

PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT
Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions to help you put together your perfect trip

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25 TOP EXPERIENCES

Discover the best of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, from the ancient ruins of the Acropolis in Athens to the stunning architecture of the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul.

Your Budget
Budget to €40
Mid-range €40-100
Luxury €100+

need to know

When to Go

Best time to visit: Spring (April to June) and Autumn (September to November). Summer (July to August) is hot and crowded. Winter (December to February) is cold and snowy.

Top Events

- 1 Creation Centre's Festival
- 2 Carthage New Festival
- 3 St. Ignace's Feast
- 4 Eilat Festival
- 5 European Youth Assembly

Seasons

- Spring** (April to June): Mild weather, good for sightseeing.
- Summer** (July to August): Hot and crowded, but great for beach holidays.
- Autumn** (September to November): Pleasant weather, fewer crowds.
- Winter** (December to February): Cold and snowy, but beautiful for winter sports.

East of East Tour

Discover the hidden gems of Eastern Europe, from the ancient ruins of the Acropolis in Athens to the stunning architecture of the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul.

Includes: Athens, Istanbul, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Krakow, Warsaw, Berlin, London.

month by month

January: Winter holidays, snow in the mountains.

February: Ski season, Valentine's Day.

March: Spring break, Easter.

April: Spring weather, Easter.

May: Spring weather, Mother's Day.

June: Summer weather, Father's Day.

July: Summer weather, Independence Day.

August: Summer weather, August.

September: Autumn weather, Labor Day.

October: Autumn weather, Halloween.

November: Winter weather, Thanksgiving.

December: Winter weather, Christmas.

SURVIVAL GUIDE

VITAL PRACTICAL INFORMATION TO HELP YOU HAVE A SMOOTH TRIP

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Directory A-Z

Find everything you need to know about Eastern Europe, from the best time to visit to the most interesting sights.

Includes: Accommodation, Transport, Language, Index, Map Legend.





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**Look out for these icons:**

Our author's recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

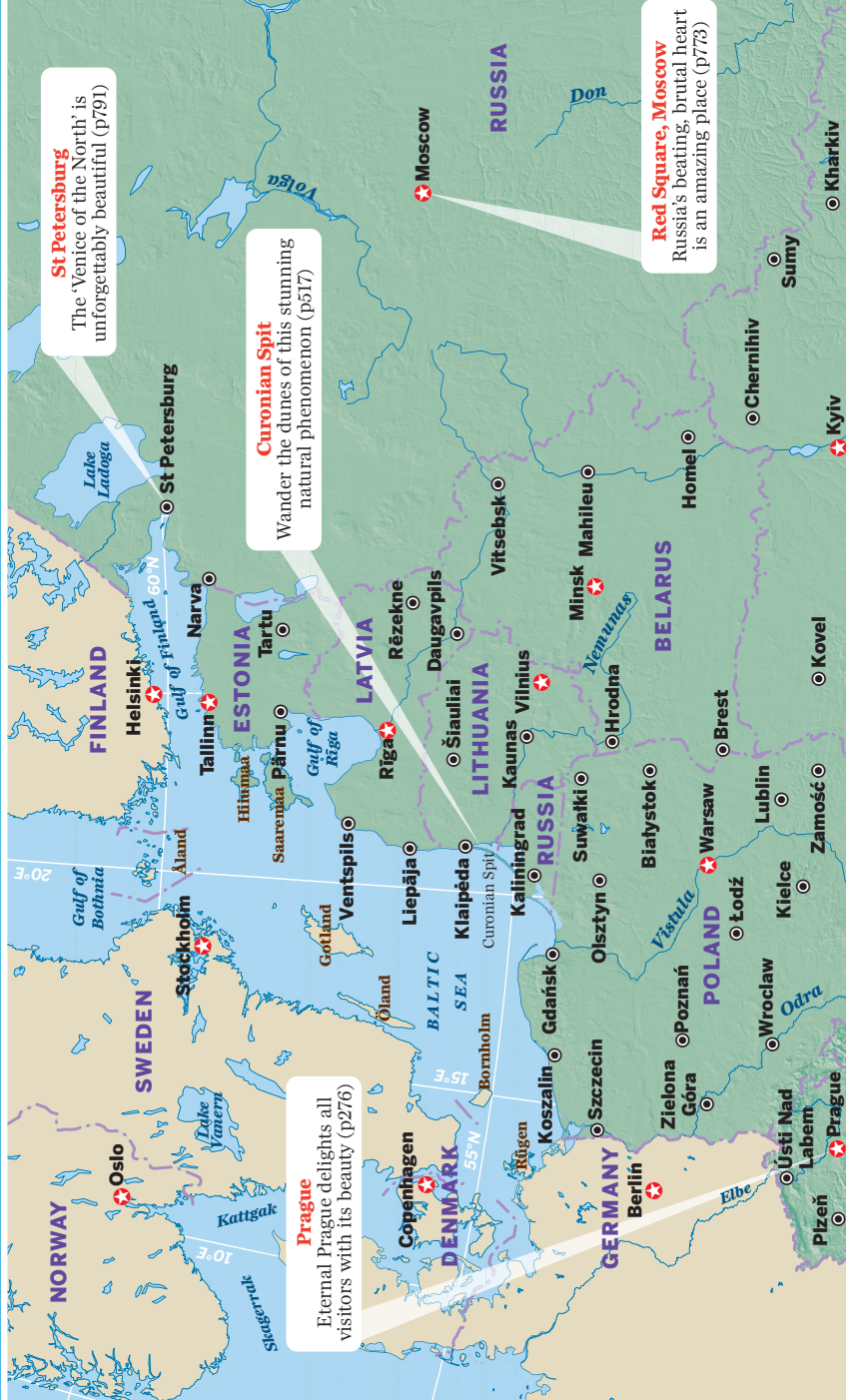
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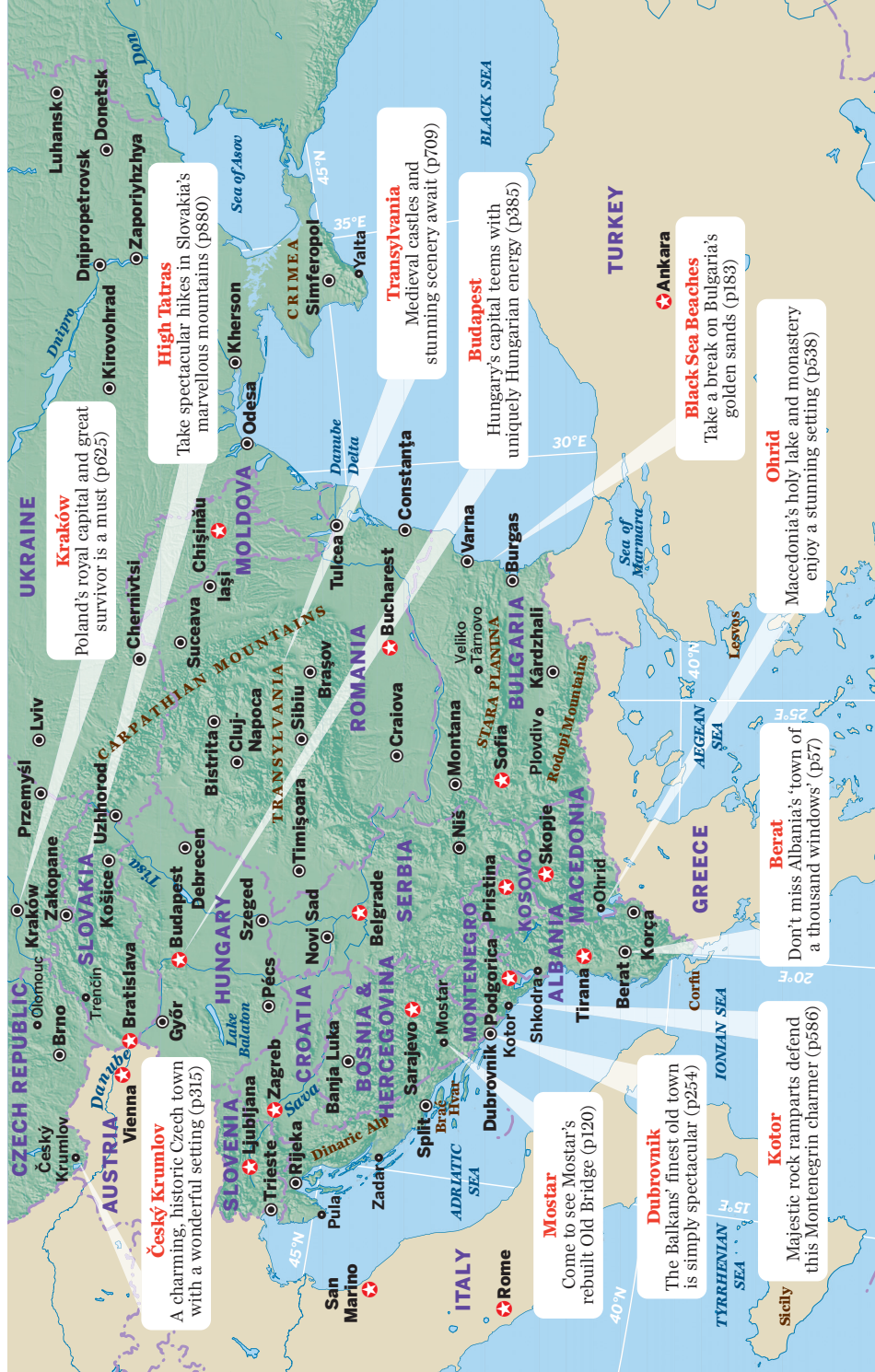
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Eastern Europe

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MOLDOVA

ROMANIA

BULGARIA

GREECE

TURKEY

ITALY

CZECH REPUBLIC

SLOVAKIA

AUSTRIA

HUNGARY

CROATIA

BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA

SERBIA

MONTENEGRO

KOSOVO

ALBANIA

MACEDONIA

CHERNIVTSI

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ZAKOPANE

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STARA PLANINA

SOFIA

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RIJEKA

ZAGREB

LJUBLJANA

TRIESTE

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

Essential Eastern Europe

Begin your trip in **Prague**, spending several days absorbing the Old Town, Lesser Side and the magnificent Prague Castle. Don't miss nearby towns such as beer lovers' mecca **Pilsen** and beautiful **Kutná Hora**.

On day five head by train into Poland and regal **Kraków**, with its gobsmacking Old Town and the vast Rynek Główny. Spending three nights here allows you to get to know the Wavel Castle complex, off-beat Kazimierz and a day trip to harrowing **Oświęcim** (Auschwitz).

On day eight head south to Slovakia, where you'll pass through magnificent scenery in the High Tatras before arriving in **Bratislava**, with its grand castle and wonderful Danube views.

On day 10 take a boat down the Danube to **Budapest**, where you can spend hours in luxurious sulphur baths, explore the famous coffee houses and take in the dazzling art and architecture of the forward-looking Hungarian capital. From here visit the Hungarian countryside - try the baroque city of **Eger**, or **Pécs**, full of relics from the Turkish occupation.



Three Weeks East of East Tour

Begin in bustling **Warsaw**, where you can see the reconstructed Old Town and learn about its dark history. From here, head by train to **Lviv**, Ukraine's most beautiful city, and spend a day enjoying the Old Town's churches and the undeniable beauty of a city that is yet to be discovered by the tour group crowd. From Lviv, continue by train to fascinating and historic **Kyiv**, the Jerusalem of East Slavonic culture.

After a few days enjoying the sights in the Ukrainian capital, including the awesome Caves Monastery Complex, take the sleeper train to the megalopolis **Moscow**, Europe's biggest city and a place of striking extremes, dazzling wealth and gridlocked traffic. Drink in the history of the Kremlin, see Lenin, St Basil's and Red Sq, and sample the nightlife and fashion for which the city is now rightly famous.

On day 10 get out of Moscow and visit one or two of the towns in the **Golden Ring** to get a sense of the Russian countryside. Next on the agenda is the beautiful baroque and neoclassical architecture of mind-blowing **St Petersburg**. You can easily spend three or four days in the city itself, although there are abundant sights outside it as well, such as the tsarist palaces at **Petrodvorets** or Tsarskoye Selo.

From Russia take the train to Estonia's magical capital where you can soak up the Old Town of medieval **Tallinn** and the rural delights of **Saaremaa** before heading south to Latvia. The Latvian capital **Riga** boasts Europe's finest collection of art nouveau architecture and is a delightful place to spend a few days. Latvia has plenty of other highlights to offer though, such as the medieval castles and caves of **Sigulda** and the breathtaking Baltic coastline around **Ventspils**. Finally, cross into Lithuania, where a couple of nights in charming **Vilnius** will reveal the Baltic's least known and most underrated capital. From Vilnius make a trip to the huge sand dunes and fragile ecological environment of the amazing **Curonian Spit**. Those who have made the effort to get a visa can then take the train to the isolated republic of Belarus and its Stalinist-style capital **Minsk** before re-entering Poland and heading back to Warsaw.



Four Weeks The Balkans & Beyond

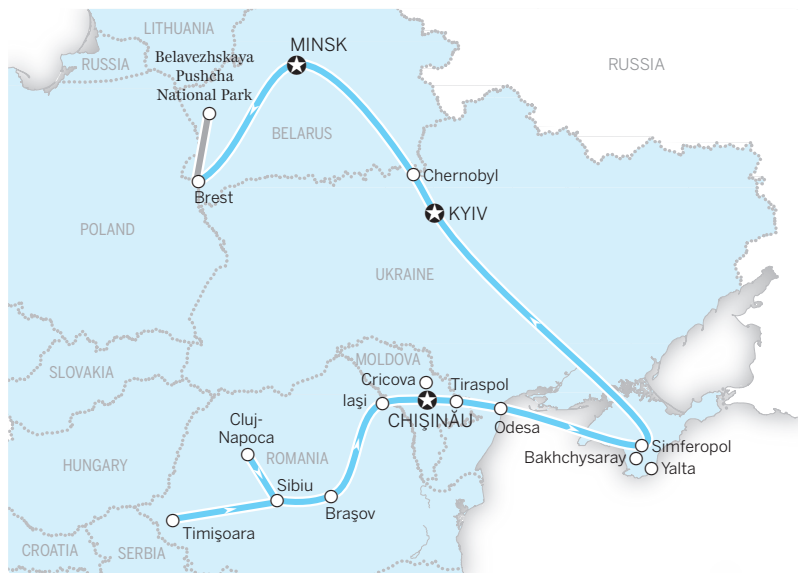
Begin in lively little Slovenia, with a cheap flight to charming **Ljubljana**. Indulge in superb scenery and adrenaline-rush mountain sports in the **Julian Alps** before heading south to the Croatian coast and working your way through the beaches along the **Dalmatian coast**. Stop in **Dubrovnik** to explore the Old Town, its vast ramparts and the surrounding islands, which shouldn't be missed. Take a side trip to Bosnia – perhaps a day trip to **Mostar** to see the legendary bridge and the interesting multiethnic community that has enjoyed rejuvenation since the Balkan War, or a night or two in the bustling capital of **Sarajevo**.

Then continue south into Montenegro, one of Europe's youngest countries. Visit the historic walled city of **Kotor**, see the wonderful natural fjord and surrounding hills, and enjoy some of the country's beautiful beaches around **Sveti Stefan** before heading into Albania.

From the northern city of **Shkodra** take a bus straight on to **Tirana**, a mountain-shrouded ramshackle capital on the rise. Make an excursion to historic **Kruja** and the gorgeous Unesco-heritage town of **Berat** before taking a bus through the mountains into little-explored Macedonia, ending up in beautiful **Ohrid**. Spend at least two days here, enjoying the wonderful monastery and swimming in the eponymous lake. Make your way to **Skopje**, Macedonia's fun capital, from where you can head overland into Bulgaria.

Your obvious first stop is **Sofia**, one of Europe's best value capitals and a little known gem. But there's more good stuff to come once you continue east to **Veliko Tarnovo**, the awesome ancient capital and university town with a dramatic setting over a fast-flowing river. From here it's an easy bus to the beach at **Varna**, complete with marvellous museums, Roman ruins and open-air nightclubs.

Finally plunge into Romania. Start off in **Bucharest** for excellent food and nightlife and a taste of megalomaniac architecture before heading to mythic Transylvania. Use **Cluj-Napoca** as your base for visiting the region of Maramures, then head for the medieval superlatives of **Sibiu** and **Braşov** before heading on to the **Danube Delta**, where you can ogle birds, dine on fish and enjoy some of the quietest beaches in Europe.



Four Weeks On The Edge

Begin with a cheap flight from Western Europe to **Timișoara** or **Cluj-Napoca** before getting medieval in **Sibiu** and/or **Brașov** and making a run to lively **Iași**, near the Moldovan border.

Here the real adventure starts – cross into Moldova and head for the entertaining capital, **Chișinău**, where partying is a way of life and the excellent local wine is plentiful and cheap, including that from the must-visit vineyards of **Cricova**. Travel into Transnistria, a country that doesn't officially exist and where the clock has resolutely stopped somewhere in the mid-1980s. In the fascinating 'capital' **Tiraspol** you'll feel as if time has stood still for two decades.

Entering Ukraine, make a beeline for the ethnic melting pot at **Odesa** and enjoy the relaxed pace of the Black Sea and its raucous nightlife during the summer months. If you want to check out the Crimean peninsula, head to **Simferopol**, the area's transport hub. From here you can make a loop around the peninsula to admire the mountainous landscapes, the tsarist-era palaces near **Yalta**, and the fantastic Khan's Palace and monastery at **Bakhchysaray**.

When you have had your fill of sun and sea, head north to **Kyiv**, which demands several days' attention. This modern capital city is at once the ancient seat of Slavic and Orthodox culture and a modern, industrial Soviet city. Don't miss the Caves Monastery Complex and St Sophia's Cathedral. If you dare, book a tour to **Chernobyl**, and become one of the few people in the world to visit the towns nearby to the ill-fated reactor No 4.

The final stop on this tour through the most-remote parts of the region is Belarus, Europe's so-called 'last dictatorship'. Have a blast in monolithic **Minsk** and find a surprising amount going on in a city dominated by huge Stalinist avenues and Soviet memorials. Heading west, stop at **Brest** on the border and use it as a base to visit **Belavezhskaya Pushcha National Park** where you'll be able to see Europe's largest mammal, the zobr (European bison) as well as a host of other wild beauties before crossing back into the EU.



Four Weeks The Ionian to the Baltic

This trip takes you from Eastern Europe's south to its northern tip. Arrive in mountainous Albania by ferry from Corfu at the busy port of **Saranda**, then stay the night and try to see the glorious ruins of Butrint right on the Greek border before travelling up the **Ionian Coast** to **Tirana**, perhaps via **Gjirokastra** or **Berat**, two of Albania's loveliest old towns. Spend a day or two exploring the Albanian capital before taking the bus to **Shkodra** and travelling on to Montenegro.

Don't miss lovely **Kotor** and its spectacular setting and old town before picking up an overnight sleeper train to Belgrade from **Bar**. The scenery en route is spectacular, especially around the **Morača Canyon**.

Arriving the next morning in **Belgrade** you'll be struck by how vibrant and rejuvenated the Serbian capital is – it's definitely worth giving it a couple of days. Continue north to **Novi Sad** – if you come in July you might catch the EXIT Festival, held annually in the city's historic hilltop fortress.

Cross into Hungary at pretty **Szeged** and head for **Lake Balaton** for some sublime swimming. Keep surging north into Slovakia, aiming for plucky traveller favourite **Bratislava**, where it's perfectly acceptable to kick back and enjoy the good food and nightlife for a few days before going on to the incredible scenery of **Slovenský Raj National Park**.

Crossing the Tatra Mountains into Poland, travel via **Kraków** to unsung gem **Wrocław**, spending a few days in both before dropping in on beautifully restored **Poznań**. From here, the Baltic is yours. Try any of the towns along the coast: Hel and **Leba** are both recommended for beaches, wildlife and water sports; **Malbork** is famed for Europe's biggest Gothic castle; while bustling Hanseatic **Gdansk** (formerly the German Free City of Danzig) is the thriving port city where WWII broke out and Solidarity was born. Next up is the plucky Russian Baltic enclave of **Kaliningrad** – remember to have sorted your visa ahead of time! – spend some time in the decidedly German city, and venture out to see the **Curonian Spit** as well, before flying on to **St Petersburg**, the most northern city in this book, for several days spent in Eastern Europe's most beautiful architectural ensemble.



Two Weeks Baltic Blast

This trip along the Baltic coast takes you through four very different countries and across a region that few travellers ever get to know beyond the universally loved capital cities of Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius. Beginning in the gloriously beautiful Baltic city of **St Petersburg** for three nights, see the Hermitage, the Admiralty and vast Nevsky Prospekt's crumbling mansions and palatial residences. For a real palace, head to the superbly restored out-of-town palace of Peter the Great at **Petrodvorets**, itself positioned with glorious views over the Baltic. Travel to **Narva**, walking across the long bridge connecting Russia and Estonia and getting great views of the castle. Carry on to the Estonian capital **Tallinn** for two days and wander the charmingly chocolate box streets of the 14th and 15th century Old Town before heading to the beautiful, remote and pine-forest-clad island of **Saaremaa** for a day or two's exploration. From Saaremaa, head to the inviting Estonian beach resort of **Pärnu** for a slice of Eastern European holiday making (think mud baths, Bacchanalian youth and golden-sand beaches) before continuing south into Latvia. Stop off in cheerful, castle-rich **Sigulda** and spend a day or two walking in tranquil landscapes and thick forests of the **Gauja National Park** before going to **Riga** for a couple of nights. Latvia's delightful capital, where you can soak up the fantastic architecture, the Old Town and friendly atmosphere, has plenty to keep you interested for several days. Lithuania is next up – and it greets you straight away with its astounding hill of crosses in **Šiauliai**, a must-see even if there's no reason to dawdle. Charming university town **Kaunas** is Lithuania's second city and boasts a leafy old centre and friendly locals, as well as being just a short distance away from the chilling Ninth Fort concentration camp. Finally, end your journey in beautiful **Vilnius**, the country's crowning glory, which boasts the biggest Old Town in the Baltic and is still relatively undiscovered by tour groups. To add to its quirky kudos, don't miss the Frank Zappa memorial or the wonderfully idiosyncratic Užupis Republic, a kernal of counter culture at the city's heart.



Two Weeks Eastern Europe 101

Only got two weeks and want to see the most you can in such a limited time? This itinerary is for you. Start off by flying to the Polish capital **Warsaw** for one night, seeing the beautifully restored Old Town and eating delicious *pierogi* before taking the train south to **Kraków** for two nights, giving you time to see the Old Town, Wawel Castle and Kazimierz and to do a day trip to **Oświęcim** (Auschwitz) before taking the overnight train to **Prague** for two days of intensive sightseeing – Prague Castle, Charles Bridge, wandering the Malá Strana and the Old Town and tasting genuine Czech Beer in a local brewery. Take another overnight train to **Budapest** for two nights, soak in the glorious Gellért Spa, take a cruise on the Danube, see the magnificent Hungarian Parliament building and wander Castle Hill before yet another overnight train to Romania's much underrated capital, **Bucharest**, where with a one-night stay you can cover the main sights including the amazing Palace of Parliament, wander the small historic centre, and pick up a sense of the city's energy in its bars and clubs. Continue by train to wonderful and much-overlooked **Veliko Tarnovo** in Northern Bulgaria for one night, a stunning and unusually located university town and a far more 'everyday' Eastern European town than most national capitals. While here, find the time to see the ancient fortress (and stick around for the nightly summer light show) before finishing up your two weeks by taking the train to **Sofia** for two last nights that will give you a taste of the plucky Bulgarian capital, including the wonderful golden-domed **Alexander Memorial Church**. On your last day take a day trip through the Rila Mountains to the unmissable **Rila Monastery**, the country's holiest site and one of the most important monasteries in Eastern Europe. From here you can fly out of Sofia or continue to bigger air hubs such as nearby Athens and İstanbul to get a flight home.



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 in his collection of essays about his Polish experiences, the Kindle e-book *We Have Here the Homicide* and also at iwriter.com.au.



Simon Richmond

Russia After studying Russian history and politics at university, Simon's first visit to the country was in 1994, when he wandered goggle-eyed around gorgeous St Petersburg, and peeked at Lenin's mummified corpse in Red Square. He's since travelled the breadth of the nation from Kamchatka in the far east to Kaliningrad in the far west, stopping off at many points between. An award-winning writer and photographer, Simon is the co-author of the first and subsequent editions of

Lonely Planet's *Trans-Siberian Railway* as well as editions 3, 4 and 5 of *Russia*. You can also check Simon's website at www.simonrichmond.com.

Read more about Simon at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/simonrichmond



Tamara Sheward

Serbia After years of freelance travel writing, rock'n'roll journalism and insalubrious authorhood, Tamara leapt at the chance to join the Lonely Planet ranks in 2009 as presenter of LPTV's *Roads Less Travelled: Cambodia* documentary. Taking on the decidedly less leech-infested Serbia for this book was a natural fit for a half-Russian Australian girl with a penchant for Cyrillic, *čevapčići* and homemade

spirits, although getting trapped in a derelict Tito-era lift did test pan-Slavic relations somewhat. As befitting someone who believes that mayonnaise, sour cream and cheese does a salad make, Tamara has extensively travelled in and written about the Balkans, the Caucasus and Russia, and will continue to do so, as soon as the brain cells she lost at Guča are rejuvenated.



Richard Watkins

Bulgaria Richard studied ancient history at Oxford, and his first job after university was teaching conversational English to college students in Sofia. He tried teaching for a while in Singapore, but found travelling much more fun, and he has returned to Bulgaria several times since, discovering something new each time. This was his fifth (or sixth?) visit, and this time he finally got to see distant,

sleepy Vidin and the forested riverbank of Romania across the wide brown Danube. Richard has written for Lonely Planet since 2003 and his previous books include two editions of Lonely Planet *Bulgaria* as well as *Poland*, *Best of Prague*, *Best of Kraków* and *Eastern Europe*.



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 sipping 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 almost 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.



Anna Kaminski

Lithuania Anna was born in the Soviet Union, has been travelling to the Baltics and Ukraine since the tender age of three, and remembers a time when all the Lenin statues were not just nostalgic remains of the Soviet past. A jill-of-all-trades, a former healthcare worker/translator/legal assistant, she was sucked into the heady world of travel writing in 2007 and intends to be a glorified vagrant for years to come. Over the last three years, travel-writing assignments

have taken her from the hedonistic Baltic shore to remnants of extermination camps, Vilnius bars and the ruins of a once-mighty empire. Anna enjoys seeing Russia and the Baltics from the dual perspective of a communist kid and a Western traveller. An incorrigible foodie, she actually enjoys Lithuania's signature dish – the zeppelin.



Anja Mutić

Croatia It's been more than 18 years since Anja left her native Croatia. The journey took her to several countries before she made New York City her base 11 years ago. But the roots are a'calling. She's been returning to Croatia frequently for work and play, intent on discovering a new place on every visit. On her last trip, she loved exploring Hvar's lavender-dotted interior. See everthenomad.com for more about Anja.

Read more about Anja at: lonelyplanet.com/members/anjamutic



Leif Pettersen

Moldova, Romania In 2003, after nine years of feigning interest in electronic payments for the US Federal Reserve System, Leif – from Minneapolis, Minnesota – was 'Kramered' into being a homeless, shameless, godless freelance travel writer by an unbalanced friend. Leif's weakness for pretty girls first brought him to Romania in 2004, where he's since lived and/or travelled for two cumulative

years. He's repeatedly visited every notable patch of grass in Romania and Moldova, making dear friends, except for Romania's Neo-Nazi Party who publicly denounced him in 2008, calling him a 'slimeball' and 'human piece of garbage'. (True story.) Leif writes an almost award-winning, 'slightly caustic' blog, where he dishes on travel writing, Romania, Italy's woeful internet and his remarkable-gift-for-hyphenation.



Brandon Presser

Latvia His wanderlust bigger than his wallet, Brandon earned his backpacker stripes after an epic overland adventure from Morocco to Finland. He then joined the glamorous ranks of eternal nomadism as a fulltime travel writer, and has since contributed to more than 20 Lonely Planet titles. He co-authored *Estonia, Latvia & Lithuania* and was delighted to return to the Baltic where he put his

Harvard art history degree to good use while checking out Riga's surplus of evocative art nouveau architecture.

**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.

**Jayne D'Arcy**

Albania, Kosovo Counting Albania's highlights every two years for the past six has led Jayne to the startling conclusion that Albania resembles a robust child's growth chart. Taking advantage of the growth are cyclists in remote corners, hikers turning the 'Accursed Mountains' into a 'must-hike' and backpacker hostels opening in the hottest spots. When she's not taking photos of vintage folding bikes in Albania, Jayne also writes about the southern hemisphere (*Southeast Asia on a Shoestring* and *Australia*) and rides her own vintage folding bike around Melbourne, Australia.

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.

**Chris Deliso**

Macedonia American travel writer and journalist Chris Deliso has been exploring widely in the Balkans ever since finishing a Master's in Byzantine History at Oxford University, back in 1999. He's lived in Greece, Turkey and, for the most part, Macedonia – a country that still continues to surprise him on a daily basis. In researching the present guide, Chris checked out new nightspots in Skopje's revitalised old town, gazed out from beatific mountaintop monasteries, and hopped boulders while fending off freshwater crabs in Macedonia's rushing rivers. Chris has contributed to several other Lonely Planet guidebooks, including *Greece*, *Bulgaria* and *Western Balkans*. See www.chrisdeliso.com for more about Chris' work.

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.

Read more about Chris at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/chrisdeliso

**Marc Di Duca**

Ukraine Driven by an urge to discover Eastern Europe's wilder side, Marc first hit Kyiv one dark, snow-flecked night in early 1998. Several prolonged stints, countless near misses with Kyiv's metro doors and many bottles of *horilka* later, he still never misses a chance to fine-tune his Russian while exploring far-flung corners of this immense land. An established travel author, Marc has penned guides to Moscow and Lake Baikal, as well as working on Lonely Planet's *Trans-Siberian Railway* and *Russia* books.

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.

**Peter Dragičević**

Montenegro Among the two dozen or so Lonely Planet books that Peter's co-written are the first ever *Montenegro* country guide, *Western Balkans* and the two previous editions of this title. While it was family ties that first drew him to the Balkans, it's the history, natural beauty, convoluted politics, cheap *rakija* and intriguing people that keep bringing him back. This trip's highlight was a particularly dramatic trek through the clouds to the Njegoš monument on the top of Mt Lovćen.

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.

**Lisa Dunford**

Slovakia A fascination with Eastern 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 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.

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.



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



Tom Masters

Coordinating Author & Belarus Tom has been travelling in Eastern Europe since the age of 14 when he spent a summer with Bulgarian family friends in newly post-communist Sofia. Since then he has lived in St Petersburg, travelled the Baltic coast with Greenpeace, worked on documentaries throughout the region for the BBC and the Discovery Channel and slept on more overnight trains than he can remember. The region may have changed enormously in the two decades since

his first trip, but Belarus, where he returned for this book, remains defiantly Soviet. Tom lives in Berlin and can be found online at www.tommasters.net.

Read more about Tom at: lonelyplanet.com/members/tommasters



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.



Carolyn Bain

Estonia Melbourne-born Carolyn got her first glimpse behind the Iron Curtain in Poland in early 1989, while a student in Denmark. It was the year communism unravelled throughout Eastern Europe, and thus began her fascination. In 1991, while studying Russian and politics at university, she was overjoyed when her 'Soviet Politics' class had to change its name to 'The Soviet Union & Beyond'.

Since then, on regular visits to the Baltic region she has applauded the renewed independence and flourishing creativity. Among other destinations, she has covered Sweden and Denmark for Lonely Planet, but Estonia holds a special place in her heart for combining the best of Eastern Europe and Scandinavia and coming up with something heartwarmingly unique.

OVER MORE PAGE WRITERS

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