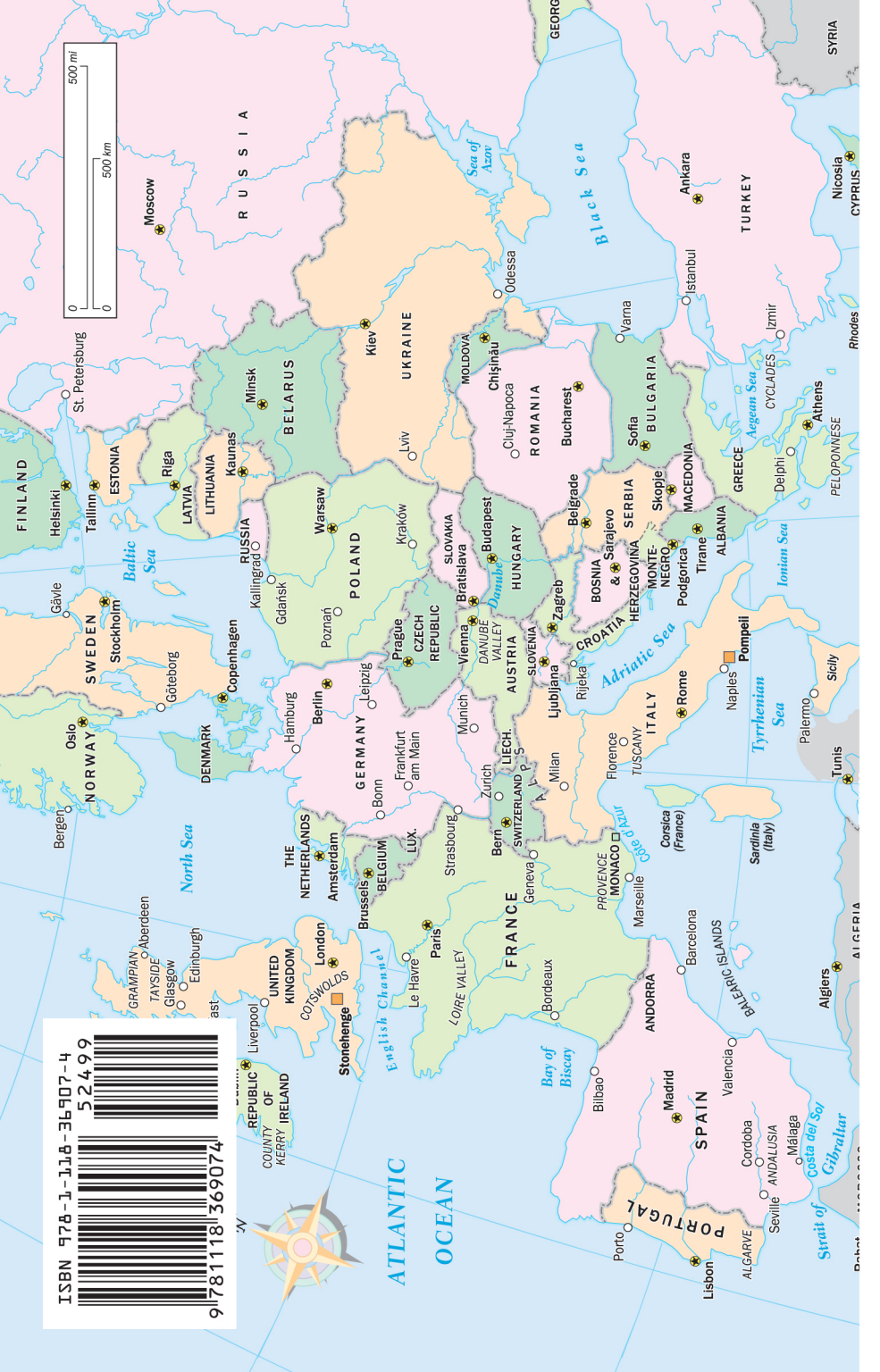
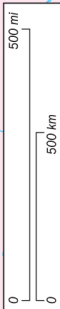


Frommer's

# Europe



ISBN 978-1-118-36907-4  
52499  
9781118369074



Frommer's®

# Europe

*12th Edition*



John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Published by:

**JOHN WILEY & SONS, INC.**

Copyright © 2013 John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester,  
West Sussex PO19 8SQ, UK  
Telephone (+44) 1243 779777

Email (for orders and customer service enquiries): [cs-books@wiley.co.uk](mailto:cs-books@wiley.co.uk). Visit our Home Page on  
[www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com)

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except under the terms of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of a licence issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, Saffron House, 6-10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS, UK, without the permission in writing of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 8SQ, England, or emailed to [permreq@wiley.co.uk](mailto:permreq@wiley.co.uk), or faxed to (+44) 1243 770620.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The Publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold on the understanding that the Publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

Publisher: Kelly Regan

Project Manager: Daniel Mersey

Editors: Fiona Quinn, Jill Emeny

Project Editors: Hannah Clement, Lindsay Conner

Cartography: Roberta Stockwell

Photo Editors: Cherie Cincilla, Richard H. Fox, Jill Emeny

Front cover photo: Belltower campanile from Brunelleschi's Dome (Duomo), Florence, Tuscany, Italy ©

Peter Barritt / Alamy Images

Back Cover photo: Algarve scenic, Lagos, Portugal © Parasola.net / Alamy Images

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some content that appears in standard print versions of this book may not be available in other formats. For more information about Wiley products, visit us at [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com).

For information on our other products and services or to obtain technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877/762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317/572-3993 or fax 317/572-4002.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-118-36907-4 (pbk)

ISBN 978-1-118-48630-6 (ebk)

ISBN 978-1-118-48631-3 (ebk)

ISBN 978-1-118-54555-3 (ebk)

Typeset by Wiley Indianapolis Composition Services

Printed and bound in the United States of America

5 4 3 2 1

# CONTENTS

## List of Maps vii

## 1 PLANNING YOUR TRIP TO EUROPE 1

Getting There 1

Getting Around 6

*TRAIN TRIP TIPS* 9

*THE RULES OF THE ROAD: DRIVING IN EUROPE* 10

*FLYING WITH EUROPE'S BUDGET AIRLINES* 12

When to Go 13

*FROMMERS.COM: THE COMPLETE TRAVEL RESOURCE* 13

*EUROPE CALENDAR OF EVENTS* 15

Tips on Where to Stay 19

Organized Tours 21

*ONE-STOP TOUR SHOPPING* 24

*FAST FACTS: EUROPE* 24

## 2 AUSTRIA 31

Vienna 31

*NATIVE BEHAVIOR* 36

*THE VIENNA CARD* 37

*FAST FACTS: VIENNA* 39

*COFFEEHOUSES & CAFES* 51

Salzburg 59

*FAST FACTS: SALZBURG* 63

*IN MOZART'S FOOTSTEPS* 66

*CAFE SOCIETY* 69

Innsbruck & Tyrol 77

*FAST FACTS: INNSBRUCK* 80

## 3 BELGIUM 91

Brussels 91

*NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF* 93

*FAST FACTS: BRUSSELS* 97

*A COOL LITTLE GUY* 100

Bruges 112

Ghent 120

Antwerp 125

## 4 THE CZECH REPUBLIC 130

Prague 130

*NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF* 136

*FAST FACTS: PRAGUE* 139

West Bohemia & the Spas 160

*SPA CURES & TREATMENTS IN KARLOVY VARY* 165

## 5 DENMARK 175

Copenhagen 175

FAST FACTS: COPENHAGEN 181

## 6 ENGLAND 199

London 199

FAST FACTS: LONDON 205

TEATIME 227

LONDON PUB-CRAWL 236

Oxford 243

CALLING ON CHURCHILL AT BLENHEIM  
PALACE 248

## 7 FRANCE 270

Paris 270

DISCOUNT TRANSIT PASSES 275

FAST FACTS: PARIS 276

## 8 GERMANY 355

Berlin 355

FAST FACTS: BERLIN 360

LOCAL CULTURE 374

COME TO THE CABARET! 379

Munich & the Bavarian Alps 387

## 9 GREECE 427

Athens 427

NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF 435

FAST FACTS: ATHENS 439

QUICK BITES IN & AROUND SYNTAGMA 453

RISING STARS IN THE PSIRRI, THISSIO &  
GAZI DISTRICTS 456

The Northern Peloponnese &  
Delphi 469

## 10 HUNGARY 532

Budapest 532

NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF 536

FAST FACTS: BUDAPEST 540

COPENHAGEN'S LITTLE MERMAID 184

Day Trips from Copenhagen 197

Stratford-upon-Avon 250

A VISIT TO WARWICK CASTLE 255

Salisbury, Stonehenge & Bath 258

A TRIP TO GEORGIAN & VICTORIAN  
BRISTOL 266

THE TOP CAFES 294

The Loire Valley Châteaux 307

Provence & the Côte d'Azur 325

FAST FACTS: MUNICH 392

BEER GARDENS, CELLARS & TAVERNS 404

PRE-WWII—DACHAU ARTISTS' COLONY 409

SPORTS IN THE BAVARIAN ALPS 410

The Romantic Road 413

THE CORINTH CANAL 471

A BREAK ON THE WAY TO DELPHI 490

The Cyclades 495

DIVING 503

SANTORINI'S BEACHES 517

WALKING TOURS 519

A SWIM, A SNACK, AN ANCIENT SITE 527

BATHING IN HISTORY: BUDAPEST'S  
THERMAL BATHS 547

The Danube Bend 557

BEST LÁNGOS EVER 560



## 11 IRELAND 564

Dublin 564

FAST FACTS: DUBLIN 571

NATIVE BEHAVIOR: THE ART OF POURING  
GUINNESS 576

Kerry & the Dingle Peninsula 595

## 12 ITALY 613

Rome 613

FAST FACTS: ROME 618

Florence 648

FAST FACTS: FLORENCE 652

Highlights of the Tuscan & Umbrian  
Countryside 672

Venice 686

FAST FACTS: VENICE 691

VENICE DISCOUNTS 695

## 13 THE NETHERLANDS 710

Amsterdam 710

NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF 715

FAST FACTS: AMSTERDAM 717

Side Trips from Amsterdam 741

Rotterdam 743

Delft 747

Leiden 748

## 14 NORWAY 750

Oslo 750

NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF 755

FAST FACTS: OSLO 756

Bergen & the Fjords 770

## 15 PORTUGAL 780

Lisbon & Environs 780

NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF 784

FAST FACTS: LISBON 787

FADO: THE MUSIC OF LONGING 800

The Algarve 808

## 16 SCOTLAND 824

Edinburgh & Environs 824

FAST FACTS: EDINBURGH 830

EDINBURGH UNDERGROUND 833

GREYFRIARS KIRK & BOBBY 835

THE WATER OF LEITH 838

EDINBURGH'S WORLD-FAMOUS  
FESTIVALS 844

FESTIVAL ACCOMMODATION 845

Glasgow 851

NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF 854

FAST FACTS: GLASGOW 856

CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH  
(1868–1928) 858

Tayside & Grampian 868

PLAYING THE WORLD'S OLDEST GOLF  
COURSE 872

SPOTTING NESSIE 879

## 17 **SPAIN** 881

Madrid 881

*THE NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF* 886

*FAST FACTS: MADRID* 888

Day Trips from Madrid 909

Barcelona 912

*FAST FACTS: BARCELONA* 918

Day Trips from Barcelona 935

Andalucía & the Costa del Sol 937

## 18 **SWEDEN** 960

Stockholm & Environs 960

*FAST FACTS: STOCKHOLM* 965

*CHANGING THE ROYAL GUARD* 970

Day Trips from Stockholm 984

## 19 **SWITZERLAND** 988

Geneva 988

*NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF* 992

*FAST FACTS: GENEVA* 994

*TO FRANCE BY LAKE STEAMER* 1015

*MONTREUX JAZZ FESTIVAL* 1016

Zurich 1017

*NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF* 1020

*FAST FACTS: ZURICH* 1021

**Index** 1037

Accommodations Index 1067



# LIST OF MAPS

- Europe 2
- Austria 33
- Vienna 34
- Salzburg 61
- Innsbruck 79
- Belgium 93
- Brussels 94
- Bruges 113
- Ghent 121
- Antwerp 127
- The Czech Republic 131
- Prague 132
- Český Krumlov 171
- Denmark 177
- Copenhagen 178
- England 201
- London Attractions 208
- London Restaurants & Hotels 222
- Stratford-upon-Avon 251
- Bath 263
- France 271
- Paris Attractions 278
- Paris Hotels 300
- The Loire Valley 309
- Provence 327
- The French Riviera 335
- Monaco 351
- Germany 357
- Western Berlin 358
- Mitte & Museumsinsel 363
- Charlottenburg 369
- Munich 388
- The Romantic Road 415
- Greece 429
- Athens 430
- The Acropolis & Ancient Agora 443
- The Cyclades 497
- Hungary 533
- Budapest 534
- The Danube Bend 559
- Ireland 565
- Dublin 566
- County Kerry 597
- Italy 615
- Rome Attractions 620
- The Colosseum, the Forum & Ancient Rome Attractions 625
- Rome Hotels 640
- Rome & Environs 647
- Florence 650
- Tuscany & Umbria 673
- Siena 679
- Assisi 685
- Venice 688
- The Netherlands 711
- Amsterdam 712
- Norway 751
- Oslo 752
- Oslo to Bergen & Along the Fjords 771
- Portugal 781
- Lisbon 783
- The Algarve 809
- Scotland 825
- Edinburgh 826
- Glasgow 852
- Tayside & Grampian 869
- Spain 883
- Madrid 884
- Barcelona 914
- Andalucía & the Costa del Sol 938
- Sevilla 939
- Sweden 961
- Stockholm 968
- Switzerland 989
- Geneva 990
- Zurich 1018

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Donald Strachan** is a Frommer's writer and author of recent guidebooks to Florence, Tuscany, England and Great Britain. He is also a contributor for Frommer's *London 2013* guidebook, as well as a regular writer for the Sunday Telegraph on consumer travel technologies and the Web. Donald wrote the Planning chapter, is co-author of the Florence, and Tuscany & Umbria sections of the Italy chapter and contributed to the England chapter.

**Dardis McNamee** is currently editor in chief of the English-language monthly *The Vienna Review*. In her long career in journalism, she has been correspondent for, among others, *The New York Times* and *Conde Nast Traveler* in New York, and for the *Wall Street Journal Europe* and *Die Zeit* in Vienna, the city where she has lived for 15 years. Dardis is the author of the Austria chapter.

**George McDonald** is a freelance journalist and travel writer who has written extensively about both the Netherlands and Belgium for magazines and guidebooks, including several Frommer's titles. He is the author of The Netherlands and Belgium chapters.

**Mark Baker** is a long-time American expat who lives in Prague. He's one of the original editors of *The Prague Post* and was for years a correspondent and editor for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, based in Prague. He is now a freelance editor and reporter. Mark is the author of The Czech Republic chapter.

**Christian Martinez** was born in Spain but grew up in Copenhagen where he majored in Anthropology and Spanish. He's been a long-time editor and staff writer at Politiken Travel Books, a Danish publishing house, and is the author of guidebooks on Madrid, Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil. He's now a freelance writer and reporter and has published articles in all major Danish newspapers and magazines. Christian is the author of the Denmark chapter.

**Joe Fullman** has lived in London for just over 40 years and has worked as a travel writer for more than a decade. He has written for most of the major guidebook publishers and is author of guides to London, England, among others. He contributed to the London section of the England chapter. **Sian Meades** has lived in southeast London for a decade and has spent most of that time hunting for the perfect boutiques. Sian contributed to the shopping section of London in the England chapter. **John Power** is a London-based DJ, club promoter and writer with nearly 2 decades experience traversing the pubs, clubs, and nightlife of the capital. He contributed to London nightlife in the England chapter.

**Lily Heise** has been living in Paris for over 10 years, having refused to go back to Canada after studying art first in Italy and then in France. In addition to contributing to *Frommer's Paris and France*, she reports on Paris cultural news for local and international online and print publications. She lives in Montmartre and spends her free time exploring off-beat Paris and traveling around Europe. **Joseph Alexiou** works as a freelance journalist and has contributed to *France For Dummies* and *Europe For Dummies*. His work has appeared in the

New York Press, the *New York Observer*, *Newsday*, and *Paper* magazine. He lives in Brooklyn. **Sophie Nellis** came to Paris for a summer adventure in 2007. Four years later, she is still here. She currently lives in Belleville and divides her time among writing, teaching, translating, and leading walking tours of Paris. **Kate van den Boogert** is founding editor of the popular Paris blog [gogoparis.com](http://gogoparis.com), an insider's guide to fashion, food, arts, gigs, and gossip in the French capital. Kate moved to Paris from Melbourne in 2000. **Tristan Rutherford** moved to Nice and began a career in freelance travel journalism in 2002. He writes travel features for *Financial Times* and London's *Sunday Times Travel Magazine* among others, and lectures in Travel and Journalism at Central Saint Martin's in London.

**Caroline Sieg** has been a travel writer for many years and has contributed on Germany chapters for three Lonely Planet guidebooks (*Western Europe 9*, *Central Europe 8*, *Europe on a Shoestring 6*); as well as *Frommer's Germany* and a number of other titles: *Frommer's San Diego*; *Frommer's Dream Vacations*; and features for [Frommers.com](http://Frommers.com). Caroline wrote the Germany chapter.

**Peter Kerasiotis**, a native Athenian, currently lives in New York City, where he works as a web developer and editor. He is the author of Athens, in the Greece chapter. **Sherry Marker's** love of Greece began when she majored in Classical Greek at Harvard. She attended American School of Classical Studies in Athens and studied ancient history at the University of California at Berkeley. Sherry is the author of *The Northern Peloponnese & Delphi*, and *The Cyclades in the Greece chapter*.

**Dr. Ryan James** was born and raised in Long Branch, New Jersey. He earned his doctorate in education from the University of San Francisco, and has taught English at ELTE University in Budapest since 2002. He and his partner own BudaBaB, a bed and breakfast on the Pest side of Budapest. Ryan wrote the Hungary chapter.

**Christi Daugherty** is an expat American living in London. A former journalist, she's the author of several travel books including *Frommer's Ireland*. Christi and her husband, **Jack Jewers**, wrote the Ireland chapter.

**Eleonora Baldwin** is an American born-Italian raised, global citizen. As a food and travel writer, and wanderlust addict living in Rome, she divides her time between guiding foodie adventures, writing food stories and columns, traveling, and designing custom culinary vacations in Italy. She is the author/editor of four blogs in which she writes about Italian lifestyle, reviews restaurants, provides useful tools for parents traveling with kids in Rome, and captures the Eternal City's essence in her photography. Eleonora contributed to the Italy chapter. **John Moretti**, a freelance writer based in Italy, has written for *The International Herald Tribune*, *The Independent on Sunday*, *Italy Daily*, The Associated Press, and [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com) (Financial Times online). He is the author of *Living Abroad in Italy*, co-editor of *Rome in Detail*, and a contributor to Time Out's Milan and Naples city guides. John contributed to the Italy chapter.

---

**Stephen Keeling** is a journalist and writer who lives in New York but returns to his native England several times a year. He has authored or co-authored several books on European destinations including *Frommer's Tuscany, Umbria & Florence With Your Family* and *Frommer's Italy*. He is co-author of the Florence, and Tuscany & Umbria sections of the Italy chapter, and contributed to the England chapter.

**Roger Norum**, an award-winning writer and photographer, studied Norwegian literature at the University of Tromsø before reading a PhD in Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford. He currently makes London his home, from where he covers travel and food for a range of publications. Roger wrote the Norway chapter.

**Darwin & Danforth** are a team of veteran travel writers who have authored dozens of Frommer's titles over the years. Porter is a film critic and noted biographer of Hollywood celebrities. Prince was employed by the Paris bureau of the *New York Times*, and is today the president of BloodMoonProductions.com. They authored the Switzerland and Portugal chapters.

**Lesley Anne Rose** is a travel and script writer who has lived in and explored Scotland for many years. She has written guidebooks, articles, and travel columns for various publishers and organizations on worldwide destinations, including Malta, Florida, and Canada, and her U.K. specialisms are the Lake District and Scotland. Lesley Anne is the author of the Scotland chapter.

**Patricia Harris** and **David Lyon** have journeyed the world for American, British, Swiss, and Asian publishers to write about food, culture, art, and design. Wherever their assignments take them, they are drawn back to Spain for the flamenco nightlife, the Moorish architecture of Andalucía, the world-weary and lust-ridden saints of Zurbarán, and the phantasmagoric visions of El Greco. They make their online home at HungryTravelers.com. Together, they are the authors of the Spain chapter.

**Mary Anne Evans** is one of the leading travel writers on London and Britain, particularly on restaurants. She is an experienced guidebook writer and has been an editor for many years. She has recently written *Frommer's Day by Day Stockholm*. Mary Anne wrote the Sweden chapter and contributed to London hotels and restaurants in the England chapter.

## HOW TO CONTACT US

In researching this book, we discovered many wonderful places—hotels, restaurants, shops, and more. We're sure you'll find others. Please tell us about them, so we can share the information with your fellow travelers in upcoming editions. If you were disappointed with a recommendation, we'd love to know that, too. Please write to:

*Frommer's Europe*, 12th Edition  
John Wiley & Sons, Inc. • 111 River St. • Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774  
frommersfeedback@wiley.com

## ADVISORY & DISCLAIMER

Travel information can change quickly and unexpectedly, and we strongly advise you to confirm important details locally before traveling, including information on visas, health and safety, traffic and transport, accommodation, shopping and eating out. We also encourage you to stay alert while traveling and to remain aware of your surroundings. Avoid civil disturbances, and keep a close eye on cameras, purses, wallets and other valuables.








While we have endeavored to ensure that the information contained within this guide is accurate and up-to-date at the time of publication, we make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this work and specifically disclaim all warranties, including without limitation warranties of fitness for a particular purpose. We accept no responsibility or liability for any inaccuracy or errors or omissions, or for any inconvenience, loss, damage, costs or expenses of any nature whatsoever incurred or suffered by anyone as a result of any advice or information contained in this guide.

The inclusion of a company, organization or Website in this guide as a service provider and/or potential source of further information does not mean that we endorse them or the information they provide. Be aware that information provided through some Websites may be unreliable and can change without notice. Neither the publisher or author shall be liable for any damages arising herefrom.

## FROMMER'S STAR RATINGS, ICONS & ABBREVIATIONS

Every hotel, restaurant, and attraction listing in this guide has been ranked for quality, value, service, amenities, and special features using a **star-rating system**. In country, state, and regional guides, we also rate towns and regions to help you narrow down your choices and budget your time accordingly. Hotels and restaurants are rated on a scale of zero (recommended) to three stars (exceptional). Attractions, shopping, nightlife, towns, and regions are rated according to the following scale: zero stars (recommended), one star (highly recommended), two stars (very highly recommended), and three stars (must-see).

In addition to the star-rating system, we also use **seven feature icons** that point you to the great deals, in-the-know advice, and unique experiences that separate travelers from tourists. Throughout the book, look for:

-  **special finds**—those places only insiders know about
-  **fun facts**—details that make travelers more informed and their trips more fun
-  **kids**—best bets for kids and advice for the whole family
-  **special moments**—those experiences that memories are made of
-  **overrated**—places or experiences not worth your time or money
-  **insider tips**—great ways to save time and money
-  **great values**—where to get the best deals

The following abbreviations are used for credit cards:

AE American Express      DISC Discover      V Visa  
DC Diners Club      MC MasterCard

## TRAVEL RESOURCES AT FROMMERS.COM

Frommer's travel resources don't end with this guide. Frommer's website, **www.frommers.com**, has travel information on more than 4,000 destinations. We update features regularly, giving you access to the most current trip-planning information and the best airfare, lodging, and car-rental bargains. You can also listen to podcasts, connect with other Frommers.com members through our active-reader forums, share your travel photos, read blogs from guidebook editors and fellow travelers, and much more.

# PLANNING YOUR TRIP TO EUROPE

1

by Donald Strachan

A little planning goes a long way, especially when you are traveling to and through a continent with several different languages, transport systems, airlines, festivals, and sights to see. This chapter provides a variety of invaluable aids, including information on how to get there from the U.S. and Canada, the U.K., and Australia or New Zealand; the most efficient and budget-friendly ways of getting around; tips on where to stay; and quick, on-the-ground resources for savvy travel around Europe.

---

## GETTING THERE

### By Plane

Pretty much every major world airline offers competitive fares to a variety of European cities. Price wars break out regularly, deals come on- and offstream, and tariffs can change overnight. The key factor determining what you'll pay is **season**: Tickets tend to be cheaper if you fly off season. **High season** on most routes is usually from June to mid-September and around Christmas and New Year—the most expensive and most crowded time to travel. **Shoulder season** is from April to May and mid-September to October. **Low season**—usually with the cheapest fares and regular aggressive offers—is from November to mid-December and January to March. You can sometimes save money by flying midweek, too, or at least spending a Saturday night in your destination.

Begin thinking about flying plans at least 6 months ahead of time. Consider exchange rate movements: Fares may be calculated in U.S. dollars, British pounds, or euros, depending on the airline. The key window for finding a **deal** is usually between 3 months and 4 weeks ahead of your departure for long-haul flights. (Short-haul deals tend to go live a little further ahead of time, between 6 and 2 months before departure.) The glory days of generous **frequent-flyer programs** and bucketloads of free miles are no more, but it's still worth checking for offers, upgrades, and rewards from airlines and alliances (and also hotel chains). The forum **Flyertalk.com** is a handy resource for this.



# 1 Europe

Getting There

PLANNING YOUR TRIP TO EUROPE





Remember that the cheapest way between two points may not always be a straight line. Flying into a major European hub such as London, Frankfurt, or Paris might be cheaper than flying direct to your final destination. If you're heading to the U.K., consider entering via Dublin, Ireland, to save on Air Passenger Duty (APD, the British flight tax). Run searches through the regular online agents such as Expedia, as well as metasearch engines like **Kayak.com**, **Skyscanner.net**, and **Momondo.com**. For complex journeys, with multiple departures, a specialist flight agent such as **RoundtheWorldFlights.com** or **AirTreks.com** will likely save you money. And don't forget the travel agent around the corner from your home. He or she may have been digging out cheap fares to Europe for decades.

**MAJOR NORTH AMERICAN AIRLINES** North American carriers with frequent service and flights to Europe include **Air Canada** ([www.aircanada.ca](http://www.aircanada.ca); ☎ 888/247-2262 in the U.S. and Canada), **American Airlines** ([www.aa.com](http://www.aa.com); ☎ 800/433-7300 in the U.S. and Canada), **Delta Airlines** ([www.delta.com](http://www.delta.com); ☎ 800/241-4141 in the U.S. and Canada), **United Airlines** ([www.united.com](http://www.united.com); ☎ 800/864-8331 in the U.S. and Canada), and **US Airways** ([www.usairways.com](http://www.usairways.com); ☎ 800/428-4322 in the U.S. and Canada).

**EUROPEAN AIRLINES** Not only will the major carriers of European countries offer the greatest number of direct flights from the United States (and can easily book you through to cities beyond the major hubs), but because their entire market outside Europe is to fly you to (or via) their home country, they sometimes run more competitive deals than other global carriers—sometimes, via codeshare agreements, for the same flights. Major national and country-affiliated European airlines include the following:

- **Austria: Austrian Airlines** ([www.austrian.com](http://www.austrian.com); ☎ 800/843-0002 in the U.S. and Canada; ☎ 0870/124-2625 in the U.K.).
- **Belgium: Brussels Airlines** ([www.brusselsairlines.com](http://www.brusselsairlines.com); ☎ 516/296-9500 in the U.S.; ☎ 514/789-2230 in Canada; ☎ 0905/6095-609 in the U.K.).
- **Czech Republic: CSA Czech Airlines** ([www.czechairlines.com](http://www.czechairlines.com); ☎ +420-239/007112; ☎ 02/8248-0000 in Australia).
- **France: Air France** ([www.airfrance.com](http://www.airfrance.com); ☎ 800/237-2747 in the U.S.; ☎ 800/667-2747 in Canada; ☎ 0871/6633-777 in the U.K.).
- **Germany: Lufthansa** ([www.lufthansa.com](http://www.lufthansa.com); ☎ 800/645-3880 in the U.S.; ☎ 800/563-5954 in Canada; ☎ 0871/945-9747 in the U.K.; ☎ 1300-655-727 in Australia; ☎ 0800/945-220 in New Zealand) and **Air Berlin** ([www.airberlin.com](http://www.airberlin.com); ☎ 866/266-5588 in the U.S. and Canada; ☎ 0871/5000-737 in the U.K.).
- **Greece: Olympic Air** ([www.olympicair.com](http://www.olympicair.com)).
- **Ireland: Aer Lingus** ([www.aerlingus.com](http://www.aerlingus.com); ☎ 800/IRISH-AIR [474-7424] in the U.S. and Canada; ☎ 0871/718-2020 in the U.K.).
- **Italy: Alitalia** ([www.alitalia.com](http://www.alitalia.com); ☎ 800/223-5730 in the U.S. and Canada; ☎ 0871/424-1424 in the U.K.).
- **The Netherlands: KLM** ([www.klm.com](http://www.klm.com); ☎ 800/618-0104 in the U.S. and Canada; ☎ 0871/231-0000 in the U.K.).
- **Portugal: TAP Portugal** ([www.flytap.com](http://www.flytap.com); ☎ 800/221-7370 in the U.S. and Canada; ☎ 0845/601-0932 in the U.K.).



## Don't Stow It—Ship It

Though pricey, it's sometimes worthwhile for North Americans heading to Europe to travel luggage-free. Specialists in door-to-door luggage delivery include **Virtual Bellhop** ([\[bellhop.com\]\(http://bellhop.com\); ☎ \*\*877/235-5467\*\* in the U.S. and Canada\) and \*\*Luggage Express\*\* \(\[www.myluggageexpress.com\]\(http://www.myluggageexpress.com\); ☎ \*\*866/744-7224\*\* in the U.S. and Canada\).](http://www.virtual</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

- **Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway, Sweden): SAS Scandinavian Airlines** ([www.flysas.com](http://www.flysas.com); ☎ **800/221-2350** in the U.S. and Canada; ☎ **0871/226-7760** in the U.K.; ☎ **1300/727-707** in Australia).
- **Spain: Iberia** ([www.iberia.com](http://www.iberia.com); ☎ **800/772-4642** in the U.S. and Canada; ☎ **0870/609-0500** in the U.K.).
- **Switzerland: Swiss** ([www.swiss.com](http://www.swiss.com); ☎ **877/359-7947** in the U.S. and Canada; ☎ **0845/601-0956** in the U.K.).
- **United Kingdom: British Airways** ([www.britishairways.com](http://www.britishairways.com); ☎ **800/247-9297** in the U.S. and Canada; ☎ **0844/493-0787** in the U.K.; ☎ **1300/767-177** in Australia) and **Virgin Atlantic** ([www.virgin-atlantic.com](http://www.virgin-atlantic.com); ☎ **800/862-8621** in the U.S. and Canada; ☎ **0844/209-7777** in the U.K.; ☎ **1300/727-340** in Australia).

## By Train from the United Kingdom

High-speed rail services connect London's **St. Pancras International Station** with Paris and Brussels, via the **Channel Tunnel**. You can now reach Brussels in under 2 hours, and Paris in 2¼ hours. There are also direct trains to other halts in France: Lille and Disneyland Paris, all year, and seasonal direct trains to Avignon, Provence, and the French Alps, terminating at Bourg St. Maurice (the so-called "Snow Train"). The London terminus boasts Europe's longest champagne bar, all the Wi-Fi you'll ever need, plus dozens of stores—and saw a new luxury hotel open in 2011, the **St. Pancras Renaissance London** (p. 238). In the U.K., make reservations for the train by calling **Eurostar** at ☎ **08432/186-186**; in North America, book online at [www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com), or contact **Rail Europe** ([www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com); ☎ **800/622-8600** in the U.S. or **800/361-7245** in Canada). There are several more European city connections available via Eurostar through-ticketing. For Cologne (4¼ hr. from London), Germany, or Amsterdam (4¼ hr.), in the Netherlands, change in Brussels. You'll need to change in Paris for Dijon (4¼ hr.), in Burgundy, France, or Geneva (6½ hr.), Switzerland, for example.

## By Ferry to/from the United Kingdom or Ireland

A number of ferry companies link England's southern coast with the Channel ports of northern **France** and **Spain**. **Brittany Ferries** ([www.brittanyferries.com](http://www.brittanyferries.com); ☎ **0871/244-0744**) sails to five destinations in France: From Portsmouth, sailings reach St.-Malo, Cherbourg, and Caen. From Poole, you can ferry to Cherbourg, and from Plymouth sailings go to Roscoff. The same company connects southern England directly with the north coast of Spain; sailings to Santander or Bilbao take around 24 hours. **P&O Ferries** ([www.poferries.com](http://www.poferries.com); ☎ **0871/664-2121**, or **+44-1304/863-000** from outside the U.K.) operates car and passenger ferries between Dover and

Calais, France (the most popular route across the Channel, with 25–46 sailings per day; 1¼ hr.), and overnight between Hull, in northern England, and Zeebrugge, Belgium, or Rotterdam, the Netherlands. **DFDS Seaways** ([www.dfdsseaways.co.uk](http://www.dfdsseaways.co.uk); ☎ 0871/574-7235, or +44-20/8127-8303 from outside the U.K.) connects Dover with Calais, as well as Dover and Dunkerque, France; Newcastle, in northern England, overnight with Amsterdam; and Harwich, east of London, with Esbjerg, in Denmark, also overnight. **LD Lines** ([www.ldlines.co.uk](http://www.ldlines.co.uk); ☎ 0844/576-8836 in the U.K.) specializes in linking England and France, connecting Dover with Calais, Newhaven with Dieppe, and Portsmouth with Le Havre.

The quickest sea route to **Ireland** is from the western coast of Wales. From Holyhead, in the northwest of Anglesey, **Stena Line** ([www.stenaline.co.uk](http://www.stenaline.co.uk); ☎ 0844/770-7070) and **Irish Ferries** ([www.irishferries.com](http://www.irishferries.com); ☎ 08717/300-400) both offer services to Dublin. There are also ferries to Rosslare, County Wexford, further south in Ireland: from Fishguard, southwest Wales, operated by Stena Line; and from nearby Pembroke, operated by Irish Ferries. Stena Line also connects Liverpool with Belfast, Northern Ireland. You can sail between Liverpool and Dublin with P&O Ferries. To reach **France** from Ireland (or vice versa), there's no need to go via England: Irish Ferries connects Rosslare with Cherbourg and Roscoff.

Ferry route search and booking site **Aferry.co.uk** is invaluable for any traveler planning to use ferries anywhere in Europe. Many car-rental companies won't let you rent a car in Britain and take it to the Continent, so always check ahead if you're considering that option.

## By Tunnel from the United Kingdom

The quickest way for drivers to cross the English Channel is via a car-transporting train that connects Folkestone, southern England, and Calais via the **Channel Tunnel**. Prices tend to be higher than for the ferry (see above), but crossing time is only around 35 minutes. Book online at [www.eurotunnel.com](http://www.eurotunnel.com) or call ☎ 08443/353-535 from the U.K.

## By Bus from the United Kingdom

Although travel by long-distance coach is slower and less comfortable than travel by train, if you're on a tight budget you could opt for one of **Eurolines's** ([www.eurolines.com](http://www.eurolines.com); ☎ 0871/781-8178) regular departures from London's Victoria Coach Station to destinations across Europe. Direct connections from London that don't require a change of bus include Paris (9½ hr.), Vienna (23 hr.), and Amsterdam (12½ hr.). If you are very quick off the mark, you may be able to get a super-budget ("from £1") **Megabus** ([www.megabus.com](http://www.megabus.com); ☎ 0871/266-3333, or +44-141/332-9644 from outside the U.K.) fare between London and Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels, or Boulogne, France.

# GETTING AROUND

## By Train

In Europe, the shortest—and often cheapest—distance between two points is usually lined with rail tracks. Compared to the United States, for example, European trains are often less expensive, far more advanced in many ways, and certainly more extensive. While not rivaling modern Asian rail networks, such as Japan's, the European rail system still ranks as one of the best in the world: Not always integrated, and with

occasional ticketing frustrations that vary from country to country, but a fine way to travel nonetheless.

Modern **high-speed trains** (traveling up to around 180 mph) make the rails faster than the plane for short journeys; airlines have gone into rapid decline on routes such as London–Brussels, Barcelona–Madrid, and Milan–Rome that have efficient high-speed links. **Overnight trains** get you where you're going without wasting valuable daylight hours—and you save money on lodging to boot.

## SOME IMPORTANT TRAIN NOTES

Many European high-speed trains require you to pay a **supplement** in addition to the regular ticket fare. It's included when you buy tickets, but not usually in any prepaid rail pass, so check at the ticket window before boarding; otherwise, the conductor will sell you the supplement on the train—along with a fine. **Seat reservations** (from 10€ up) are required on some high-speed runs, too. You can usually reserve a seat within a few hours of departure, but be on the safe side and book your seat a few days in advance for any key connections you're building into an itinerary. You need to reserve any sleeping couchette or sleeping berth too.

With some exceptions, there's usually no need to buy individual train tickets or make seat reservations many months before you leave home. However, it's always wise to reserve a seat on the **Eurostar**, as England's **bank holidays** (long weekends with holiday Mondays) book the train solid with Londoners taking a short vacation to Paris or Brussels. Tickets go on sale 120 days before departure, and you'll usually bag the best prices if you book early and avoid Fridays and Sundays. The overnight **Thello** train ([www.thello.com](http://www.thello.com); Paris to Milan, Rome, and Venice) is another service worth reserving well ahead of time. You won't save any money, because tariffs are fixed, but as there's only one service each way per day, booking early will help with itinerary planning.

The difference between **first class** and **second class** on European trains is often minor—a matter of 1 or 2 inches of extra padding and maybe a bit more elbowroom. However, upgrades can sometimes be fairly cheap (for first-class seats booked in advance on weekends in the U.K., for example). There's sometimes a complimentary snack thrown in, along with free Wi-Fi. So, our general advice is: Upgrade if it doesn't cost very much to do so, but don't break the bank. Overnight trains can provide more for your upgrade, in terms of space and privacy, but you'll pay for the privilege.

European **train stations** are usually as clean and efficient as the trains, if a bit chaotic at times. In stations you'll find departures boards showing the track number and timetables for regularly scheduled runs (departures are sometimes on a yellow poster, too). Many stations also have tourist offices, banks with ATMs, and newsstands where you can buy phone cards, bus and metro tickets, maps, and local English-language event magazines. Some have shopping malls and hotels, or even public showers.

You can get more details about train travel in Europe by contacting **Rail Europe** ([www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com); also ☎ 08448/484-064 in the U.K.). Other excellent agents worth consulting for planning assistance and advance ticket or pass sales include **International Rail** ([www.internationalrail.com](http://www.internationalrail.com); ☎ 0871/231-0790 in the U.K.) and **TrainsEurope** ([www.trainseurope.co.uk](http://www.trainseurope.co.uk); ☎ 0871/700-7722 in the U.K.). Note that schedules are confirmed and tickets released between 60 and 90 days from travel dates. If you plan to travel a great deal on the European railroads, it's worth buying an up-to-date copy of the **Thomas Cook European Rail Timetable**. It's

At the time of writing there were 23:	Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.
Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary,	

available online at [www.thomascookpublishing.com/railguides](http://www.thomascookpublishing.com/railguides), as well as via the usual retailers. The most valuable bookmark for planning complex European rail journeys is **The Man in Seat Sixty-One** ([www.seat61.com](http://www.seat61.com)).

## RAIL PASSES

The greatest value in European travel has traditionally been the **rail pass**, a single ticket allowing you unlimited travel (or travel on a certain number of days) within a set time period. If you plan on going all over Europe by train, buying a rail pass will end up being less expensive than buying individual tickets. Plus, a rail pass gives you the freedom to hop on a train whenever you feel like it, and there's no waiting in ticket lines. For more focused trips, look into single-country or regional passes. If you're only planning a few point-to-point journeys plus the odd local excursion, individual tickets will be the cheapest way to go.

**PASSES AVAILABLE IF YOU LIVE OUTSIDE EUROPE** The granddaddy of passes is the **Eurail Global Pass**, covering some 23 countries (most of western Europe except Britain, alongside chunks of eastern Europe).

It's best to buy these passes before you leave home. You can get them from most travel agents, but the biggest supplier is **Rail Europe** ([www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com)), which also sells most national passes via its comprehensive website.

The most popular pass is the **Eurail Global Pass**, which offers unlimited first-class travel for adults 26 and older. Options are US\$768 for 15 days, US\$990 for 21 days, US\$1,219 for 1 month, US\$1,720 for 2 months, or US\$2,121 for 3 months. Substantial reductions are granted on the **First Class Saver Pass** for two or more people traveling together or for **Second Class Youth Travel** for those 25 and younger. Children, ages 4 to 11, on their first day of travel, receive a 50% discount on the first-class adult fare, and those 3 and under travel free.

You can also consider a **Eurail Select Pass**, allowing travel in three, four, or five bordering European countries connected by train or ferry. With this pass, you can customize your own trip, traveling by train from 5 to 15 days within a 2-month period.

A **Eurail Regional Pass** is for those who want to see only a small part of Europe in a short time frame. Several different combination regional passes are offered, granting train travel on various numbers of days within periods up to 2 months. Such a pass, for example, might grant you unlimited travel in both France and Switzerland (Eurail France–Switzerland Pass), or a Scandinavia Pass granting travel in four countries. Most European countries, including Austria and Italy, also participate in the **Eurail One Country Pass**. This pass grants unlimited train travel from 3 to 10 days within a 1- or 2-month period in a single participating European country of your choice. Eight days of travel in Austria, within a 1-month period, costs US\$381





## TRAIN TRIP tips

To make your train travels as pleasant as possible, remember a few general rules:

- **Hold on to your train ticket** after it's been marked or punched by the conductor. Some European rail networks require that you present your ticket when you leave the station platform at your destination.
- While you sleep—or even nap—**be sure your valuables are in a safe place.** You might temporarily attach a small bell to each bag to warn you if someone attempts to take it. If you've left bags on a rack in the front or back of the car, consider securing them with a small bicycle chain and lock to deter thieves, who consider trains happy hunting grounds.
- Few European trains have drinking fountains, and the dining car may be closed just when you're at your thirstiest, so **take along a bottle of mineral water.** As you'll soon discover, the experienced rail traveler comes loaded with hampers of food and drink and munches away throughout the trip—buying food onboard can be very expensive.
- If you want to leave bags in a train station locker, **don't let anyone help you store them in it.** An old trick among thieves is feigned helpfulness, and then pocketing the key to your locker while passing you the key to an empty one.

first-class, US\$268 second-class. In Italy, 10 days' rail travel within a 2-month window costs US\$503 first-class, US\$409 second-class.

You have to study these passes carefully to see which one would be ideal for you. You can check online or call for the latest prices and offerings, which are always subject to changes. Many countries also offer rail passes with add-ons of a few days' car rental, but be sure to cross check the value against standalone deals.

If you plan on traveling in Great Britain, then **BritRail** ([www.britrail.com](http://www.britrail.com); ☎ 866/938-RAIL in the U.S. and Canada), which specializes in rail passes for use in Great Britain, is your best bet.

**PASSES FOR U.K. RESIDENTS VISITING CONTINENTAL EUROPE** A vast array of rail passes are available in the United Kingdom for travel around Europe. The most popular ticket is the **InterRail Global Pass**, which is offered for persons who have lived in a participating country in Europe at least 6 months. It offers unlimited travel in up to 30 European countries within 5 days, 10 days, 15 days, 22 days, or 1 month and is valid on all normal trains; the card is valid on high-speed trains such as TGV and overnight trains if you pay a supplement ranging between £5.50 and £46 per journey. The price of the pass depends on the trip duration and whether you want your validity to run continuously or for a set number of days in a fixed period. A typical fare for 5 days of travel within 10 days is 316€ in first class, 240€ in second class, and 158€ for a youth fare. **One-Country Passes** are also available. Passes are not valid in your country of residence.

For help in determining the best option for your trip and to buy tickets, contact a reliable reseller such as **Rail Europe** ([www.raileurope.co.uk](http://www.raileurope.co.uk); ☎ 08448/484-064) or **International Rail** ([www.internationalrail.com](http://www.internationalrail.com); ☎ 0871/231-0790).

## THE RULES OF THE ROAD: driving IN EUROPE

- First, know that European drivers tend to be more **aggressive** than their counterparts from other parts of the world.
- **Drive on the right** except in England, Scotland, and Ireland, where you drive on the left. And *do not drive* in the left lane on a four-lane highway; it is only for passing.
- If someone comes up from behind and flashes his lights at you, it's a signal for you to slow down and drive more on the shoulder so that he can pass you more easily (two-lane roads here sometimes become three cars wide).
- Except for the German Autobahn, most highways do indeed have **speed limits** of around 100 to 130kmph (62–81 mph).
- Remember that, outside the U.K., everything's measured in **kilometers** (distance and speed limits). For a rough conversion, 1km = 0.6 miles.
- Be aware that fuel is very expensive, so you should **rent the smallest, most fuel-efficient car** you think you can manage. Prices at the pumps are quoted in liters (1 US gallon = 3.78 liters).
- Never leave anything of value in a car overnight, and don't leave anything visible when you leave the car (this goes double in London, triple in Naples).

### By Car

Most rental companies offer their best prices to customers who **reserve in advance** from their home country. Weekly rentals are almost always less expensive than day rentals. Three or more people traveling together can often get around cheaper by car than by train, depending on the distances traveled and the size and efficiency of the engine—compared to most other parts of the world, fuel is very expensive almost everywhere in Europe. You should also factor in **road tolls** that many countries charge.

When you reserve a car, be sure to ask if the price includes: all taxes including value-added tax (VAT); breakdown assistance; unlimited mileage; personal accident or liability insurance (PAI); collision-damage waiver (CDW); theft waiver; and any other insurance options. If not, ask what these extras cost, because they can make a big dent in your bottom line. The CDW and other insurance might be covered by your credit card if you use the card to pay for the rental; check with your card issuer to be sure.

If your credit card doesn't cover the CDW, consider Car Rental Collision Coverage from **Travel Guard** ([www.travelguard.com](http://www.travelguard.com); ☎ 800/826-1300 in the U.S. and Canada), which will insure you for around US\$7 to US\$9 per day. In the U.K., **Insurance 4 Car Hire** ([www.insurance4carhire.com](http://www.insurance4carhire.com); ☎ 0844/892-1770) offers similar cover. An annual policy covering unlimited car rental for a maximum of 31 consecutive days on any one trip costs £49.

The main international companies all have rental points across Europe: **Avis** ([www.avis.com](http://www.avis.com); ☎ 800/331-1212 in the U.S. and Canada), **Budget** ([www.budget.com](http://www.budget.com); ☎ 800/472-3325 in the U.S. and Canada), **Dollar** ([www.dollar.com](http://www.dollar.com); ☎ 800/800-4000 in the U.S. and Canada), **Hertz** ([www.hertz.com](http://www.hertz.com); ☎ 800/654-3131 in the U.S. and Canada), and **National** ([www.nationalcar.com](http://www.nationalcar.com); ☎ 877/222-9058 in the U.S. and Canada). U.S.-based companies specializing in European

rentals include **Auto Europe** ([www.autoeurope.com](http://www.autoeurope.com); ☎ 888/223-5555 in the U.S. and Canada), **Europe by Car** ([www.europebycar.com](http://www.europebycar.com); ☎ 800/223-1516 in the U.S. and Canada), and **Kemwel** ([www.kemwel.com](http://www.kemwel.com); ☎ 877/820-0668 in the U.S. and Canada). It's also worth checking prices offered by U.K.-based rental agents such as **Holiday Autos** ([www.holidayautos.co.uk](http://www.holidayautos.co.uk); ☎ 0871/472-5229 in the U.K.). Europe by Car, Kemwel, and **Renault USA** ([www.renaultusa.com](http://www.renaultusa.com); ☎ 888/532-1221 in the U.S. and Canada) also offer a competitive alternative to renting for longer than 15 days: **short-term leases** in which you technically buy a fresh-from-the-factory car and then sell it back when you return it. All insurance is included, from liability and theft to personal injury and CDW, with no deductible. And unlike at many rental agencies, who won't rent to anyone 24 and under, the minimum age for a lease is 18. You should also always check your quote against quotes from general travel search sites like **Kayak.com**, as well as car-rental search specialists such as **RhinoCarHire.com** and **CarHireSearch.co.uk**.

For visitors coming from North America, the **AAA** supplies good maps to its members. **Michelin maps** ([www.viamichelin.co.uk](http://www.viamichelin.co.uk)) are made with the tourist in mind, and are widely available in shops and fuel stations across Europe. There's also a handy route planner online. Be aware that, if you are planning to navigate using your cell-phone, data costs for roaming can be very expensive. **Nokia smartphones** come with mapping preinstalled on the handset, and generally work 100% offline.

## By Plane

Although trains remain the greenest and easiest way to get around in Europe, air transport networks have also improved drastically in the past decade. Intense competition—and the mushrooming of low-cost airlines serving destinations that even few Europeans had heard of 15 years ago—has forced airfares into the bargain basement. Routes such as London–Paris, Milan–Rome, and London–Brussels have also come under sustained competitive pressure from high-speed trains. While the political climate in Europe's higher echelons very much favors the environmental credentials of trains over planes, for journeys longer than a few hundred miles, you'll likely find flying to be the cheapest option.

The predictable airline news in Europe is the continued dominance of the **no-frills airline**, originally modeled on American upstarts like Southwest. By keeping their overhead down through electronic ticketing, forgoing meal service, charging for every “extra,” and flying only point-to-point, often from less popular airports, these airlines are able to offer very low fares. This means now you can save lots of time (and usually, money) over transcontinental train hauls, especially from, say, London to Venice or from Paris to Greece and Spain, or eastern Europe. You should still compare low-cost carrier flights against the mainstream airlines (see “European Airlines,” earlier in this chapter); many budget airline fares have extra fees such as luggage or credit-card charges buried in their small print. Lower airfares are also sometimes available throughout Europe on **charter flights** rather than regularly scheduled ones. Look in local newspapers to find out about these kinds of late deals. Consolidators cluster in cities like London and Athens.

Flying across Europe on regularly scheduled airlines can destroy a budget and be super expensive. Whenever possible, book your total flight on one ticket before leaving. For example, if you're flying from New York to Rome, but also plan to visit Palermo and Paris, have the total trip written up on one ticket. Don't arrive in Rome and

## FLYING WITH EUROPE'S budget AIRLINES

Europe's skies are awash with budget, low-cost, and no-frills airlines. The names can change, because these small airlines are sometimes at the mercy of a fickle market. They can fail or merge with a bigger airline or smaller competitor. Still, as quickly as one disappears, another takes off, perhaps even another two. You should note that some popular flight search engines do not compare fares from budget airlines: You should either check websites individually, or consult a specialist low-cost website such as **www.whichbudget.com**.

At the time of writing, the following airlines were among the established European no-frills players, offering a selection of useful routes for visitors to Europe:

**Air One** ([www.flyairone.com](http://www.flyairone.com); ☎ **894-444** in Italy) has hubs in Milan, Pisa, and Venice with a good domestic Italian network, as well as key links with the likes of London, Prague, and Athens.

**Blu-Express** ([www.blu-express.com](http://www.blu-express.com); ☎ **06/9895-6666** in Italy) has a routemap focused on Italian domestic and Mediterranean island destinations, served mostly from Rome.

**easyJet** ([www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)) connects airports across Britain with much of Europe, including Switzerland.

**FlyBe** ([www.flybe.com](http://www.flybe.com)) serves more of Britain's regional airports than any other airline, joining them particularly well with France and Germany.

**Germanwings** ([www.germanwings.com](http://www.germanwings.com); ☎ **0906/294-1918**) serves over 90 destinations from hubs in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and London.

**Niki** ([www.flyniki.com](http://www.flyniki.com)) has a wide network centered on Austria, linking it with destinations in central and eastern Europe, Spain, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

**Norwegian** ([www.norwegian.com](http://www.norwegian.com); ☎ **020/8099-7254** in the U.K.) offers cheap flights from across Europe to cities in Scandinavia including Oslo, Stockholm, and Copenhagen.

**Ryanair** ([www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com); ☎ **0871/246-0000** in the U.K., **1520/444-004** in Ireland) is Europe's busiest point-to-point airline, with hubs in the United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, and Italy, among others.

**SmartWings** ([www.smartwings.com](http://www.smartwings.com); ☎ **900/166-565** in the Czech Republic) offers flights to Prague from cities across southern Europe, as well as from Paris.

**Transavia** ([www.transavia.com](http://www.transavia.com)) has hubs in France and the Netherlands, and routes focused on southern Europe.

**Vueling** ([www.vueling.com](http://www.vueling.com)) is Spain's leading low-cost carrier, with all the country's major cities well served from around Europe.

**Wizz Air** ([www.wizzair.com](http://www.wizzair.com); ☎ **0906/959-0002** in the U.K., or **1550/475-970** in Ireland) has the best range of destinations in eastern Europe, including Budapest and Prague.

book separate legs of the journey, which costs far more when it's done piecemeal. See "Getting There: By Plane," earlier in this chapter, for advice.

## By Bus

Bus transportation is readily available throughout Europe; it is often less expensive than train travel and covers a more extensive area, but is slower and can be much less comfortable. European buses, like the trains, outshine their American counterparts, but they're perhaps best used only to pick up where the extensive train network leaves off. One major long-haul bus company serves almost all the countries of western,

## FROMMERS.COM: THE COMPLETE travel RESOURCE

Planning a trip or just returned? Head to **Frommers.com**, voted Best Travel Site by *PC Magazine*. We think you'll find our site indispensable before, during, and after your travels—with expert advice and tips; independent reviews of hotels, restaurants, attractions, and preferred shopping and nightlife venues; vacation giveaways; and an online booking tool. We publish the complete contents of more than 135 travel guides in our **Destinations** section, covering more than 4,000 places worldwide. Each weekday, we publish original articles that report on **Deals and News** via our free **Frommers.com Newsletters**. What's more, **Arthur**

**Frommer** himself blogs 5 days a week, with strong opinions about the state of travel in the modern world. We're betting you'll find our **Events** listings an invaluable resource; it's an up-to-the-minute roster of what's happening in cities everywhere—including concerts, festivals, lectures, and more. We've also added weekly **podcasts**, **interactive maps**, and hundreds of new images across the site. Finally, don't forget to visit our **Message Boards**, where you can join in conversations with thousands of fellow Frommer's travelers and post your trip report once you return.

northern, and eastern Europe (no service to Greece): **Eurolines** ([www.eurolines.com](http://www.eurolines.com); ☎ 0871/781-8178 in the U.K., 055/357-059 in Italy, 069/7903-501 in Germany). The staff at Eurolines can check schedules, make reservations, and quote prices for travel between cities Europe-wide.

## WHEN TO GO

Europe has a continental climate with distinct seasons, but there are great variations in temperature from one part to another. Northern Norway is plunged into arctic darkness in winter, but in sunny Sicily the climate is usually temperate—although snow can fall even on the Greek islands in winter, and winter nights are cold (or at least, cool) pretty much anywhere. Europe is north of most of the United States, but along the Mediterranean are weather patterns more along the lines of the U.S. southern states. In general, however, seasonal changes are less extreme than in most of the United States. In Southern Hemisphere terms, Seville, in southern Spain, is at 37° N, about the same distance from the Equator as Auckland, New Zealand (36° S).

The **high season** almost everywhere lasts from mid-May to mid-September, with the most tourists hitting the Continent between mid-June and late August. In general, this is the most expensive time to travel, except in Austria and Switzerland, where prices are a little higher in winter during the ski season. Because Scandinavian city hotels depend mostly on business clients instead of tourists, you can often find lower prices in the fleeting summer, when business clients vacation and a smaller number of tourists take over.

You'll find smaller crowds, relatively fair weather, and often lower prices at hotels in the **shoulder seasons**, from Easter to mid-May and mid-September to October. **Off season** (except at ski resorts in the Alps, Dolomites, Tyrol, Pyrenees, and elsewhere) is from November to Easter, with the exception of the Christmas period. Much of Europe, Italy especially, takes August off, and August 15 to August 30 is

vacation time for many locals, so expect the cities to be devoid of natives but the beaches and lakes packed.

## Weather

**BRITAIN & IRELAND** It rains a lot in Britain and Ireland, especially in the west of both countries, but winters are rainier than summers, and in fact London receives less annual rainfall than Rome or Sydney. The sunniest period in the British Isles is usually from June to mid-September. Average summer daytime temperatures are from the low 60s Fahrenheit (mid-teens Celsius) to the mid-60s (upper teens Celsius), with daily highs in summer hovering around the low 70s (low 20s Celsius). Average temperatures drop to the 40s (single digits Celsius) on winter nights, with many nights dropping below freezing inland. Ireland, whose shores are bathed by the Gulf Stream, has a slightly milder winter climate, but is wetter in summer. The Scottish Lowlands have a climate similar to England's, but the Highlands are much colder, with storms and snow in winter.

**CENTRAL EUROPE** In **Vienna** and along the **Danube Valley** the climate is moderate. Summer daytime temperatures average in the low 70s Fahrenheit (low 20s Celsius), falling at night to the low 50s (low teens Celsius). Winter temperatures are usually in the 30s Fahrenheit (between  $-1$  and  $+4^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) and 40s ( $4$ – $9^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) during the day. In Budapest, temperatures can often reach  $80^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $27^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) in August and dip to  $30^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-1^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) in January. Winter is damp and chilly, spring is mild, and May and June are often wet. The best weather is in the late summer through October. In **Prague** and **Bohemia**, summer months have an average temperature around  $65^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $18^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), with daytime highs in the mid-70s (low 20s Celsius), but are generally the rainiest, while January and February are usually sunny and clear, with temperatures around freezing.

**FRANCE & GERMANY** The weather in Paris is approximately the same as in the U.S. mid-Atlantic states, but as in most of Europe, there's usually less extreme variation. In summer, the temperature doesn't linger for long above the mid-70s Fahrenheit (mid-20s Celsius). Winters tend to be mild, in the 40s Fahrenheit ( $4$ – $9^{\circ}\text{C}$ ). It's warmer along the Riviera year-round, and wetter than elsewhere on the western, Atlantic coast. Germany's climate ranges from moderate summers and chilly, damp winters in the north to warm summers and very cold, sunny winters in the alpine south. Away from the coasts, however, both France and Germany can experience sustained periods of summer heat or winter cold, too.

**NORTHERN EUROPE** In the **Netherlands**, the weather is rarely extreme at any time of year. Summer temperatures average around  $67^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $19^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) and the winter average is about  $40^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $4^{\circ}\text{C}$ ). The climate is rainy, with the driest months April and May—from mid-April to mid-May, the tulip fields burst into color. The climate of **northern Germany** is very similar, as is **Belgium's** climate: moderate, varying from daytime highs of  $73^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $23^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) in July and August to an average of  $40^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $4^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) in December and January. It can rain at almost any time, but the weather is at its finest in July and August.

**SCANDINAVIA** Above the Arctic Circle, summer temperatures hover around the mid-50s Fahrenheit (low teens Celsius), dropping to around  $14^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) during the dark winters. In the south, summer temperatures hit highs of around  $70^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $21^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), dropping to the 20s Fahrenheit (below 0 Celsius) in winter. Fjords and even the ocean are often warm enough for summer swimming, but rain is frequent. The sun

shines 24 hours in midsummer above the Arctic Circle; winter brings semipermanent twilight. Denmark's climate is relatively mild by comparison. It has moderate summer temperatures and winters that can be damp and foggy, with average daytime high temperatures around the mid-30s Fahrenheit (single digits Celsius).

**SOUTHERN EUROPE** Summers are hot in **Italy**, **Spain**, and **Greece**, with daytime temperatures around the high 80s Fahrenheit (low 30s Celsius) or even higher in some parts of Spain. Along the Italian coast, winter temperatures are usually mild; and except in the mountains, Italian winter temperatures rarely drop below freezing for long. The area around Madrid is dry and arid, and much colder than you'd expect in the winter (average daily lows of 32°F/0°C). Summers in Spain are coolest along the Atlantic coast, with mild temperatures year-round on the coast of Galicia, much hotter along the Mediterranean Costa del Sol. Seaside Portugal is rainy in the winter, but has average temperatures of 50°F to 75°F (10°C–24°C) year-round. In Greece there's sunshine all year, and winters are usually mild on the islands, with temperatures around 50°F to 54°F (10°C–12°C). Hot summer temperatures are often fanned by cool breezes. The best seasons to visit Greece are from mid-April to June, when the wildflowers bloom, and from mid-September to late October, after the high-season tourists have gone home.

**SWITZERLAND & THE ALPS** The alpine climate is shared by Bavaria in **southern Germany**, the **Austrian Tyrol**, and the **Italian Dolomites**—winters are cold and bright, and spring comes late, with snow falls well into April. Summers are mild and sunny, with delightfully fresh air, though the alpine regions can experience dramatic changes in weather any time of year. Summer storms aren't uncommon.

## Europe Calendar of Events

For an exhaustive list of events beyond those listed here, check <http://events.frommers.com>, where you'll find a searchable, up-to-the-minute roster of what's happening in cities all over the world.

### JANUARY

**Epiphany celebrations, Italy, nationwide.**

All cities, towns, and villages in Italy stage Roman Catholic Epiphany observances, which celebrate the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus. One of the most extensive celebrations is the Festa Nazionale della Befana in Urbania, Le Marche. [www.labefana.com](http://www.labefana.com). January 6.

### FEBRUARY

**Carnevale, Venice, Italy.** At this riotous time, theatrical presentations and masked balls take place throughout Venice and on the islands in the lagoon. The balls are by invitation only (except the Doge's Ball), but the street events and fireworks are open to everyone. [www.carnevale.venezia.it](http://www.carnevale.venezia.it). The week before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent.

**February Basler Fasnacht, Basel, Switzerland.** Switzerland's "wildest of carnivals,"

with a parade of "cliques" (clubs and associations). Visit [www.fasnacht.ch](http://www.fasnacht.ch) for more information. First Monday after Ash Wednesday.

### MARCH

**Holmenkollen Ski Festival, Oslo, Norway.**

This is one of Europe's largest ski festivals, with World Cup Nordic skiing and biathlons and international ski-jumping competitions, all held at Holmenkollen Ski Jump on the outskirts of Oslo. To participate or request more information, [www.holmenkollen-worldcup.no](http://www.holmenkollen-worldcup.no). Early March.

**St. Patrick's Day Festival, Dublin, Ireland.**

This massive 4-day fest is open, free, and accessible to all. Street theater, carnival acts, music, fireworks, and more culminate in Ireland's grandest parade. Go to [www.stpatricksfestival.ie](http://www.stpatricksfestival.ie) or call ☎ **01/676-3205**, March 16 to March 19.



**Budapest Spring Festival, Budapest, Hungary.** For 2 weeks, performances of everything from opera to ballet, from classical music to drama, are held in all the major halls and theaters of Budapest. Simultaneously, temporary exhibitions open in many of Budapest's museums. Tickets are available from [www.festivalcity.hu](http://www.festivalcity.hu) or by calling ☎ **36/1-486-3311**. Mid- to late March.

#### APRIL

**Semana Santa (Holy Week), Seville, Spain.** Although many of the country's smaller towns stage similar celebrations, the festivities in Seville are by far the most elaborate. From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, processions with hooded penitents move to the piercing wail of the *saeta*, a love song to the Virgin or Christ. Contact the **Seville Tourism Office** for details ([www.visitasevilla.es](http://www.visitasevilla.es); ☎ **955-471-232**). Ten days before Easter Sunday.

**Holy Week observances, Italy, nationwide.** Processions and age-old ceremonies—some from pagan days, some from the Middle Ages—are staged. The most notable procession is led by the pope, passing the Colosseum and the Roman Forum up to Palatine Hill; a torch-lit parade caps the observance. Sicily's observances are also noteworthy. Beginning 4 days before Easter Sunday; sometimes at the end of March but often in April.

**Pasqua (Easter Sunday), Rome, Italy.** In an event broadcast around the world, the pope gives his blessing from the balcony of St. Peter's. Easter Sunday.

**Feria de Abril de Sevilla (Seville April Fair), Seville, Spain.** This is the most celebrated week of revelry in all of Spain, with all-night flamenco dancing, entertainment booths, bullfights, flower-decked coaches, and dancing in the streets. Reserve your hotel early. Contact the **Seville Tourism Office** for details ([www.visitasevilla.es](http://www.visitasevilla.es); ☎ **955-471-232**). Second week after Easter.

#### MAY

**Brighton Festival, Brighton, England.** The country's largest arts festival features some 400 cultural events. Go to [www.brightonfestival.org](http://www.brightonfestival.org) or call ☎ **01273/709-709**. Most of May.

**Prague Spring International Music Festival, Prague, Czech Republic.** This world-famous, 3-week series of classical music and dance performances brings some of the globe's best talent to Prague. For details, book online at [www.festival.cz](http://www.festival.cz), call ☎ **420/226539-623**, or stop in at the central box office. Mid-May to early June.

**Festival International du Film (Cannes Film Festival), Cannes, France.** Movie madness transforms this city into a media circus. Reserve early and make a deposit. Admission to the competition itself is by invitation only; however, many screenings are made available to the public and play round-the-clock. Contact the **Festival de Cannes Association Francaise du Festival International du Film**, 3 rue Amélie, 75007 Paris ([www.festival-cannes.com](http://www.festival-cannes.com); ☎ **01-53-59-61-00**). Mid-May.

**Wiener Festwochenkonzerte (International Music Festival, Vienna), Austria.** This traditional highlight of Vienna's concert calendar features top-class international orchestras, conductors, and classical greats. Book via the **Wiener Musikverein** ([www.musikverein.at](http://www.musikverein.at); ☎ **01/505-8190**). See also [www.festwochen.at](http://www.festwochen.at). Early May through first 3 weeks of June.

**Fiesta de San Isidro, Madrid, Spain.** Madrileños run wild with a 5-day celebration honoring their city's patron saint. Food fairs, street parades, parties, dances, bullfights, flamenco, and other events mark the occasion. Expect crowds and traffic. For details, see [www.esmadrid.com/sanisidro](http://www.esmadrid.com/sanisidro) or call ☎ **091/588-1636**. Mid-May.

**Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Florentine Musical May), Florence, Italy.** Italy's oldest and most prestigious music festival emphasizes music from the 14th to the 20th centuries, but also presents ballet and opera in the city's grandest venues. See [www.maggiofiorentino.com](http://www.maggiofiorentino.com). Tickets are available in Italy through **Viva Ticket** ([www.vivaticket.it](http://www.vivaticket.it); ☎ **899/666-805** in Italy). Late April to early June.

**Festspillene i Bergen (Bergen International Festival), Bergen, Norway.** This world-class music event features artists from