

TOP 7 EUROPEAN DESTINATIONS AND EVENTS NOT TO MISS IN 2016



Germany celebrates its beer, Great Britain the great Shakespeare and France hosts the UEFA EURO 2016. Which locations and events are especially worthwhile? Which anniversaries or classic events should be seen? Tourism-Review.com takes a look at this year's 7 highlights.

UEFA EURO Football Championship in France

Without a doubt, one of the biggest large scale events of 2016 is going to be the European football championship, which will be held from June 10th to July 10th in France. The focus of this event is going to be a total of ten cities, such as Lyon and its old streets and high class restaurants as well as the wine-capital Bordeaux, which is inscribed on the UNESCO world heritage list since 2007.

The opening ceremony as well as the final show will be held in Stade de France in Paris. As a part of the championship, France's capital is expecting an additional 3 million visitors. Currently, there are plans to erect a large projection screen at the foot of the Eiffel tower. Due to the terror attacks in last November, Paris is putting a large emphasis on security, closing the Mars field with a capacity of 120,000 and introducing strict controls.

Germany Celebrates Beer and Gardens

Germany is getting ready for a special anniversary this year - 500 years of the Bavarian Reinheitsgebot, which declared in 1516 that beer must only include barley, hops and water. Later, this was updated to also allow yeast. This makes the Reinheitsgebot the world's oldest currently active food law.

The anniversary begins on 22 April with a central celebration in Ingolstadt, where the Reinheitsgebot first was declared. At the end of July, Munich will host a three-day beer festival, which is expecting 100 participating breweries and 100,000 visitors from all over the world. Those who are going to have acquired this taste by then can return between September 17th and October 3rd - for the Oktoberfest, world's biggest beer fair.

Moreover in 2016, Berlin is paying tribute to horticulturist Peter Joseph Lenné, who died 150 years ago. Lenné redesigned large public parks to resemble English landscape gardens, including Park Sanssouci in Potsdam, the "Pfaueninsel" and Berlin's Landschaftspark Glienicke, which are all on the UNESCO list. Later, Lenné was entrusted with planning a more socially compatible city of Berlin, for which he created several public parks to facilitate rest and recreation.

400th Anniversary of Shakespeare's Death

No other writer in recent history created as many internationally renowned dramas as he did. Now, the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death is coming close. This is more than enough reason for Great Britain to honor its most famous playwright - including stage performances in theatres, cinemas and opera houses all throughout the country.

In January, Shakespeare's birthplace and childhood home in Stratford-upon-Avon is going to open a new permanent exhibition, which introduces his social environment, including family members, friends, neighbors, drinking buddies and colleagues. After extensive renovation works, Shakespeare's old school building is supposed to re-open as well. This will enable tourists to visit his old classroom.

Cultural Capitals with Complex History

Wroclaw in Poland and San Sebastián in Spain are Europe's capitals of culture of 2016. Wroclaw presents itself as a young and creative student city with a restored historic downtown, museums, galleries and restaurants. In 1945 however, most of the city's core was destroyed and German inhabitants were expelled. Since then, thousands of Polish people have found their home here instead.

This multifaceted identity is mirrored in the cultural capital's program. Concerts will be held throughout the entire year - in the newly built national musical forum as well as streets, train stations and hospitals. This year of culture in Wroclaw will be topped off by the European film award ceremony on December 10th.

The city of San Sebastián in northern Spain wants to heal its historic wounds with a cultural program. To this day, the population is torn apart. For decades, the terrorist underground organization ETA fought for the sovereignty of the Basque region with bloody assaults. "People should receive something that makes them believe in a future for the city", says Pablo Berástegui, director of the culture capital 2016 project.

The program will also tie into recent developments such as the European refugee crisis, including an anti-war festival with concerts, films and stage productions in March. Starting in June, a special exhibition will display 300 works of Goya, Rubens and Picasso about violence and peace.

Large Cultural Exhibitions in Europe

On a trip around European destinations, travelers should definitely visit one of the several art museums. One of the focuses of 2016 will be Dutch Renaissance painter Hieronymus Bosch, who died 500 years ago. To celebrate the painter's work, several pictures are going to return to his birthplace in Hertogenbosch, where they will be on display in an exhibition called "Hieronymus Bosch - Visions of a Genius" from February 13th to May 8th.

Those who wish to see one of Bosch's main works such as "The Garden of Earthly Delights" will have to visit Madrid's Prado. The painting has been owned by Spain since the 16th century and will not be lent to anyone. Starting on May 31st, the Prado will host a special exhibition about Bosch with more than 60 of his paintings.

In London, the Royal Academy of Arts will host a new exhibition called "Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse" from January 30th to April 20th. It is going to display 120 pictures by great artists such as Cezanne, Renoir, Monet, Van Gogh, Kandinsky, Klimt and Klee.

"The Floating Piers" - this Open-Air-Project will invite many culturally interested visitors to northern Italy. The Bulgarian-American artist Christo is going to lay gigantic footbridges made of wool over the lake Iseo, enabling visitors to walk over the water similarly to Jesus Christ. This interactive display of art will also be able to be seen from the surrounding mountains between June 18th and July 3rd.

Midsummer and ESC in Sweden

In summer, the nights in northern Europe are especially long. In some Scandinavian regions, the sun does not even set. This is what Swedes celebrate at the annual Midsummer festival, which will be held on June 24th. Many inhabitants wear traditional costumes while they sing and dance during this celebration. The largest and most traditional Midsummer festival is held in Leksand at Lake Siljansee with 20,000 visitors every year. International visitors are always welcome.

Those who are not entirely convinced can look forward to another large event held in 2016 in Sweden: on May 14th, the Globe Arena in Stockholm will host the final of the 61st Eurovision Song Contest (ESC). The event will be televised and watchers can vote for the victor via telephone.

Music under the Open Sky

When it comes to cultural events around European destinations, the many open air festivals should not be left out. One of these regular occurrences is Fête de la Musique - which is held at the start of summer on June 21st. As part of this festival, professional musicians and hobbyists give free concerts in the streets or bars of several European cities.

One of the world's largest open air events is Southern England's Glastonbury Festival. This year, it will present current music from Rock to Hip Hop, theatre productions and circus performances between June 22nd and 26th.

Another massively popular European festival is the Heavy Metal Festival in German town of Wacken. On the first weekend of August, tens of thousands of visitors arrive in the small community to celebrate the world's largest heavy metal festival.

Fans of classical music may enjoy the international festival d'Aix en Provence in southern France, which is a host to concerts and operas in front of a historical city background. The heart of this festival is found in the palace of the archbishop, where concerts are held under the open sky.

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