



Peleş Castle (CC TiberiuSahlean)

Eastern Europe

Top 10 Eastern European Countries to Travel to in 2017

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Argophilia Travel News introduces its list of top 10 Eastern European countries to travel to in the upcoming year for the first time in its existence, and we hope to make this an annual tradition. Our top is based on watching the travel trends of 2016 closely, and on feedback from our readers.

Eastern Europe is an attractive area to visit as most of it still offers miles of unspoiled nature, a diversity of landscapes, hidden gems, and cities that surprise through beauty and value. Consider Eastern Europe beyond the terms of the former Soviet block and understand that each country is unique, with individual values, ancient traditions and food culture, stunning historical landmarks, and much more. This part of the world offers something for every type of traveler, from those who seek luxury and gourmet food experiences, to adventure seekers, shoe-string travelers, backpackers, families, groups, and so on. In the following, our picks of countries to see in 2017.

10. Belarus, the country of 11,000 lakes

Belarus is a nature lover's paradise. Leafy forests cover extensive parts of its territories, there are thousands of lakes surrounded by glorious nature, perfect for hikers, and Minsk is an exciting capital. Our must-see sight is the UNESCO World Heritage Site [Nesvizh Castle](#).



9. Moldova, for oenophiles

Did you know that Moldova is the seventh largest wine exporter in the world? But not only its export numbers earned its title of the “country with open doors in the paradise of wine.” Two of the world’s largest wine cellars are here, the second largest at [Cricova Winery](#), and the largest in the world at [Milestii Mici Winery](#). The total length of the underground galleries at Milestii Mici is 200 kilometers. You can imagine it will take a while to explore this oenophile paradise.



The Cricova cellars courtesy Sejur

8. Bosnia and Herzegovina, rising star of Balkan peninsula

Bosnia and Herzegovina is facing constant tourist growth, and its beautiful capital, Sarajevo, ranks among the top 50 best cities in the world. According to an estimate of the World Tourism Organization, Bosnia and Herzegovina will have the third highest tourism growth rate in the world between 1995 and 2020. Our must-see pick here is Mostar, a picturesque destination full of charm.



7. Romania, Carpathian cradle

The Carpathians are the second-longest mountain range in Europe, and 51% of their mountainous range forms the heart of Romania. There's plenty to explore here if you are a mountaineer, but the range is wild, and you are advised to stay on the marked routes or to employ a guide. Yet, our must-see recommendation for the country famous for Dracula's Castle is the Danube Delta.



6. Slovenia, for Medieval gems

Slovenia's relief is rich and diverse, with mountains, meadows, lakes, caves, and the sea. The country is also attractive for its excellent rural tourism offers. But the most fascinating are its Medieval towns, Ptuj, Škofja Loka and Piran, and its fortified villages, Štanjel, Vipavski Križ, and Šmartno. For the posh, we recommend Slovenia's amazing spas.



5. Estonia: strongholds and hill-forts

Tallin is obviously the most popular tourist destination in Estonia, but there are some other interesting places to add to your bucket list when you visit this fascinating little country. Pärnu is its summer capital, with beautiful beaches, spas, lively nightclubs, and a delightful promenade by the sea. The country is also fascinating for architecture and

history buffs, especially for the number of strongholds and hill-forts scattered throughout its lands. Our must-see pick in 2017: Tartu, home of the new Estonian National Museum.



4. Hungary: the thermal baths still going strong

The main attraction in Hungary remains Budapest with its decadent thermal baths that still attract thousands of visitors every week. The Széchenyi Baths (Hungarian: Széchenyi-gyógyfürdő) count among the most spectacular, and famous, Budapest has to offer. They boast no less than 15 indoor baths and 3 grand outdoor pools, and are, beyond any doubt, the most visited by locals and tourists alike.



3. Croatia: still a top destination for bikers

In 2013 Croatia was among the top travel destinations for bikers, and things haven't changed. Bikers from neighborhood countries still take to Croatia's cobbled streets and rustic pathways every season. For travelers interested in other types of activities, the country has plenty to offer: national parks to explore; beautiful coastline attractive for yachting, diving, and other watersports; the Roman cities of Istria; striking Kvarner and the Venetian island towns; Zadar; Split; and always Dubrovnik.



2. Eternally fascinating, the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic never loses its charm. While Prague still ranks as its most popular attraction, travelers also love destinations like Kutná Hora and Český ráj. For beer lovers, Plzeň is a well-known destination. Our favorite destination in the country is Ostrava, especially during the mushroom season, which is quite big here. During the season you should try the kulajda, a superbly thick soup with forest mushrooms and milk or the houbový guláš, a traditional mushrooms goulash.



1. Greece, cradle of gods

Greece remains at the top of Eastern European destinations in 2017, with Athens the most popular destination, followed by pristine and idyllic islands like Santorini, Mykonos, Rhodes, and Crete. Another favorite among travelers is Central Macedonia, especially for Halkidiki and Mount Olympus. Still, the most visited part of the country is Northern Greece, with destinations like Thessaloniki, Komotini, Ioannina, and Larissa. Our favorite destination in Greece remains Crete, also a favorite recovery place for space travelers from Russia.

