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## Survival Guide

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## Venice, Italy

### *Magical city seemingly floating on water*

A sunny winter's day, with far fewer tourists around, is the perfect time to lap up Venice's unique and magical atmosphere (p379). Ditch your map and wander the shadowy back lanes of Dorsoduro while imagining secret assignments and whispered conspiracies at every turn. Then visit two of Venice's top galleries, the Gallerie dell'Accademia and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, which houses works by many of the giants of 20th-century art. From top: Palazzo Ducale (p386); Rio Marin Canal

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## Dubrovnik, Croatia

### ***Spectacular walled city***

Dubrovnik's main claim to fame are its historic ramparts, considered among the finest in the world, which surround luminous marble streets and finely ornamented buildings (p481). Built between the 13th and 16th centuries, the walls are still remarkably intact today, and the vistas over the terracotta rooftops and the Adriatic Sea are sublime, especially at dusk, when the fading light makes the hues dramatic and the panoramas unforgettable.





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## Ruins of Pompeii, Italy

***Ancient city destroyed and preserved by Vesuvius***

Frozen in its death throes, the sprawling, time-warped ruins of Pompeii (p370) hurtle you 2000 years into the past. Wander through chariot-grooved Roman streets, lavishly frescoed villas and bathhouses, food stores and markets, theatres and even an ancient brothel. Then, in the eerie stillness, with your eye on ominous Mt Vesuvius, ponder the town's final hours when the skies grew dark and heavy with volcanic ashes.

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## Andalucía, Spain

***Vibrant cities studded with glorious architecture***

Andalucía (p213), ancient al-Andalus, is awash with glorious architecture that dates back to the eight centuries of Moorish rule that ended in 1492. Granada, Córdoba and Seville are the high points of a journey of extraordinary riches. In Granada, the palace complex of the Alhambra, in particular, is close to perfection, and perhaps the most refined example of Islamic art anywhere in the world. Put simply, this is Spain's most beautiful monument. Above: The skyline of Seville (p224) as seen from the top of the Space Metropolis Parasol. Architect: Jürgen Mayer

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## Provence, France

### ***Galic charm in the south of France***

For many people, the pastoral landscapes of Provence (p289) are a French fantasy come true. Provence seems to sum up everything enviable about the French lifestyle: fantastic food, hilltop villages, legendary wines, bustling markets and a balmy climate. For decades, it's been a hot spot for holidaymakers and second-homers, inspired by the vision of the rustic good life in Peter Mayle's classic 1989 travelogue, *A Year in Provence*. Above: A lavender field in Provence

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## Swiss Alps, Switzerland

### ***Hike, ski and admire these postcard-perfect peaks***

The stirring ramparts of the Swiss Alps (p467) grace chocolate-bar wrappers and evoke stereotypical Heidi scenes, but nothing prepares you for their allure up close. Its most famous summit, the Matterhorn (pictured, p470), is a mesmerising peak that looms above the timber-chalet-filled Swiss village of Zermatt. Gaze at it from a tranquil cafe, hike in its shadow along the tangle of alpine paths above town, with cowbells clinking in the distance, or pause on a ski slope and admire its craggy, chiselled outline.

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