**PORTUGAL**

Portugal is a southern European country on the Iberian Peninsula, bordering Spain. Its location on the Atlantic Ocean has influenced many aspects of its culture: salt cod and grilled sardines are national dishes, the Algarve's beaches are a major destination and much of the nation’s architecture dates to the 1500s–1800s, when Portugal had a powerful maritime empire.

**Detailed pictures of the sceneries**

**Discussion of the place**

**How to get there**

**Other places to visit in that city/country.**

**Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, Lisbon**

The church and monastery embody the spirit of the age, and feature some of the finest examples of **Manueline architecture** found anywhere in Portugal; the beautifully embellished decoration found on the South Portal is breathtaking.

Inside, the beautiful cloister is equally exuberant. Appropriately, the church houses the tomb of Vasco da Gama and other national figureheads, including Luís de Camões, Portugal's greatest poet and chronicler of the discoveries.

## Palácio Nacional de Sintra, Lisbon Coast

Nestling in the lap of a wooded mountain range, Sintra's stunning location is reason enough to visit this charming, verdant town. Indeed, UNESCO acknowledges the destination as a **World Heritage cultural landscape** such is its beauty and the significance of the collection of [historic visitor attractions](https://www.planetware.com/tourist-attractions-/sintra-cintra-p-lei-sint.htm) clustered in and around the old town, **Sintra Velha**.

A favorite summer retreat for the kings and queens of Portugal and an alluring destination for numerous writers and poets, including Lord Byron and William Beckford, Sintra exudes romance. The old town is a maze of cobbled lanes lined with handsome town houses painted in pastel hues of pink, mustard, and lilac. The narrow streets surround a pretty central square that's dominated by the wonderful [Palácio Nacional de Sintra](https://www.planetware.com/sintra/palacio-nacional-de-sintra-p-lei-palns.htm).

## Torre de Belém, Lisbon

One of Portugal's best-loved historic monuments and a Lisbon icon, the Torre de Belém stands as a symbol of the Age of Discovery and the voyages of exploration undertaken in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Completed in 1521 as a fortress to defend the approaches to the River Tagus, the tower is regarded as a masterpiece of military architecture. Designed in the Manueline style by Francisco de Arruda, the façade is a confection of beautifully carved stone, typified by maritime motifs, such as twisted rope and the armillary sphere. An impressive Renaissance loggia heightens the decoration.

**FRANCE**

**Detailed pictures of the sceneries**

**Discussion of the place**

* **Flag of france**
* **France Description**

**How to get there**

**Other places to visit in that city/country.**

* **Eiffel tower**

The symbol of Paris, the Eiffel Tower is a feat of ingenuity as much as it is a famous landmark. This structure of 8,000 metallic parts was designed by Gustave Eiffel as a temporary exhibit for the World Fair of 1889. Originally loathed by critics, the 320-meter-high tower is now a beloved and irreplaceable fixture of the Paris skyline.

The Eiffel Tower's gracefulness has earned it the nickname of "Iron Lady." Visitors are impressed by the tower's delicate airiness despite its monumental size and the breathtaking panoramas at each of the three levels.

* **Louvre**
* **Palace of Versailles**

More than just a royal residence, Versailles was designed to show off the glory of the French monarchy. "Sun King" Louis XIV transformed his father's small hunting lodge into an opulent palace with a sumptuous Baroque interior. The palace became Louis XIV's symbol of absolute power and set the standard for princely courts in [Europe](https://www.planetware.com/europe-travel.htm).

Architect **Jules Hardouin-Mansart** created the elegant Baroque facade and lavish interior of the Château de Versailles, which is designated as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

The most emblematic space in the castle is the **Hall of Mirrors**, where courtiers waited for an audience with His Majesty. This dazzling hall sparkles with sunlight that enters through the windows and is reflected off massive ornamental mirrors.

**SPAIN**

Spain, a country on Europe’s Iberian Peninsula, includes 17 autonomous regions with diverse geography and cultures. Capital city Madrid is home to the Royal Palace and Prado museum, housing works by European masters. Segovia has a medieval castle (the Alcázar) and an intact Roman aqueduct. Catalonia’s capital, Barcelona, is defined by Antoni Gaudí’s whimsical modernist landmarks like the Sagrada Família church

**Detailed pictures of the sceneries**

## The Alhambra and Generalife Gardens, Granada

The Alhambra complex includes several buildings, towers, walls, gardens, and a mosque, but it's the indescribably intricate stone carvings, the delicate filigrees, the magnificent tile-lined ceilings, the graceful arches, and serene courtyards of the Nasrid palace that will haunt your dreams.

## Barcelona's Sagrada Familia and Gaudi Sites

Antoni Gaudi took the architectural style known as Art Nouveau a step further, even, some have argued, into absurdity. The fanciful and outrageous buildings he created in Barcelona have become landmarks, the signature attractions of this Catalan city. Foremost is The Sagrada Família church, officially the Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família or the Holy Family Church of the Atonement. One of Europe's most unconventional churches, it is also unfinished, so as you look down from its tower, you can see the work in progress below.

## The Great Mosque of Cordoba (Mezquita)

Once the principal mosque of western Islam and still known as the Mezquita, Cordoba's mosque is one of the largest in the world and the finest achievement of Moorish architecture in Spain. In spite of later alterations that carved out its center to build a Catholic cathedral at its heart, the Great Mosque ranks with the Alhambra in Granada as one of the two most splendid examples of Islamic art and architecture in western Europe.

Building materials from Roman and Visigothic buildings were used in the construction, which began in 785, and by 1000, it had grown to its present dimensions, its prayer hall with no fewer than nineteen aisles. No matter where you stand or which direction you look, its rows of columns and rounded Moorish arches line up in symmetrical patterns.

**Discussion of the place**

**How to get there**

**Other places to visit in that city/country.**

**SWITZERLAND**

Switzerland is a mountainous Central European country, home to numerous lakes, villages and the high peaks of the Alps. Its cities contain medieval quarters, with landmarks like capital Bern’s Zytglogge clock tower and Lucerne’s wooden chapel bridge. The country is also known for its ski resorts and hiking trails. Banking and finance are key industries, and Swiss watches and chocolate are world renowned.

## Lucerne

[Lucerne](https://www.planetware.com/tourist-attractions-/lucerne-luzern-ch-lu-luc.htm) (in German, Luzern) is a top spot for tourists. Famed for its music concerts, this quintessential Swiss town lures renowned soloists, conductors, and orchestras to its annual **International Music Festival**. The Culture and Convention Center is home to one of the world's leading concert halls.

One of the city's most famous landmarks is the **Chapel Bridge**, built in the 14th century. In a small park, lies the famous **Lion Monument**, a poignant sculpture of a dying lion, which honors the heroic death of Swiss Guards during the attack on the Tuileries in the French Revolution. History buffs will enjoy the **Swiss Transport Museum**with extensive exhibits on all forms of transport, including air and space travel, railroad locomotives, and a Planetarium.

## Lake Geneva

Lake Geneva, **Europe's largest Alpine lake**, straddles the Swiss/French border, and laps at the shores of some of Switzerland's most popular cities. The city of [Geneva](https://www.planetware.com/tourist-attractions-/geneva-ch-ge-gen.htm) (in French Genève; in German Genf) sits between pretty snow-capped peaks at the point where the Rhône spills into Lake Geneva.

This French-speaking "capital of peace" is the European seat of the United Nations and exudes a pleasing blend of French joie de vivre and Swiss structure. Promenades, parks, and gardens surround the lake, and the old town is a lovely spot to stroll among the historic buildings. The **Jet d'Eau**, a fountain in Lake Geneva shooting water 150 meters into the air, is a famous landmark. Cultural attractions include the **Opera House** and the **Grand Théâtre**, which stages international acts.

## Chateau de Chillon, Montreux

On the shores of Lake Geneva, **near Montreux**, the Chateau de Chillon (Chillon Castle) has inspired artists and writers for centuries. Lord Byron, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Victor Hugo are among the luminaries who have written about this architectural treasure.

Once the stronghold of the Counts and Dukes of Savoy from the 12th century, the complex encompasses about 25 buildings clustered around three courtyards. Highlights include the **Great Halls,** with magnificent views of Lake Geneva; the Gothic underground rooms; the **Chapel**, adorned with 14th-century paintings; and the **Camera Domini**, a bedroom occupied by the Duke of Savoy decorated with medieval murals.

**AUSTRIA**

This prosperous Alpine republic and its capital – Vienna – present an alluring image to the outside world. Its scenic beauties draw visitors here in their millions in summer and winter, while millions more revel in its unsurpassed cultural heritage. Its charm is legendary, its inhabitants welcoming, its cuisine heartily filling. In many ways it seems a model country, a parliamentary democracy and member of the European Union whose geographical location and neutral status has made it a bridge between East and West. An ancient Latin epithet *Felix Austria* (‘O Happy Austria!’) would seem to apply today as much as when it was coined several hundred years ago. But before reaching this enviable state, the country was beset by crises of identity and a history more turbulent than most.

## The Vienna Hofburg: Austria's Imperial Palace

The spectacular Hofburg Palace in Vienna was for centuries the seat of Austria's monarchy, the powerful Habsburgs. Now the President conducts state business in the same rooms that once belonged to Emperor Joseph II. Nearly every Austrian ruler since 1275 ordered additions or alterations, resulting in many different architectural influences, including Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, and Classicism.

## The Spanish Riding School, Vienna

The Spanish Riding School dates back to the time of Emperor Maximilian II, the man responsible for introducing the famous Lipizzaner horses into Austria in 1562. Today, it's one of the only places where the classical style of riding preferred by aristocracy is still practiced. Viewing the famous equestrian displays in the Baroque Winter Riding School - held here since the time of Charles VI - is a must when in Vienna.

## Hallstatt and the Dachstein Salzkammergut

**Hallstatt**, undoubtedly one of the most picturesque small towns in Austria, is a good place from which to explore the spectacular Dachstein Salzkammergut region, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The beautiful Baroque architecture testifies to Hallstatt's wealth, which is based on its long history of salt production from prehistoric times.

You can visit the underground salt lake in the nearby Hörnerwerk cavern, or explore the **Dachstein Caves**, one of Europe's most impressive cavern networks, which are, in places, up to 1,174 meters deep.