

European Vacation Spots



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European Vacation Spots Idea #1:

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Pompeii, was a town in Italy that was buried by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius back in 79 A.D. The whole town was preserved by the volcanic ash. It was excavated years later and now visitors can view the remains and get an unparalleled look at what life was like 2,000 years ago.

Many of the Pompeii artifacts have been removed to Naples where they can be seen at the *National Archaeological Museum*



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European Vacation Spots Idea #2:

Visit the **La Sagrada Familia**, a bizarre and beautiful Gothic cathedral in Barcelona, Spain. It's been under construction for over 100 years, originally designed by architect Antoni Gaudí. The architecture is truly unique. Tour the massive stone temple, the museum and exhibits to get full sense of the history and wild beauty of this vacation spot.

European Vacation Spots Idea #3:

If you don't mind the cold, you can take a visit to **Tromso, Norway**, located 250 miles north of the Arctic Circle. It's a great place to see those famous and beautiful *Northern Lights* or *Aurora Borealis*. Go between November 21 and January 21. That's what the locals call **Polar Nights** because the sun never rises. This is one of the few towns on earth where the Northern Lights are visible. Local tour guides will take you out into the countryside where the night skies allow the best viewing. The winters are surprisingly mild so you really can get out and enjoy the outdoors.

European Vacation Spots Idea #4:

Suceava, Romania is the starting point for a tour of the *Painted Monasteries*. Around the mid-fifteen hundreds a handful of artists went from town to town creating incredible dramatic narrative murals by painting the local churches inside and out. A few have survived to modern day and are typically within 30 miles of each other. Basing your tour from Suceava, you can visit many of these church frescoes in 1-3 days depending the time you want to spend admiring these ancient treasures.

European Vacation Spots Idea #5:

Take a guided tour of **The Ruins of Ancient Troy** in Hisark, Turkey. Archeologists have uncovered multiple layers of buildings dating back as far

as 3500 B.C. Troy was burned around 1200 B.C. and rebuilt 400 years later. It is believed that the seventh layer is the actual remains of the city of Troy. Guided tours base out of Canakkale and Istanbul. This is the best way to see all the reconstructions which include the acropolis of Pergamum, a temple of Athens, a Roman theater, Senate building and even a model of the famous Trojan Horse that you can climb into.

European Vacation Ideas #6:

The Tuscan plain is home to, among many other vacation ideas, the walled town on **San Gimignano**. It's 13 noble towers give the plain an unusual medieval "skyscraper" skyline. The *Piazza della Cisterna* and the *Piazza del Duomo*, 12th century medieval towers and palaces are at the heart of San Gimignano. You can still climb the palazzo's *Torre Grossa* tower for an overhead view. Horrible remnants of the Inquisition remain on display in the *Museo della Tortura* the Torture Museum.

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European Vacation Spots Idea #7:

Take a **World War II Memorial Tour of Europe** by the European tour experts *Image Tours*. This is a 15-day vacation trip through Holland, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg & France. The tour focuses on famous battle sites, war museums, and memorials while also giving you the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the European countryside. It's a great way to sitesee while learning and reflecting on the dramatic events of World War II.

European Vacation Spots Idea #8:

Discovering Serbia can take you on a unique all-inclusive cave exploring package in the most undiscovered destination in Europe - Serbia. Experienced local guides will take exploring through the Usac cave on Pester weald. It's an adventure that takes you under a mountain, through narrow passages, water filled pools, and limestone chambers to an exit overlooking a beautiful lake. It is here that you will discover a colony of large white-headed Griffon Vulture. These gorgeous and very rare birds used to populate all of Europe but now can only be found in Serbia.

European Vacation Spots Idea #9:

Santa's Village is a quaint little theme park just above the Arctic Circle in Finland. Here you will find *Santa's Office* where all the secrets of Santa are revealed and everyone can meet with Santa himself every day of the year. This is also where the elves put the official Santa postmark on all letters. The Christmas House is an exhibition that showcases the traditional Finnish origins of Christmas, the Christmas Tree and how it is celebrated in Finland. Nearby is *Napapiri Reindeer Park* where Santa's reindeer are kept during the year. Also nearby is *Santa Park* where the kids can have some fun helping the elves make toys and bake goodies as well as have a turn sitting on Santa's lap.

European Vacation Spots Idea #10:

My Home Town - Viareggio (Tuscany), Italy [contributed](#) by L. Serenella Leoni.



Viareggio, Italy, a beach resort town on the Riviera della Versilia in Italy, is well-known for its

large beaches, lively night scene, the freshest of sea food specialties, large parks and a great place to forget your troubles. To those of us from Viareggio, there are many other facets of our town that occasional visitors may not catch.

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In the winter months, the enormous allegorical floats of the largest carnival in Italy dominate the scene on the Passeggiata (promenade) as hundreds of thousands of spectators participate in a three-week bacchanalia. The papier mâché giants created and built by renowned local artists, tower above the revelers and the brightly decorated buildings. Carnival balls abound.

Born as a small celebration in 1873, this pre-Lenten brouhaha culminating on Martedì Grasso (Fat Tuesday), continues to captivate

participants and is quite capable of turning serious adults into masked pranksters. Years ago, as a masquerading clown on a float along with my young son David and his father, I tossed multi-colored caramelle (candies) into the outstretched hands of the crowds below.


To many, the most beautiful aspect of the Passeggiata is the remaining group of historical buildings situated between the Burlamacca Canal and the Piazza Mazzini. A few buildings bear the master work influence of old Viareggio ship builders.

Several of the structures, in the enchanting "Liberty Style" (a type of Art Deco) built by the team of Alfredo Belluomini (architect) and Galileo Chini (artist) at the turn of the last century, ooze of days gone by. Chini's unique style was influenced by his extended stay in Bangkok where he decorated the throne room of the King of Siam. This influence is very evident in the Gran' Caffè Margherita (one of the more famous of the liberty style buildings).

The town's young gentlemen, dressed in robes and pajamas, came here to see and be seen. Apparently, this was quite fashionable in the 1920s. Still today, one can picture a handsome Giacomo Puccini in his elegant hunting outfit smoking a cigar at one of the café's outdoor tables while catching the eyes of the passing ladies outfitted in the latest fashions. They demurely smile to the maestro as the breeze plays with the feathers on their hats.

You can head towards my favorite destination by passing the long, wide stretch of soft, sandy beach where you may cast your gaze on the miles of perfectly aligned rows of beach umbrellas standing at attention in readiness for the summer season. Continue walking along the mile-long molo (pier), past the leisure walkers, bicycle riders, children at play and vendors of various wares; past the location where the best fishermen consistently out-fish and frustrate every other contender.

At the end of the pier, take a seat on the corner of marble wall furthest from the shore and look back at my piece of Tuscany. Out there, as you breathe in the fresh sea air, the view sends shivers down your spine. The entire coast from Viareggio through the "Riviera della Versilia" and the Gulf of Poets at La Spezia is visible.

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From the front of the port where world-class yachts are built and stand silhouetted against the sky to the main part of the city to the countryside that lies beyond, to the majestic Apuan Alps scarred white by marble quarries, you are one with this scene. In this moment, Viareggio is yours alone. Suddenly, the church bells in town commence ringing the noon hour. "Clang, clang, clang." The music of echoing chimes (some off-key) a bit muffled in the distance, adds another dimension of beauty to the scene.

You can experience a special sense of connection to the history of this part of the world as you record this memory. These are moments that will stay with you forever. Viareggio will become your favorite European vacation spot.