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DESTINATION: EUROPE

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

Europe's Spring Jubilee

Few places make you feel as alive and healthy as Europe does—especially during spring when the weather is absolutely perfect. Walk in the wildflower-dotted Alps, see royal gardens in Belgium, and explore up-and-coming cities in Poland. Then raise a local vintage and say “prost!” to 20 years of German unity. Cheers to feeling wonderful!

Hills That Are Alive

The Alps are one of Europe's most cherished natural wonders, linking several countries. Instead of rushing along by train, slow down and savor the richness of the Alps the old-fashioned way: on foot. Walking is so ingrained in the European lifestyle; it's part of what makes its people so healthy. Breathe in fresh air as you discover charming villages and meet locals. Surrounded by these majestic peaks, see how the French *joie de vivre* becomes the

Italian *dolce vita*, all while finding your own deep appreciation for life.

During spring, Austria's western mountains are a walker's paradise, with trails for all levels. In Innsbruck, take advantage of free guided tours from June to October. High up in the French Alps, visit authentic villages, like picturesque Courchevel, where literally everything is within walking distance. In Italy's picture-perfect Alta Badia, experience traces of old Ladin culture around some of the

world's most exclusive mountain resorts and spectacular golf courses.

About an hour south of Munich, Germany's Oberammergau is straight out of a fairy tale, with friendly locals, houses painted with frescoes, and centuries-old churches. Whisk by a cable car up Kolbensattel Mountain to hike or mountaineer, or rent bikes to explore the beautiful trails around the Ammergauer Alps.

Switzerland is a longtime haven for well-being. In mountain outposts like St.



Enjoy music and architecture
in historical Dresden

Moritz, unwind and immerse yourself in Swiss culture and outdoor sports. Explore the Alps at your own pace this spring. Visit www.walkmyalps.com for more details.

A New Kind of Renaissance

Spring is a time of rebirth and change, and perhaps one of the best times to celebrate the lead-up to the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. History was truly made on November 9, 1989: The world watched as the Berlin Wall fell overnight and

reunited East and West Germany. Over these next few months, extensive cultural programs are planned up until the Festival of Freedom (November 9). In a dramatic display followed by fireworks, the city will reenact the fall by toppling giant dominoes set along the former course of the wall.

Since reunification, Berlin has flourished with a renaissance of art and culture. See the city's creative flair at the almost mile-long East Side Gallery, the world's largest open-air gallery of paintings and graffiti. To get a sense of what a divided Germany was like, take guided tours,

visit memorials, and see old treasures that have been hidden away for four decades. Visit old East German cities like Dresden to see the lovely Semper Opera House and the baroque Zwinger Palace. This is a truly exciting time to celebrate Germany's unification and vibrant diversity. Visit www.cometogermany.com and www.mauerfall09.com to plan your trip.

Old-World Delights and New-World Treats

For a country slightly bigger than Maryland, Belgium certainly produces a lot of chocolate—172,000 tons a year. There are more than 2,000 chocolate shops around the country, making the treat impossible to resist. The good times in Belgium only begin with sweets and continue with an amazing selection of beer. While you might not have time to sample all of the nation's 500 specialty brews, you can have fun trying. Visit beer museums and breweries or plan to attend the Beer Festival of Mons (June 5-7).

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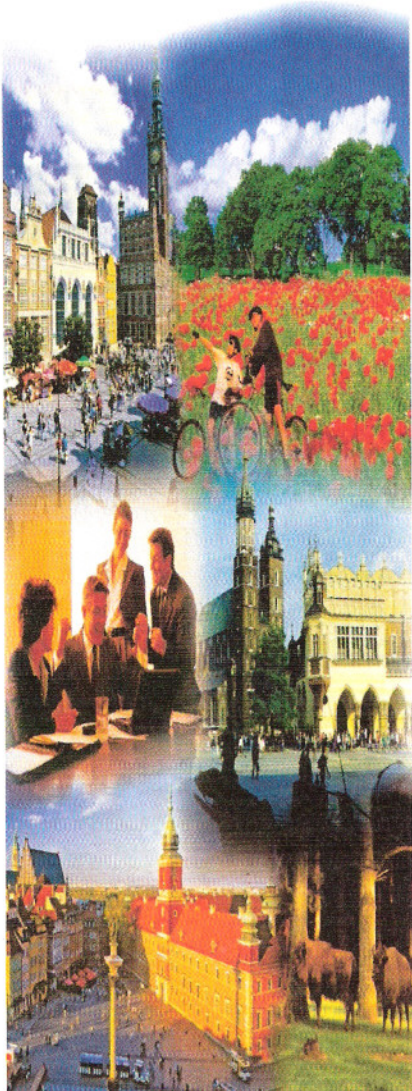


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DESTINATION: EUROPE



SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION



a street-cart vendor is another delicious experience to remember. After sightseeing in Brussels' more than 80 museums and regal plazas, the warm delight is a well-earned treat—and a nice sugary kick to keep you going.

There is much excitement in Belgium this spring, including the Brussels Jazz Marathon Weekend (May 29–31) and the opening of the new Magritte Museum (June 2). Be sure to visit the Brussels' Royal Greenhouses at Laeken (which are only open to the public April 17–May 10) and the weekend flower markets in historic Tournai and Namur. Visit www.visitbelgium.com or call (212) 758-8130 to learn more about Belgium.

A Crossroads of Culture

Bordered by the deep-blue Baltic Sea and the mighty Carpathian Mountains, Poland is a natural bridge between Eastern and Western Europe. Beyond its geographic significance, Poland is a fascinating blend of cultures, distinctive architecture, beautiful music, and delectable cuisine. From the stunning Amber Coast to the soaring Tatras (the Carpathians' highest peaks), Poland has a dramatic landscape of untouched natural beauty that is complemented by one-of-a-kind cities.

In Warsaw, visit the beautifully rebuilt Old Town to see the main square, the Zamek Krolewski royal castle, and St. John's Cathedral. Today, movies and jazz are as much a part of Polish life as pierogies and kielbasa. You'll find one of Europe's oldest jazz festivals and a hotspot for film buffs in Lodz, just two hours from Warsaw.

Over the last few years, Krakow has been hailed as one of Europe's most exciting

destinations. Considered the cultural capital of Poland, Krakow's most famous sights include the regal hilltop Wawel Royal Palace, St. Mary's Church, and Main Market Square. (Locals will also brag that Krakow has the country's best cuisine.) Visit www.poland.travel to read more about Poland in springtime.

How to See It All

For more than three decades, Central Holidays has been mastering the art of traveling in Europe. This spring, see the best of Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Egypt with romantic retreats for two or an exciting group trip for the whole family. Personalized service, tailoring holidays of all kinds, has become their trademark, from independent trips to motorcoach tours and fly-and-drive vacations.

On a Central Holidays tour, you'll see Europe beyond the surface and experience authentic culture and landscapes. Some of Europe's greatest pleasures are its amazing cuisine and delicious wines. Learn how to cook with classes in Italy, Spain, and France. Enjoy a wine excursion, such as the Romance of Castles and Wine Tour through Spain's grape-growing regions of La Rioja and Ribera del Duero.

Sail on the sparkling blue Mediterranean Sea or drift down Central Europe's grand rivers with sightseeing cruises. Travel back in time with the Classical Athens and Ageless Egypt package that features four-night cruises in the Aegean and down the Nile River. Visit www.centralholidays.com or call (800) 539-4516 for more information on Central Holiday's spring packages or independent travel options.