



Western Europe



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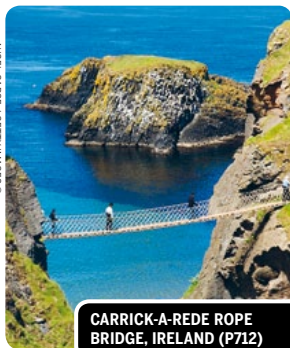
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➤ Look out for these icons:



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



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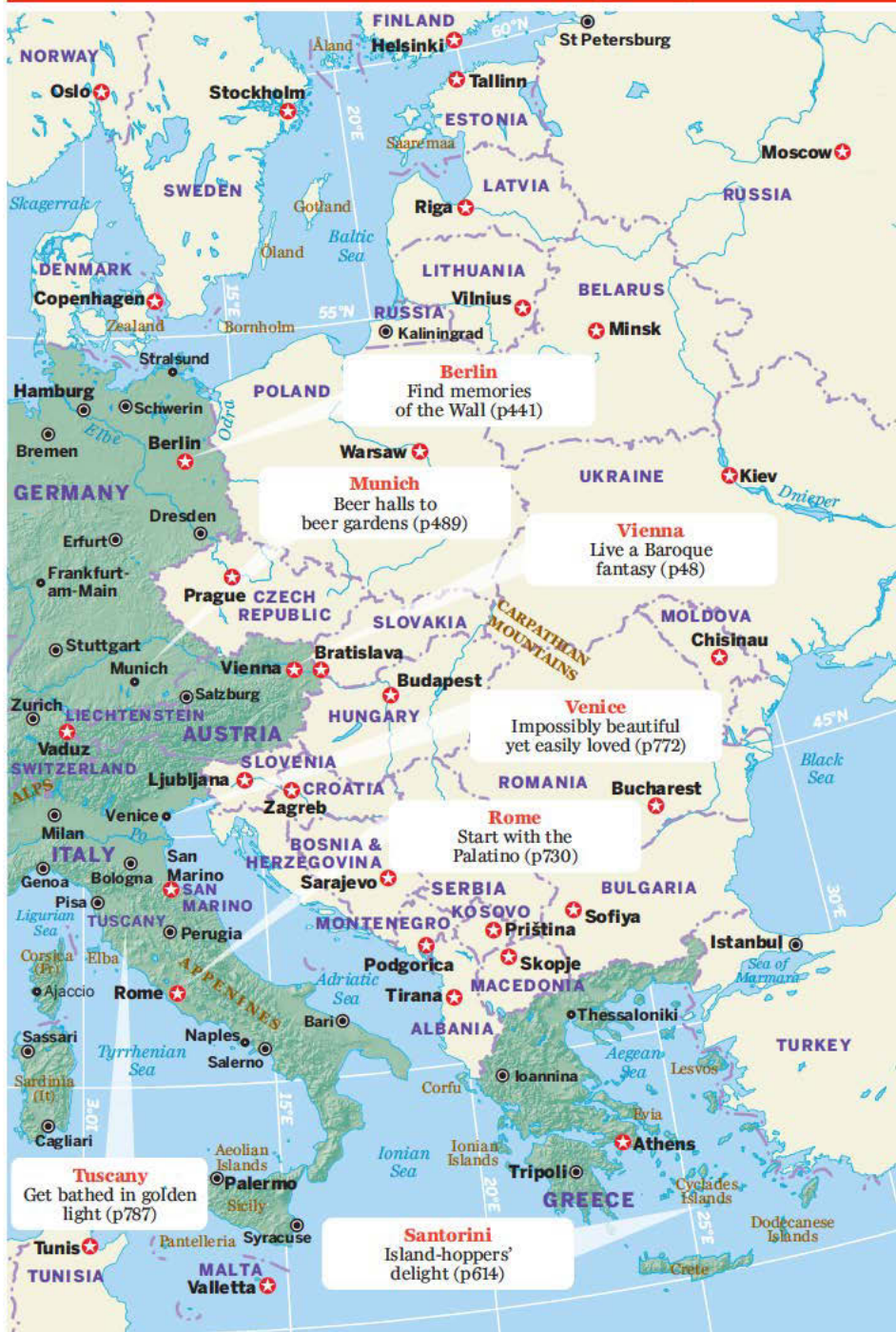
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Western Europe



Top Experiences >





Nicola Williams

France British writer and editorial consultant Nicola Williams has lived in and written about France for more than a decade. From her hillside home on Lake Geneva's southern shore, it is an easy hop to the French Alps (call her a ski fiend), Paris (art buff) and southern France (foodie). She has worked on numerous Lonely Planet titles, including *France*, *Discover France*, *Paris*, *Provence & the Côte d'Azur* and *The Loire*. She blogs at

tripalong.wordpress.com and tweets at @Tripalong.

Read more about Nicola at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/nicolawilliams



Neil Wilson

Ireland Neil's first experiences of Ireland were a sailing trip to Kinsale in 1990 and a tour of Northern Ireland's Antrim coast in 1994. Since then he has returned regularly for holidays, hiking trips and guidebook research – this time around he climbed Mt Brandon and six of Connemara's Twelve Bens. Neil is a full-time travel writer based in Edinburgh, Scotland, and has written around 50 guidebooks, including working on the last five editions of Lonely Planet's *Ireland* guide.

**Mark Elliott**

Belgium & Luxembourg As a small child Mark Elliott was dragged up a bizarre conical hill to meet a giant lion (Waterloo) then let loose inside an enormous chemistry set (the Atomium). To a baby Brit, Belgium already looked pretty weird, but that was just the start. Having spent most of the last two decades based there, he has merrily discovered that Belgium's surrealism is more than skin deep, that the carnivals really are as crazy as one might hope and that there

always seems to be yet another timeless classic cafe to discover. He has tried to pass on this enthusiasm through articles in local magazines, books on Belgian culture and several travel guides for Lonely Planet.

**Duncan Garwood**

Italy Born in the UK, Duncan now lives near Rome with his Italian wife and two bilingual sons. He has travelled extensively in his adopted homeland and has written or contributed to about 30 Lonely Planet guides, including *Italy*, *Rome*, *Sardinia* and *Italy's Best Trips*. Stand out memories on this job included sailing into a summer storm en route to Cagliari and having to break into his sister-in-law's apartment in Bologna.

Read more about Duncan at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/duncargarwood

**Anthony Ham**

Spain In 2001, Anthony fell in love with Madrid on his first visit to the city. Less than a year later, he arrived on a one-way ticket, with not a word of Spanish and not knowing a single person. Having recently passed the ten-year mark in Madrid, he still adores his adopted city. Anthony also writes about and photographs Spain, Scandinavia, Africa and the Middle East for newspapers and magazines around the world.

**Virginia Maxwell**

Italy Though based in far-off Australia, Virginia is a regular visitor to Italy, lured by the country's history, art, architecture, food and wine. She is the coordinating author of Lonely Planet's *Florence & Tuscany*, has covered almost every corner of the country for multiple editions of *Western Europe*, and has also worked as coordinating author of *Sicily*. When pressed, she nominates Rome and Florence as her favourite Italian destinations.

**Craig McLachlan**

Greece Craig has covered the Greek Islands for the last five editions of Lonely Planet's Europe guidebooks. He runs an outdoor activity company in Queens-town, New Zealand in the southern-hemisphere summer, then heads north for another summer, writing for Lonely Planet and leading tours all over the world, including in Greece. A 'freelance anything', he has an MBA from the University of Hawaii and leads other lives as a pilot, karate instructor and Japanese inter-

preter. Check out www.craigmclachlan.com.

**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.

**Regis St Louis**

Portugal Regis' long-time admiration for wine, rugged coastlines and soulful music made him easy prey for Portugal – a country he has travelled extensively over the past decade. Fine memories from his most recent trip include chatting with shepherds in the mountains near Manteigas, hearing avant-garde fado in Lisbon, and feasting on delectable *percebes* in the Algarve. Regis is the coordinating author of the last three editions of Lonely Planet's *Portugal*, and he has written

numerous articles about the Iberian Peninsula.



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, Oakland and Delhi, 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, Netherlands, Switzerland Ryan Ver Berkmoes first visited Switzerland in 1984 when he used it as his mail drop during a year-long backpacking trip. 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 divides his time between Europe and the US. Follow him at ryanverberkmoes.com. He tweets at @ryanvb.



Alexis Averback

Greece Alexis Averback lives on Hydra, takes regular reverse R&R in Athens (she wrote *Pocket Athens*), and makes any excuse she can to travel the isolated back roads of her adopted land. She is committed to dispelling the stereotype that Greece is simply a string of sandy beaches. A travel writer for two decades, Alexis has lived in Antarctica for a year, crossed the Pacific by sailboat and written books on her journeys through Asia and the Americas. She's also a

painter – visit www.alexisaverback.com.



Oliver Berry

Great Britain Oliver is a writer and photographer based in Cornwall. He has travelled the length and breadth of the British Isles for Lonely Planet, having worked on several editions of *England* and *Great Britain*, as well as writing the first editions of *Devon*, *Cornwall & Southwest England* and *The Lake District*. He also writes regularly for many national publications including *Lonely Planet Traveller*. His latest work can be found at www.oliverberry.com.



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 authored/co-authored some 20 guidebooks, including Lonely Planet's *Austria*, *Germany* and *Switzerland*. She tweets at @kerrychristiani and lists her

latest work at www.kerrychristiani.com.

OVER MORE PAGE WRITERS

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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.



One to Two Months Ultimate Europe

Have limited time but want to see a bit of everything? Start in **Dublin**, sampling the vibrant pubs and traditional Irish craic. From Ireland, take a ferry to **Liverpool** or fly to **London** for some great theatre. From London, catch the Eurostar train to unmissable **Paris**.

Head north from Paris to **Antwerp** for amazing beer, and then further north to **Amsterdam**, not forgetting to ride a canal boat. Go east, stopping for a cruise on the Rhine, and spend a few days exploring (and surviving) the nightlife in **Berlin**. Next, **Vienna** beckons with classical-music riches. Step west to **Zürich** and the Alps for awe-inspiring ski slopes and vistas.

Head to the canals of **Venice** and through **Florence** to historic **Rome**. Train it to **Bari** and take a ferry to **Athens**, then explore island beaches, starting with the stunning **Santorini**. Connect by air or go by ferry and train to the French Riviera, to check out quintessential Mediterranean towns such as **Nice**. Continue to **Barcelona** before heading to the Moorish towns of southern Spain, perhaps **Granada**. End your trip in laid-back **Lisbon**, enjoying local port wine to celebrate completing your grand journey!



One to Two Months Mediterranean Europe

Beautiful weather and scenery are the draw of this comprehensive tour that follows famous towns and cities from antiquity to the present.

Start in southern Spain with some British flavour in **Gibraltar**, where you can view the only wild primates in Europe. Go north to the city that defines lovely: **Seville**. Make your way up the eastern coast past the Moorish town of **Málaga** and on to the ever-beautiful **Granada** and **Córdoba**. Then it's back to the coast at **Valencia**, for a ferry hop to the parties and beaches of the **Balearic Islands**.

Back on the mainland, **Barcelona** is filled with the architecture of Gaudí. From here, head into France's Provence region, where in **Marseille** you can see the fortress that was inspiration for the novel *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Leave the sea for the hills and lavender-scented towns like **Orange**. On to the **Côte d'Azur** and its playground for the rich and famous, **St-Tropez**. A quick stop in the capital of the French Riviera, **Nice**, makes a good jumping-off point for other nearby hot spots such as **Cannes**.

Take a ferry to **Corsica** and experience the traditional lifestyle of quiet fishing villages. Hit the snowy peaks at **Calvi** and the groves of **Les Calanques** before hopping down to **Sardinia**. From here, take a long ferry ride or a quick flight to **Sicily** to visit colossal Greek temples and its famous volcano, Mt Etna.

Catch a ferry to **Naples**, on the Italian mainland, and take a trip to **Pompeii**. Move east to **Brindisi** for a ferry to Greece that passes rocky coasts seen by mariners for millennia, landing in **Patra**. Head to **Athens** to wonder at ancient treasures before getting a plane or ferry to islands such as **Crete** and **Mykonos**. Retrace your steps to Italy. Head north to **Rome**, taking time to wander amid its ruins and piazzas. Continue through Tuscany, stopping at **Pisa** to see its famous 'leaning tower'. Finish up along the Ligurian coast in the port city of **Genoa** via the coastal towns of the Cinque Terre, where you can stroll along the Via dell'Amore.



Two Weeks France & Iberia

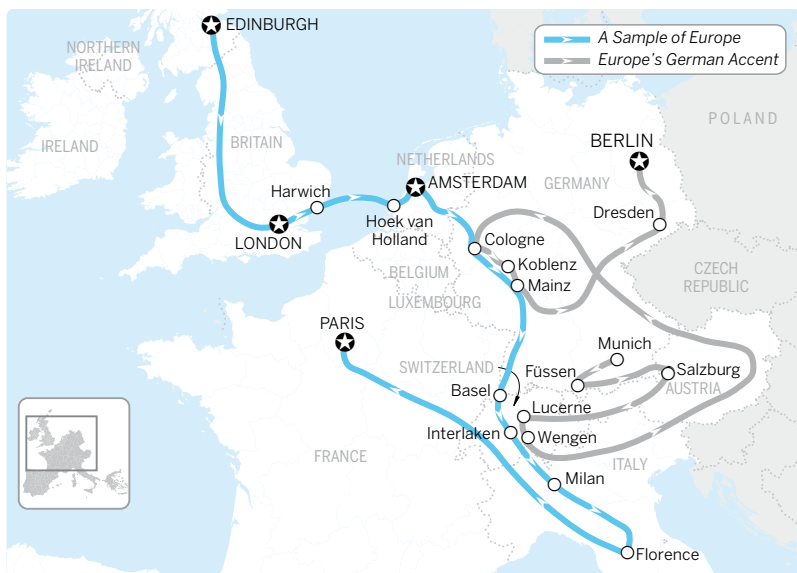
Get a feel for two of Europe's most distinct countries on this relatively compact jaunt. Start in **Paris**, of course. Sample the chateaux of the **Loire Valley**, then take the fast TGV train to Brittany, where the battlements of **St-Malo** always astound. Although the apple ciders of the region delight, you'll want to continue south to Burgundy, where red wine reaches its pinnacle in the region around **Bordeaux**. Head across the border to the Basque city of **Bilbao** before continuing to the pilgrimage shrine of **Santiago de Compostela**.

If you think you eat late at home, you've got nothing on **Madrid**, where an evening of tapas and drinks in tiny bars can postpone dinner until midnight. Find your favourite square and become a regular. Spend a day inside the walls of the beautiful hill town of **Segovia**. And don't let the sandstone splendour of **Salamanca** pass without a stop. Go south and plan on using a car to explore the many hill towns of Andalucía. Little winding roads traverse stark landscapes and olive orchards before reaching places like **Ronda**, where whitewashed buildings gleam in the distance. End at the coast or return to Paris.

Three Weeks Backroads of Europe

You've already done the major capitals and ticked every must-see box. Now start seeing the rest of Europe. The far north of Ireland is rugged and uncrowded; start yourself in **Donegal**, then head to the very welcoming Northern Ireland – **Belfast** in particular. Head southeast to the gritty yet charming town of **Newcastle-upon-Tyne** in England, then catch the ferry to the Netherlands, where **Rotterdam** combines edgy modern architecture with rocking charm.

Go east to the former East German cities of **Leipzig** and **Dresden**, each of which are creating a new future from their historic pasts. Turn south via the amazing **Regensburg** to the temperate Swiss town of **Lugano**. Traverse Italy and the hidden gem of **Mantua**, followed by beautiful Umbria and towns such as **Perugia**. In the far south, take time to wander frenetic **Naples** and the ruin-filled **Amalfi Coast** before pressing on to **Sicily** and its ancient and colourful culture. Marvel at the Grecian Valley of Temples in **Agrigento**, which rival anything in Greece itself.



Two Weeks A Sample of Europe

Watching Europe from the window of a train, gazing at the sea rolling past the handrail of a ferry – that's the way generations of travellers have explored the continent, and you can, too. To stick to tradition you might even grab a kiss on a misty station platform or share a hug on deck as the land slips away behind you. Start in the Scottish castle-town of **Edinburgh**, then take the train to **London** and on to **Harwich** for a ferry crossing to **Hoek van Holland**. From here, trains connect to fabled, gabled **Amsterdam**.

Take a fast train to **Cologne** and then mellow out on a river cruise down the alluring Rhine River. Alight at **Mainz** and connect by train through **Basel** to **Interlaken** for the slow-moving trains and trams that wend through glaciers of the Alps. Next take a train past rugged scenery to connect with stylish **Milan**, where a fast Italian Eurostar train zips to **Florence**, the heart of the Slow Food Movement. Reserve a sleeping compartment and snuggle up tight on the night train to **Paris**, feeling the romance in the rhythm of the rails.

Two Weeks Europe's German Accent

Fly into **Munich**, where beer halls are a short hop away. This is a good spot to spend a couple of days – when it's clear, you can see the Alps. Head for the hills and behold the cutest castle on a hilltop you'll ever find: the wildly popular Neuschwanstein, in **Füssen**. A short jaunt east brings you to Austria's perfect combination of hills and music: **Salzburg**. Move west into Switzerland's lakeside city of **Lucerne**, where iconic half-timbered bridges cross glacier-cold waters. Start your ascent by setting up in one of the cosy chalets of **Wengen**, where an imposing wall of Alps looms before you. Now head north into Germany and catch one of the country's renowned high-speed trains to **Cologne**, with its stunning cathedral. Set aside a day for a cruise up the Rhine River from **Koblenz** to **Mainz**. Steep hillsides are covered in vineyards and crowned by castles. Get another high-speed train east to **Dresden**, which drips in history both glorious and tragic, plus nightlife that's edgy and endless. Finish in **Berlin**, the ever-surprising capital that has more stories and drama than a week's worth of TV shows.

how to use this book

These symbols will help you find the listings you want:

Sights	Tours	Drinking
Beaches	Festivals & Events	Entertainment
Activities	Sleeping	Shopping
Courses	Eating	Information/Transport

These symbols give you the vital information for each listing:

Telephone Numbers	Wi-Fi Access	Bus
Opening Hours	Swimming Pool	Ferry
Parking	Vegetarian Selection	Metro
Nonsmoking	English-Language Menu	Subway
Air-Conditioning	Family-Friendly	London Tube
Internet Access	Pet-Friendly	Tram
		Train

Reviews are organised by author preference.

Look out for these icons:

	Our author's recommendation
	No payment required
	A green or sustainable option

Our authors have nominated these places as demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainability – for example by supporting local communities and producers, operating in an environmentally friendly way, or supporting conservation projects.

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Buddhist
- Castle
- Christian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery
- Ruin
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Diving/Snorkelling
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Skiing
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity/Course/Tour

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating

- Eating

Drinking

- Drinking
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Post Office
- Tourist Information

Transport

- Airport
- Border Crossing
- Bus
- Cable Car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Monorail
- Parking
- S-Bahn
- Taxi
- Train/Railway
- Tram
- Tube Station
- U-Bahn
- Underground Train Station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed Road
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian Overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour Detour
- Path

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Geographic

- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Hydrography

- River/Creek
- Intermittent River
- Swamp/Mangrove
- Reef
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Glacier

Areas

- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Park/Forest
- Sportsground
- Sight (Building)
- Top Sight (Building)

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