

# Destination Mediterranean Europe

Golden beaches lapped by azure waters, the feel of sun on your skin and sand under your feet, ancient ruins rising out of parched rocks, stunning seascapes, great art, awe-inspiring architecture – Mediterranean Europe is all these things. But, more than just the snapshots, what makes this region so endlessly fascinating is the reality behind the gloss, the struggles, passions and politics of its 300 million inhabitants.

The Mediterranean has long been a byword for sun and southern sensuality, and it is today the world's top tourist destination. Of the planet's 10 most visited nations, four are Mediterranean countries (France, Spain, Italy and Turkey), and every year close to 200 million people pour into the region.

The reasons why are no secret. The Mediterranean boasts Europe's best beaches, and a long, varied coastline that stretches from Portugal's wind-swept western seaboard to Turkey's 'Turquoise Coast'. Along this stretch the scenery is compelling and the food is magnificent.

The region's cultural legacy is without rival. Classical ruins testify to the power and ambition of ancient empires; Islamic art tells of Moorish sophistication and Ottoman vision; and Gothic cathedrals, Renaissance palaces and baroque facades record the great artistic movements of history. A roll-call of Mediterranean artists reveals names such as Michelangelo, da Vinci, Goya, Monet, Dalí and Picasso.

While the region is steeped in history, however, it is not stuck in it. Mediterranean countries might be conservative by northern European standards – traditions are respected and religion remains an influential social arbiter – but they have enthusiastically embraced modern life. The result is a mesmerising tableau of juxtapositions – packed commuter buses rattle past the Colosseum in Rome; Prada-clad locals sip Starbucks coffee amid minarets in Istanbul; camera-toting tourists snap away in Fez' medieval medina.

In terms of politics, the Mediterranean map is currently a tepid shade of blue. Right-wing governments call the shots in Albania, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Morocco and Portugal. A high-profile exception is Spain, where the socialist leader, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, has polarised opinion with his commitment to progressive, often controversial, social policy. Since assuming power, he has legalised gay marriage (making Spain only the third country in the world to do so), passed laws on women's rights and approved legislation against domestic violence. He's also signed an amnesty granting residency to 700,000 illegal immigrants.

Migration has long been an issue for Mediterranean countries, although until relatively recently it was emigration rather than immigration that was the main concern. Many of the migrants who poured into North America in the early 1900s came from southern and Eastern Europe. Today, however, the Mediterranean is an important destination in itself, and the main gateway into Europe. Policing of the key routes into the region – from North Africa to Spain, Italy and Malta, and from Iran across Turkey and into Greece – has increased in recent years, but still large-scale immigration persists.

Public and political opinion remains sharply divided on the subject. Supporters claim that immigration is necessary to compensate for Europe's ageing population and low birth rates, while opponents assert that it merely exacerbates unemployment and leads to increased crime. National

governments are similarly divided in their approach. Nevertheless, agreement was reached in 2008 on the need for a European-wide response, and the 27 member states of the EU signed the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, calling for a system of targeted immigration and common asylum procedures.

At the time of writing, Mediterranean Europe, like the rest of the world, had been hit hard by the global recession. The most obvious indicator of this has been an increase in unemployment across the region. The effect the recession will have on Mediterranean tourism remains to be seen, but commentators are predicting hard times for countries reliant on foreign tourists, such as Spain and Greece. The continued growth of the Eastern European and Balkan destinations is also likely to slow down. In recent years, these countries have been actively focusing on tourism, attracting travellers with offers of unspoilt countryside and adrenalin-charged adventure sports. And while they are well placed to continue growing – they're affordable, and exotic enough to excite without being intimidating – competition for tourist revenue has never been tougher.

One of the challenges currently facing Mediterranean Europe is how to promote tourism while simultaneously safeguarding the environment. The Mediterranean's natural resources are considerable – it's home to an estimated 25,000 species of flora and some 6% of the world's marine species – but these resources are increasingly under attack from a long list of enemies, including climate change, pollution, overfishing, desertification and coastal erosion. Spearheading the environmental cause is the WWF, whose Rome-based Mediterranean Programme Office is involved with projects across the region. These include efforts to preserve the Mediterranean's cork forests, to save the bluefin tuna from extinction, and to conserve fresh water in North Africa and the western Balkans.

In many respects, the issues affecting Mediterranean Europe mirror those faced elsewhere in the Western world, yet the region remains unique. Located on the crossroads of east and west, north and south, it boasts an unparalleled cultural and geographic make-up. Its myths, its spectacular coasts and snow-capped mountains, its heady cities, its world-class sights and its gourmet pleasures have survived more than 3000 years of tumultuous history, and chances are they'll survive for some time yet.

# Getting Started

Mediterranean Europe is not a difficult destination to make your way around: travellers have been passing through for thousands of years and the region is well set up for visitors. Accommodation runs the gamut from backpacker crash pads to luxurious five-star palaces; transport is efficient and reasonably priced; and there are any number of eating options. English is widely spoken in the main tourist centres, but attempts to speak the local language will generally elicit a friendly response. In the region's rocky hinterland you might encounter some language difficulties, but they'll rarely prove insurmountable.

How much you plan in advance largely depends on what you want to do and when. For much of the year you can pretty well make it up as you go along, but if you're hoping to spend two weeks on the beach in August, you'd do well to book ahead. Similarly, you'd be advised to plan ahead over Easter, Christmas and New Year.

## WHEN TO GO

Any time's good but the best periods are spring (April through to mid-June) and early autumn (September and October). In these periods, the weather is sunny without being stifling (it's generally hot enough for the beach in June and September), crowds are bearable and prices are not at summer peaks. If you want to travel in summer, try to avoid August. Everyone in France, Spain and Italy takes their beach holidays in this month, which means that prices are sky-high, accommodation is fully booked and the major resorts are packed. It can also get uncomfortably hot with temperatures regularly topping 40°C in some parts. That said, if you can bear the heat, you'll sometimes find savings to be made in the big cities as hoteliers drop their rates to lure punters away from the coast.

Summer is the best time of the year to catch a festival; hundreds are staged between June and September – for listings see the Events Calendar, p29. Easter is another big festival period, marked by processions, parades and passion plays across the region.

Ski resorts begin operating in late November/early December and move into full swing after the New Year, closing down when the snow begins to melt in late March or April. Expect to pay high-season rates between Christmas and the first week in January and then from late January through to late March. Away from the ski resorts and major cities, winter (December through to March) is the region's downtime. The weather, if not cold by northern standards, is often grey and wet, and many resorts simply shut up shop until the next season.

For country-specific weather information, see the Climate & When to Go sections in individual chapters. As a general rule, the Mediterranean coast is hotter and drier than the Atlantic seaboard, with most rain falling in autumn and winter (roughly November to March). In most places, bank on high season prices between May and September, at Easter, and over Christmas and New Year. Low season generally runs from October through to March or April.

## COSTS & MONEY

Europe is not cheap, but as a general rule the further south and east you go, the cheaper it gets. Of the countries covered in this guide, Morocco, Turkey and the Balkan nations are cheaper than France, Italy and Spain.

For the low-down on the region's current affairs, log onto [www.southeuropenews.com](http://www.southeuropenews.com). You'll find articles on everything from politics to finance, fashion and sport.

See Climate Charts (p944) for more weather information.

**DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...**

- ID card or passport and visa if required (see p955).
- Travel insurance (see p948) – make sure it covers the countries you're visiting and any activities you might be doing (diving, bungee jumping etc).
- Your driving licence and, if necessary, International Driving Permit if you're planning to hire a car (see p965).
- Your ATM/credit card PIN number in figures not letters.
- Photocopies of all important documents.
- Plug adaptor, power transformer and mobile-phone recharger (see p947).
- A torch.
- A smart 'going-out' set of clothes.
- Sandals/thongs for showers and pebbly beaches.
- A penknife with a corkscrew for those impromptu picnics.
- Solar batteries.

Of all your expenses, accommodation is by far the greatest cost. Whether you stay in youth hostels (roughly €10 to €30 for a dorm bed), budget pensions (up to about €55 for a double) or midrange hotels (from about €80), your accommodation will probably amount to between a half and two-thirds of your daily expenditure. Needless to say, prices drop considerably outside of the main tourist centres and in the low season, sometimes by as much as 40%. For details of accommodation options, see p938.

Eating can be as cheap or as expensive as you like. Grab a bite from a roadside snack bar and you could pay as little as €1.50. Alternatively, sit down to a restaurant meal and you should reckon on at least €25.

Public transport throughout the region is largely efficient. Buses and long-distance coaches are generally cheaper than trains, especially for cross-border travel, and ferry travel is reasonably priced. Car hire is expensive, typically from about €30 per day, plus fuel (also expensive).

As a rough guide, a backpacker cutting all the corners – sticking to youth hostels, snacking at noon and travelling slowly – should reckon on €25 to €50 per day. Midrange travellers staying in budget hotels, eating in modest restaurants and visiting one or two sights a day, can expect to pay anything from €50 to €150. At the top end of the scale, staying in resort hotels and eating full-course restaurant meals could easily cost from €200 per day.

To save money there are a number of things to look out for. If you're travelling with kids, note that some hotels don't charge for toddlers who bunk up with mum and dad, and that many state museums in EU countries are free to under 18s (and over 65s). Discount cards, city and transport passes will often save you a bob or two – see individual country chapters and the Regional Directory (p946) for further details. When eating out, try ordering set lunch-time menus and drinking the local wine as opposed to expensive bottled beer. Note also that where hotel breakfasts are charged as extra, you'll often save money (and eat better) by grabbing something at a nearby bar or cafe.

The best way to access your money on the road is to use an ATM card. ATMs are widely available throughout the region. It's always a good idea, however, to have a little spare cash for emergencies, both in the local currency and in an easily exchanged currency such as US dollars. About €150 should be sufficient. For further details on money matters, see p949 and individual country chapters.

XE ([www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com)) is an up-to-the-second online currency-exchange calculator. Find out the rates for Mediterranean European currencies, and see exactly how much your trip is going to cost you.

Compare prices on everything from travel insurance to car hire, airport parking and credit cards on [www.money supermarket.com](http://www.money supermarket.com).

## TRAVELLING RESPONSIBLY

On a global scale, your individual journey might not seem particularly environmentally significant, but consider tourism's impact on the Mediterranean. The region is the world's biggest tourist destination, receiving about 200 million visitors each year. And with this figure set to rise – the UN's World Tourism Organisation estimates that Mediterranean tourist arrivals will reach 346 million by 2020 – the strain on the area's already stretched natural resources is only going to get worse.

So what can you do to reduce your environmental footprint?

### Getting There & Away

Budget airlines are here to stay and they bring in a large percentage of visitors to the region. This is good news for tourism in the region but less so for the environment as air travel is a major contributor to climate change. Mile for mile, the amount of carbon dioxide emitted for one person driving a car is much the same as for one passenger on a plane, but with flying the carbon and other greenhouse gases are spewed out at much higher altitudes and this has a significantly greater effect on climate change.

To alleviate the impact of your carbon emissions, there are a number of carbon offset schemes that enable you to calculate your emissions and offset them by contributing to renewable energy schemes and reforestation projects. For further information, check out the website of **Climate Careout** ([www.jpmorganandclimatecare.com](http://www.jpmorganandclimatecare.com)), a leading British carbon offset organisation.

There are alternatives to flying into Mediterranean Europe. If you're coming from northern Europe or the UK it's perfectly possible to get to the region by train, bus and/or ferry. See p957 for details on the various forms of transport.

### Slow Travel

Train travel is making a comeback as the concept of slow travel (fly less, stay longer) catches on. Mediterranean Europe is covered by an extensive train, bus and boat network, and with enough patience you can easily travel from one end of the region to the other without ever setting foot on a plane. Overland (and over-water) travel is not necessarily cheaper than flying – although overnight journeys will save you the cost of a night's accommodation – but it allows you to see far more of the region and is often more relaxing than jumping in and out of planes.

Within individual countries, the quality of public transport varies. A hire car can be useful for exploring remote rural areas, but it can also be a major headache in city centres where parking is impossible and traffic chaotic. Many of the region's major cities suffer from the choking effects of traffic smog and while attempts are being made to curb the flow of cars, they tend to be half-hearted. If you've got the legs for it, cycling is a wonderfully green alternative. Scooters, like jet-skis and other vehicles with two-stroke engines, are heavy polluters.

### Accommodation & Food

The choice of where you sleep and eat can impact on the local economy, as well as the environment. If possible always try to stay in locally owned establishments, rather than international chain hotels. By staying in an Italian *agriturismo*, a Portuguese *Turihab* property, a Cypriot *agrotourism*, or a family-run B&B, you're ensuring your money stays local.

In terms of environmental credentials, it can be difficult to distinguish genuinely eco-friendly accommodation options from opportunists trying to cash in on the trend for all things green. Look out for places bearing the EU's

Check out the region's best beaches on [www.blueflag.org](http://www.blueflag.org). Spain has 442 beaches with the prestigious Blue Flag rating; Greece has 416 and Turkey 258.

The Mediterranean is the world's third-largest sea after the South China Sea and the Caribbean. It measures 3900km at its longest point and 1600km at its widest.

## CONDUCT IN MEDITERRANEAN EUROPE

Most Mediterranean countries are fundamentally conservative and attach a great deal of importance to appearance, so your clothes may well have a bearing on how you're treated, especially in Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece. By all means dress casually, but keep your clothes clean and ensure sufficient body cover (trousers or a knee-length dress) if your sightseeing includes churches, monasteries, mosques or synagogues. Also keep in mind that in most Muslim countries, Westerners in shorts or sleeveless shirts are virtually in their underwear in the eyes of traditional locals.

On the beach, nude bathing is generally limited to particular areas, but topless bathing is common in many areas. As a rule, if nobody else seems to be doing it, you shouldn't do it either.

European Ecolabel or carrying certification from accredited bodies, such as Legambiente in Italy, WWF France, or the Malta Tourism Authority.

Eating locally produced food make sense. Most countries in the Mediterranean produce delicious fruit, veg, meat and seafood, so keeping it local shouldn't really be a problem. Let's face it, there are worse ways of doing your bit than eating paella in Valencia, pizza in Naples or a kebab in Istanbul. The same goes for drinking – why order an expensive New World wine when you're in the Burgundy Valley? There are plenty of local beers and wines with which to slake your thirst.

Water is a precious commodity in the Mediterranean, particularly in Malta and Cyprus where consumption outweighs regeneration rates, and you should try to save every last drop. Bottled mineral water gives rise to its own problems, most obviously in the form of the plastic bottles it's sold in. If possible, try to refill water bottles rather than throwing them away – if the tap water is not drinkable, try public drinking fountains.

## Responsible Travel Organisations

There are many green travel organisations out there:

**Responsible Travel** ([www.responsibletravel.com](http://www.responsibletravel.com)) A British travel agency offering everything from gap-year trips to honeymoon packages and worldwide accommodation.

**Ethical Escape** ([www.ethicalescape.com](http://www.ethicalescape.com)) Ecofriendly travel advice with links to accommodation providers throughout the Mediterranean.

**Save Our Snow** ([www.saveoursnow.com](http://www.saveoursnow.com)) Has news on what ski resorts are doing to clean up their act and has listings of green accommodation and tour operators.

**Walks Worldwide** ([www.walksworldwide.com](http://www.walksworldwide.com)) A travel agency specialising in international walking holidays.

## TRAVEL LITERATURE

For as long as people have been travelling in the Mediterranean, authors have been writing about them. Way back in the 8th century BC, Homer penned *The Odyssey*, his epic tale of Odysseus' attempts to return home to Ithaca (modern-day Ithaki – see p416) after the Trojan War. Almost a millennium later, in the 2nd century AD, historian and geographer Pausanias wrote the world's first travel guide, the 10-book *Description of Greece*.

Two of the greatest Mediterranean travel writers, however, sought their fame elsewhere. The great Moroccan explorer Abu Abdullah Muhammed Ibn Battuta (1304–69) is said to have covered some 120,000km in 30 years of travel in Asia and the eastern Mediterranean, while Venetian adventurer Marco Polo (1254–1324) thrilled with his tales of Asian exotica.

But as home-grown authors have left, so too northern authors have sought solace in the southern sun. Goethe and Stendhal, Byron, Dickens and DH Lawrence all travelled to the region seeking inspiration.

Whet your appetite for the Mediterranean with Elizabeth David's classic cookbook *A Book of Mediterranean Food*, a passionately written homage to the region and its food, smells and tastes.

To get you into the mood for a Mediterranean odyssey:

- *Francesco's Mediterranean Voyage: A Cultural Journey Through the Mediterranean from Venice to Istanbul* (Francesco Da Mosta) An elegant read, this glossy coffee-table book follows TV architect and historian Francesco Da Mosta as he cruises the eastern Med.
- *On the Shores of the Mediterranean* (Eric Newby) The ideal travelling companion, Newby turns his sparkling eye to the Italian mafia, Arabian harems and communist Albania as he wanders the length of the Med.
- *Mediterranean Winter: The Pleasures of History and Landscape in Tunisia, Sicily, Dalmatia and Greece* (Robert Kaplan) In recounting a trip through low-season Mediterranean, Kaplan vividly recalls the history behind the area's great landscapes.
- *Labels: A Mediterranean Journal* (Evelyn Waugh) From Malta to Morocco, Waugh cuts a swath through the Mediterranean with his pointed pen and irreverent wit. It's as much about the people he meets as the famous sites, and it's a great read.
- *Route 66: On the Trail of Ancient Roman Tourists* (Tony Perrottet) A light read, this is one of the better 'follow-in-the-footsteps-of-the-ancients' books. Perrottet combines classical references, modern jokes and amusing anecdotes.
- *Pillars of Hercules* (Paul Theroux) With his usual caustic wit and languid style, veteran traveller Theroux leads the reader along the shores of Spain to the French Riviera, Sardinia and Sicily.
- *We Followed Odysseus* (Hal Roth) Join Roth in his boat as he retraces Odysseus's legendary 10-year journey. If you're not going to read *The Odyssey*, this is the next best thing.
- *The Seventh Wonder* (Juan Villar) Part travelogue, part guidebook, this is the entertaining account of Villar's attempt to visit each of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World on a three-week holiday.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**Cheap Flights** ([www.flycheapo.com](http://www.flycheapo.com)) Get the low-down on budget airlines and the routes they serve.

**Ferry To** ([www.aferry.to](http://www.aferry.to)) Book your ferries on this comprehensive site detailing routes, rates, operators and ports.

**Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) Read up on destinations, book hotels and exchange thoughts on the Thorn Tree forum.

**Michelin** ([www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com)) A great planning tool for drivers – get directions, check weather forecasts and peruse maps.

**Seat 61** ([www.seat61.com](http://www.seat61.com)) Encyclopaedic site detailing everything you'll ever need to know about international train travel.

**Visit Europe** ([www.visiturope.com](http://www.visiturope.com)) A massive online A to Z of European travel with tons of practical travel advice and links to national tourist authorities.

## MUST-SEE MOVIES

Here's a selection of celluloid teasers to put you in the Mediterranean mood:

- *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (2008; Woody Allen) Woody Allen gives Barcelona (p777) star billing in this ironic, off-beat comedy. Passions run high as Penelope Cruz turns up to haunt ex-husband Javier Bardem and his latest lover, Scarlett Johansson.
- *Mamma Mia!* (2008; Phyllida Lloyd) All you need to know about this mega-grossing musical is that the music is Abba, the Greek island (p412) setting is gorgeous and it's all obscenely OTT.

The French film *Le Graine et le Mulet*, known to international audiences as *Couscous* or *The Secret of the Grain*, is an engaging study of a North African immigrant family in France.

- *The Talented Mr Ripley* (1999; Anthony Minghella) Set in sexy *dolce vita* Italy, this is an unsettling drama of murder and stolen identity. Matt Damon stars as a bespectacled sociopath giving free rein to his inner demons.
- *Travels with My Aunt* (1972; George Cukor) Based on a Graham Greene novel, this classic comedy caper features a tour de force from Brit actress Maggie Smith and some stunning scenery in Italy, Morocco, Spain and Turkey.
- *Karaula* (2006; Rajko Grlic) A coproduction involving all the former-Yugoslav republics, this bittersweet comedy tells of love, syphilis and a state of emergency in a 1980s mountain-top outpost.

# Events Calendar

Mediterranean Europe's great festivals are noisy, colourful, passionate and anarchic. Ranging from solemn religious processions to wild street parties, costumed balls and glitzy film festivals, they showcase the region's passionate nature and its spiritual character. Here we highlight Mediterranean Europe's biggest and best events.

## JANUARY–FEBRUARY

### INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS

**FESTIVAL OF MONACO** mid–late Jan  
Cheer the world's circus elite as they perform under Monte Carlo's big top (p326).

**FESTIVIDAD DE SAN SEBASTIÁN** 20 Jan  
Drums provide the backbeat for costumed celebrations and prolonged feasting at this festival (p846) in San Sebastián, Spain.

**FANTASPORTO** late Feb  
The annual film festival in Porto (Portugal; p690) screens everything from blockbusters to sci-fi and fantasy flicks.

**CARNIVAL** Feb–early Mar  
In the build-up to Lent, look out for Carnevale in Venice (Italy; p487), Kurentovanje in Ptuj (Slovenia; p735), and Karneval in Rijeka (Croatia; p141).

## MARCH–APRIL

**LAS FALLAS** mid–Mar  
Pyrotechnic wizardry lights up Valencia's party marathon (p809) in Spain for the week leading up to 19 March.

**EASTER** Mar/Apr  
Easter week in Italy is celebrated with parades, processions and passion plays. On Easter Sunday, the pope blesses the faithful in St Peter's Square, Rome. See p458.

**ZAGREB BIENNALE** Apr  
World-class musicians perform at Croatia's most important musical event (p128), taking place in odd-numbered years.

**MAGGIO MUSICALE FIORENTINO** Apr–Jun  
The curtain goes up on opera, classical music and ballet at Florence's prestigious music festival. See p502.

**FESTIVAL OF SUFI CULTURE** mid–Apr  
Blow your mind on Sufi culture and music in Fez, Morocco's spiritual capital. See p636 for more.

**FERIA DE ABRIL** late Apr  
Gorge on folklore, flamenco, tapas and sherry at Seville's week-long jamboree (p825), Spain.

**QUEER ZAGREB FM FESTIVAL** late Apr–early May  
Stick around in Croatia for Zagreb's exuberant festival of gay-themed films and concerts (p128).

## MAY

**MAY DAY** 1 May  
On the first day of May the French give each other *muguet*s (lilies of the valley; see p335); Greeks gather wildflowers (p420); and Italians rock at a vast open-air concert (p458).

**FESTA DI SANT'EFISIO** 1–4 May  
Crowds of costumed townsfolk flock to Italy's Cagliari for its high-spirited annual parade (p540).

**FESTAS DAS CRUZES** 3 May  
Portugal's medieval town of Barcelos stages grand processions, concerts and performances on and around 3 May (p699).

**FESTA DI SAN GENNARO** 1st Sun in May  
In Italy, Neapolitans honour their patron saint and pray for the miraculous liquefying of his blood (p518); also celebrated on 19 September and 16 December.

**QUEIMA DAS FITAS** mid–May  
Students of the Portuguese town of Coimbra raucously celebrate the end of the academic year for a week following the first Thursday in May (p687).

**CANNES FILM FESTIVAL** mid–May  
Cannes (p321) rolls out the red carpet for the film world's finest.

**FIESTA DE SAN ISIDRO**

15 May

Madrid celebrates its patron saint with street parties and bullfights among other things (p756) in Spain on and around 15 May.

**DRUGA GODBA**

late May-early Jun

Ljubljana's flamboyant festival of alternative and world music features everything from new jazz to contemporary folk (p713).

**KATAKLYSMOS**

50 days after Easter

Cypriots hit the wet stuff in commemoration of the biblical flood (p199).

**JUNE****FEZ FESTIVAL OF WORLD SACRED MUSIC**

Jun

With an international cast of top performers, this is one of the Med's most popular world-music festivals (p636), held in Fez, Morocco.

**PALIO DELLE QUATTRO ANTICHE REPUBBLICHE MARINARE**

Jun

Historic rivalries are rekindled in Italy during boat races between Pisa, Genoa, Amalfi and Venice (p547). In 2011 the event is held in Venice.

**INTERNATIONAL İSTANBUL MUSIC FESTIVAL**

Jun-Jul

Catch a concert in a sultan's palace or a 4th-century church in İstanbul, Turkey (p870).

**ESTATE ROMANA**

Jun-Sep

The summer sees thousands of events, ranging from book fairs to raves and gay parties (p458) in Rome, Italy.

**VENICE BIENNALE**

Jun-Nov

A major exhibition of international art with the accent on contemporary works (p487), held in odd-numbered years in Italy.

**VIP INMUSIC FESTIVAL**

3-4 Jun

In Croatia, headline acts at Zagreb's two-day music festival have included Nick Cage and the Prodigy (p128).

**FESTA DE SANTO ANTÓNIO**

12-13 Jun

Lisbon's annual shindig involves parades, street parties and unfeasible quantities of Portuguese grilled sardines (p669).

**RAVENNA FESTIVAL**

mid-Jun-mid-Jul

A month-long music festival with the accent on classical music takes place in the Italian town of Ravenna (p495).

**HELLENIC FESTIVAL**

mid-Jun-Aug

Athens' major cultural event boasts music, dance and theatre performances (p358), Greece.

**GNAOUA & WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL**

3rd weekend Jun

Essaouira hosts this four-day extravaganza of Moroccan Gnaoua music (p654).

**FÊTE DE LA MUSIQUE**

21 Jun

The curtain goes up on concerts across France (p335) for this music festival.

**FESTA DE SÃO JOÃO**

23-24 Jun

Revellers flock to beach parties at Porto's big street bash (p690), Portugal.

**FESTA DI SAN GIOVANNI**

24 Jun

Florentines dress up and play footie to commemorate patron saint St John (p502), in Italy.

**FESTA DEI SANTI PIETRO E PAOLO**

29 Jun

In Italy, Romans celebrate patron saints Peter and Paul (p458) with events centred on St Peter's Basilica.

**LENT INTERNATIONAL SUMMER FESTIVAL**

late Jun-early Jul

A cultural cocktail of folklore, music, theatre, dance and sport (p734) in Maribor, Slovenia.

**ROCK OTOČEC**

late Jun-early Jul

Dust down the denim and head to Novo Mesto for Slovenia's biggest open-air rock concert (p737).

**FESTIVAL D'AIX-EN-PROVENCE**

late Jun-Jul

Enjoy a month of top-class music, opera and ballet (p336) in France's Aix-en-Provence.

**OIL-WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIP**

late Jun-Jul

Greased-up geezers entertain huge crowds at Kirkpınar (p930) in Turkey.

**JULY****BAŠČARŠIJSKE NOĆI**

Jul

Dance, music and street theatre are performed throughout the month at Bašćaršija (p84), Bosnia.

**FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON** Jul  
Avignon, France, hosts a month-long bonanza of drama, music, dance and poetry (p314).

**MARRAKESH POPULAR ARTS FESTIVAL** Jul  
Get into the swing at this celebration of traditional Moroccan music (p654).

**ZAGREB SUMMER EVENINGS** Jul  
Zagreb's Upper Town hosts its summer festival, a cycle of classical music concerts and theatre performances (p128), in Croatia.

**NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF BERBER CULTURE** early Jul  
Fez showcases Amazigh (Berber) culture with music events, poetry readings and exhibitions (p636).

**ORTIGUEIRA INTERNATIONAL CELTIC MUSIC FESTIVAL** early Jul  
Learn to tell your bagpipes from your *bombos* (big drums) at this four-day homage to Galician music (p805), in Spain.

**LJUBLJANA FESTIVAL** early Jul-late Aug  
Thousands flock to Slovenia's capital for world-class music, theatre and dance (p713).

**IL PALIO** 2 Jul & 16 Aug  
Bareback jockeys ride for glory at Siena's legendary horse race (p547).

**SANFERMINES** 6-14 Jul  
In Spain, Pamplona's annual bull running (p801) is not for the faint-hearted. Or the sane.

**BASTILLE DAY** 14 Jul  
Patriotic crowds salute the military parade on Paris' Champs-Élysées on France's national day (p336).

**NICE JAZZ FESTIVAL** mid-Jul  
France's Côte d'Azur swings to the sounds of jazz (p317).

**UMBRIA JAZZ** mid-Jul  
Top jazz musicians lead the party in the medieval town of Perugia, Italy (p511).

**DUBROVNIK SUMMER FESTIVAL** mid-Jul-mid-Aug  
Croatia's headline festival boasts international artists and over 100 performances in the Old Town (p167).

**SPLIT SUMMER FESTIVAL** mid-Jul-mid-Aug  
Drama and music enjoy top billing at Split's annual culture fest (p154), in Croatia.

**FESTA DEL REDENTORE** 3rd weekend in Jul  
Gondola regattas serve as the build-up to a spectacular fireworks display in Venice (p487), Italy.

**IKARI BRIDGE JUMPING** late Jul  
In Bosnia and Hercegovina, daredevil divers leap off Mostar's iconic bridge, Stari Most (p94), into the Neretva River 21m below.

## AUGUST

**ETHNOAMBIENT** early Aug  
Musicians from all corners of the world descend on the Croatian town of Solin (p156) for this homage to world music.

**SEMANA GRANDE** 1st half of Aug  
Towns on Spain's northern coast celebrate their Basque heritage with a week-long frenzy of bullfighting, boozing and spectacular fireworks (p846).

**FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION** 15 Aug  
Celebrated across Mediterranean Europe – shops shut and crowds swarm to the beaches.

**FESTAS DE NOSSA SENHORA DA AGONIA** weekend nearest to 20 Aug  
Three days of spectacular merrymaking, folk arts, parades and fireworks in Viana do Castelo, Portugal (p699).

**SARAJEVO FILM FESTIVAL** mid-Aug  
Bosnia and Hercegovina hosts one of Europe's largest film festivals (p85), screening commercial and art-house movies, almost all with English subtitles.

**MOSTRA DEL CINEMA DI VENEZIA** late Aug-early Sep  
Movie-world A-listers alight at Venice for the world's oldest film festival (p487), in Italy.

## SEPTEMBER

**BIENAL DE FLAMENCO** Sep  
Give yourself up to the passion of Spain's largest flamenco festival (p825), held in Seville every even-numbered year.

**BRADERIE DE LILLE** 1st weekend in Sep  
A mecca for bargain hunters, the annual flea market in Lille (p242), France, is one of the largest in Europe, attracting up to two million visitors. Stalls sell everything from books to stuffed animals, while restaurants compete to serve the most mussels.

**REGATA STORICA** 1st Sunday in Sep  
Gondolas are swathed in 15th-century finery and raced down Venice's Grand Canal (p487), in Italy.

**COWS' BALL** early-mid-Sep  
Folkloristic revelry in Bohinj greets the return of Slovenia's cows from their high pastures to the valleys (p723).

**FESTES DE LA MERCÈ** around 24 Sep  
In Spain, eight-storey human towers lord it over Barcelona's exuberant annual bash (p785).

**MOUSSEM OF MOULAY IDRIS II** Sep/Oct  
Jubilant festivities honour Moulay Idriss, Morocco's most revered saint, in the holy streets of Fez (p636).

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FESTIVAL** mid-Sep  
Women from all over converge on the Greek island of Lesbos for a two-week festival of workshops, concerts, sport and herstory writing (p409).

**ROMAEUROPA** late Sep-Nov  
Rome's premier cultural fest salutes the best international music, dance and theatre (p459), in Italy.

## OCTOBER–NOVEMBER

**ADVENTURE RACE MONTENEGRO** early Oct  
Montenegro's two-day challenge involves 27km of kayaking, a 40km cycle and a 25km run (p598).

**FESTIVAL INTERNAZIONALE DEL FILM DI ROMA** mid-Oct  
Hollywood transfers to the Eternal City for Rome's film festival (p459).

**OHI (NO) DAY** 28 Oct  
Celebrated throughout Greece, Ohi Day sees parades, folk dancing and much furious feasting (p420).

**INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL** early Nov  
Sarajevo's internationally acclaimed jazz fest showcases local and international performers (p85), in Bosnia and Hercegovina.

## DECEMBER

**FÊTE DES LUMIÈRES** 8 Dec  
In France, Lyon's spectacular Festival of Lights (p336) illuminates the city's historic centre.

**CHRISTMAS** 25 Dec  
Festive highlights include Alsace's historic markets (p336), in France, and Naples' elaborate *presepi* (nativity scenes; p547), in Italy.

# Itineraries

## CLASSIC ROUTES

### A TALE OF TWO CONTINENTS

#### One Month / Lisbon to Barcelona

Kick off in **Lisbon** (p664), Portugal's laid-back capital, before heading down to the beaches at **Lagos** (p681). From here, make a beeline to sexy **Seville** (p823), famous for its full-blooded lifestyle. Continue on to **Tarifa** (p839), where you can catch a ferry to **Tangier** (p606). Push on down the Moroccan coast to cosmopolitan **Casablanca** (p624) and the hip resort of **Essaouira** (p627). Next, venture inland to **Marrakesh** (p641), one of Morocco's highlights. Watch the sun set on the blood-red walls before pressing on to **Fez** (p631) and its labyrinthine medina (old city). Once you've found your way out of the maze, head back to Spain via **Melilla** (p617) and **Málaga** (p834). As you head north take time to admire the Alhambra in **Granada** (p830) and the Mezquita in **Córdoba** (p827), two of Spain's most celebrated Moorish marvels. Stop off at **Toledo** (p774), renowned for its stunning cathedral, before hitting **Madrid** (p748), Spain's thumping capital. Overdose on culture and clubbing before moving on to **Barcelona** (p777) to feast on Gaudí's madcap architecture.



Marvel at amazing architecture, get lost in Moroccan medinas, kick back on Atlantic beaches, party in legendary clubs – this 3200km intercontinental trip caters to most tastes. Give yourself a month for a comfortable ride.

## A COASTAL JAUNT

One Month / Marseille to Split

Passing through the French Riviera, several Unesco-listed national parks and a number of full-blooded Mediterranean ports, this three-country route takes in some of the region's finest coastal scenery.

Start in **Marseille** (p307), France's edgy, multiethnic Mediterranean port. Dine on bouillabaisse and enjoy the atmosphere before heading east. Top up your tan at **St-Tropez** (p323) and catch a film at **Cannes** (p321) as you wend your way along the Riviera to **Nice** (p315), the Côte d'Azur's busy, cosmopolitan capital.

From Nice, take a train to **Genoa** (p469), where you can eyeball sharks in Europe's largest aquarium. For more sea thrills head down to the **Cinque Terre** (p471), one of Italy's most spectacular stretches of coastline.

The road now leads to **Rome** (p443), as all eventually do. Take in the highlights before continuing south to manic, in-your-face **Naples** (p514). Don't miss the nearby ruins of **Pompeii** (p521) en route to the **Amalfi Coast** (p524), a dreamy stretch of shimmering seascapes and plunging cliffs.

From the Mediterranean coast, cross over to the Adriatic port of **Bari** (p527) and catch a ferry to **Dubrovnik** (p163), star of Croatia's Dalmatian coast. Once you've marvelled at the city's marble streets and baroque buildings, jump on a boat for some island hopping. Nearby, peaceful **Mljet Island** (p162) is a seductive mix of forests, vineyards and small villages, while further north **Hvar Island** (p158) boasts sunshine, beaches and a vibrant nightlife. From Hvar, it's a short ferry ride to **Split** (p150), Croatia's second city and home to the Unesco-listed Diocletian's Palace.

From the chic resorts of the Côte d'Azur to the splendours of Italy's Amalfi Coast and Croatia's craggy seaboard, this 1700km voyage is a sea lover's dream tour. Allow a month to do it justice, although you can easily break it down into shorter segments.



## AEGEAN ISLAND HOPPING

Three Weeks / Athens to Knossos

With their beautiful beaches, ancient ruins and hedonistic pleasures, the Greek Islands have been seducing sailors for millennia. Today they are connected by a comprehensive ferry network, making an island-hopping tour both feasible and fun.

The obvious starting point is **Athens** (p351). Here, among the traffic and modern mayhem, you'll find some of Europe's most iconic monuments. From nearby **Piraeus** (p365), jump on a ferry for **Mykonos** (p381), one of Greece's top island destinations. A hedonistic hot spot, it boasts action-packed beaches and a pretty whitewashed town. Before leaving, take time for a day trip to **Delos** (p383), the mythical birthplace of the god Apollo. Explore the Sanctuary of Apollo and climb Mt Kynthos for sensational views.

From Mykonos, sail south to **Naxos** (p385), the largest and greenest of the Cyclades islands. With its enticing main town and striking interior, it's much more than a beach stop and is well worth exploring. From Naxos, it's a quick ferry ride to laid-back **Paros** (p383) and the popular beaches of **Antiparos** (p383).

Continuing southwards, you come to **Santorini** (p388), one of the Aegean's most impressive islands. The sight of its volcanic cliffs sheering up from the limpid blue water with whitewashed villages perched precariously on the rock is one you won't forget in a hurry.

Greece's most southerly island, Crete makes a fitting finale. Just southwest of the main city **Iraklio** (p392) is **Knossos** (p393), the ancient capital of Minoan Crete where the mythical Minotaur is supposed to have lived.

**Starting in Athens, this 349km hop around Greece's islands takes in some of the Aegean's most popular destinations. With ferry routes reduced in winter, it's a trip best undertaken in summer.**



## ROADS LESS TRAVELLED

### CASTLES, LAKES & MOUNTAINS

One Month / Ljubljana to Tirana

Mountainous and covered in great swaths of forest, Slovenia and the Balkan countries present the tougher, more rugged side of the Mediterranean landscape. Starting in Slovenia's cultured capital, **Ljubljana** (p707), the first leg of the tour leads northwest to the lakeside town of **Bled** (p719). A gorgeous spot in its own right, Bled makes a great base for exploring the Julian Alps.

From Bled double back to Ljubljana to pick up a bus to the Croatian capital, **Zagreb** (p122). Hang around for a coffee or two in the Upper Town before pushing on to **Bihac** (p106), a pretty staging post on the road to **Sarajevo** (p78). Before reaching the Bosnian capital, take time to stop off in **Jajce** (p103), famous for its catacombs, citadel and waterfall, and **Travnik** (p102), home to some impressive castle ruins.

After a few days enjoying Sarajevo's hip vibe, continue south to **Mostar** (p92), whose Stari Most bridge stages a spectacular diving competition every July. From Mostar, take a bus to **Herceg Novi** (p581), an attractive walled town on Montenegro's eastern coast. Nearby, the dramatic **Kotor** (p581) sits wedged between dark mountains at the head of southern Europe's deepest fjord. The road here turns inland, via Montenegro's former capital **Cetinje** (p590), on to **Podgorica** (p593), the nation's modern capital. About 65km from Podgorica on the southeastern tip of Lake Shkodra, ancient **Shkodra** (p53) provides a good introduction to Albania with its smattering of interesting sights. From here the last stretch takes you south to **Tirana** (p46), once a model of drab Soviet-style urban blandness, now a crazy, colourful, buzzing city.

Revel in wild natural beauty on this 1045km eastern odyssey. As you snake southwards from Ljubljana to the Albanian capital Tirana, you'll pass through stunning mountain landscapes and postcard-pretty towns.



## TURKISH DELIGHTS

### Two Weeks / İstanbul to Göreme

Bridging the gap between East and West, Turkey is a compelling cauldron of culture and style. A modern secular state with a Muslim past, it's a country where mosques stand next to churches and headscarves are as likely as halter tops.

Nowhere are Turkey's contradictions more visible than in **Istanbul** (p861), whose highlights include the Topkapı Palace, Aya Sofya and the Blue Mosque. Further round the Aegean coast **Çanakkale** (p879) is a popular base for visiting nearby **Gallipoli** (p878), scene of vicious WWI fighting, and the legendary town of **Troy** (p880).

Following the coast around to the southeast, you arrive at **Bergama** (p881), celebrated for its ravishing ruins of ancient Pergamum, once a powerful Middle Eastern kingdom. More classical treasures await at **Ephesus** (p886), Turkey's version of Pompeii, near **Selçuk** (p884), itself home to one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

From Selçuk, push on to **Patara** (p898), where you can share a magnificent 20km-long beach with breeding turtles. Tanned up, spend a day or two hanging out in a tree house in **Olympos** (p901) before heading on to **Antalya** (p903), a modern town with an interesting Ottoman core. At this point head inland. A six-hour bus ride away, **Konya** (p913) boasts some fine Seljuk architecture and gave birth to the 13th-century whirling dervishes. Further northeast, the eerie, rocky landscape around **Göreme** (p915) is one of Turkey's most incredible sights.



There's something for everyone on this two-week, 1100km tour of Turkey's delights. Bazaars, battlefields and some of the Med's most beautiful beaches line the land that the ancients knew as Asia Minor.

## TAILORED TRIPS

### THE MED ON A PLATE

To whet your appetite, start with a few days in **Paris** (p211), dining at neighbourhood bistros and lingering over streetside coffees. Warmed up and ready to go, make for Burgundy and serious wine country. Stop off at **Dijon** (p273), at the **Côte d'Or Vineyards** (p276) and at **Lyon** (p278), a cultural and gastronomic centre par excellence. Down on the south coast, **Marseille** (p307) is the place to try bouillabaisse, a staple of Provence fishing folk for centuries.

Over the Alps in Italy, **Bologna** (p492) is considered by many to be the nation's culinary capital. Home of bolognese sauce (known to Italians as *ragù*), it also gifted the world tortellini, lasagne and mortadella (Bologna sausage). Italy also means pizza, and pizza means **Naples** (p514). It was here in 1889 that the *margherita* (tomato, mozzarella and basil) was invented and pizza was propelled to the gastronomic big league.

Over the pond in Spain, **Valencia** (p807) is the place to go for a steaming plate of paella. To the north, in the Basque seaside town of **San Sebastián** (p797), you'll be spoiled for choice as you stumble from one tapas bar to the next.



### THRILLS, SPILLS & BUNGEE JUMPING – A SPORTS TOUR

Mediterranean Europe's varied landscape provides sports-minded travellers a wealth of opportunities. The region is not usually considered a surfing hot spot, but the windswept beaches around **Sagres** (p682) on Portugal's Atlantic coast offer decent surf. Elsewhere you'll find surfing around **Biarritz** (p301) in France and **Essaouira** (p627) in Morocco. In Spain, **Tarifa** (p839) is considered Europe's windsurfing capital.

Cyclists will enjoy pedalling around Tuscany's rolling landscape, and drinking its lush red wine. Various companies in **Florence** (p497) offer bike hire and guided rides. For something more strenuous head up to **Cortina d'Ampezzo** (p497) in the northern Dolomites. The area, with its network of well-marked trails, is a favourite of Italy's hiking-and-biking set.

If you prefer jumping off mountains to walking up them, get over to **Bovec** (p724) in Slovenia, where you can try paragliding, bungee jumping, rafting and canyoning.

South of Slovenia, Croatia is one of the Med's top diving destinations. Cave diving is a speciality, but there are also wrecks to be explored – such as an Austrian steamship in the sea off **Rovinj** (p135).

For something more sedate, head to **Fethiye** (p895), Turkey's sailing centre. Party animals can sign up for a booze cruise, while serious sailors can charter a yacht.



# The Authors



## DUNCAN GARWOOD

**Coordinating Author, Italy**

Ever since backpacking around the Greek Islands as a student, Duncan has been fascinated by the Mediterranean and its apparently idyllic lifestyle. In an attempt to live it himself, he gave up a stuttering career in corporate journalism and moved to southern Italy in 1997. Two years later he transferred north to Rome, where he lives with his Italian wife and two young kids. These days Duncan spends much of his time running up and down the Italian peninsula, writing for Lonely Planet, but he's still drawn to the south, and heads to the Ionian Coast every summer to test the beaches and enjoy the superb Puglian food. Duncan also wrote *Destination Mediterranean Europe*, *Getting Started*, *Events Calendar*, *Itineraries*, *Mediterranean Treasures*, *Regional Directory* and *Transport*.



## ALEXIS AVERBUCK

**Greece**

Alexis Averbeck lives in Hydra, Greece and makes any excuse she can to travel the isolated back roads of her adopted land. She is committed to dispelling the stereotype that Greece is simply a string of sandy beaches. A California native and a travel writer for two decades, Alexis has lived in Antarctica for a year, crossed the Pacific by sailboat and written books on her journeys through Asia and the Americas. Each trip inspires new work, both written and visual – see her paintings at [www.alexisaverbeck.com](http://www.alexisaverbeck.com).



## JAMES BAINBRIDGE

**Turkey**

James first visited Turkey as a student, at the end of an Inter-Railing trip through Eastern Europe, and subsisted on cheese triangles for a week in Istanbul and the Princes' Islands. His most recent Turkish trip was more successful: wandering Anatolia and making up for student starvation by spending his entire fee on *kebabs*. When he's not charging around with a notebook in one hand, James lives in London – right on Green Lanes, the city's 'little Turkey'. He has contributed to a dozen Lonely Planet books and media worldwide.

### LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

Why is our travel information the best in the world? It's simple: our authors are passionate, dedicated travellers. They don't take freebies in exchange for positive coverage so you can be sure the advice you're given is impartial. They travel widely to all the popular spots, and off the beaten track. They don't research using just the internet or phone. They discover new places not included in any other guidebook. They personally visit thousands of hotels, restaurants, palaces, trails, galleries, temples and more. They speak with dozens of locals every day to make sure you get the kind of insider knowledge only a local could tell you. They take pride in getting all the details right, and in telling it how it is. Think you can do it? Find out how at [lonelyplanet.com](http://lonelyplanet.com).



### OLIVER BERRY

**France**

Oliver graduated with a degree in English from University College London and spent the next few years seeing what the rest of the world had to offer (quite a lot as it turned out). He now lives and works in Cornwall as a writer and photographer. His travels for Lonely Planet have carried him everywhere from the snowy mountains of Canada to the sunny beaches of the Cook Islands, but he always finds the best adventures have a French flavour. He has worked on several editions of Lonely Planet's *France*, and can often be found wandering around the more remote corners of L'Hexagone.



### PAUL CLAMMER

**Morocco**

As a student, Paul had his first solo backpacking experience when he took a bus from his Cambridgeshire home all the way to Casablanca. Morocco instantly enchanted him. After an interlude when he trained and worked as a molecular biologist, he eventually returned to work as a tour guide, trekking in the Atlas and trying not to lose passengers in the Fez medina. He returns on a regular basis both as coordinating author for Lonely Planet's *Morocco* and for recreation, and is currently fighting the temptation to buy an old medina townhouse to restore into a more permanent bolt-hole.



### JAYNE D'ARCY

**Albania**

Ever since she watched Celtic Tigers eat up and commercialise Irish culture in the mid-'90s, Jayne's been attracted to countries with more character and lower GDPs. Albania hit her radar in 2006, when she joined her first-ever package tour; although she complained about her fellow travellers, she was pretty stoked to get a new passport stamp and see some amazing ruins in relative peace. The changes in Albania since then are astonishing, but while the similarities to the 'old Ireland' are huge (homemade spirits, dodgy roads), the Albanian Tiger is yet to emerge. As well as writing about travel, Jayne produces features on design, people and the environment.



### PETER DRAGICEVICH

**Montenegro**

After a dozen years working for newspapers and magazines in both his native New Zealand and Australia, Peter finally gave into Kiwi wanderlust, giving up staff jobs to chase his diverse ancestral roots around much of Europe. While it was family ties that first drew him to the Balkans, it's the history, natural beauty, convoluted politics, cheap *rakija* (fruit brandy) and, most importantly, the intriguing people that keep bringing him back. He's contributed to 12 Lonely Planet titles, including writing the Macedonia and Albania chapters for the previous edition of the *Eastern Europe* guide. He's just completed Lonely Planet's first guidebook to *Montenegro*.



## MARK ELLIOTT

### Bosnia & Hercegovina

British-born travel writer Mark Elliott was only 11 when his family first dragged him to Sarajevo and stood him in the now defunct concrete footsteps of Gavrilo Princip. Fortunately no Austro-Hungarian emperors were passing at the time. He has since visited virtually every corner of BiH, supping fine Hercegovinian wines with master vintners, talking philosophy with Serb monks and Sufi mystics, and drinking more Bosnian coffee than any healthy stomach should be subjected to. When not travel writing he lives a blissfully quiet life in suburban Belgium with the lovely Danielle, who he met while jamming blues harmonica in a Turkmenistan club.



## STEVE FALLON

### Slovenia

Steve has been travelling to Slovenia since the early 1990s, when a travel-publishing company initially refused his proposal to write a guidebook to the country because of 'the war going on' (it had ended two years before) and a US newspaper of record told him that their readers weren't interested in 'Slovakia'. Never mind, it was his own private Idaho for over a decade. Though he *still* hasn't reached the top of Mt Triglav (next time – *domen*, promise!), Steve considers at least part of his soul Slovenian and returns to the country as often as he can for a glimpse of the Julian Alps, a dribble of *bučno olje* (pumpkin-seed oil) and a dose of the dual.



## VESNA MARIC

### Croatia, Cyprus

Vesna was born in Bosnia and Hercegovina while it was still a part of Yugoslavia and, as a result, she has never been able to see Croatia as a foreign country. A lifelong lover of Dalmatia's beaches, pine trees, food and wine, she expanded her knowledge during this book by exploring Zadar and Zagreb, two cities she discovered anew. Researching Croatia was a true delight.

Visiting Cyprus is a different experience each time, as the country's changes are so rapid, and Vesna's curiosity about the island has never ceased. She has always felt an affinity with the Cypriots from both sides of the Green Line. The landscape, beaches, fresh figs and halloumi all lure her back for more.



## TOM MASTERS

### Malta

Tom jumped at the chance to research sunny Malta for this guidebook. With childhood summers spent all over the Mediterranean and a love for the region's cuisine and architecture, he has a blast discovering Malta's culinary scene, the secluded beaches of Gozo and the gorgeous architecture and dramatic history of Valletta. Tom is a freelance writer living and working in Berlin. You can see more of his work at [www.mastersmafia.com](http://www.mastersmafia.com).



### VIRGINIA MAXWELL

**Italy**

After working for many years as a publishing manager at Lonely Planet's Melbourne headquarters, Virginia decided that she'd be happier writing guidebooks rather than commissioning them. Since making this decision she's written or contributed to Lonely Planet books about nine countries, eight of which are on the Mediterranean. Virginia has covered Rome and ventured to the north of Italy for Lonely Planet's *Italy*.



### CRAIG MCLACHLAN

**Greece**

A Kiwi with a bad case of wanderlust, Craig enjoys nothing more than visiting the Greek Isles to drink Mythos beer, retsina and to consume countless gyros. He regularly leads hiking tours to Greece and has even taken a group of Japanese doctors to Kos to see where Hippocrates came from. Describing himself as a 'freelance anything', Craig runs an outdoor activity company in Queenstown, New Zealand in the southern hemisphere summer, then heads north for the winter. Other jobs have included author, pilot, hiking guide, interpreter and karate instructor. Check out his website at [www.craigmclachlan.com](http://www.craigmclachlan.com).



### DAMIEN SIMONIS

**Spain**

The spark was lit on a short trip over the Pyrenees to Barcelona during a summer jaunt in southern France. It was Damien's first taste of Spain and he found something irresistible about the place – the way the people moved, talked and enjoyed themselves. Damien came back years later, living in medieval Toledo, frenetic Madrid and, finally, settling in Barcelona. He has ranged across the country, from the Picos de Europa to the Sierra Nevada, from Córdoba to Cáceres, and slurped cider in Asturias and gin in the Balearic Islands. Apart from *Spain*, Damien wrote *Barcelona*, *Madrid*, *Mallorca*, the *Canary Islands* and the now-defunct *Catalunya & the Costa Brava* for Lonely Planet.



### REGIS ST LOUIS

**Portugal**

A lover of wine, rugged coastlines and a bit of *bacalhau* (dried cod) now and again, Regis was destined for a romance with small, irresistible Portugal when he first began exploring the country some years back. Favourite memories of his most recent trip include delving into the bohemian side of Porto, sampling fine vintages from wineries along the Douro and visiting remote corners of the north. Regis was the coordinating author of Lonely Planet's *Portugal*, and he has covered numerous other destinations for Lonely Planet. His travel essays have appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, among other publications. He lives in New York City.

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