | Amsterdam | July 27– Aug. 4

Redhead Days Festival | Spoorpark and City Center
Tilburg | Aug. 23–25

GLOW Festival (Light Art Fest) | Eindhoven
Nov. 2024–Jan. 2025 (TBD)


Amsterdam Light Festival | Amsterdam
Nov. 2024–Jan. 2025 (TBD)

Extra



There is so much going on across Europe that we couldn’t fit it all on one page. Scan the QR for more events across Europe this year. ■

MWR GO

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Wiesbaden Family
and Morale, Welfare
and Recreation



February time for live music, learning new skills

Live Bands at the WEC

Rock out to cover versions of songs by Bare Naked Ladies, Blink 182, Green Day and Steppenwolf performed by **Rooked and Kaserned** at the Wiesbaden Entertainment Center Lounge on Feb. 2. On Feb. 23 enjoy Old School Jams by **Groove Connection**. Entrance is free — open to ages 18 and above.

Dortmund Hunting, Dog and Fishing Messe

Outdoor Recreation offers a trip to the Hunting, Dog and Fishing Messe in Dortmund on Feb. 1. Cost is \$49 for adults or \$39 for children up to age 16. Call civ (0611) 143-548-9801 for details.

Library Makerspace

The Wiesbaden Library hosts Makerspace on Feb. 18 at 10 a.m. Come meet Cobey and Botley, the library's coding robots.

Black Forest Skiing

Wiesbaden Outdoor Recreation offers a trip to the Black Forest for a day of skiing or snowboarding on Feb. 3. Cost is \$159 per person including use of ski or snowboard gear; \$129 per person if using own equipment. Call civ (0611) 143-548-9801.

Serving Heroes

Active Duty Soldiers (U.S. and Allied) are invited to the Wiesbaden Entertainment Center every second Tuesday of the month for free pizza, bowling and soft drinks (or water) from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The free bowling includes free shoe rental.

Latin Street Salsa Night

DJ Sergio will provide your favorite Latin tunes into the early hours of the morning during Salsa Night on Feb. 2 starting at 9 p.m. at the Latin Street



Restaurant on Clay Kaserne. Enjoy the drink special Happy Hour all night long. Featured music will include Salsa, Merengue, Bachata, Reggaeton and R&B.

Kaprun Ski Trip

Wiesbaden Outdoor Recreation offers a trip to Kaprun, Austria, — one of Europe's best known winter sports resorts — on Feb. 16-19. Cost is \$749 per adult or \$699 per child (including use of gear); \$699 per adult or \$649 per child (with own gear). Price includes round-trip transportation to Kaprun and two overnights in a four-star hotel with breakfast. Sign up at Outdoor Recreation on Clay North.

CYS Special Opening

Parents of registered Child and Youth Services children ages six weeks to fifth grade can take advantage of the Special Opening on Feb. 10 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Cost is \$48. Call civ (0611) 143-548-9356 or visit Parent Central Services for more information.

German Fishing Course

Outdoor Recreation hosts a U.S. Forces German Fishing Course. Feb. 8-11. Learn what you need to know to purchase your German Fishing License and successfully fish while in Germany. Cost is \$75 for adults ages 16 and up; \$25 for ages 10-15 (minimum age is 10). Call civ (0611) 143-548-9801 to register.

Government Contract Bidding Class

Army Community Service's Employment Readiness Program invites community members interested in bidding on a government contract to an information briefing on Feb. 7 at

10 a.m. The free briefing will be held in the ACS Multi-Purpose Room (Building 7790 in Hainerberg Housing). Call civ (0611) 143-5438-9201.

Blind Date With a Book

The Wiesbaden Library invites readers to discover a whole new universe of book subjects, authors, etc. The staff will have a variety of pre-selected "outstanding reads" available for checkout Feb. 11-15, 2024. Take a chance on book love — and ask for one of the titles during Blind Date With a Book.

Trivia League

Compete for bragging rights and prizes while showing off your knowledge of all things trivia at the Wiesbaden Entertainment Center Lounge on Feb. 7 and 21 starting at 7 p.m.

Schuetzenmeister Course

Outdoor Recreation hosts a free Schuetzenmeister/Range Safety Officer course Feb. 23-24 as part of the Hunting, Fishing and Sport Shooting Program. Participants must have a Jagdschein or have completed the Sports Shooter Knowledge Course. The course is held in the classroom of the HFSS Lodge the first day and at the Wackernheim Range Complex on the second day. Call civ (0611) 143-548-9801.



Spotlight On



Alta, Norway

By Kat Nickola

Venture into the Arctic this winter at the northernmost city in the world. Alta, Norway hugs the rugged coastline of the Altafjord and is the gateway town for adventurers heading into the Finnmark Plateau, the cultural home of the Sami people.

Rock carvings from 7000 years ago have been found along the shoreline throughout the area showing the prehistoric reindeer herds of the Stone Age people who called this area home. There are scenes of hunting, fishing, and sailing in elaborate boats; activities that still draw tourists to the area.

In winter, the Polar Night of northern Norway, there are roughly six weeks when the sun does not peak above

the horizon. However, the daytime hours are immersed in a perpetual twilight of magical bluish luminosity as the sun's light reflects off the sky, sea and snow. The aurora borealis, or northern lights, also adds beautiful luminescent greens, blues and sometimes pinks to the dark night sky.

Each winter, the Sorrisniva Arctic Wilderness Lodge along the Alta River builds the world's northernmost igloo hotel from ice harvested in the valley upstream. Offering all kinds of Polar Night fun like snowmobiling, dog sledding and snowshoeing, the igloo hotel makes a luxuriously frigid home base for winter exploration. ■



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A large, detailed illustration of Schönburg Castle, a medieval stone structure with multiple towers and a prominent spire, set against a light blue sky with soft clouds.

Eat • Stay • Love

Schönburg

By Tamala Malerk



EAT The on-site bistro at Schönburg Castle offers breakfast for hotel guests to get you started, along with coffee and cake options for visitors. In favorable weather, it is pleasant to sit outside in the castle courtyard with its views over the mountains and the Rhine River. A fine dining restaurant is also open Wednesday through Sunday for the ultimate date-night experience. Various dark-paneled rooms, spaces lit through leaded glass windows and romantic terraces give the restaurant the ambience of a medieval castle. They offer a daily four-course menu for a set price with gourmet options such as spaghetti with truffle cream, veal fillets, local rainbow trout, and spinach dumplings. There is something for every taste pallet.

For a romantic night in the village of Oberwesel, there is **Opperman's Restaurant**. Opperman's offers delicious fine dining with a varied menu from the vegetarian wok pan sauteed in local honey and hot sesame oil, to the SooNahe Kronprinzen-Pfanne which is fried in hot butter and served with organic cream and vegetables. Why not finish the night with a delicious crème brulee or their trilogy of chocolate?



STAY Schönburg Castle is a four-star hotel featuring over 25 rooms for everyone from the solo visitor to the entire family (except the dog). For a romantic stay, they offer options with canopy beds, huge windows for beautiful natural lighting, tower rooms with balcony views, and suites with bathtubs for relaxing. For convenience, breakfast is included in your room rate, and you can pre-book the four-course daily dinner. If you are celebrating a special event or want to add that extra bit of romance to your stay, you can arrange for half a bottle of wine and two glasses to be set in your room upon your arrival followed by a five-course dinner with wine at the restaurant that evening. Rooms fill up far in advance, especially on holiday weekends, so plan ahead by visiting www.hotel-schoenburg.com/en.



LOVE The castle garden at Schönburg Castle is pleasant in nice weather. Meander through the garden and discover fountains, wooden figures, plants, abandoned walls, bridges, creeks, tree houses and swings. In addition, the Tower Museum is open from mid-March to mid-January on Tuesdays through Sundays. The museum takes you through 700 years of castle history and has an observation deck with a gorgeous view of the Rhine Valley for those willing to climb the stairs. Hotel guests can visit the museum for free.

Those who wish to discover more about winemaking can schedule a "small Riesling journey." On this journey, an Oberweseler winemaker takes you on a two-hour drive through Oberwesel and the vineyards followed by a winery tour where you taste four Rieslings made in the Rhine Valley.

Oberwesel dates back to the Middle Ages and there is plenty for you to do. For a historic romantic walk, stroll along the city wall. You'll have a great view of the river and see different parts of the town at the same time. If you happen to be in town on a Friday, catch the weekly market where you can buy some local fare from fish to flowers, meats, cheeses, fruits and more. ■



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Pub Crawling

IN CAMBRIDGE

By Carrie Farrell



So, what's a _____ PUB CRAWL?

At its essence, a pub crawl is when you visit a few pubs and have at least one drink in each. It's about meeting new people and enjoying shared experiences. There is rarely any actual crawling unless you drink so much that you eventually can no longer remain upright. In Cambridge, a pub crawl offers a delightful experience with over a hundred pubs, conveniently located a few yards apart.

Picture yourself ducking through a crooked doorway into a dimly lit room. As your eyes adjust to the cozy ambiance, you notice the eclectic décor – wooden interiors with framed photographs capturing moments of the past and perhaps a fireplace crackling in the corner. The low hum of conversation surrounds you, interrupted by bursts of laughter and the clinking of glasses. The atmosphere is filled with the comforting scent of well-worn leather upholstery, aged timber, and a hint of malt from the ales on tap. A pub is the perfect place to enjoy a round of pints and top-notch grub.

Pub Grub

Curb your hunger with these quintessentially British pub foods.

PIE & CHIPS

Savory pies make a hearty meal and are usually served with a side of peas and chips. Pies are baked with a shortcrust pastry and are filled with a combination of delicious chunky meat and veggies. For something traditional, try a steak and kidney or ham and leek pie.

SUNDAY ROAST

Typical Sunday fare, a roast may be made with beef or lamb. A roast usually comes with potatoes of any variety: mashed, roasted or fried. You can also expect a nice robust gravy, and, possibly, a side of vegetables or a Yorkshire pudding.

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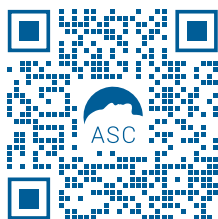


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“
*Each pub is
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 The walls tell
 STORIES*
 ”



Setting STARTED

My first pub crawl was spontaneous. My friends and I casually moseyed from one pub to the next and enjoyed a brew at each one. Enticed by crafted signs showcasing whimsical and eccentric names, we ventured into each establishment with no knowledge-led expectations.

My familiarity with British ales and cider was nonexistent. I asked a ton of questions while staring at the wide selection of drinks available. I may have, not-so-politely, resorted to ordering by way of pointing in an “I’ll have what he’s having” fashion.

Going PRO

During another visit to Cambridge, we booked an organized crawl. Our guide, William (nope, not that William), was so much fun and knowledgeable about the history of each pub.

Our itinerary, near Parker’s Piece, included unique and cozy pubs like The Clarendon Arms, The Elm Tree, The Free Press, The Tram Depot, and The Old Bicycle Shop. All are notable pubs with great atmosphere. Our group sipped through a selection of real ales, draught beer and wines, all while feasting on hearty British favorites such as fish and chips and Shepherd’s pie.

Off-the-beaten-path recommendations from our guide added a layer of adventure. The Old Ticket Office, near the Cambridge Rail Station, is pure eye candy with its stunning restoration and a diverse lineup of craft beer, cider and spirits.

The Eagle, dating back to the 14th century, stands out as one of the oldest pubs. During World War II, Allied airmen used wax candles, lighters, and lipstick to write their names and other doodles onto the ceiling. Boasting even more historical significance, it was here in 1953 that scientists Francis Crick and James Watson



announced the discovery of DNA, thus immortalizing the pub forever.

The pub crawl captures the essence of Cambridge’s history and provides a memorable exploration of the city’s rich drinking culture. Each pub is unique. The walls tell stories, and every piece within seems to have a history. Even if you have no interest in drinking, it’s worth a peek inside.

BANGERS & MASH

A ‘banger’ is typically a pork sausage, while the ‘mash’ is short for mashed potatoes. For this dish, a couple of bangers are often perched atop a pile of mash before the whole thing is doused in gravy. Perhaps there will also be peas.

FISH AND CHIPS

Likely the most well-known pub fare, fish and chips are a fried and salty taste treat perfect for pairing with pub beverages. The fish may be cod, plaice or haddock and is at its best when spritzed with salt and vinegar. On the side, you will find tartar sauce and a pile of mushy peas.

SHEPHERD’S PIE OR COTTAGE PIE

Neither of these special pies has a pastry crust. Instead, a minced meat and vegetable filling is placed in a small stoneware dish, topped with mashed potatoes and baked to perfection. The difference? Shepherd’s pie has mince of lamb, while cottage pie has a mince of beef. ■



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Fan the Flames at a German Therme

By Kat Nickola

You can't live in Germany and not take a dip into sauna culture by visiting a therme (tare-muh). Defined by its use of natural hot springs, a therme will have spring-fed pools, saunas and relaxation spaces. Typically, the thermal pool area is for people of all ages wearing swimsuits, while a separate spa or sauna space is 'textile-free' and for adults only.

While the pools are a fun way to test the waters, it's really the spa and saunas that my husband and I love for a romantic getaway. These are spaces full of relaxation beds, themed rooms, smaller spring-fed pools, outdoor spaces, and a variety of saunas. Treatments like massages aren't a huge part of the experience but can be added. If nudity is uncharted water for you, it's fine to keep on a wrapped towel in the sauna, and wearing a robe while walking around is the norm.

How to visit the spa

- Book tickets (and hotel) ahead.
- Bring a robe, towel and flip-flops.
- Sauna spaces are co-ed, and nudity is required (no swimsuits).
- Undress and store your items in the locker room.
- A wristband will allow purchases; pay on your way out.
- It's cool to wear your robe or towel when walking around.
- Take off your robe to enter a sauna, but use your towel to sit on.
- Cell phones are prohibited; books are welcome.
- Sauna experiences, which are included in your entry fee, will be scheduled on a board near the entrance.



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For readers who are wet behind the ears, here are some highly-rated therme's for your first plunge.

Mineraltherme Böblingen, Stuttgart

Near Panzer Kaserne south of Stuttgart, this relaxed therme is a local favorite. With five indoor and outdoor hot thermal waters, and even a music-themed floating pool, it is super relaxing. The spa area has lots of themed saunas, including some fun ones out in the pretty landscaped garden. It's a great local spot for a first dip.
www.mineraltherme-boeblingen.de

SchwabenQuellen, Stuttgart

Located in the SI-Centrum entertainment center, this huge therme is usually a fully textile-free spa, but the first Saturday of each month allows bathers with swimsuits. With around-the-world theming, you can swim in the Caribbean, relax in an Egyptian hot tub, nap in the Japanese lounge, bake inside the Canadian log cabin or try the Tibetan meditation sauna. The surrounding SI-Centrum makes this a weekend getaway with two hotels, stage performances, movie theaters and numerous restaurants to choose from.
www.schwabenquellen.online

Taunus Therme, Bad Homburg

North of Frankfurt, this Asian-themed therme leans into the theming so much you may just feel like you stepped off the airplane on the other side of the world. You can swim in the heated outdoor pools of the Japanese-inspired garden, relax in the colorful Persian-inspired rooms and feel the heat of the many saunas.
www.taunus-therme.de



Defined by its use of natural hot springs, a therme will have spring-fed pools, saunas and relaxation spaces.

Weidener Thermenwelt, Weiden

Just over a half hour from Vilseck or Grafenwöhr, this local therme is a wonderful place to take the plunge. The pool space is family-friendly, but the spa area is where you want to be. With indoor and outdoor spaces, this quiet spa has saunas, relaxing infusions and interesting resting spaces sure to help you reconnect. For a girls' day out, Wednesdays are female-only.
www.weidener-thermenwelt.de

Caracalla Therme or Friedrichsbad, Baden Baden

The hot springs in Baden-Baden were first used by Celts before the area was built up as a wellness destination by the Roman army. To relive the history, visit the Friedrichsbad therme where a set ritual along 17 stations is said to rejuvenate the body. If relaxation is more your style, visit the modern Caracalla Therme down the road with its large thermal pools and unique sauna spaces perfect for a calm day together. Both facilities use the local mineral-rich thermal water, and there are plenty of local hotels to choose from.
www.carasana.de

Therme Erding, Munich

In northern Munich, this tropical resort claims to be the world's biggest spa. In addition to the thermal pools, the erlebnisbad is an adventure pool area full of water slides. However, it's the Roman-themed 'Sauna World' that makes this a couple's paradise. With a massive thermal pool, a plethora of themed saunas, swim-up watering holes, and unique scheduled experiences, it's easy to while away a special day. The attached nautical-themed Hotel Victory offers packages.
www.therme-erding.de ■



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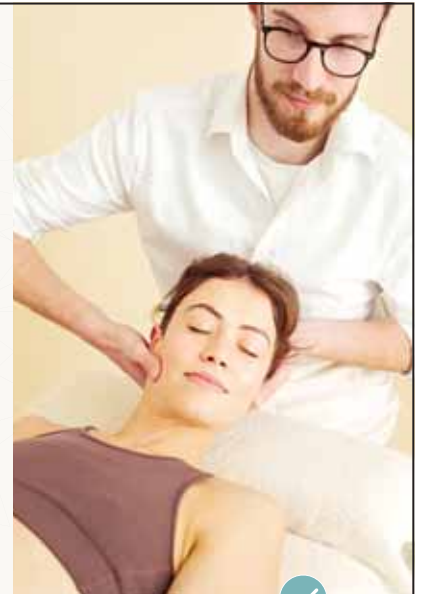
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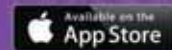
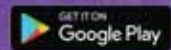
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A ROMANTIC WEEKEND

By Jessica Zen

in Megève

To make the area even more visit-worthy, the mountain gastronomy in Megève is on point. This little village has 89 restaurants and three of them have Michelin stars. **Flocons de Sel**, **Le 1920** is a fabulous choice for a romantic dinner for two.



Snow-covered mountains, candlelit dinners, fireplaces and the spa are calling your name this Valentine's Day. Head to the ski village of Megève in southeastern France for a weekend full of romantic wintry escapes. From top-notch skiing to sleigh rides and rustic chalets, this adorable village is sure to steal your heart.

The village center has cobblestoned medieval streets and lovely old houses. Once a peaceful farming town, Megève has blossomed into a full-fledged ski resort. The Mont Blanc massif surrounds the area and creates the perfect landscape for skiers of all ages and abilities. Those who enjoy wide-open spaces can take advantage of the **Cote 2000** gondola. This area is nothing short of a skier's paradise.

To make the area even more visit-worthy, the mountain gastronomy in Megève is on point. This little village has 89 restaurants and three of them have Michelin stars. **Flocons de Sel**, **Le 1920** is a fabulous choice for a romantic dinner for two. It features an intimate and beautiful natural setting and gourmet food lovingly prepared by the masterful chef. If Michelin stars don't mean much to you, don't worry. The local restaurants feature locally sourced meals with meat that comes from their own farms and plants and herbs straight

from the mountain fields. Regardless of where you choose to spend your special dinner, you are sure to find something that tastes fantastic!

If you want to go all out for this holiday, consider a stay at **Les Fermes de Marie**. This five-star hotel is set in an authentic rescued alpine farmhouse that has been lavishly restored. It features rooms with beautiful rustic, yet upscale furnishings and balconies with mountain views. There is also a fabulous spa with hot tubs and saunas. The numerous bars and restaurants truly make this resort a destination unto itself.

For another option closer to town, try the **Hôtel La Crémaillère**. Horse-drawn carriage rides often roll past this chalet-style hotel, and it is ideally located adjacent to the Chamois ski lifts. Rooms are comfortable in a traditional farmhouse style. The best part? It is only a five-minute walk from the romantic center of town. There is also a nice breakfast buffet and free parking.

Search no further for the perfect winter getaway this Valentine's Day. You and your special someone can enjoy a weekend of skiing mixed with fabulous food and relaxation in the quaint holiday town of Megève. ■

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