

10 UNDERRATED CITIES TO VISIT IN EUROPE



Travelers planning a city trip often end up in metropolises like London, Barcelona, Vienna or Paris. But there are many more European cities that can be reached within a few hours by train or plane and are just waiting to be visited. In times of overtourism, underrated cities offer welcome tranquillity and often a more relaxed ambience. Instead of queuing in front of the Louvre or waiting in line at the Vatican, the alternative destinations are just as enticing with many sights and offer surprising insights. We've ploughed through the map of Europe, travel books, and our own travel experiences - and present what we consider to be the 10 most underrated cities to visit across Europe.

Bergen (Norway)

Bergen, the second largest city in Norway, is located on the southwest coast of the country and is the gateway to the fjords. The picturesque city is surrounded by seven mountains and is itself located on a fjord; however, it is primarily the starting point to, for example, the "Sognefjord" further north, the deepest and longest fjord in the country.

Although Bergen is not a small city with 250,000 inhabitants, it has managed to preserve much of its small-town charm and homey atmosphere. Students makeup about ten percent of the population and also give the city a fresh, youthful ambience.

Among the most important sights is the old harbor front "Bryggen" with its Unesco-protected wooden houses, a relic from bygone days when Bergen traded intensively with the Hanseatic cities. Bergen also has much to offer culturally - numerous museums, art galleries, cultural events such as the Bergen International Festival, and a lively music scene.

The local fish market at the harbor is also famous, as are excursions to the local mountain "Fløyen": a funicular takes you from the center up to the viewpoint in just a few minutes. Alternatively, you can go to the higher mountain Ulriken, which is further away from the center. Bergen is the starting point of both the Bergen Railway, which runs across the Norwegian highlands to Oslo, and the famous Hurtigut mailboats.

Cardiff (Wales)

If Wales is the land of castles, then Cardiff must be the castle capital. The vibrant city of Cardiff is Wales' capital. The world-famous Principality Stadium is home to the Welsh rugby and football teams and is also a regular venue for the British Speedway Grand Prix. The harbor area on Cardiff Bay is home to the Wales Millennium Centre and the Welsh National Opera. The compact city center offers great shopping opportunities and a colorful mix of history and culture. From the fabulous Cardiff Castle to the Victorian arcades and many trendy restaurants and bars. Cardiff is a young and

modern city, which is also very well suited as a starting point for a tour of Wales or Great Britain.

Graz (Austria)

Graz, the little brother of Vienna, is the capital of the southern Austrian province of Styria and has 305,000 inhabitants. Historical buildings and a creative, modern cultural scene characterize the image of Graz.

The Schlossberg is enthroned in the middle of the city. From the former fortress with the clock tower on its plateau, one has a spectacular view over the city. One of the landmarks of Graz is the Kunsthaus, which is also called "Friendly Alien". Other sights include the Graz Cathedral, the Mausoleum of Emperor Ferdinand and the Landeszeughaus with 32,000 historical weapons.

Cultural festivals such as the "Styriarte" attract visitors, as does the annual Jazz Summer. The main square forms the core of the medieval old town. The surrounding narrow streets with buildings in Renaissance and Baroque styles are lined with stores and restaurants, which have a lot to offer in terms of culinary delights.

Lagos (Portugal)

It doesn't always have to be Lisbon in Portugal. Lagos is one of the best cities to visit in the country. It is especially known for its old town with city walls, its cliffs and its Atlantic beaches. Nearby are many cozy rocky bays and the kilometer-long sandy beach "Meia Praia".

From the cliffs of "Ponta da Piedade" you have a panoramic view of the headland and the light tower there. If you follow the "Avenida dos Descobrimentos" you will quickly reach the center. There a tourist will find many small, typical Portuguese stores and restaurants, which are definitely worth a visit.

Besides its beauty, the city convinces especially with its fresh fish dishes. The center also attracts many street musicians and cabaret artists of all kinds during the summer months. Other sights of Lagos include the church of Santo Antonio, the slave market, the city gate "Porta de São Gonçalo" and the old town.

Lyon (France)

Not in the mood for the city of love? How about the city of light? With a vibrant nightlife, great cultural offerings, a variety of museums and a great shopping offer, Lyon can definitely make you forget Paris in many respects. Lyon is located at the confluence of the Rhône and Saône rivers. With its old town, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, its narrow streets and its variety of traditional cuisine, Lyon has a lot to offer.

Among the most important sights are the amphitheater "des Trois Gaules", the hill "Fourvière" and the district "La Confluence". If you also want to get rid of some money, you can do this in the shopping center "La Part-Dieu".

Manchester (Great Britain)

Manchester, located in the northwest of England, has about 550,000 inhabitants and is famous for its football clubs United and City, the lively music scene (hometown of the Smiths and Oasis) and its hospitable atmosphere. A real shopper's paradise can be found in Manchester "Arndale", in "Affleck's Palace market" and in the trendy "Northern Quarter", where there are many small stores, cafes and bars. Furthermore, there are a lot of cultural attractions, such as the Imperial War Museum and the Lowry Gallery. To finish a day, you should go to a pub and become part of Manchester's nightlife.

Nuremberg (Germany)

Nuremberg is located in the north of the state of Bavaria. The cityscape is characterized by medieval architecture such as the fortress walls and towers of the old town. Likewise, trendy neighborhoods with hidden street art attract. Steeped in history, the city has much to offer, especially to those interested in history and art, with a selection of museums.

The city's landmark, the beautiful Kaiserburg, is a must-see on any visit to Nuremberg. The churches of St. Sebald and St. Lorenz, historic buildings such as the Albrecht Dürer House and the new Museum of Art and Design are also worth a visit.

Ravenna (Italy)

If you've had enough of Italy's crowded and hectic tourist metropolises like Rome and Venice, you can find the peace and quiet you're looking for in the picturesque little town of Ravenna. Ravenna is located on the southern edge of the Po Valley in Emilia-Romagna, about nine kilometers off the Adriatic coast. The town has about 160,000 inhabitants and is known for its mosaic-decorated buildings. Ravenna is home to no less than eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites. These include, above all, the Basilica of San Vitale, a masterpiece from the 6th century, or the Baptistry of the Arians. Further, one should visit the "Piazza del Popolo" in the center of the city. The partially car-free downtown of Ravenna invites you to stroll and drink coffee.

San Sebastian (Spain)

San Sebastian is a city on the Bay of Biscay in the mountainous Basque Country of Spain. The 2016 Capital of Culture is located near the French border and knows how to please with its beaches "Playa de la Concha" and "Playa de Ondarreta". In the cobblestone-lined old town, luxurious boutiques border popular pintxos bars where local wines and regional tapas tempt. Other attractions include the city's town hall, the Buen Pastor Cathedral and the Palacio Miramar. San Sebastian becomes a stage for the film world every year in September, when the International Film Festival takes place. The city has also made a name for itself as a festival metropolis and surfing mecca.

Turku (Finland)

Before Helsinki became the capital in 1812, Turku was the most important city in Finland. It is located on the southwest coast of the country on the banks of the river "Aurajoki". Most famous is the medieval Turku Castle at the mouth of the river. Another place of interest is Turku Cathedral, which was built around 1300.

The landmark of the city is the cathedral, which is located in the heart of Turku. It is considered the most important religious building in Finland. From Turku you can visit the picturesque coastline and many small island archipelagos. In summer, the riverfront comes to life as locals and tourists gather to eat, drink and listen to music. Furthermore, during the summer months, there are also numerous festivals.

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