

TOP 10 EU COUNTRIES WITH THE CLEANEST BEACHES



Each year the European Commission examines the quality of coastal as well as inland bathing waters in the EU. In 2007 a total of 21,368 bathing areas were monitored. Out of them 95% of the coastal water and 89% of the freshwater sites were found to comply with the mandatory physical, chemical and microbiological standards. Which of the 27 EU members enjoy the highest percentage of quality coastal bathing waters?

10. Portugal

427 coastal bathing sites, 94,6% clean

Portuguese shore is the top priority of many visitors to this sunny country. Portugal boasts of 800 kilometers of fabulous coastline and lots of sandy beaches. Since the coastline is so extensive the climate varies in different parts of Portugal. The most beautiful place for bathing is Praia do Alvor in Algarve where people admire and enjoy the golden sand dunes and vast areas of open space.

9. Sweden

406 coastal bathing sites, 95,1% clean

For many beach lovers, Sweden is not on the top of their must-go list. But wait! They also get hot summers in Sweden (up to 30°C). Swedish beaches are covered with soft sand and offer numerous attractions and entertainment. An especially well known area for bathing are the Beaches of Skane in the south. This "Swedish Riviera" offers numerous clean and sunny beaches and is popular especially among Danes who simply cross the Oresund Bridge and enjoy the clear waters of Sweden.

8. Malta

87 coastal bathing sites, 95,4% clean

Since Malta is only a small island (316 sq. km) tourists can be sure the sea is never far away. Most people usually head for the North where you can choose from a number of hot sand beaches. Those who seek more secluded bathing need to explore a bit more and find some off the beaten path places. In Malta the most popular bathing resort is Ghadira Bay in Mellieha with shallow sea and numerous sun beds and small cafes all around.

7. France

1897 coastal bathing sites, 95,7% clean

Atlantic or Mediterranean - in France you can get both. If you prefer rougher and colder waters go for Atlantic (North West); if you seek smaller sandy hide outs choose the Mediterranean shore (South East). For those looking for a place to get good sun tan the France's Riviera is the most popular. Families on the other hand usually choose Brittany with numerous attractions for kids. Surfers usually go for the waves of the Bay of Biscay and nature lovers head to the island of Corsica to not only enjoy the clear waters but to explore the local hiking trails as well.

6. United Kingdom

573 coastal bathing sites, 96,5% clean

British Isles are famous for the varied coastline (30 500 km long) of sandy or pebbled beaches. The most popular for foreign tourists is naturally the Brighton Beach that is one-hour train ride far from London. Besides the numerous bathing spots, it offers a number of restaurants and cafés as well as the famous Brighton Pier entertainment amenities. British beach goers on the other hand often head southwest to Dorset, Cornwall or Devon where they find not only beautiful spots for bathing and sun tanning but also surfing and other water sports.

5. Ireland

122 coastal bathing sites, 96,7% clean

Ireland offers a coastline of 1 448 kilometers. Its beaches are usually covered by golden sand and tourists can enjoy not only the crystal clear water but numerous facilities and attractions for kids as well. Quite popular is the Copper Coast with its stretch of rugged shore. Visitors can admire the local charming villages and enjoy the Copper Coast Geopark presenting geology in a unique way.

4. Belgium

40 coastal bathing sites, 97,5% clean

The 70 kilometer long coastline of Belgium is world known for its comfortable sandy beaches. For many it is a perfect retreat especially for a family holiday. Since 18th century the most popular sea-side resort in Belgium is Blankenberge. As on the other beaches the sand here ranks among the finest in the world. The resort is large enough for families and offer fabulous views as well as clear water for all-day bathing.

3. Cyprus

100 coastal bathing sites, 99% clean

Cyprus can boast of more than 600 kilometers of wide sandy beaches. Most of them offer variety of water sports like water skiing, parasailing, wind-surfing, diving, or jet skiing. The finest area to visit with respect to clear water and fine beaches is the coast of Agia Napa where the majority of tourists also go. Most of the sites authorized for swimming are covered with numerous restaurants as well as hotels and water sport facilities.

2. Spain

1901 coastal bathing sites, 99,1% clean

Clean, safe, accessible and environmentally friendly – these are the attributes often connected with Spanish beaches and bathing sites. Spain is well known for the water quality control and green approach. Spain is also the European country that received the most blue flags in 2007. The country offers 3 000 beaches on its 8 000 kilometer long coastline all over the year. Thousands of tourists come to enjoy not only the sea and sun but also the numerous attractions and facilities offered day and night, night and day.

1. Greece

2049 coastal bathing sites, 99,5% clean

The coastline of Greece (13 676 km) offers a number of beautiful beaches each of them with its

typical atmosphere. Turquoise water, steep cliffs, palm trees or pine forests - they all lure visitors to Greece every year. The beaches range from white sands to pebbles so anyone can find what he or she likes the best. Hot sunshine, good food and friendly Greeks are only the bonus for a perfect holiday.

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