

Travelers Drawn to Old World Feel of Eastern Europe TripAdvisor User Survey Reveals Travelers Bypassing Traditional Western European Mainstays for Hidden Charms of the 'Other Europe'

PRNewswire
NEEDHAM, Mass.

Prague is the new Paris. According to a survey of nearly 700 TripAdvisor users, 91 percent consider Eastern Europe more appealing than Western Europe for leisure travel. Of that group, 39 percent said Eastern Europe was appealing because it is more "authentic," 25 percent because it is more affordable and 15 percent because it is more beautiful than Western Europe. Sixty-eight percent of those surveyed have already visited Eastern Europe and 52 percent are currently planning a trip.

"It's pretty clear that smart travelers are looking eastward in Europe for value, authenticity and new experiences," said Michele Perry, TripAdvisor spokesperson. "The countries of Eastern Europe are more accessible than ever and present unique opportunities appealing to curious and adventurous travelers."

TripAdvisor offers travelers an honest guide to Eastern Europe with an insider's look at what's hot and what's not, based on the opinions of real travelers.

TOP DESTINATIONS - TripAdvisor's favorite Eastern European cities, based on May 2005 user survey

1. Prague, Czech Republic
2. Budapest, Hungary
3. St. Petersburg, Russia
4. Krakow, Poland

TRAVEL BUZZ - TripAdvisor's tips on traveling to Eastern Europe, based on May 2005 user survey

1. Get religion - "I'm not religious, but I thought the Black Madonna in Czestochowa, Poland was truly spiritual."
2. The French Riviera is so ... 20 minutes ago - "The Adriatic Coast and all the islands along Croatia, more beautiful than the French Riviera and the Italian Coast put together."
3. Lights out - "Prague at night from the St. Charles Bridge - like a fairy tale."
4. Get real - "The neighborhood of 'Zizkov' in Prague. Including the local bars and restaurants, Televizni tower and 'Infinity' nightclub off Vinohradska Street. These are places where I could really feel the authentic Prague over the touristic Prague."

MUST SEES - TripAdvisor's top picks for places to see in Eastern Europe, based on May 2005 user survey

1. Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg
2. The Charles Bridge, Prague
3. Old Town in Prague; Old City in Dubrovnik; Old Bohemia in Budapest; Old Town in Tallin
4. Auschwitz-Birkenau, Poland
5. Adriatic/Dalmatian Coastline, Croatia
6. Dracula Castle, Romania
7. Red Square, Moscow

HIDDEN GEMS - TripAdvisor users reveal "secret" spots that are sure to please, based on May 2005 user survey

1. Sand Dunes of Nida, Lithuania
2. Tatra Mountains, Poland
3. Salt Mines, Poland

RANTS & RAVES - Pearls of wisdom from experienced TripAdvisor travelers, based on May 2005 user survey and Forums

1. Be careful who you call Eastern - "The Czechs do not feel they are in Eastern Europe, rather Central Europe!"
2. Prague or Budapest? - "No need to be torn, Prague wins hands down. More beautiful, cheaper, more friendly, more interesting, just more more more." (TripAdvisor User - UK, April 26, 2005)
3. Budapest or Prague? - "Having visited both Prague and Budapest within weeks of each other two summers ago, I preferred Budapest. Prague was beautiful but it was overrun with tourists and I truly felt like I was in the Magic Kingdom. I would like to return in the off-season. Budapest, on the other hand, felt like an actual 'getaway.' It was picturesque and romantic with great restaurants, beautiful architecture and wonderful people."
4. While in St. Pete ... - "I have been to St. Pete 3 times and going for another week in June. The 'Must See' is Peterhof. Easily gotten to by Hydrofoil at the Winter Palace. The other MUST see is the Catherine Palace and the Amber Room there. The Hermitage is next (center of city). Church on Spilled Blood is easy to get to also and quite magnificent." (TripAdvisor User - Greenville, SC, May 8, 2005)

TOP HOTELS - TripAdvisor's best bets in top 4 Eastern European cities (top cities determined by May 2005 user survey)

Prague, Czech Republic

Andel's Design Hotel, Stroupeznickeho 21, Prague 5, Prague 15000
97 Reviews, most recent posted on May 22, 2005
Average Price: US\$ 195

"Nice hotel in great location. Just across the river from old town (short walk or subway ride away), close to park and castle. Clean, friendly staff, free internet in lobby." (TripAdvisor User - Texas, May 19, 2005)

Budapest, Hungary

Le Meridien Budapest, Erzsebet Ter 9-10, Budapest 1051
37 Reviews, most recent posted on April 12, 2005
Average Price: US\$ 260

"The location is great, the hotel is situated within a stones throw of the Chain Bridge and the Vaci Utca. We cannot praise this hotel highly enough; the room, the location and the staff." (TripAdvisor User - Manchester, UK, April 12, 2005)

St. Petersburg, Russia

Dostoevsky Hotel, Vladimirsky prospekt, 19, St. Petersburg 191002
7 Reviews, most recent posted on May 18, 2005
Average Price: US\$ 244

"The staff were delightful, all young, speaking very good English and incredibly helpful. They made sure we had everything we needed, booked ballet tickets, taxis and found out details of tours, etc. The room, although small, had all that was required." (TripAdvisor User - Godalming, UK, May 12, 2005)

Krakow, Poland

Regent Hotel, 19 Bozego Ciala St, Krakow 31-059
7 Reviews, most recent posted on May 21, 2005
Average Price: US\$ 66

"Hotel was excellent, the reception staff were very helpful. Nice big rooms, brilliant shower and very good breakfast. The Jewish district is peppered with brilliant bars, mainly for the youngsters but that didn't stop us from frequenting them till the wee small hours ... no loud music just cheap beer and top vodka ... " (TripAdvisor User - Lancashire, UK, May 21, 2005)

Note: TripAdvisor calculates an average price for each hotel, which is based on the rates of available rooms obtained from booking partners and other independent sources of pricing information. In addition, average hotel prices are updated nightly based on prevailing conversion rates. These are only estimates and not guarantees. Rates are subject to seasonal fluctuations.

About TripAdvisor

TripAdvisor.com is the most popular travel information and recommendation destination worldwide (according to comScore Media Metrix, January 2005), with more than 1.8 million unbiased reviews and opinions and covering nearly 200,000 hotels and attractions. A popular travel homebase with more than 13 million unique monthly visitors, TripAdvisor.com offers easy access to major worldwide online travel sites, including Expedia, Orbitz, hotels.com, American Airlines and Travelocity, for the best deals on the Web. TripAdvisor offers travel suppliers a cost-per-click marketing platform, guaranteeing the budgeted number of leads (not just impressions) with every campaign. Winner of dozens of awards, including PC Magazine's Top 100 Web Sites and Forbes Best of the Web, TripAdvisor is part of IAC/InterActiveCorp .

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