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MARCH 2023

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March Events

By Tamala Malerk

EDITOR'S PICKS

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.



Irish Heartbeat March 17, Hamburg

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



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"Weird Al" Yankovic March 4, Dusseldorf

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/.



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.



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.



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.



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.



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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.



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.

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. ■

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PHOTO of the month

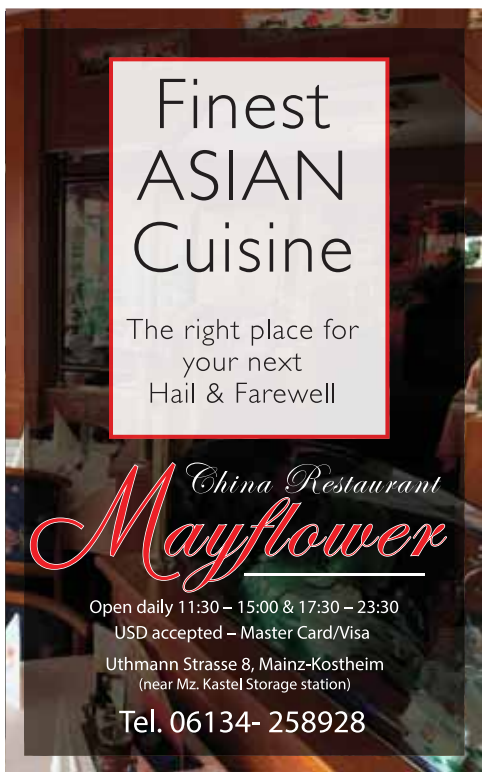
The Ponte Pietra in Verona, Italy is a bridge that has been destroyed and renovated many times since the Romans built the crossing in 148 B.C. After a fifth complete rebuild following the destruction of World War II, it was reopened in 1959, and it keeps faithful to its original Roman archways. The Verona 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.

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Heidelberg Castle

By Lauren Bernasconi



Beautiful, historic Heidelberg Castle is the perfect destination to spend a day with a romantic getaway, shopping, or a family-friendly adventure.

UNIQUE TRADITIONS OF THE HEIDELBERG CASTLE

Heidelberg is known throughout the world for its romantic castle ruins. While the first indication of castles dates back to 1225, the first reference to Heidelberg Castle dates back to the 1600s. With its largely turbulent history, the castle was severely damaged three times by invading armies and ravaged by fire after being struck by lightning twice in a single night. This last event marked the point of its abandonment and subsequent ruin. Culturally, the castle embodies many traditions and stories, including the annual Castle Illuminations, the great Heidelberg wine barrel and the legend of Perkeo the Court Jester.

A CELEBRATION OF RUIN AND RENEWAL

Every summer, traditionally on the first Saturdays of June, July and September, Heidelberg prepares a spectacular fireworks show centered on Heidelberg's Castle and Old Bridge (Alte Brücke). A tradition since 1860, the Castle Illuminations event begins with the castle slowly glowing red with flares, symbolizing the flames of the multiple misfortunes and specifically its largest periods of destruction by the French in 1689 and 1693. After the flares die down, attention turns to the Old Bridge. An elaborate fireworks display is shot off from the bridge. The original event celebrated the arrival of Elector Palatine Friedrich V's newlywed wife, Elizabeth Stuart of England, for the first time to Heidelberg in 1613. Today, the Heidelberg Castle Illuminations attract thousands of guests to the city.

THE KING OF KEGS

Within the cellars of Heidelberg Castle sits an impressive and relatively unknown claim to fame for the city. The Heidelberg Tun (Großes Fass) is considered one of the largest wine barrels in the world. It is specifically known as the Karl-Theodor-Fass, the fourth rendition of the enormous barrel, and was installed in 1751 (the first, known as the Johann-Casimir-Fass, in 1591). Throughout history, the Heidelberg Tun has been famously referenced by multiple authors, including Mark Twain, Jules Verne, Victor Hugo, Herman Melville and Washington Irving. The barrel no longer holds wine, but the public may view the barrel and even climb a stairway to a dance floor installed on top.



LIFE OF WINE

From the pages of history, the legendary Perkeo remains the most famous of the Heidelberg Tun's custodians. Born Clemens Pankert in South Tyrol, Perkeo was an Italian dwarf who caught the interest of Elector Palatine Charles III Philip and was taken to Heidelberg to act as his cupbearer and court jester. His ability to drink large amounts of wine despite his small size, and his classic response to those offering him wine, "Perché no?" (Italian: "Why not?"), earned him the nickname of Perkeo. There are many amusing stories and songs of Perkeo's exploits, but by far the most famous describes how after living 80 good years of drinking only wine, he suddenly grew ill. Doctors advised the jester to drink water for the first time, yet ironically after doing so, he died the next day.

In modern day Heidelberg, Perkeo has become an unofficial mascot, traditionally mentioned in songs and festivals, and you can look for him being playfully referenced by institutions, hotels, restaurants and businesses in the region as you are shopping. ■

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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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Books, golf season and the Harlem Globetrotters

Harlem Globetrotters

Armed Forces Entertainment is bringing the Harlem Globetrotters back to Wiesbaden on March 25 for an exciting performance at the Wiesbaden Sports and Fitness Center. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the show starts at 7:30 p.m. There will be food for sale. A meet-and-greet will be held following by the show.

Free golf in March

The Rheinblick Golf Course offers free green fees for U.S. ID cardholders during their March Membership Drive from March 1-31. Rheinblick also offers free golf club rental for active duty service members E5 and below during the March special. Call civ (0611) 143-548-5485.

'Something Rotten'

Journey back in time to enjoy this hilarious mash-up of 16th-century Shakespeare and 21st-century Broadway at the Amelia Earhart Playhouse. "Something Rotten" is the story of two 16th-century brothers desperate to write a hit play only to write the world's first musical. Performances are on March 17, 18, 23 and 25 at 7 p.m.; March 19 at 2 p.m. Purchase tickets at the Wiesbaden Arts and Crafts Center or the Playhouse.

Skiing in Switzerland

Wiesbaden Outdoor Recreation offers an Express Ski and Snowboard trip to Muerren, Switzerland, on March 18. Cost is \$199 per person including use of ski or snowboard gear; \$169 per person with own gear. Deadline to sign up is March 13 at the Outdoor Recreation Center on



Early Literacy Fair

The Wiesbaden Library hosts an Early Literacy Fair from 2-4 p.m. on March 2 at the Taunus Theater in Hainerberg Housing. The event will feature stories, activities and various community services available to promote the love of reading and learning. The free program is geared toward preschoolers, parents and child care providers.

Spring Break Theater Camp

The Amelia Earhart Playhouse hosts a Spring Break Theater Camp March 28-31 from 1-4:30 p.m. The camp is open to ages 8-16. Cost is \$25 per day or \$75 for all four days. Call civ (0611) 143-548-9812 for details.

Black Forest Ski/Snowboard Express

Wiesbaden Outdoor Recreation offers a trip to the Black Forest for a day of skiing or snowboarding on March 11. Cost is \$149 per person including use of snowboard or ski gear; \$119 if you use your own gear. Sign up by March 6 at Outdoor Recreation on Clay North.

St. Patrick's Day Bash

Wear your green shirt or pants and bowl for free on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Later that evening — wear your lucky charm hat and compete in the St. Patrick's Day Hat



Contest in the Lounge. There will be cash prizes for most original and biggest hats. Green beer will also be available.

Country Line Dancing

The Wiesbaden Entertainment Center Lounge hosts Country Line Dancing on March 11 and 18 starting at 7 p.m. Beginners and advanced dancers are invited to join the

fun.

Bowling specials

Enjoy Two-for-One Bowling on Tuesdays or Penny-A-Pin Bowling on Wednesdays at the Wiesbaden Entertainment Center from 3-9 p.m. Go bowling, save money and enjoy a meal at the Strike Zone.

Career Café

The Employment Readiness Program will host an outreach table at various coffee spots/food courts throughout the community in 2023 as a community outreach. Job seekers are invited to come and get their questions answered — and to view the latest local jobs listing. PLEASE NOTE: Coffee and snacks will NOT be provided (that's up to you). Career Café will be at the Clay Food Court on March 9 from 1:30-3 p.m.

Intro to Coding

Join the staff at the Wiesbaden Library as they work through Khan Academy's Intro to HTML/CSS-Making Webpages course starting on March 5 at 1 p.m. The course will run over an eight-week period, meeting on Sundays at 1 p.m. Students will work at their own pace and will need about an hour to an hour and half to complete each lesson. The staff will be on hand to help if anyone gets stuck. Stop by the library to register and for more information.



Clay North. Call civ (0611) 143-548-9801.



“ 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.

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.



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.



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



4

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



8

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.



7

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.

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



Nine

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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So, What Did you Pick Up in Belgium?

by Erica Fowler



Lace & Tapestries

Centuries-old production in Bruges, Belgium has made it a hub for any type of intricate lace pattern or tapestry you could be on the hunt for. If you or someone you know has a flair for vintage lacey styles from different eras, 't Apostelentje is a perfect pitstop, or even just to get an idea of how long these intricate masterpieces take to construct. Mille Fleurs Tapestries is a 12-minute walk away and has both traditional wall tapestries (like an Alphonse Mucha one that I fell in love with). You can also find other quirky applications of this skill, including throw pillows with dressed-up animals in silly portraits. I can see them fitting right in with a cottage-core or maximalist aesthetic.

Comic Books & Memorabilia

Belgian urban areas boast at least one great comic shop, but Brussels shows its affinity for the art style with more than 50 comic strip murals throughout the city. Memorabilia and loads of comics abound at various shops and boutiques, including characters of Belgian origins, such as Tin Tin and his fox terrier, Snowy. Check out the Comics Art Museum in Brussels while you're there, so you can walk through the history of this long-lasting form of entertainment. In Ghent, the World's End Comic & Games has a large selection with titles in English, manga, a bar and a gaming area, so you can relax and dive into your newfound pages.

Chocolate

Crunchy pralines hail from Belgium, and the decadent truffles and ganache are truly divine. Belgian chocolate uses 100 percent cocoa butter and a higher percentage of cocoa is used in the confections, according to www.visitflanders.com, a website that covers what to see and do in Northern Belgium (Flanders region). There's a Chocolate Museum in Bruges, where you can sign up for an adult or youth workshop and even make your own sweet treats! You, your family and friends will surely love that you either made or hand-picked a box of Neuhaus, Leonidas, Côte d'Or or Godiva chocolates right from their homeland. You're still safe if you've forgotten by the time you leave, because the Brussels Airport is where you can find the most Belgian chocolate sold in any single location. ■

"There is nothing better than a friend, unless it is a friend with chocolate."
— Linda Grayson





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