

Less Known, Yet Fabulous – 10 Must-See Eastern European Cities

Travel packages to Eastern Europe mainly include well known destinations with fame and elegance that's projected through movies, travel magazines and postcards. Travelers and tourism industry entrepreneurs who are looking for interesting and less known European tourism melting pots should therefore push aside travel brochures, pick up the map of Europe and check out the following cities.

IN POLAND

Krakow, Poland

Described as one of Europe's historic showpieces, Poland's city of Krakow isn't known to many as a tourism gem though it has existed since A.D. 966. This is where you find the Piast dynasty's legacies such the Wawel Castle which was constructed in 1241. The castle was later transformed into a palace-cathedral, putting it at parance with older Krakow landmarks such as St. Adlabert. Other attractions include a 1364 university known as Casimir III, the 14th century Gothic St. Mary Basilica and the Adam Mickiewicz monument.



Zamosc, Poland

Zamosc may be hard to get to using public transport but it's one of the few places in the world with inspiring natural charm and ambiance. You could start your tour of Zamosc with a trip through a time capsule that takes you to the heart of Baroque- Renaissance era. Constructed from nothing at the start of 1580, the city to the South of Poland is today an architectural wonderland with a modest population of 70,000 people. Many of its original ancient walls still stand amidst exquisite ornate buildings since it's protected by UNESCO's World Heritage Sites' treaties.

Przemysl, Poland

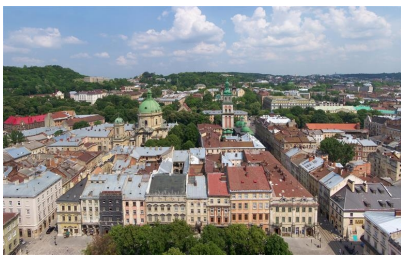
This Polish city is characterized by hilly streets aligned with churches. Its low population of 70,000 people is however not a measure of its glorious history that dates back to the 9th century. This is where you can cross a river and get into Ukraine through a special gateway known as the Przemysl Gate. It's

possible to see the Old Synagogue and the Jesuit College which were the first buildings to grace its hilly terrain in 1559 and 1617 respectively. Przemysl was a significant battle ground during World War I – a piece of history that remains preserved within the walls of Przemysl Fortress.

IN UKRAINE

Lviv, Ukraine

Lviv is a border city. It's where Western Europe ends and Eastern Europe starts. Known to some as the "concrete curtain, Lviv began in 1256 as a fortified town called Halych. Casimir took it over in the 14th century and it remained under the Polish until 1772. The city's Potocki palace, Opera House and city hall, locally referred to as Ratusha, are some of its top attractions found in UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites. Lviv is one of the few places in Eastern Europe where you find a unique multi-ethnic hub comprising of Germans, American and Italians.



Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine

Under the Polish rule, the city was known as Stanislawow. Today, it's the second largest metropolitan area in Ukraine with over 240,000 people. The Potocki family established Ivano-Frankivsk in 1650 though some of its most outstanding architectural benchmarks such as the Art Nouveau building didn't come to life until 1932. The city's synagogue reflects Moorish and oriental designs as the Blue Church epitomize the mix of its modern and ancient sophistication.

Kamianets-Podilskyi, Ukraine

This is the place to be if you feel like experiencing a gateway that's detached from cosmopolitan effects since the city's population rest at less than 100,000 people. It's one of Ukraine's seven wonders because its ancient peripheral walls and castles are still standing. This makes it one of Eastern Europe's few existing fully fortified cities.

IN ROMANIA

Sighisoara, Romania

Established in 1191, Sighisoara remains Eastern Europe's gem when it comes to superbly preserved medieval cities. It's a UNESCO World Heritage site with a population of 35,000 people and it's easily recognized by landmarks such as the clock tower.

Brasov, Romania

You may have seen Brasov in a number of movies because it's one of Eastern Europe's off-beat cities that are fast gaining popularity. Romanian classical Gothic architecture such as the Black Church which was built between 1385 and 1476 is in Brasov. The city has had an Orthodox cathedral, a printing press and a library since 1558. Famous books such as Bram Stoker's Dracula, were inspired by the Brasov's Castle.



IN SLOVAKIA

Kosice, Slovakia

Located to the east of Slovakia, Kosice has everything you may need. It has a history that dates back to 1230 when some of its historic buildings were planned and built. St Elizabeth was however built in the 14th century to spell out some of the peak aspirations of Gothic art. Other attractions include Neo Baroque State Theater, which was established in 1899, and the Jakab's Palace.

Bratislava, Slovakia

With a population of about 430,000 people, this city is astonishingly beautiful, hence the reason why it's also known as Europe's Phoenix. The Old Town is dotted with Gothic churches and a castle that's located on the hillside to give you a magnificent view of the metropolitan area and the countryside. The castle has been around for nearly 7,000 years and it is still worth a visit. French's Napoleon saw it in 1805, perhaps you should as well.

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