

Welcome to Europe

Even on a shoestring budget, a journey through the cultural storehouse that is Europe can be fun, exciting and wonderfully life enhancing.

Urban Adventures

Some of Europe's headline locations can suck up your cash like a herd of thirsty elephants. But for every London or Paris there's a more affordable Lviv or Porto. Scattered among the 40 countries covered in this guide, ranging from Iceland to Turkey, there are hundreds of fascinating cities, towns and villages to discover. Take a taxi tour of the mural art of Belfast; ride the ferry across the Bosphorus in Istanbul, enjoy an ice cream on Venice's Piazza San Marco – many of Europe's most memorable experiences needn't break the bank, and a surprising amount can be done for free. Be flexible and you'll soon find your funds stretching further than you ever imagined.

Scenic Wonders

Europe's lovely landscapes are the gift that keeps on giving. Stride across English meadows or the sand dunes of the Baltic States. Sail down Norwegian fjords or Germany's Rhine. Climb, ski or just marvel at the Swiss and French Alps. Relax on Croatian beaches or Greek islands. Explore the honeycombed hills of Cappadocia or cycle past Dutch tulip fields in full bloom. Picture-postcard views are around every corner, whichever route you take.

Cultural Kaleidoscope

With thousands of years of civilisation under its belt, Europe's cultural diversity is its trump card. Religions, philosophies and artistic movements that changed the world developed in Athens, Rome, Moscow, Leipzig, Vienna – we could go on and on. Europe has in the region of 450 Unesco World Heritage Sites, the most of any continent, with 51 in Italy alone! Be it climbing up Skellig Michael off Ireland's west coast, soaking up the architectural majesty of Granada's Alhambra, or witnessing whirling dervishes in action, Europe's range of cultural attractions is unsurpassed.

Join the Party

Europe has some of the best nightlife in the world. Globally famous DJs keep the party going in London, Berlin and Paris, all of which also offer top-class entertainment, especially theatre and live music. Other key locations for high-energy nightlife include Moscow, Belgrade, Budapest and Madrid, while those hankering for something more cosy can add Dublin's pubs or Vienna's cafes to their itinerary. Continue to party on the continent's streets at a multiplicity of festivals and celebrations, from city parades attended by hundreds of thousands to intimate concerts in an ancient amphitheatre.



Why I Love Europe

By Simon Richmond, Writer

You're likely to feel a little overwhelmed, but once you dive into Europe, these fears will be replaced by wonder and fascination – plus something, perhaps, unexpected: a sense of connection. Very few places in the world, if any, remain untouched by European history, culture and influence. As continents go, Europe's broad variety and excellent transport infrastructure – be it air or roads, or the old standby of the Grand Tour, rail – is hard to beat and is sure to push you on to new experiences and unexpected discoveries.

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