

Grand EUROPEAN Cities

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Brouwersgracht Canal,
Amsterdam

Amsterdam, Barcelona, Lisbon and London are brimming with history and charm on a grand scale.



Old Facade,
Barcelona

T

raveling through Europe can make every day feel too short. Sure, there's always the wish that you could extend the trip when on any vacation, but the time warp in European cities hits differently. Time simply looms larger when you're staring up at a landmark that's nearly 1,000 years old.

The grand scale of the history upon which famous European cities and capitals were built can be hard to fully comprehend. Construction on Barcelona's majestic Sagrada Familia began in 1882. That seems like a really long time ago, until you reflect on the fact that the Tower of London dates to 1078.

Wrapping your head around a place's history while also attempting to soak in all of the modern charms of a major city is not an easy feat. The desire to see as much as possible in a short time can also become overwhelming when the destination is as grand as these European cities.

Take the pressure off by choosing a city and then leave finding that balance of history, exploration and relaxation to AAA partners who know Europe's magnificent cities best.

Barcelona



aptivating Barcelona is at the heart of Insight Vacation's Easy Pace Spain guided tour.

This seaside city with its unique culture, vibrant atmosphere and stunning architecture will draw you in and stay with you long after you leave. Antoni Gaudi's monumental mark on the city is apparent all over the sprawling city. Viewing his famous unfinished masterpiece, the Sagrada Familia, and looking up at the basilica towers is awe-inspiring, and one could spend hours staring at its ornate facades.

Whimsical Park Guell's vibrant broken tile mosaics showcases more of Gaudi's talents. Located on a hillside overlooking the city, the park is one of the largest green spaces in Barcelona, making it ideal for strolls in the shade admiring Gaudi's intricate, undulating, colorful creations.

While its architecture and the lively pedestrian thoroughfare of Las Ramblas are some of the best-known things in the city, perhaps the actual best thing is the food.



La Sagrada Familia



Mosaic Dragon in Park Guell

Unassuming courtyard restaurants serve up unforgettable fresh sangria with tapas like manchego cheese, chorizo and olives.

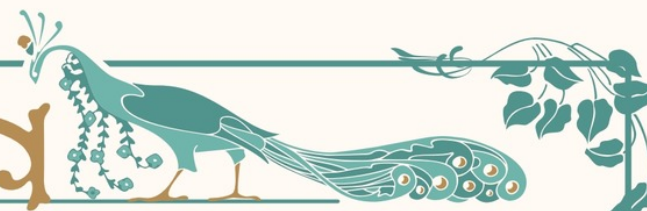
For a uniquely Spanish experience, spend an evening at a flamenco show to see passionate artistry on display through Spain's national dance accompanied by brilliant guitarists. Be prepared to smile and be awed all night.



Tapas dinner

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London



ample the rich history and culture of London with the 8-Day London Explorer tour from Trafalgar.

The River Thames flows through the heart of England's capital. Stay on its banks at the Tower Hotel London and simultaneously overlook Tower Bridge. Exploring the city starts at your doorstep, and just around the river bend, the London Eye and Big Ben lead to Buckingham Palace, the official residence of the British monarch since 1837. Watching the stately and traditional Changing of the Guard ceremony outside the palace is a must-do for any visitor to London.

Learn more about the monarchy, and step into the lives of the royal family by touring Kensington Palace. Plus, explore Westminster Abbey with a local specialist, and discover why the church lost its cathedral status.

For a different perspective of the city, enjoy a leisurely cruise along the River Thames. The boat ride to Greenwich glides past some of London's most famous landmarks, such as the Houses of Parliament, St Paul's Cathedral, Tate



A Beefeater at the Tower of London

Modern, Shakespeare's Globe and Tower Bridge.

Beyond the boundaries of London, the guided journey rolls toward Stonehenge, where storied stone monoliths have stood for approximately 5,000 years. Being near the iconic prehistoric monument provides a humbling perspective to the rest of the trip as you feel compelled to wonder more deeply about the history behind these mysterious, ancient structures.



Stonehenge



Tower Bridge



The London Eye

LISBON

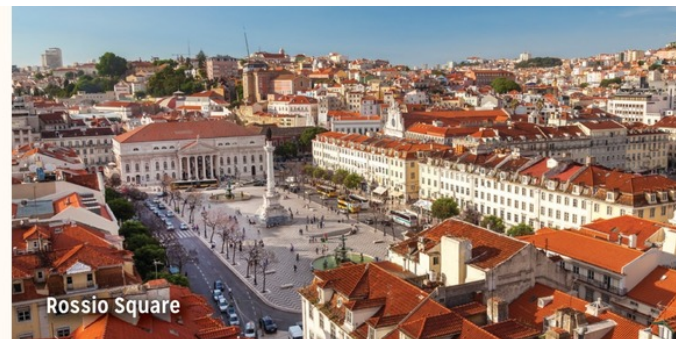


Tramway



charming 3-night stay in Lisbon is the finale of Uniworld's Portugal, Spain & The Douro River Valley cruise tour.

A hilly, laid-back city in the western part of Portugal, Lisbon is easily explored by trams that transport you through the city and up to jaw-dropping overlooks above red tile roofs and waterfront. As you stroll the tiled streets of this distinctive seaside city, you may hear the sentimental tunes of fado, traditional Portuguese music in which a



Rossio Square

singer evokes emotional longing and is accompanied by a classical guitar harmony.

Another evocative local experience awaits in Rossio—possibly the busiest square in Lisbon—where cafes offer seating along the square's unusual mosaic. The area is paved with a distinctive wave pattern, which was laid in the 19th century, and features two beautiful fountains.

AMSTERDAM



iver cruises are a truly unique way to explore Europe, and what better city to visit on one than Amsterdam, the “Venice of the North.” AmaWaterway's Best of Holland & Belgium river cruise and land journey offers a 2-night pre-cruise stay in Amsterdam, Netherlands' progressive capital.

The city's distinctive architecture is best admired from its meandering canals and scenic bridges. One of the most famous destinations in Amsterdam is the Anne Frank House, a somber museum where you can see Frank's original diary and the hinged bookcase that served as the entrance to the secret annex where she and others hid during World War II.

From the flower-lined streets near the house, you can hear bells toll from Westerkerk, the largest church in Amsterdam. Its construction spanned from 1619 to 1631. Dutch painter Rembrandt, who lived nearby, was buried at the church.



Snowy canal below the Rijksmuseum

While some of Rembrandt's paintings captured the beauty of the area on canvas, make sure to explore vibrant neighborhoods like Jordaan, one of the most enchanting areas in the city. It features colorful facades and maze-like streets that often lead to open-air markets—a perfect opportunity to sample local goods and food.

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Herengracht Canal

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