



Belarus

Includes ➔

Minsk	94
Njasvizh	99
Mir	100
Brest	100
Belavezhskaya Pushcha National Park	102

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Bistro de Luxe (p97)
- ➔ Jules Verne (p101)
- ➔ Kamyanyitsa (p96)
- ➔ Time's Cafe (p101)
- ➔ Lido (p96)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hotel Manastyrski (p95)
- ➔ Hermitage Hotel (p101)
- ➔ Revolución Hostel (p95)
- ➔ Kamyanyuki Hotel Complex (p102)
- ➔ Neman Hotel (p100)

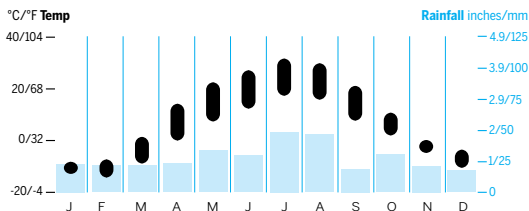
Why Go?

Eastern Europe's outcast, Belarus (Беларусь) lies at the edge of the region and seems determined to avoid integration with the rest of the continent at all costs. Taking its lead from the Soviet Union rather than the European Union, this little-visited dictatorship may seem like a strange choice for travellers, but its isolation lies at the heart of its appeal.

While the rest of Eastern Europe has charged headlong into capitalism, Belarus allows the chance to visit a Europe with minimal advertising and no litter or graffiti. Outside the monumental Stalinist capital of Minsk, Belarus offers a simple yet pleasing landscape of cornflower fields, thick forests and picturesque villages. The country also has two excellent national parks and is home to Europe's largest mammal, the *zubr* (European bison). While travellers will always be the subject of curiosity, they'll also be on the receiving end of warm hospitality and a genuine welcome.

When to Go

Minsk



Jun–Aug Come to Belarus to escape the crowds elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

Early Jul On 6 July stay up all night for Kupalle, a fortune-telling festival with pagan roots.

Oct Pleasantly cool climate and fall foliage in Belavezhskaya Pushcha National Park near Brest.



Belarus Highlights

1 Minsk (p94) Getting under the skin of Belarus' friendly and accessible capital, a showcase of Stalinist architecture.

2 Brest (p100) Strolling through the mellow pedestrian streets of this cosmopolitan city and gazing at its epic WWII memorials.

3 Mir Castle (p100) Training your lens on this fairytale 16th-century castle – and its equally famous reflection.

4 Njasvizh (p99) Exploring this tranquil provincial town's parks and impeccably restored castle.

5 Belavezhskaya Pushcha National Park (p102) Touring Europe's oldest wildlife refuge in search of rare European bison.