



“All you’ve got to do is decide to go and the hardest part is over. So go!”
TONY WHEELER, COFOUNDER – LONELY PLANET

PAGE
1

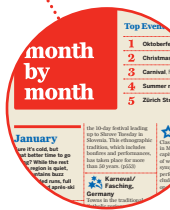
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YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions to help you put together your perfect trip

Welcome to

Central Europe	2
14 Top Experiences	6
Need to Know	12
If You Like.....	14
Month by Month	18
Itineraries.....	22
Countries at a Glance	29



PAGE
619

SURVIVAL GUIDE

VITAL PRACTICAL INFORMATION TO HELP YOU HAVE A SMOOTH TRIP

Directory A-Z	620
Transport	629
Language	636
Index	654
Map Legend	662

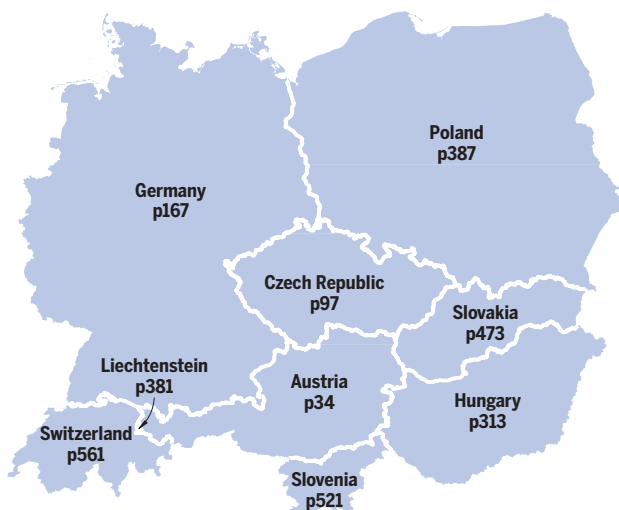


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THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Lisa Dunford

**Brett Atkinson, Mark Baker, Kerry Christiani,
Steve Fallon, Tim Richards, Caroline Sieg,
Ryan Ver Berkmoes**

**Look out for these icons:**

Our author's recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

AUSTRIA34

VIENNA 38

THE DANUBE VALLEY 56

THE SOUTH 60

Graz 60

SALZBURG 64

SALZKAMMERGUT 72

TIROL 77

Innsbruck 77

Mayrhofen 83

Kitzbühel 83

Hohe Tauern

National Park 85

VORARLBERG 86

St Anton am Arlberg 87

UNDERSTAND

AUSTRIA 88

SURVIVAL GUIDE 90

CZECH REPUBLIC ... 97

PRAGUE 100

BOHEMIA 125

Terezín 125

Litoměřice 126

Bohemian Switzerland

National Park 127

Karlovy Vary 128

Plzeň 133

České Budějovice 136

Český Krumlov 139

Adršpach-Teplice Rocks... 144

MORAVIA 145

Brno 145

Olomouc 150

Telč 154

UNDERSTAND CZECH

REPUBLIC 157

SURVIVAL GUIDE 161

GERMANY 167

BERLIN 169

BRANDENBURG 190

Potsdam 190

SAXONY 192

Dresden 192

Leipzig 199

THURINGIA 202

Erfurt 203

Weimar 204

Buchenwald 207

SAXONY-ANHALT 207

Magdeburg 208

MECKLENBURG-WESTERN

POMERANIA 210

Rostock & Warnemünde... 212

BAVARIA 216

Munich 216

Dachau 227

Würzburg 228

Bamburg 229

Nuremberg 231

Füssen 236

BAVARIAN ALPS 237

BADEN-

WÜRTTEMBERG 239

Stuttgart 240

Heidelberg 243

Baden-Baden 247

BLACK FOREST 248

LAKE CONSTANCE 254

RHINELAND-

PALATINATE 256

Moselle Valley 256

Rhine Valley 259

HESSE 260

Frankfurt-am-Main 261

NORTH RHINE-

WESTPHALIA 267

Cologne 267

Bonn 271

Düsseldorf 272

Aachen 274

LOWER SAXONY 276

Hanover 276

BREMEN 279

HAMBURG 282

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN... 290

Lübeck 291

NORTH FRISIAN

ISLANDS 292

UNDERSTAND

GERMANY 294

SURVIVAL GUIDE 300

HUNGARY 313

BUDAPEST 315

THE DANUBE BEND 335

Szentendre 335

Visegrád 339

Esztergom 340

NORTHWESTERN

HUNGARY 342

Győr 343

Sopron 346

LAKE BALATON 348

On the Road

SOUTH CENTRAL HUNGARY.....	355	WIELKOPOLSKA	437	Soča Valley	541
Pécs	355	Poznań	437	KARST & COAST	544
SOUTHEASTERN HUNGARY.....	359	POMERANIA.....	442	Škocjan Caves	544
Kecskemét.....	359	Gdańsk.....	442	EASTERN SLOVENIA	552
Szeged	362	Toruń	451	Maribor	552
NORTHEASTERN HUNGARY.....	365	WARMIA & MASURIA	456	UNDERSTAND SLOVENIA..	553
Tokaj	368	Olsztyn.....	457	SURVIVAL GUIDE.....	555
Debrecen	369	Great Masurian Lakes...	459	SWITZERLAND.....	561
UNDERSTAND HUNGARY.....	371	UNDERSTAND POLAND..	462	GENEVA.....	563
SURVIVAL GUIDE.....	375	SURVIVAL GUIDE.....	465	LAKE GENEVA REGION ..	572
LIECHTENSTEIN.....	381	SLOVAKIA	473	Lausanne.....	572
VADUZ	382	BRATISLAVA.....	476	Montreux	574
Malbun	385	SOUTHERN SLOVAKIA..	487	VALAIS.....	577
UNDERSTAND LIECHTENSTEIN	385	Banská Štiavnica	487	Zermatt	577
SURVIVAL GUIDE.....	386	WEST SLOVAKIA	488	BERN	579
POLAND.....	387	Trenčín	488	CENTRAL SWITZERLAND	
WARSAW.....	390	CENTRAL SLOVAKIA..	490	& BERNESE OBERLAND..	583
MAZOVIA & PODLASIE.....	402	Malá Fatra National Park...	492	Lucerne	584
Łódź	402	EAST SLOVAKIA.....	494	Interlaken	587
Białowieża National Park	403	High Tatras	494	Jungfrau Region.....	589
MAŁOPOLSKA	405	Belá Tatras.....	501	ZÜRICH	591
Kraków	405	Levoča	503	NORTHERN SWITZERLAND	598
Oświęcim.....	416	Slovenský Raj & Around	505	Basel.....	598
CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS.....	424	Košice.....	509	Appenzellerland	601
SILESIA	431	UNDERSTAND SLOVAKIA..	514	TICINO.....	602
Wrocław	431	SURVIVAL GUIDE.....	517	Locarno	602
Sudeten Mountains	436	SLOVENIA	521	GRAUBÜNDEN.....	605
		LJUBLJANA	523	St Moritz	606
		JULIAN ALPS	535	Swiss National Park.....	607
		Bled	535	UNDERSTAND SWITZERLAND	608
		Bohinj.....	539	SURVIVAL GUIDE.....	612
		Kranjska Gora	540		

Central Europe



Berlin

History-making wall, turned gallery and trail (p169)

Český Krumlov

Glorious riverfront
Old Town (p139)

Brussels

BELGIUM

Munich

World-class beer halls
and Oktoberfest (p216)

Jungfrau

Charming villages beneath
glacier-encrusted peaks (p589)

Zermatt

Noble Matterhorn peak
rises above town (p577)

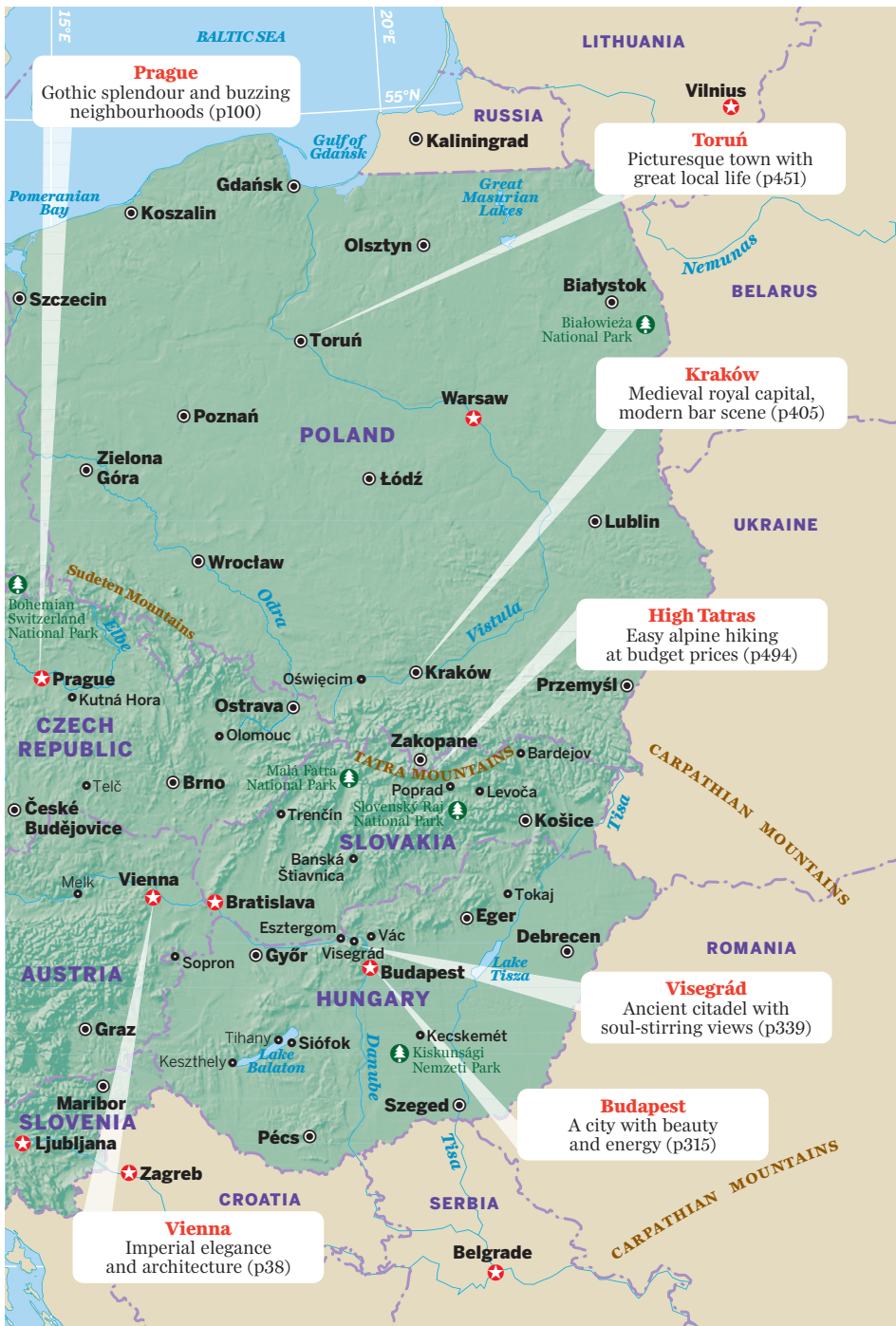
Salzburg

Baroque fortress and
mountain vistas (p64)

Mt Triglav and Vršič Pass

Amazing hike (p539) and
hair-raising mountain pass (p541)

Top Experiences >



Prague

Gothic splendour and buzzing neighbourhoods (p100)

Toruń

Picturesque town with great local life (p451)

Kraków

Medieval royal capital, modern bar scene (p405)

High Tatras

Easy alpine hiking at budget prices (p494)

Visegrád

Ancient citadel with soul-stirring views (p339)

Budapest

A city with beauty and energy (p315)

Vienna

Imperial elegance and architecture (p38)

itineraries

Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



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? **Bratislava** is a fascinating mix of Old Town charm and new development. 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, 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 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**, Germany, 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 club 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 Neuschwanstein castle 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**, Slovenia.

The lovely little capital of **Ljubljana** is also worth a stop before you ride the rails on to impressively imperial **Vienna**, Austria, 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**, Hungary. To the south, the architecture in **Pécs** retains some remarkable Turkish relics.

Heading north again, myriad Old Town cafes in **Bratislava**, Slovakia, make a good pit stop en route to the **Tatra Mountains**. On the Slovak side, the most atmospheric mid-mountain 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**, Germany, a restored city that exhibits some impressive art.

The whole of **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, you can return to catch a flight in Frankfurt-am-Main (7½ hours by train), or exciting and edgy Berlin is only three hours north by fast train.



Three Weeks Northern Route

Mild weather makes summer the best time for seeing the most northern reaches of Germany and Poland. Start by spending a few nights in multicultural **Cologne**. Pass two days touring the country's most massive 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, the 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 quaint, 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-seeing.

From Zermatt take the 7½-hour Glacier Express train ride over stunning high mountain passes to **St Moritz** in Graubünden. 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 **Zernez** or in the park itself.

Continuing on to the Liechtenstein Alps, you'll have to connect through **Vaduz** to get to end-of-the-road **Malbun**. 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 3000 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? 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 up the mountains to 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 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 is 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 midriver Margaret Island caps off your Danube adventure.



- » (above) Stroll over Reuss River on the Chapel Bridge (p584), Lucerne, Switzerland
- » (left) Admire the ceiling of Mirror Hall at the baroque Benedictine Monastery (p57) in Melk, Austria



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 among the modern-day port of **Koper**, less-crowded **Izola** 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, **Salzkammergut**. 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 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**, 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**, Hungary, has been producing great dessert 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.



Kerry Christiani

Austria Born in Essex, Kerry now lives in the Black Forest, Germany. On her second visit to Austria for Lonely Planet she discovered the truth about the von Trapps in Salzburg, sweated out a rare heatwave in the Alps and climbed (almost) every mountain – and in doing so fell for the country and its great outdoors all over again. Kerry's wanderlust has taken her to six continents, inspiring numerous articles and some 20 guidebooks, including Lonely Planet's *Germany*, *Switzerland* and *France*.

Read more about Kerry at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/kerrychristiani



Steve Fallon

Slovenia Steve has been travelling to Slovenia since the early 1990s, when most everyone but the Slovenes had never heard of the place. Never mind, it was his own private Idaho for over a decade. Though *on še govori slovensko kot jamski človek* (he still speaks Slovene like a caveman), Steve considers part of his soul to be Slovenian and returns as often as he can for a glimpse of the Julian Alps in the sun, a dribble of *bučno olje* and a dose of the dual.



Tim Richards

Poland Tim spent a year teaching English in Kraków in 1994-95, having transferred with an international teaching organisation from a two-year stint in Egypt. He was fascinated by the massive post-communism transition affecting every aspect of Polish life, and by surviving remnants of the Cold War days. He's since returned to Poland repeatedly for Lonely Planet, deepening his continued relationship with this beautiful, complex country. When he's not on the road for

Lonely Planet, Tim is a freelance journalist living in Melbourne, Australia, writing on various topics, particularly travel and the arts. You can see more of his writing at www.iwriter.com.au, and in his collection of essays about his Polish experiences as a Kindle e-book, *We Have Here the Homicide*.



Caroline Sieg

Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland Half –Swiss, half-American. Caroline's relationship with Switzerland began when she and her family first moved to Lucerne at age five. Several moves back and forth across the Atlantic ended when she resided in Zurich throughout high-school and beyond, including working a season in a ski resort in the Valais. These days, Caroline heads to Switzerland as often as possible – to ski, indulge in cheese and chocolate or to simply meander along Lake Zürich.

Read more about Caroline at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/carolinesieg



Ryan Ver Berkmoes

Germany Ryan Ver Berkmoes once lived in Germany. Three years in Frankfurt during which time he edited a magazine until he got a chance for a new career: with Lonely Planet. One of his first jobs was working on the Germany chapter of the fourth edition of this very book. Later he worked on the first edition of Lonely Planet's *The Netherlands*, a country where they pronounce his name better than he can. He continues to write about both. These days he lives in Portland,

Oregon. Follow him at ryanverberkmoes.com. He tweets at @ryanvb.

Read more about Ryan at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/ryanverberkmoes



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



Lisa Dunford

Coordinating author, Slovakia A fascination with Central Europe has gripped Lisa since childhood, probably because her grandfather emigrated from the Carpathian mountains that were a part of Hungary, then Czechoslovakia and now are just over the border in the Ukraine. She studied in Budapest junior year at university and, post graduation, worked for the Agency for International Development at the US embassy in Bratislava. While living in Slovakia, Lisa explored the region extensively: skiing in Switzerland, hefting a *weizen* beer or two in Austria and Germany, spelunking in Slovenia and admiring old towns in Poland and the Czech Republic. She returns often both for freelance assignments and to visit friends and cousins. Lisa has contributed to numerous Lonely Planet books, including *Czech & Slovak Republics*, *Hungary*, *Eastern Europe* and *Discover Europe*.

Read more about Lisa at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/lisa_dunford



Brett Atkinson

Czech Republic Brett Atkinson has been travelling to Eastern Europe for more than 20 years, honeymooning in Bosnia, Croatia and Hungary, writing about the legacy of the communist era, and enjoying more than a few local beers. For his fourth extended research trip to the Czech Republic, he dived into Prague's emerging visual arts scene, trekked the spectacular valleys of the Bohemian Switzerland region, and continued to marvel at sunsets above Prague Castle.

When he's not on the road for Lonely Planet, Brett's at home in Auckland, planning his next overseas sojourn with wife Carol. He's contributed to more than 20 Lonely Planet titles, and travelled to more than 60 countries. See www.brett-atkinson.net for details of his latest writing and travels.



Mark Baker

Hungary Mark first came to Eastern Europe in the mid-'80s as a grad student in International Affairs. Those were the dark days of the dying communist regimes, yet even then he was hooked by the region's quirky history, beauty and cheap booze. He's lived in Prague for the better part of 20 years, and is a frequent traveller throughout the region (and now has a special fondness for Hungary). After working as a fulltime journalist for The Economist Group and Radio Free Europe,

he's found permanent employment as a freelance travel writer and is co-author of *Lonely Planet Prague* and *Lonely Planet Romania*, among other titles.

OVER MORE
PAGE WRITERS

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