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2024 Travel Guide to Europe

Everybody loves Europe.

According to a recent UNWTO report, the continent was once again the world's largest destination region in 2023, greeting approximately 550 million international tourists, pulling in a whopping 56% of all international travelers in the world.

Europe is always trending and with the Summer Olympics, Euros (European soccer championships) and Taylor Swift set to take over the continent this summer, the popularity will only surge in 2024.

While overtourism is always looming in the background, the continent is still full of surprises and less traveled roads.

No matter what type of traveler you are, Europe has you covered and this guide will help you get ready for a great year ahead of European travel.

Best Destinations in Europe

You could throw a dart at the map of Europe and it would likely land on a destination that would blow you away, but 2024 will see a few destinations shine especially bright.

First up is Germany. From the urban buzz of super cool cities like Berlin, Hamburg and Cologne to lively college towns like Freiburg and a host of half-timbered Hansel & Gretel villages dotted across the country (often nestled up to mountains, rivers or vineyards), Germany offers a range of quintessential European experiences. This summer, the nation will be showing off its hospitality during the Euros, which will take place over a month at stadiums all around the country.

The spotlight will shine bright on Paris this summer too as the City of Light welcomes the world for the Summer Olympics, but this year will also see a celebration of the 150th anniversary of Impressionism and the reopening of Notre Dame Cathedral (December). Events celebrating Impressionism will be focused in Paris and Normandy, with Normandy also being a great place to visit in 2024 as the region will commemorate the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Landings with a series of special events. ny offers a range of quintessential European experiences.

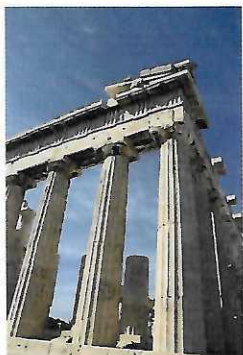


Outside of Normandy & Paris, Bordeaux & Marseille will continue their ascension up the list of must-visits, the Dordogne region will enchant and France's collection of fairytale chateaux will captivate.

Poland has been overlooked for far too long on European itineraries, but this year is the perfect time to explore it fully.

From the beaches of Sopot and the gorgeous town of Gdansk in the north through the cute town Torun and energetic cities like Warsaw and Wroclaw, this country is full of surprises. This is to say nothing of cool Krakow and the Tatras Mountains to the south of it and the nation's Lakeland, a watery paradise perfect for peaceful days spent paddling.

Best Attractions in Europe



Europe is a treasure trove of captivating sights that can take your breath away, but there are a few that stand head and shoulders above the rest as symbols of the continent.

First, there's the Colosseum in Rome and the Acropolis in Athens. These ancient sights offer a mesmerizing glimpse into the glories of the past. Then there's the Eiffel Tower in Paris and Big Ben in London, more modern marvels that have become global symbols of their cities. Lastly, the enchanting canals of Venice are arguably the most quintessentially European cityscape on the continent.

But the wonders don't stop there. Dive into the rich tapestry of European history with museums like the Louvre in Paris, the Prado in Madrid and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, which have become must-visit attractions in their own right. Then explore awe-inspiring places of worship, from the Hagia Sophia mosque in Istanbul to the ongoing masterpiece that is the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona.

You can also marvel at grand residences like the Alhambra in Granada, the Palace of Versailles in France and the whimsical Neuschwanstein Castle in Germany. Others deserving of a mention are the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Brandenburg Gate, the Trevi Fountain and Prague's Charles Bridge.

Must-See 2024 Events in Europe

The Euros (June 14 - July 14) Summer Olympics (July 26 - August 11) and Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour (May 9 - August 20) will steal the show, but hardly a month goes by without something special happening in Europe.

Carnival celebrations take place during the lead-up to Fat Tuesday (February 13), with cities like Cologne, Basel, Nice, Cadiz and the island of Tenerife throwing the biggest parties on the continent. St. Patrick's Day is always a party in Dublin, spring fairs take over Spain in April and the Netherlands throws a party on King's Day (April 27).



The music festivals of summer last for days and attract fans from all over the world, with Glastonbury in England (June 26 - June 30) and Tomorrowland in Belgium (July 19 - July 28) being two of the biggest.

Autumn is the time for Oktoberfest (September 21 - October 6) and wine & food harvest festivals, with the year coming to a crescendo with Christmas markets.

Best Places for Families in Europe

If you're considering introducing your kids to the wonders of international travel, Europe is the perfect place. While every corner of the continent has its charm, some places stand out more than others: the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Scandinavia.

In the UK, there's no language barrier (although some of the local lingo can confuse in a fun way) and a wealth of family-friendly sights and locations from TV and movies that will keep your crew happy. London takes the cake for families as its collection of iconic historical sights is unmatched and regardless of the kids' ages, the city will leave a lasting impression.

Younger ones can follow in the paw prints of Paddington, while older kids can soak in the magic of the West End shows and explore iconic spots related to some of their favorite shows and movies like Bridgerton, Derry Girls, Outlander and Happy Valley. And for Harry Potter enthusiasts (regardless of age), there are film locations to discover all over the country, from the Highlands of Scotland to Alnwick Castle in Northumberland. This is to say nothing of the Premier League football and sights connected to Ted Lasso and Welcome to Wrexham, which are proving to be major draws for families in the 2020s.

In the Netherlands, you'll find a fantastic entry point for continental travel with its efficient infrastructure and postcard-perfect canals & villages. Picture your family cruising on a tandem bicycle, enjoying a canal tour, or marveling at windmills in the countryside. And don't miss out on the whimsical Efteling amusement park, which is a true Dutch delight.

Head north to Scandinavia and you'll find delightful cities like Copenhagen, Stockholm and Gothenburg that aren't crowded but full of family-friendly attractions and adorable theme parks.



Best Places for Couples in Europe

Portugal has been still stealing plenty of hearts in recent years and it's a dreamy destination for couples seeking that perfect blend of romance and adventure. It doesn't get much better than the Douro Valley, draped in vineyards, offering what might just be the most romantic surroundings in all of Europe.

City-wise, Porto, Lisbon and Coimbra bring lively nights, rich history and culinary delights to the table. From sipping port wine at sunset near the water to wandering through the charming streets after dark, the country will captivate you both.

This is to say nothing of the Algarve, Portugal's southern region full of sandy beaches and romantic sunset views.

Even if you've been together for years, you'll feel like you're on a honeymoon in the Greek Islands. From the A-list isles on the Cyclades to lesser-known islands, the setting will send both your hearts aflutter.

Last but not least, Belgium offers a delightful combination of atmospheric towns, great food and some of the finest beer & chocolate on the continent.

Best Places for Solo Travel in Europe

Europe is a haven for solo adventurers. The continent's extensive web of railways, budget-friendly accommodations and fun city & food tours are a dream for solo travelers who are looking to explore or perhaps make a few new friends.

In northern Europe, cities like Dublin, Edinburgh, Amsterdam and Bruges are safe, easy to explore and full of plenty of other friendly travelers.

Venture to Central Europe and you'll discover Vienna, Budapest and Prague, which are all sophisticated and incredibly safe cities where you can explore by day and make new friends at night.

In Scandinavia, cities like Stockholm, Copenhagen, Bergen, Oslo, Gothenburg and Helsinki are great places for solo travelers. These urban locales not only boast safety in spades but also offer a plethora of attractions to keep you happily occupied for days on end.

Best Foodie Destinations in Europe

Long gone are the days of Italy and France exclusively dominating the food scene, as seemingly the entire continent is full of tantalizing street food, great restaurants (everything from Mom & Pop to Michelin Stars) and more food & drink-themed tours than you can imagine.

Eat your way around the world in London, Paris and Berlin. Then, be blown away by the New Nordic cuisine in Copenhagen or Stockholm, the paprika-kissed dishes of Budapest or the continent-straddling flavors of Istanbul.



It's not just cities that are a dream come true for food lovers, as rural England is home to scores of gastro pubs that will impress, the Basque Country of Spain has A-list restaurants hiding around seemingly every corner and the Black Forest of Germany is renowned for its restaurants.

Best Places for Adventure Travel in Europe

If adventure travel had a permanent address, it would be nestled in the majestic Alps. Picture towns scattered in and around towering peaks, serving as meccas for extreme sports, heart-pounding skiing and a plethora of adrenaline-fueled pursuits.

Kitzbuhel, Austria is a haven for those craving alpine excitement, Chamonix & Annecy in France are too and then there's Interlaken, Switzerland, which is a dream destination for adrenaline junkies. Don't overlook Slovenia, where the Julian Alps offer the perfect playground for white water rafting and hiking.

Elsewhere, venture into the Tatras Mountains, straddling Slovakia and Poland, or explore Montenegro's Durmitor National Park, where thrills await amidst breathtaking scenery. Tarifa, Spain (renowned for kitesurfing) and Portugal (boasting arguably the best surfing in Europe) beckon those who get their thrills on the sea.

Best Places for Sports Enthusiasts in Europe

Europe's passion for sports runs deep, and it's not just soccer.

Cycling takes center stage with fervent followers eagerly anticipating the Tour de France (June 29 - July 21). This year's journey kicks off in Florence, Italy before winding its way through France and culminating in the grand finale in Nice. Along the route, spirited revelers will cheer on their favorite cyclists, creating a one-of-a-kind atmosphere.

Switching gears, Formula One's two marquee events to mark on your calendar are the Monaco Grand Prix (May 23-26) and the Belgian Grand Prix (July 28), both of which will draw race fans from around the world.

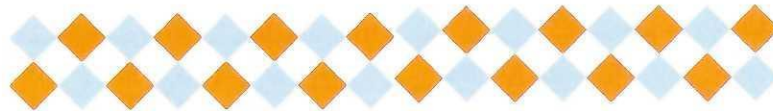
For tennis fans, two major tournaments take place in Europe this summer: the French Open in Paris (May 20 - June 9) and Wimbledon in London (July 1-14). And of course, we can't forget the ever-beloved soccer as the Champions League Final will take place in London on June 1.

Unique in Europe

There's truly no other place quite like Europe, where you can immerse yourself in a range of diverse cultures, customs and culinary delights all within a few hours of each other. Think about it. In Europe, you can start your day with a flaky croissant and a café au lait in France, then effortlessly hop on a train to Switzerland for some watch shopping and a lunch ordered in German.

But the adventure doesn't stop there. One more train ride gets you into Italy just in time to sip on a refreshing spritz and indulge in one of the most memorable meals of your life.

While it shares some similarities with North America, Europe is just different enough to consistently spark that travel buzz, and if that's not enough for you, seemingly everyone else is coming here anyway, so you might as well join them!



The Best Chicken and Rice

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons canola oil
4 to 6 bone-in, skin on chicken thighs (about 6 ounces each)
1/2 teaspoon paprika
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 medium carrots (about 12 ounces), sliced into 1/4-inch rounds
3 stalks celery (about 9 ounces), sliced 1/4-inch thick
2 large shallots (about 4 ounces), finely diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves, chopped
1 tablespoon fresh oregano leaves, chopped
2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest plus 1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 cup long-grain rice
2 cups low-sodium chicken stock
1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives

Directions:

1 Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Toss the chicken with the paprika, 1 teaspoon salt and a few grinds of pepper in a large bowl. Place the chicken skin-side down in the skillet and cook undisturbed until the skin is golden but not too dark, 4 to 5 minutes. Remove the chicken to a plate using a metal spatula and add the remaining 1 tablespoon oil to the skillet.



Could classic chicken and rice be one of the most beloved comfort dinners to ever hit the plate? We think so. And to blow your mind even more, this version is made in just one skillet. Here we use bone-in, skin on chicken thighs which cook up in exactly the same time as the rice to guarantee juicy chicken. A quick broil at the end creates the perfect crispy skin and gives a little crunch to the rice and vegetables.

2 Add the carrots, celery and shallots to the skillet and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened but not yet turning golden, 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic, thyme, oregano, lemon zest, lemon juice, 1/2 teaspoon salt and a few grinds of pepper and cook just until you begin to smell the garlic, about 1 minute. Stir in the rice and cook undisturbed until lightly toasted, about 2 minutes. Pour in the stock, add 1/2 teaspoon salt and stir to combine, then add the chicken thighs back to the pan, skin-side up. Bring the liquid to a boil then cover, reduce the heat to a simmer and cook until the rice is tender and the chicken is cooked through, 15 to 20 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat the broiler.

3 Remove the lid from the pan and broil until the chicken skin is crispy and golden, 2 to 3 minutes. Sprinkle with the chives.