

Welcome to Western Europe

Western Europe's intricate tapestry of countries and cultures is woven together by rich history; artistic, architectural and culinary treasures; enduring traditions and cutting-edge trends.

Living History

In Western Europe, history is all around you: in prehistoric Cro-Magnon caves, in otherworldly tombs and stone circles, in the tumbledown remains of Greek temples and Roman bathhouses, in ostentatious castles and palaces where power was wielded and geopolitical boundaries were shaped and reshaped, in the winding streets and broad boulevards of its stately cities, and at poignant sites including the D-Day beaches and the remnants of the Berlin Wall. Understanding Europe's long and often troubled history is a vital part of figuring out what makes this pastiche of countries what they are today.

Extraordinary Art & Architecture

Western Europe's architectural heritage has given rise to iconic, instantly recognisable landmarks such as Rome's gladiatorial Colosseum, Cologne's cathedral, London's Big Ben and Paris' art nouveau Eiffel Tower, along with contemporary additions. This environment is inextricably tied to the artistic legacy of Western Europe: the home of virtuosos from Michelangelo to Monet, Da Vinci to Dalí, Botticelli to Banksy, it continues to inspire boundary-pushing artists while monumental and intimate museums,

galleries and public spaces showcase their exceptional works.

Thriving Culture

Distinct cultures, defined by their language, customs, specialities, idiosyncrasies, style and way of life, make Western Europe a fascinating place to travel. Especially along country borders, you can see where cultures intertwine and overlap. You'll also see subtle cultural shifts between each country's regions, and the influence of trade and immigration over the centuries, creating cultural melting pots. Wherever you travel, allow time to soak up the vibe in parks and gardens, at time-honoured and innovative new festivals, and in neighbourhood pubs and cafes where you can watch the world go by.

Celebrated Food & Drink

Western Europe is united by its passion for eating and drinking with gusto. Every country has its own unique flavours, incorporating olive oils and sun-ripened vegetables in the hot south, rich cream and butter in cooler areas, fresh-off-the-boat seafood along the coast, delicate river and lake fish, and meat from fertile mountains and pastures. Each country has its own tipples, too, spanning renowned wines, beers, stouts



Why I Love Western Europe

By Catherine Le Nevez, Writer

What I love most about Western Europe is that its diversity is so accessible. Its grand old-world cities, contemporary metropolises, vibrant towns and exquisite cobbled villages are just hours apart, along with surf beaches, sun-baked islands, vineyards, lavender and tulip fields, dark forests and snowy peaks. The fantastic transport network here makes it easy to zip back and forth between countries to check out old haunts and new openings and catch exhibitions, concerts and festivals. It's the perfect place for spontaneous discoveries, which, to me, are the highlights of travelling.

For more about our writers, see page 704.