



Central Europe



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Ryan Ver Berkmoes,
Mark Baker, Kerry Christiani, Steve Fallon,
Tim Richards, Andrea Schulte-Peevers, Luke Waterson

PLAN YOUR TRIP

Welcome to Central Europe	6
Central Europe Map	8
14 Top Experiences.....	10
Need to Know	18
If You Like	20
Month by Month.....	24
Itineraries	28
Countries at a Glance ..	35

ON THE ROAD

AUSTRIA	40	Bad Ischl	73
Vienna	44	Hallstatt	74
The Danube Valley	59	Wolfgangsee	75
Krems an der Donau	59	Northern Salzkammergut	76
Dürnstein	60	Tirol	76
Melk	60	Innsbruck	76
Linz	61	Mayrhofen	82
The South	62	Kitzbühel	82
Graz	62	St Anton am Arlberg	84
Klagenfurt	64	Lienz	84
Salzburg.....	65	Hohe Tauern National Park	85
Around Salzburg.....	72	Vorarlberg	86
Schloss Hellbrunn	72	Bregenz	86
Werfen	72	Understand Austria	87
Salzkammergut	73		



OLD TOWN, PRAGUE,
CZECH REPUBLIC P99



RESIDENZPLATZ,
SALZBURG, AUSTRIA P65



MATTERHORN, ZERMATT,
SWITZERLAND P537

Contents

History	87
Arts & Architecture	88
Food & Drink	88
Survival Guide.....	89
Directory A-Z	89
Getting There & Away ...	92
Getting Around.....	93

CZECH REPUBLIC .. 95

Prague	98
Around Prague	122
Karlštejn	122
Konopiště	123
Kutná Hora	123
Terezín	126
Bohemia.....	126
Karlovy Vary	126
Loket	129
Píseň	130
České Budějovice.....	132
Český Krumlov	134
Moravia	138
Brno	138
Olomouc	142
Telč	146
Mikulov	147
Understand Czech Republic.....	150
History	150
People	152
Arts	152
Environment	153
Food & Drink	153
Survival Guide.....	154
Directory A-Z	154
Getting There & Away ...	156
Getting Around.....	157

GERMANY 159

Berlin	161
Around Berlin	184

Sachsenhausen	
Concentration Camp	184
Potsdam	185
Dresden & Saxony ...	186
Dresden	186
Around Dresden	191
Leipzig	192
Weimar & Thuringia ...	194
Weimar	195
Erfurt	197
Saxony-Anhalt.....	199
Magdeburg	199
Dessau-Rosslau	200
Lutherstadt Wittenberg ..	201
Harz Mountains	202
Mecklenburg-	
Western Pomerania ...	203
Schwerin	204
Wismar	205
Rostock &	
Warnemünde	206
Stralsund	207
Bavaria.....	209
Munich	209
Bavarian Alps	220
Romantic Road	223
Füssen	224
Augsburg	225
Rothenburg	
ob der Tauber	226
Würzburg	226
Nuremberg	227
Bamberg	230
Regensburg	231
Stuttgart &	
the Black Forest	232
Stuttgart	232
Tübingen	236
Heidelberg	236
Baden-Baden	238
Black Forest	239
Freiburg im Breisgau	242

Lake Constance	243
Constance	244
Meersburg	245
Lindau	245
Rhineland-Palatinate..	245
Romantic Rhine	246
Moselle Valley	247
Trier	248
Hesse	249
Frankfurt-am-Main.....	249
North Rhine-	
Westphalia.....	255
Cologne	255
Düsseldorf	259
Aachen	260
Lower Saxony	262
Hanover	262
Around Hanover	264
Bremen	267
Hamburg	268
Schleswig-Holstein ...	275
Lübeck	275
North Frisian Islands..	276
Sylt	276
Understand Germany..	278
History	278
Germany Today	280
Arts	280
Food & Drink	281
Survival Guide.....	282
Directory A-Z	282
Getting There & Away ...	285
Getting Around.....	286

HUNGARY 295

Budapest	297
The Danube Bend.....	316
Szentendre	316
Vác	318
Visegrád	319
Esztergom	320

ON THE ROAD



SCHLOSS SCHÖNBRUNN,
VIENNA, AUSTRIA P45



HOFBURG, VIENNA,
AUSTRIA P44

Northwestern Hungary 321

Győr 321

Sopron 323

Lake Balaton 325

South Central Hungary 328

Pécs 329

Southeastern Hungary 332

Kecskemét 333

Szeged 335

Northeastern Hungary 338

Eger 339

Tokaj 342

Debrecen 343

Understand Hungary .. 345

History 345

People 346

Arts 347

Environment 348

Food & Drink 348

Survival Guide 349

Directory A-Z 349

Getting There & Away ... 352

Getting Around 353

POLAND 355

Warsaw 358

Mazovia & Podlasie ... 371

Łódź 371

Małopolska 374

Kraków 374

Lublin 387

Koźłówka 391

Zamość 391

Carpathian Mountains. 393

Zakopane 393

Tatra Mountains 395

Dunajec Gorge 397

Przemyśl 397

Silesia 398

Wrocław 398

Sudeten Mountains 403

Wielkopolska 404

Poznań 404

Pomerania 408

Gdańsk 408

Around Gdańsk 415

Toruń 416

Szczecin 420

Warmia & Masuria ... 421

Elbląg-Ostróda Canal ... 421

Frombork 422

Olsztyn 422

Great Masurian Lakes ... 424

Understand Poland ... 424

History 424

People 426

Arts 426

Environment 427

Food & Drink 428

Survival Guide 428

Directory A-Z 428

Getting There & Away ... 432

Getting Around 433

SLOVAKIA 435

Bratislava 438

Around Bratislava 447

West Slovakia 447

Trenčín 447

Central Slovakia 449

Žilina 449

Around Žilina 450

Malá Fatra

National Park 451

Banská Bystrica &

Around 454

Tatra Mountains 455

Poprad 455

High Tatras 456

Belá Tatras 462

East Slovakia 463

Kežmarok 463

Pieniny National Park ... 463

Levoča 464

Contents



GELLÉRT BATHS,
BUDAPEST, HUNGARY P302



ČESKÝ KRUMLOV, CZECH
REPUBLIC P134

Spišské Podhradie	465
Slovenský Raj & Around	467
Košice	469
Around Košice	473
Bardejov	474
Bardejovské Kúpele	475
Understand Slovakia ..	475
History	475
People	476
Arts	476
Environment	477
Food & Drink	477
Survival Guide	478
Directory A-Z	478
Getting There & Away ...	479
Getting Around	480

SLOVENIA 481

Ljubljana	483
Julian Alps	495
Lake Bled	496
Lake Bohinj	500
Kranjska Gora	502
Soča Valley	503
Karst & Coast	505
Postojna	505
Škocjan Caves	506
Koper	507

Piran	508
Portorož	512
Eastern Slovenia	512
Maribor	513
Ptuj	513
Understand Slovenia ..	514
History	514
People	515
Arts	515
Environment	516
Food & Drink	516
Survival Guide	516
Directory A-Z	516
Getting There & Away ...	519
Getting Around	519

SWITZERLAND 521

Geneva	523
Lake Geneva Region ..	532
Nyon	532
Lausanne	532
Montreux	534
Gruyères	535
Valais	536
Zermatt	537
Bern	538
Murten	542
Neuchâtel	542

Central Switzerland & Bernese Oberland. 543

Lucerne	543
Interlaken	545
Jungfrau Region	547
Zürich	550

Northern Switzerland

Basel	557
Schaffhausen & the Rhine	559
Appenzellerland	560
Ticino	560

Locarno

Locarno	560
---------------	-----

Lugano

Lugano	561
--------------	-----

Graubünden

Flims-Laax	563
------------------	-----

St Moritz

St Moritz	564
-----------------	-----

Understand Switzerland

History	566
---------------	-----

People	568
--------------	-----

Arts	569
------------	-----

Environment	569
-------------------	-----

Food & Drink	570
--------------------	-----

Survival Guide

Directory A-Z	571
---------------------	-----

Getting There & Away ...	574
--------------------------	-----

Getting Around	575
----------------------	-----

SURVIVAL GUIDE

Directory A-Z	578
---------------------	-----

Transport	586
-----------------	-----

Language	592
----------------	-----

Index	604
-------------	-----

Map Legend	622
------------------	-----

➤ Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first

➤ Look out for these icons:



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

AUSTRIA40

VIENNA 44

THE DANUBE VALLEY 59

Krems an der Donau 59

Dürnstein 60

Melk 60

Linz 61

THE SOUTH 62

Graz 62

Klagenfurt 64

SALZBURG 65

SALZKAMMERGUT 73

Bad Ischl 73

Hallstatt 74

Wolfgangsee 75

Northern Salzkammergut 76

TIROL 76

Innsbruck 76

Kitzbühel 82

St Anton am Arlberg 84

Lienz 84

Hohe Tauern National Park 85

VORARLBERG 86

Bregenz 86

CZECH REPUBLIC ...95

PRAGUE 98

Karlštejn 122

Kutná Hora 123

Terezín 126

BOHEMIA 126

Karlovy Vary 126

Loket 129

Plzeň 130

České Budějovice 132

Český Krumlov 134

MORAVIA 138

Brno 138

Olomouc 142

Telč 146

Mikulov 147

GERMANY159

BERLIN 161

Potsdam 185

DRESDEN & SAXONY 186

Dresden 186

Leipzig 192

WEIMAR & THURINGIA 194

Weimar 195

Erfurt 197

SAXONY-ANHALT 199

Magdeburg 199

Dessau-Rosslau 200

Lutherstadt Wittenberg 201

Harz Mountains 202

MECKLENBURG-

WESTERN POMERANIA 203

Schwerin 204

Wismar 205

Rostock & Warnemünde 206

Stralsund 207

BAVARIA 209

Munich 209

Bavarian Alps 220

Romantic Road 223

Füssen 224

Augsburg 225

Würzburg 226

Rothenburg ob der Tauber 226

Nuremberg 227

Bamberg 230

Regensburg 231

STUTTGART &

THE BLACK FOREST 232

Stuttgart 232

Heidelberg 236

Baden-Baden 238

Black Forest 239

Freiburg im Breisgau 242

LAKE CONSTANCE 243

RHINELAND-PALATINATE 245

Romantic Rhine 246

Moselle Valley 247

Trier 248

HESSE 249

Frankfurt-am-Main 249

NORTH RHINE-

WESTPHALIA 255

Cologne 255

Düsseldorf 259

Aachen 260

LOWER SAXONY 262

Hanover 262

Bremen 267

HAMBURG 268

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN 275

Lübeck 275

NORTH FRISIAN ISLANDS 276

Sylt 276

HUNGARY295

BUDAPEST 297

THE DANUBE BEND 316

Szentendre 316

Vác 318

On the Road

Visegrád.....	319	Poznań.....	404	KARST & COAST	505
Esztergom.....	320	POMERANIA.....	408	Postojna.....	505
NORTHWESTERN		Gdańsk.....	408	Koper.....	507
HUNGARY.....	321	Toruń.....	416	Piran.....	508
Győr.....	321	WARMIA & MASURIA	421	Portorož.....	512
Sopron.....	323	Elbląg-Ostróda Canal.....	421	EASTERN SLOVENIA	512
Lake Balaton.....	325	Olsztyn.....	422	Maribor.....	513
SOUTH CENTRAL		SLOVAKIA.....435		Ptuj.....	513
HUNGARY.....	328	BRATISLAVA.....	438	SWITZERLAND.....521	
Pécs.....	329	WEST SLOVAKIA	447	GENEVA.....	523
SOUTHEASTERN		Trenčín.....	447	LAKE GENEVA REGION	532
HUNGARY.....	332	CENTRAL SLOVAKIA.....	449	Lausanne.....	532
Kecskemét.....	333	Žilina.....	449	Montreux.....	534
Szeged.....	335	Malá Fatra National Park	451	Gruyères.....	535
NORTHEASTERN		Banská Bystrica & Around	454	VALAIS.....	536
HUNGARY.....	338	TATRA MOUNTAINS	455	Zermatt.....	537
Eger.....	339	Poprad.....	455	BERN.....	538
Tokaj.....	342	High Tatras.....	456	Neuchâtel.....	542
Debrecen.....	343	Belá Tatras.....	462	CENTRAL SWITZERLAND	
POLAND.....355		EAST SLOVAKIA.....	463	& BERNESE OBERLAND.....	543
WARSAW.....	358	Kežmarok.....	463	Lucerne.....	543
MAZOVIA & PODLASIE.....	371	Pieniny National Park	463	Interlaken.....	545
Łódź.....	371	Levoča.....	464	Jungfrau Region.....	547
MAŁOPOLSKA	374	Spišské Podhradie.....	465	ZÜRICH.....	550
Kraków.....	374	Slovenský Raj & Around	467	NORTHERN	
Lublin.....	387	Košice.....	469	SWITZERLAND	556
Zamość.....	391	Bardejov.....	474	Basel.....	557
CARPATHIAN		SLOVENIA.....481		Schaffhausen & the Rhine	559
MOUNTAINS.....	393	LJUBLJANA	483	Appenzellerland.....	560
Zakopane.....	393	JULIAN ALPS	495	TICINO.....	560
Tatra Mountains.....	395	Lake Bled.....	496	Locarno.....	560
Przemyśl.....	397	Lake Bohinj.....	500	Lugano.....	561
SILESIA	398	Kranjska Gora.....	502	GRAUBÜNDEN.....	563
Wrocław.....	398	Soča Valley.....	503	Flims-Laax.....	563
Sudeten Mountains.....	403			St Moritz.....	564
WIELKOPOLSKA	404				

› Central Europe



Top Experiences >



Prague, Czech Republic

Gothic splendour and buzzing neighbourhoods (p98)

Toruń, Poland

Picturesque town with great local life (p416)

Kraków, Poland

Medieval royal capital with a modern bar scene (p374)

High Tatras, Slovakia

Easy alpine hiking at budget prices (p456)

Visegrád, Hungary

Ancient citadel with soul-stirring views (p319)

Budapest, Hungary

A city with beauty and energy (p297)

Vienna, Austria

Imperial elegance and architecture (p44)



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Ryan Ver Berkmoes

Coordinating Author, Switzerland Ryan Ver Berkmoes first visited Switzerland in 1984 when he used it as his mail drop during a year-long backpacking trip. He next tried to visit Czechoslovakia but was denied access by a pudgy bureaucrat out of central casting. Since then he has delighted in numerous, hassle-free trips across Central Europe. These days he divides his time between Europe and the US. Follow him at ryanverberkmoes.com. He tweets at @ryanvb.



Mark Baker

Czech Republic, Slovenia Based permanently in Prague, Mark has lived and worked in Eastern Europe for more than 20 years, first as a journalist for The Economist Group and then for Bloomberg News and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. He travels frequently throughout the region and counts Bulgaria, Slovenia and Romania among his favourite countries in Europe. In addition to this book, Mark is co-author of the Lonely Planet guides to Prague, Slovenia, and Romania and Bulgaria.



Kerry Christiani

Austria Ever since her first post-grad trip to Austria, Kerry has seized every available chance to travel to the country of Mozart, Maria and co. Picking the cream of Vienna's coffee houses, glimpsing September snow in the Alps above Innsbruck and finding out the truth about the von Trapps in Salzburg kept her busy for this edition. Kerry has worked on some 20 guidebooks, including Lonely Planet's *Austria*, *Germany* and *Switzerland*. She tweets @kerrychristiani and lists her latest work at www.kerrychristiani.com.



Steve Fallon

Hungary Steve, who has written every edition of Lonely Planet's *Hungary*, first visited Magyarország in the early 1980s by chance. It was a brief visit but he immediately fell in love with thermal baths, Tokaj wine and *bableves* (bean soup). Not able to survive on the occasional fleeting fix, he moved to Budapest in 1992, where he could enjoy all three in abundance. Now based in London, Steve returns to Hungary regularly for all these things and more: *pálinka* (fruit-flavoured brandy), art nouveau and the haunting voice of Marta Sebestyén.

OVER MORE
PAGE WRITERS

Published by Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd

ABN 36 005 607 983

10th edition – Oct 2013

ISBN 978 1 74220 421 5

© Lonely Planet 2013 Photographs © as indicated 2013

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be copied, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, except brief extracts for the purpose of review, and no part of this publication may be sold or hired, without the written permission of the publisher. Lonely Planet and the Lonely Planet logo are trademarks of Lonely Planet and are registered in the US Patent and Trademark Office and in other countries. Lonely Planet does not allow its name or logo to be appropriated by commercial establishments, such as retailers, restaurants or hotels. Please let us know of any misuses: lonelyplanet.com/ip.

Although the authors and Lonely Planet have taken all reasonable care in preparing this book, we make no warranty about the accuracy or completeness of its content and, to the maximum extent permitted, disclaim all liability arising from its use.



Tim Richards

Poland Tim taught English in Kraków in the 1990s, and was fascinated by Poland's post-communist transition. He's returned repeatedly for Lonely Planet, deepening his relationship with this beautiful, complex country. In 2011 Tim released a Kindle ebook collecting his media articles about Poland, *We Have Here the Homicide*. When he's not on the road for Lonely Planet, Tim is a freelance journalist in Melbourne, Australia, writing about travel and the arts. You can find his blog and social media contacts at www.iwriter.com.au.



Andrea Schulte-Peevers

Germany Born and raised in Germany and educated in London and at UCLA, Andrea has travelled the distance to the moon and back in her visits to some 65 countries. She's written about her native country for two decades and authored or contributed to some 60 Lonely Planet titles, including all editions of *Germany, Berlin* and *Pocket Berlin*. After years of living in LA, Andrea now makes her home in Berlin.



Luke Waterson

Slovakia Dividing his love affair with Slovakia between the castles, the mountains, *pirohy* (potato dumplings) and (more unexplainably) Soviet architecture, Luke has, besides contributions to 15 Lonely Planet titles, written for BBC Travel, the *Guardian*, Avalon Travel Publishing and a clutch of in-flight magazines (thus keeping you entertained even in mid-air). He lives on the very edge of Bratislava, conveniently located for slurping Small Carpathian wine, and his favourite weekend activity is hiking into the hills to a quirky *krčma* (rural pub).

Read more about Luke at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/lukewaterson

itineraries



Two Weeks Top Capital Tour

Spending two to three days per capital will give you a great overview of the region. Start your trip in the dynamic, delightfully idiosyncratic **Berlin**; the history-filled capital of reunited Germany is also something of a party place. Then ride the rails to sprawling **Warsaw**, with a reconstructed Old Town that became the capital of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania back in the mid-16th century. After a few days, continue south to mystical **Prague**. The Czech seat of power is famous for its fantasyland of Gothic architecture – and for great beer. Next? Slovakia's **Bratislava** is a fascinating mix of Old Town charm and new development, while the imperial opulence of the long-reigning Habsburg empire is still evident in Austria's capital, **Vienna**. Just don't satiate yourself on coffee-house culture there; you have more cafes to visit in one-time cocapital **Budapest**. Today Hungary's main city is abuzz with a mix of the modern and the historic. If you have time, detour to **Ljubljana** in Slovenia and tiny **Vaduz** in Liechtenstein; otherwise World Heritage-listed **Bern**, the Swiss capital fought over by the Holy Roman and Habsburg Empires alike, is your final stop. It's so beautiful, it's no wonder everyone wanted a piece of it.



Two Months Central Europe In-Depth

With two months, you can cover the entire region, but it will still be a bit of a 'Best of' trip. Skyscraper-filled **Frankfurt-am-Main** is most useful as an air hub, but you may want to spend a night. From there, shake off jet lag at the chi-chi spa centre **Baden-Baden** before exploring the bucolic towns of the **Black Forest**. Just across the Swiss border, the cobblestone streets and cafes of **Basel** await. Move on to the modern art and ancient architecture of the capital, **Bern**.

Soon the Alps beckon: **Interlaken** and the Jungfrau region have some of the most extreme mountain scenery around. Check out the cafe scene of **Zürich** before crossing the spine of the Alps and getting ready to imbibe in the beer halls of **Munich**. Spend a few days, so you can bus it along the Romantic Road and see the fantasyland-like Schloss Neuschwanstein in **Füssen**. Next stop is the baroque, music-filled city of **Salzburg**. Then it's south into the Julian Alps and picture-postcard, lakeside **Bled**, in Slovenia.

The lovely Slovenian capital of **Ljubljana** is also worth a stop before you ride the rails on to impressively imperial **Vienna** for a couple of nights. A riverboat ride along the vineyard-laden **Danube Valley** is a worthy detour before travelling downstream to the bathhouses and bars of **Budapest**. To the south, the architecture in **Pécs** retains some remarkable Turkish relics.

Heading north again, myriad Old Town cafes in **Bratislava** make a good pit stop en route to the **Tatra Mountains**. On the Slovak side, the most atmospheric midmountain village is Ždiar; in Poland, it's Zakopane. Hike rugged area trails before you continue to **Kraków**, one of Europe's prettiest Old Towns, near the notorious Auschwitz concentration camp. A local favourite and another lively Old Town, **Wrocław** is next, then **Dresden**, a restored German city that exhibits some impressive art.

The whole of Czech capital **Prague** is like a museum, so you'll want to take several days wandering its neighbourhoods, or side trip to spend a night in even more medieval **Český Krumlov**. From Prague exciting and edgy **Berlin** is only three hours north by fast train, or you can return west to catch a flight in Frankfurt-am-Main (7½ hours by train).



Three Weeks Northern Route

Mild weather makes summer the best time for seeing the northernmost reaches of Germany and Poland. Start by spending a few nights in multicultural **Cologne**. Pass two days touring the country's largest cathedral and several small museums. By evening heft a glass of locally brewed Kölsch beer in one of the town's lively beer halls and bars. From there day-trip over to character-filled **Aachen**, where you can float in bubbling thermal baths before wandering the quirky cobblestone streets. Moving on to charming **Bremen** for a night or two, you'll explore art nouveau alleyways and an ornate market hall before winding up at a cafe on the waterfront promenade.

Next, Germany's most energetic port town, **Hamburg**, will keep you entertained for at least three days. You'll enjoy the maritime history, the old brick warehouse district and the new glass-encased philharmonic hall. Take the ferry out to the windswept beaches and seafood restaurants of Germany's northernmost point, the **North Frisian Islands**.

Back on the mainland, **Lübeck** is a 12th-century, Unesco-recognised townscape of medieval merchants' houses and towers that is well worth a stopover. Save at least three days – and nights – for the rich history, museums, bars and clubs of **Berlin**. The Brandenburg Gate, Holocaust Memorial and East Side Gallery at the Berlin Wall are must-sees. In the evening you have your choice of subdued-but-happening nightlife in Prenzlauer Berg, the hipster havens in Friedrichshain or alternative clubs in slightly grungy Kreuzberg.

Entering Poland, make the Old Town of **Poznań**, where the lively university population keeps the ancient centre buzzing, your first overnight stop. Two days in the impressively Gothic, church-filled **Toruń** has a much slower pace. To the north, **Gdańsk** is Poland's largest Baltic Sea port town. You can easily spend a few days wandering the waterfront, taking boat excursions and exploring resorts like Sopot.

Five hours or so south, **Warsaw** may not be the prettiest city, but it has loads of history hidden among the big-city sprawl. Take two days exploring the Old Town and war monuments. End your tour with an outing to **Białowieża National Park**, a biosphere reserve where the once nearly extinct European bison roams. The small village has plenty of places to stay overnight before your journey onward.



Three Weeks Alpine Adventure

Getting up close and personal with the Alps takes time; connections are almost never direct. Allow at least three to four days per region.

Starting out in **Geneva**, take a day and night to enjoy the city's cosmopolitan lake-front, cafes and fountains. If you want to gain altitude immediately, transfer on to quainter, also-lakeside **Lausanne** – part former fishing village with a summer beach-resort feel, part upscale, elegant shopping and dining town.

Next, explore Valais and Switzerland's 10 tallest peaks. Don your stylish togs and base yourself beneath the Matterhorn in the ritzy 19th-century resort town of **Zermatt**. Nearby, cogwheel trains and cable cars provide access to amazing hiking, skiing and mountain views.

From Zermatt take the 7½-hour Glacier Express train ride over high mountain passes to **St Moritz**. This region has 11,000km of hiking trails and incredible black diamond ski runs – and the town has fab nightlife to boot.

To the north, the **Swiss National Park** area is a quieter, more peaceful stop with rugged dolomite peaks, sprawling larch woodlands and untouched, topaz lakes. Stay in the village of **Ternez** or in the park itself.

Continuing on to the Liechtenstein Alps, you'll have to connect through **Vaduz** to get to the famous alpine hike, the thrilling Fürstensteig Trail. Don't forget to snap a shot of the town's famous hilltop castle.

Neighbouring Austria's wild and beautiful Arlberg region is home to **St Anton am Arlberg**, a huge draw for skiers and boarders, with an active party scene.

The Tyrolean Zillertal Valley is as much a summer playground as a winter one. Set off from the town of **Mayrhofen** to go cycling, hiking, rock climbing or rafting.

One of the best drives in the Alps awaits you in **Hohe Tauern National Park**, a nearly 1800-sq-km wilderness with 3000m peaks. You'll undoubtedly pass over Grossglockner Road, a 1930s engineering marvel with 36 switchbacks.

South in Slovenia, Triglav National Park encompasses almost all of the Julian Alps. A postcard-perfect mountain setting and cute village make **Bled** the most popular base. But you should also check out the larger, less-crowded lake at **Bohinj** or adventure-sports-oriented **Bovec** before connecting on from the capital, **Ljubljana**.



One Week Seven-Day Sprint

Only have a week to spend in Central Europe? You don't actually have to run far. The picture-perfect towns close to the borders of Switzerland, Austria and Germany are tailor-placed for a quick highlights tour. Fly into **Zürich**, and spend a night in the lively urban centre that retains an Old World heart; don't miss hip Züri-West. From there, head to the mountains and the ever-idyllic lakeside city of **Lucerne**, where iconic half-timbered bridges cross glacier-cold waters.

Leave Switzerland for its immediate neighbour to the east, Austria. **Innsbruck** has hosted the Winter Olympics twice and is a great mountain base; from there you can ski or hike, taking sustenance in mountain huts. The beer halls of **Munich** are now only a short hop away. This atmospheric Bavarian town with good museums is worth a couple of days; when it's clear, you can see the Alps. A short final jaunt brings you to the perfect combination of hills and music: **Salzburg**. Mozart's one-time home has an abundance of old architecture, including an impressive castle, surrounded by mountains and Alpine lakes.

10 Days Blue Danube

Build on Johann Strauss' classical attempt to capture the mood of Central Europe by exploring the region around the 'Blue Danube' river. Start with a water-view meal in Germany's **Regensburg**, a city replete with historical constructions. Then visit **Linz** and its stunning riverside art gallery before boarding a tour boat. Cruises stop in pretty **Melk**, dominated by an intimidating Benedictine monastery. After that, head to the **Danube Valley**, crowded with castles and vineyards, and best seen by water. On the northern bank of the Danube, **Krems an der Donau** has a pretty cobblestone centre.

Meander on by train to **Vienna**. Take a couple of days to tour the city before going by boat, train or bus to spend a night in the Slovakian capital, **Bratislava**, with its interesting mix of ancient Old Town and communist concrete. From there you can cruise along, following the Danube east into Hungary. Look up at **Esztergom** to see the awesome walled basilica high above. Finish with a few days in **Budapest**, where renting a bike and tootling around mid-river Margaret Island caps off your Danube adventure.



- » (above) Stift Melk (p60), Austria
- » (left) Kapellbrücke (p543), Lucerne



Two Weeks Coast to Coast

From the Adriatic to the Baltic, going coast to coast takes you right up the centre of Central Europe. Connect to Slovenia through capital **Ljubljana**, and make your way to the water. Divide several days between the modern-day port of **Koper** and the old Venetian gem **Piran**. Backtracking north, a side trip to the colossal **Škocjan Caves** is in order before you head into Austria.

From Ljubljana, you go through **Salzburg** (and may want to stop) en route to boating, bobbing and nature-walking in the Lake District, **Salzammergut**. Next, it's avant-garde and arty **Linz**. North in Germany, medieval **Regensburg** lies on the Danube riverfront. From there head north to **Würzburg** to taste the wines of the valley (or to oh-so-cute **Bamberg** for smoked beer). Spend a couple of days of cultural pursuit in **Weimar** – like Goethe, Liszt and Nietzsche before you. You might detour to see **Erfurt** and the nearby castle, or Buchenwald concentration camp. Transferring on to happening **Hamburg**, you've reached the coast and a lively last port of call.

One Month Far East

Taking an eastern tack you'll be travelling through former communist countries, but you'd hardly know it today. Start in **Berlin**, where, instead of a wall dividing the city, you'll find an art gallery and walking path. Then travel to the dynamic East German city of **Leipzig**, where Bach and Wagner once lived. Make a stop in reconstructed baroque **Dresden** before staying a few days in tourist-filled **Prague**. You'll have a more authentic Czech experience in a smaller, Unesco-recognised town like **Telč**. Then, see modern Moravian life in upbeat **Brno**, and head east for another astronomical clock in laid-back **Olomouc**. If you like medieval construction, you'll love **Kraków**, in Poland. To get to Slovakia, you pass through the **Tatra Mountains**, so you may as well stop. Below the mountains, the walled city of **Levoča** is close to the impressive Spiš Castle ruins. A musical fountain and Gothic cathedral highlight **Košice**. Thirsty? Because little **Tokaj**, in Hungary, has been producing great desert wines for ages. Vineyards also cover the hills surrounding the old town of **Eger** and its walkable wine-tasting valley. From there **Budapest** – and your onward journey – are not far west.

© Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'