

CULTURAL GEMS

SEVEN UNMISSABLE EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE TO VISIT ON YOUR DiscoverEU JOURNEY

So much to see, so little time... With 27 Member States and hundreds of cities (and we're not even counting towns and villages!), planning a DiscoverEU trip can be daunting.

Need some inspiration? We've got you covered! From Ireland to Romania, we're presenting you Europe's hidden gems that are full of cultural experiences for your adventure.

Each of these cities has been or will be a European Capital of Culture – so you can be sure that whichever you pick, there will be rich cultural diversity awaiting you.

Never heard of any of these cities? Don't worry, you'll learn – that's the fun part!

1- SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA, SPAIN

European Capital of Culture 2000

Santiago de Compostela boasts not only title of European Capital of Culture 2000 – it is also a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. Perhaps best known as the final stop of the Catholic pilgrimage route Camino de Santiago (the Way of St. James), the city's old town is full of Romanesque, Gothic, and Baroque buildings – so there's always a sight to behold wherever you go.

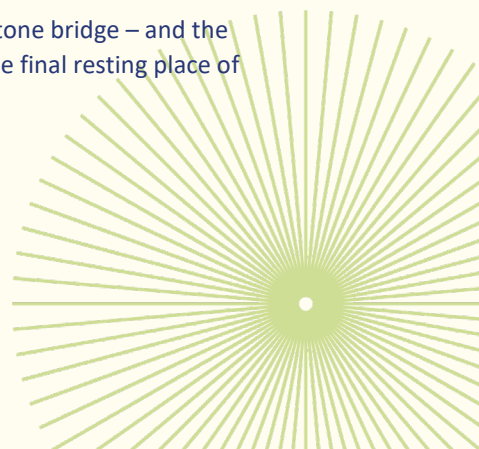
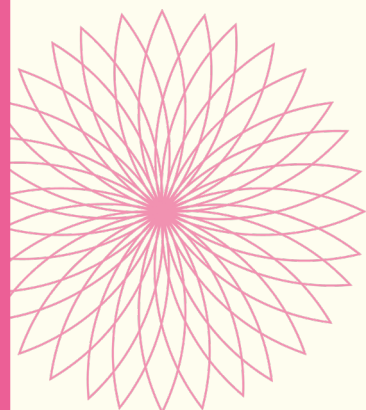
Tips: Visit the Catedral de Santiago de Compostela, the destination for pilgrims walking the historical Camino de Santiago – or walk the route yourself! Don't miss the ornately decorated Pórtico da Gloria.

2 - NOVA GORICA, SLOVENIA

European Capital of Culture 2025

Nova Gorica is a young town, having been built in the early 1950s following modernist architecture. The first European Capital of Culture to stretch across two countries, Nova Gorica shares its 2025 title with the neighbouring Italian city of Gorizia, with which it has a long-running cooperation. Transalpina Square (Slovene: Trg Evrope), on which the Nova Gorica train station sits, neatly divides the two cities.

Tips: Admire the Sokan Bridge – the world's longest railroad stone bridge – and the impressive views around it. Stop by Kostanjevica Monastery, the final resting place of Charles X, the last King of France.



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3 - ESCH-SUR-ALZETT, LUXEMBOURG

European Capital of Culture 2022

Luxembourg's second largest city is known to locals simply as Esch. Having attracted large immigrant populations from Portugal, Italy and France in the past, Esch is situated at a truly multicultural crossroad. A formerly industrial town focused on iron mining and steel production, Esch has morphed into a cultural destination in recent years and now boasts Luxembourg's biggest concert hall.

Tips: Reflect on Luxembourg's recent history at the National Museum of the Resistance. Visiting in 2022? Don't miss the exhibition *Remix Yourself*, an exploration of identity in the digital age. Don't use your phone while you're on city public transport or while you're walking down a busy street in order to avoid giving thieves an opportunity. It's also a good idea to password-protect your phone, just in case.

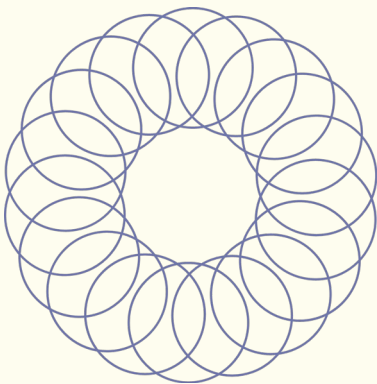


4 - CORK, IRELAND

European Capital of Culture 2005

A UNESCO City of Learning, Cork celebrates lifelong learning as a joyful and collaborative experience with the Cork Learning Festival, which features over 500 events every year. Take it from Lonely Planet, which describes Cork as being "at the top of its game: sophisticated, vibrant and diverse"! The city also has a cheeky side – locals call it 'Rebel County', an ode to its citizens' history of challenging authority.

Tips: In town? Visit the Crawford Art Gallery, with its showcase of 400 years of silver- and goldsmiths, or take a day trip and visit one (or more!) of the gorgeous little villages nearby.



5 - TIMIȘOARA, ROMANIA

European Capital of Culture 2023

Home to 18 different ethnicities and at least 21 religions, Timișoara is a city that holds interculturality close to its heart. It is home to three of Romania's state theaters – each focused on the Romanian, German or Hungarian languages – as well as a Serbian-language theater. Timișoara also has a proud literary tradition, having opened the first public lending library in the Habsburg empire in 1815.

Tips: Take a trip to the Banat Village Museum with its beautifully reconstructed traditional houses and experience life as it was typical in the regions of Banat and Crișana in the past.



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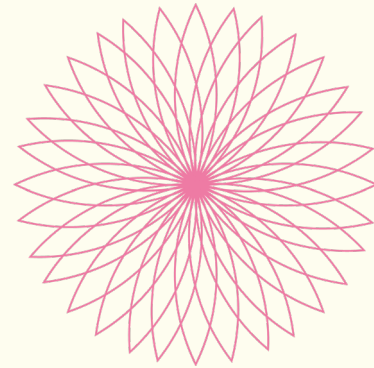
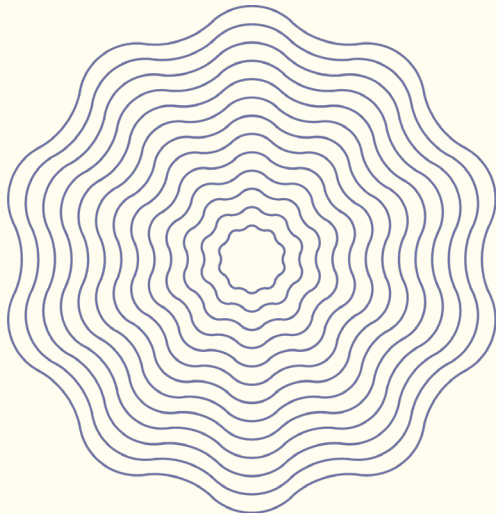
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6 - UMEÅ, SWEDEN

European Capital of Culture 2014

Pronounced Oo-may-oh, this Swedish city is the perfect marriage between culture and nature, being situated on the edge of the Swedish wilderness. Umeå is also a university town – with a third of its population either students or university staff – and it is known for its prestigious school of product design. It has also been praised for its bottom-up, co-creative approach to building cultural legacy.

Tips: Learn about the indigenous Sami people and experience their traditional huts at the Västerbottens Museum. Into rock music? Visit Guitars – The Museum with its 500-strong guitar collection.

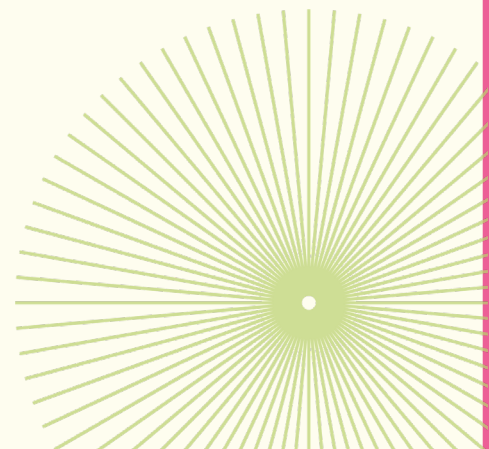


7 - CHEMNITZ, GERMANY

European Capital of Culture 2025

Though its name is Slavic in origin, this city is located in eastern Germany. Once known as Karl-Marx-Stadt, the city's iconic Theaterplatz square hosts the King Albert Museum, home to the renowned Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz (Chemnitz Art Collections). Opera, theatre, ballet, Figuren (puppeteering) and the orchestra are all active, popular and can be seen regularly at Theater Chemnitz.

Tips: Learn about Chemnitz's industrial past at the Industriemuseum Chemnitz, and visit the Kassberg district, featuring impressive Art Nouveau architecture and an extensive network of cellar vaults.



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