How can you possibly sum up a continent as diverse, rich and surprising as Europe? You may dream of exploring its iconic landmarks, extraordinary museums and breathtaking architecture, but we'll wager that the memories you will take home with you will be even more wide-ranging and less predictable than a list of monuments. From exciting train journeys and amazing views to meals you'll remember for years to come, and nights out in all corners of the continent with newly found friends, Europe will quickly prove itself to be far more than the sum of its parts.

We hope the travel tips and suggestions within these pages will help inspire you to venture out on your own European adventure. And with Lonely Planet guidebooks as your resource—written by experts, and full of accurate honest, and practical advice—you are sure to have a trip of a lifetime.
Whether you have five days or five weeks, here are a few suggested itineraries to help provide a starting point for a trip to remember. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travelers.

10 Days: London to Rome
Four Cities and the Swiss Alps

Ten days isn’t much time to cover a continent, so we’ve picked some of Europe’s most popular cities and most breathtaking scenery. The train can take the strain all the way, so you can just sit back, enjoy the views and hit the ground running.

LONDON
Europe’s greatest city? There’s so much to do in the British capital that you probably won’t even have time to ponder that question as you try to fit in a visit to the Tower of London, a night at a West End show, and a meal in one of the city’s cool restaurants.

PARIS
Just a couple of hours on the train from London and you can be strolling the streets of irresistible Paris. Show the Mona Lisa your own enigmatic smile at the Louvre, try snails for the first time at a chic bistro, and shop in the city’s legendary department stores.

SWISS ALPS
To slow the pace after your own Tale of Two Cities, head south from Paris to the Swiss Alps. Easily reached by the train, top destinations include Montreux, Lucerne and the Jungfrau Region. Climb every mountain, explore the chocolate-box villages, and breathe in that fresh Alpine air.

VENICE
Many visitors are day-trippers so a night or two here can allow you to enjoy Venice’s unique beauty in (relative) peace. The big sights—Basilica di San Marco, the Palazzo Ducale, etc—are all worth seeing, but one of the best things you can do is simply get lost in Venice’s quiet backstreets, where some undiscovered gems are still to be found.

ROME
Magnificent monuments recalling the Italian capital’s illustrious history—the Colosseum, the Trevi Fountain and the Vatican—are reason enough to come here. But throw in exceptional food, great nightlife and some classy shopping, and you’ve got the perfect place to finish off your whistle-stop trip.
Once home to Europe’s first civilizations and now home to many of its best beaches and seaside cities, the Mediterranean oozes charm. This trip takes you from buzzing cities to tranquil resorts.

**BARCELONA**
1 Amazing architecture, stylish inhabitants, exciting nightlife and city beaches—what’s not to love about Barcelona? Spain’s most European city has enough to fill a week’s exploration, but quick-trip top choices are the Sagrada Familia, La Rambla, and the restaurants and bars around La Ribera. Don’t forget a half day on the sand to get your first taste of the Med.

**NICE**
2 A quick flight or an enjoyable two-train journey and you’re in Nice, the cosmopolitan capital of France’s chic Côte d’Azur. Explore the Old Town and either Nice’s own pebbly beach or the cool nearby sands of Cannes and St Tropez.

**CINQUE TERRE**
3 Five cliff-hugging towns give their name to this scenic strip of Italian coastline. A train line runs the length of the area, offering stunning views of sea and land. Alternatively, tackle the Blue Trail hiking route for equally impressive panoramas and a healthy dose of exercise.

**VENICE**
4 By boat is the best way to go when you’re in this historic island city. In a couple of days you can indulge in a gondola ride, get lost among the bridges and backstreets, and board a vaporetto to the neighboring islands to see Venetian glass-making and pastel-colored townhouses.

**DUBROVNIK**
5 Ferry and bus combinations along Croatia’s stunning coast will soon get you to the country’s most beautiful city, Dubrovnik. Stroll the ancient walls, hit the local beaches or just enjoy a drink amid the baroque splendor.

**ATHENS**
6 The cradle of western civilization is also a thoroughly modern city, so you can admire the ruins of the Acropolis before dining out in a fancy Michelin-star restaurant. If time is on your side, the nearby port of Piraeus is the gateway to the Greek islands where you can continue your Mediterranean odyssey.
3 Weeks: Dublin to Vienna

The Beer and Wine Route

Drink up the local culture of six countries in 21 days—from a pint in a pub to wine in a garden. Oh, and you’ll see some sights as well!

DUBLIN

One of the joys of the Irish capital is the opportunity to spend your days in literary pursuits, learning about Joyce, Wilde and Beckett at the Dublin Writers Museum. Another joy is spending your evenings savoring locally-made Guinness at the Stag’s Head pub where Joyce drank, or in the raucous Temple Bar district.

LONDON

The city’s historic pubs are a perfect pit stop after tackling the Tower of London, St Paul’s and the Eye. Those worth checking out include the Coach & Horses, once frequented by artist Francis Bacon; the Princess Louise, a late Victorian beauty; and the George Inn, a 1677 coaching inn tucked up a small side street.

PARIS

Pop over to Paris, where after seeing the Sacré Coeur and braving the lines at the Eiffel Tower you can sip famous French wines at a musical bistro like Le Limonaire. Spend an extra night so you can take a day trip to the Burgundy wine region.

BRUSSELS

No Brussels trip is complete without shopping for chocolate, touring the Grand Place and wondering what all the fuss is about with the Manneken Pis statue. As for beers, Belgium brews more than 8000. Choose from at least 2000 at Delirium Café.

MUNICH

If Bavaria is beerland then its capital, Munich, is lager central. See the Glockenspiel on Marienplatz, then stop into the kitsch Hofbräuhaus beer hall. The next day visit one (or three) of the beer gardens in Englischer Garten.

VIENNA

Just a few hours’ train-ride east across the border and you’re in Vienna where, after the fall harvest, the city’s Heurigen (wine taverns vending “new wine” made on-site) are especially lively. Sit out in the garden and enjoy the effervescent vino and buffet victuals.
what to know

Accommodations

Hostels
Hostels offer the best bargain, and you don’t have to be a youngster to use them. You need to be a member of the Youth Hostel Association or Hostelling International to use affiliated hostels, but often you can stay by paying an extra charge.

B&Bs, pensions & guesthouses
The traditional bed and breakfast is an institution throughout much of Europe. You’ll find these are usually the most character-filled places, and are typically budget or midrange.

Homestays & private rooms
Homestays are often a great way to see daily life and see local people. Make sure you bring a small gift for your hosts—it’s deeply ingrained in the cultural tradition in many areas.

Hotels
Big-name chain, midrange stalwart or funky boutique, there are plenty of hotel choices. Remember, hotels in Europe are often small compared to those of other countries. Breakfast is sometimes included, be sure to ask when reserving a room.

Getting There & Away

European gateway airports:
The airports in London, Frankfurt, Paris, Rome and Athens are among the major gateways, but most major European cities receive flights from abroad.

Getting Around

Air: The proliferation of low-cost carriers across Europe has made it easy to cover a lot of ground in a short space of time.

Train: With the exception of Greece and Turkey, most of the countries in Europe are well connected by rail.

Buses: Long distances by bus may be a tad cheaper, but you’ll trade in comfort. Buses are best used for mountainous or coastal routes not covered by rail, as in Croatia.

Advance Planning

Three months ahead Start researching airfares. If you plan on traveling in July or August, book even further in advance.

One month ahead Depending on how scheduled you plan to be, make hotel reservations. If you’re winging it, at least book a bed for your first and last nights.

Two weeks ahead Book intra-European flights, but know that reserving even earlier will snag you a better fare.

Helpful Info

ATMs
Widely available in cities and towns, may be scarce in villages.

Credit cards
Visa and MasterCard more widely accepted than others; the smallest places may not accept any cards.

Tipping
Varies by country, 10% is a good general guideline.

CURRENCY

- euro (€; Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain)
- pound (£; Britain)
- Swiss franc (Sfr; Switzerland)
- Czech crown (Kč; Czech Republic)
- forint (Ft; Hungary)
- kuna (KN; Croatia)
- Turkish lira (TL; Turkey)

LANGUAGE

English is spoken fairly widely in big cities, especially among the young, with the possible exception of France. A few local phrases will always go down very well with the locals. Very useful to know are “thank you,” “please,” “sorry” and “do you speak English?”.

WHEN TO GO

Spring
For most of Europe, April and May are springtime. Crowds are fewer, costs sometimes less, and the weather pleasant (though the mountains will still be cool).

Autumn/fall
September and October are good, when crowds are smaller and seasonal attractions haven’t closed for the winter yet.

Christmas
OK, so Christmas is an expensive, chilly, busy time to visit. But we just love all the festive markets and decorations, and there are usually added concerts this time of year.
MONEY TIPS FROM VISA

Visa Debit is accepted at ATMs across the world, so you can get the cash you need wherever you need it. Here are some tips from Visa to help you travel safe, avoid fees and have fun along the way.

How do I prepare to use my debit card before I go?
- Keep a copy of your banks’ international numbers in your luggage in case you need to cancel lost or stolen cards.
- Before you leave, call and let your bank know the countries and dates you’ll be traveling to so you’re never stranded without a card.
- Check with your bank to see if your card has a daily spending limit or withdrawal restrictions.
- Many international ATMs only accept only four-digit numeric PINs. If your PIN is longer, call your bank to get it changed.

How do I avoid fees when I use my ATM card abroad?
- To avoid unexpected fees, call your bank before you leave and ask for information on using ATMs abroad.
- While you travel, it’s usually better to withdraw a few larger sums, rather than multiple small amounts. This way, you’ll have fewer bank fees overall.
- By using ATMs you can often get the best exchange rates because they give you the official interbank rate and don’t charge commissions.

How do I stay safe using ATMs in other countries?
- When you’re getting cash from an ATM abroad be aware of your surroundings, use ATM machines in daylight and don’t let anyone watch you enter your PIN.
- To be on the safe side, don’t use ATMs that look unusual or offer unfamiliar menu options.
- If you lose your card, call your bank asap or call the Visa Global Customer Assistance Service number for the country you are in.
- Click here to find the number for your country. Otherwise, call collect on +1-303-967-1096.
- ATMs are all over Europe so you can access your cash when you need it.

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**What to Bring**

**Antibacterial gel or wipes**
» Avoid swapping surface germs with a horde of other travelers.

**Travel-size detergent**
» You’ll often wish you could wash something out in the sink. With this, you can.

**Lonely Planet’s phrasebooks**
» Saying “Jo napot” in Hungarian or toasting prost in German goes a long way towards making friends.

**Swiss Army knife**
» A multi-use tool often comes in handy for cutting bread or salami and opening beer and wine…. Just remember to keep it in your checked luggage.

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**Etiquette**

Watch the local customs for hand and body gestures. Be careful, for example, about raising your fingers to order two beers, even with your palm facing the bar staff; it’s rude in some countries. And if introduced to locals, follow their cues. In some northern European countries, such as Denmark or Germany, it’s still common to shake hands with a stranger. While in charming France, Spain or Italy, it doesn’t matter if people don’t know you from Adam—they’ll still kiss you.

**Tech Stuff**

**Electricity**
Europe runs on 220-240V, 50Hz AC. This varies from that in the US and Canada; converters for appliances from those countries are necessary.

**Plugs**
Most of Europe uses the two, round pin plug. The UK and Ireland use three-pin, square plugs. Adapters are available at airports.

**Wi-fi**
Wireless Internet access is becoming more common across the continent—in hotels, bars, cafés and even on some public squares. Note that it’s rarely free.

**Internet terminals**
Internet cafes are easy to find, and hotels often have business centers with computer access.

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**TRAVEL SEASONS**

**Skiing**
» The ski season in the Alps and in Slovakia’s High Tatras runs from roughly December to March.
» Higher elevations may have slopes open earlier and later.

**Summer holidays**
» July and August are the busiest times to travel in Europe; expect lines and booked-solid hotels. Plan ahead.
**Music**

**European Jazz Masters**
Tropical jazz, French pop, a Tuscan orchestra... François-René Duchâble plays Bach, Beethoven, Scarlatti and Mozart
Classical music by Austrian, German and Italian composers.

**German Drinking & Beer Garden Songs: 14 All-Time Favorites**
Learn ‘em by heart.

**Mediterranean Sunset**
Blends traditional eastern instruments like the mandolin and bouzouki with Spanish guitar.

**Putumayo Presents: Music from the Wine Lands**
Sounds from southern countries like France, Spain and Italy.

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**More Info**

**Measurements**
Except for the UK where metric and imperial measurements are used, Europe uses the metric (kilometers and liters) system.

**Visas**
Not required in most countries for most nationals; Turkey is the exception.

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**Books**

- **A Tramp Abroad**
Mark Twain’s humorous 1870s look at Europe on foot.

- **Europe 101: History and Art for the Traveller**
Insight into all those artworks and churches.

- **Europe: A History**
Professor Norman Davies boils down European history down to one book.

- **In Europe: Travels Through the 20th Century**
Journalist Geert Mak traveled the continent the final year of the millennium.

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**Films**

- **A Room with a View** (1985)
EM Forrester’s classic tale about an Englishwoman who travels to Italy and back in the 1900s.

- **Europe Trip** (2004)
Youthful comedy about a post-break up, cross-Europe trip to meet a German pen pal.

- **European Vacation** (1985)
Chevy Chase and the Griswolds’ usual zaniness. “Look, kids—Big Ben!”

- **From Russia with Love** (1963)
James Bond 007 spy flick filmed in Turkey, Italy, England and Scotland.

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**DRESS**

The universal uniform of jeans, T-shirt and sneakers will do for most daywear. But be aware that in über-chic Paris, Rome and Milan, scruffy clothing will give you away as a tourist.

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what to do

SHOPPING

1 Milan  
Designer garb at the Golden Quad, cut rates at street markets.

2 Grand Bazaar, İstanbul  
Four thousand shops. Enough said.

3 Nuremberg  
Germany’s premier Christmas market.

4 Portobello Road, London  
Crowded street market filled with antiques.

5 Prague  
Bohemian Moser crystal and more, in Nové Město.

6 Brussels  
Chocolate, comics and lace all widely available.

TOP-NOTCH MUSEUMS

1 British Museum, London  
A treasure trove of Egyptian, Etruscan, Greek, Oriental and Roman artifacts.

2 Louvre, Paris  
Mindboggling array of art inside an equally impressive palace.

3 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam  
A master-filled collection valued in the billions.

4 Uffizi Gallery, Florence  
The world’s greatest assembly of Italian Renaissance art.

5 National Archaeological Museum, Athens  
A vast collection from all the ancient civilizations across Greece.

6 Museo del Prado, Madrid  
A seemingly endless parade of priceless artworks from Spain and beyond.
**ICONIC EXPERIENCES**

1. **A trip around the London Eye**
   Touristy, but great South Bank views from a giant Ferris wheel.

2. **Tasting French wine where it grows**
   Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champagne... let your palate be your guide.

3. **Island hopping in Greece**
   Take a ferry from Piraeus to the Cyclades, Crete, Corfu and more.

4. **Balloon ride over Cappadocia**
   Float over the ethereal fairy chimney rock formations in central Turkey.

5. **An idle café day in Vienna**
   Idle over coffee and cake for hours at a turn-of-the-20th-century café.

**LITERARY & ARTISTIC HAUNTS**

1. **Les Deux Magots, Paris**
   Stop for a *café au lait* at Hemingway’s favorite Parisian café.

2. **Teatre-Museu Dalí, Figueres**
   Delve into the surreal world of Salvador Dalí at this zany art museum.

3. **Trevi Fountain, Rome**
   See the fountain where Anita Ekberg got wet and wild in Fellini’s *La Dolce Vita*.

4. **Castle Howard, Near York, England**
   Admire the fabulous stately home made famous in *Brideshead Revisited*.

5. **Cephallonia, Greece**
   Explore the idyllic Mediterranean island that inspired *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin*.

6. **Anne Frank Museum, Amsterdam**
   Pay homage at the tiny hideaway where Anne Frank wrote her famous wartime diary (now a moving museum).
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