

Therapeutic Landscapes

Historic spa towns –
designed for wellbeing



“Spa or Therapeutic Landscapes” – Discover a phenomenon

The research done for the Great Spa Towns of Europe highlighted a theme that runs through our spa towns that has become especially relevant since the pandemic. The landscape that surrounds our historic thermal buildings has often been used as part of the cure associated with the waters, in a planned way, and in recent years, the walking cycling and riding paths and outdoor wellness and exercise activities have become more important than ever.

Our spa parks and gardens provide much-needed green space within our towns, while the forests and hills with their paths and trails set out with healthy exercise in mind allow physical and mental space for visitors, as well as a much-needed boost to the spirit. Views to the surrounding hills and woodlands are often planned into our towns, so that the landscape is drawn into the town. Man-made structures such as covered walkways and colonnades allow guests to drink the waters or take gentle exercise sheltered from the weather, while funicular railways allow guests to ride to spectacular view points in the hills surrounding the towns.



★ THERMAL KNOWLEDGE ★

The Great Spas of Europe

Several of EHTTA's members are also part of the Great Spa Towns of Europe, a group of eleven spa towns across seven countries that has been inscribed by UNESCO on the World Heritage List as a transnational serial property.

The property— eleven towns developed around mineral springs —provides exceptional testimony to a complex, and unprecedented urban typology and cultural movement – the European spa town. The Great Spa Towns of Europe marks the greatest development of this phenomenon.

www.greatspatownsofeurope.eu



Inspiring landscapes

GERMANY

★ Baden-Baden

Baden-Baden's Trinkhalle, Kurhaus, Casino and theatre were deliberately built away from the historic core of the town in the 1830s, and were surrounded by landscaped gardens, giving them a relaxing green setting. A series of parks and private gardens leads away along one side of the small river, connected to the pathway with a series of charming bridges, and visitors to Baden-Baden shouldn't miss a walk through the famous Lichententaler Allee landscaped gardens on the other. Other parks extend around the castle and away from the Friedrichsbad and Caracalle Terme, and a short walk leads to a spectacular park where a huge water feature, the Wasserkunst-anlage Paradies, cascades down the hillside. The funicular is a short bus ride from town and visitors who make the trip are rewarded with spectacular views from a lookout tower and restaurant overlooking the valley below.

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★ Bad Ems

The Kurpark, with its formal "French"-style borders and flower beds, and English landscape garden runs parallel to the river in Bad Ems, with tree-lined promenades running alongside the water. The spa district, next to the park is interconnected with the surrounding landscape, not only with stunning views

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and of the countryside, but with a network of historic footpaths and scenic lookouts. From the early 19th century, encouraged by Baedeker guidebooks and literature written by famous guests such as Goethe and Dostoyevsky, who both stayed here, visitors have been drawn to the rugged landscape around Bad Ems especially the historic lookout tower on Concordia Heights. Don't miss the legendary Heinzelmännchen Caves, formed by lime erosion that have inspired countless legends, and the wild romantic rocky path, the Bäderlei ridge, which has been a must for visitors since the 19th century!

★ Wiesbaden

The Kurhaus with the so-called 'Bowling Green' in the front and the Kurpark with its scenic lake at the rear dates back to 1907 and still is very impressive for visitors. Together with the boulevard Wilhelmstrasse it is still witness to Wiesbaden's days as a "world spa town of the 19th century". The natural landscape around Wiesbaden, nestles between the Taunus mountains and the Rhine River, and has been used to create hiking trails with plenty of views over the city below. Green valleys dotted with huge villas set in their own gardens stretch from the town into vineyards and then into the forests, creating the impression of space and natural surroundings even in the suburbs.





POLAND

★ Łądek-Zdrój

This has the characteristics of a mountain spa as it is situated in the valley of the Biała Ladecka River that is located in the South Eastern Sudety Mountains. An arboretum has been created in the forested terrain surrounding the town with a large variety of trees and shrubs, some of which are exotic species. Several walking trails have been laid out in this hilly landscape that is criss-crossed by many streams.

CZECHIA

★ Karlovy Vary

Follow in the footsteps of Beethoven and Goethe who used to walk together in Karlovy Vary, and discover the park where Dvořák conducted the spa orchestra. Even before 1914 there were over 100 km of paths in parks and countryside, and today there are many trails and footpaths in the extensive woodlands which provide the setting of the town, with pavilions and lookout towers and “gloriettes” providing places to relax and enjoy views of the town below. Start a spectacular walk at the Diana Lookout at the top of the cable car railway, meandering down to the town, where colonnades and roofed galleries which cover the 15 drinking springs are connected by tree-lined pathways and small parks, never far from the river as it winds its way through multi-coloured buildings.

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BELGIUM

★ Spa

Spa's location in the Ardennes hills gives it the perfect setting for woodland walks with many trails and paths in the forests. These have been used for prescribed exercise since the middle of the 18th century, when the first network of promenades was laid out, in the landscape, linking the different springs and offering viewpoints, cementing the link between nature and thermal cures. It's on these walks that you can discover some of Spa's many historic springs and water sources, known as „pouhons“ as well as pavilions, view points, rest areas and waterfalls.

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FRANCE

★ Vichy

The spa district of Vichy, on a wide bend on the River Allier is dominated by parks and tree-lined roads – a deliberate decision in the early 19th century to bring the landscape into the town rather than connecting to the surrounding hills as many other towns have done. The First Park, with regular lines of trees from the original design is at the heart of the future town, and was built to connect the hall of the springs to the Casino, by decree of Napoléon III, whose visits to Vichy in the 1860s transformed the town in many ways. Today visitors can also ...

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... enjoy the Parc des Celéstins (where Vichy's most famous spring is located) and the Parc d'Allier, where many of Vichy's sporting events take place. Look out for yoga and many other activities on the steps of the impressive Casino, including spectacular illuminations projected onto the spa buildings in the winter.

CROATIA

★ Daruvar

Julije's park is one of the oldest spa parks in continental Croatia. The park is enriched with buildings from the 18th and 19th century including various baths and villas. Many ancient walking and hiking trails can be found in the "Roman Forest" nearby. Enjoy a break on one of the benches there!

ITALY

★ Montecatini Terme

Montecatini Terme's imposing Tettuccio Terme, and numerous other spa buildings are set within an extensive thermal park, where guests can be seen every day with their cups of water, taking gentle exercise as part of their treatments. The avenues, thermal gardens and prospects, or views of the surrounding

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landscape have been part of the urban plan of Montecatini Terme, Italy's most important spa town, since the early days of the town. Don't miss taking a trip in the funicular railway, built in 1898, which connects Montecatini Terme to the original town, Montecatini Alto, high up on the hill. Prominent Montecatini visitor, the composer Giuseppe Verdi was present when the line, which transports passengers through olive groves and lush scenery was inaugurated.

Cultural Route of the Council of Europe

EHTTA is responsible for managing the European Route of Historic Thermal Towns, a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe since 2010. Launched by the Council of Europe in 1987, "the Cultural Routes demonstrate by means of a journey through space and time how the heritage of the different countries and cultures of Europe contributes to a shared and living cultural heritage".



The European Route of Historic Thermal Towns European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA)

Member Towns Acqui Terme | Bad Ems | Bad Homburg | Bad Kissingen | Baden bei Wien | Baden-Baden | Bagnoles de l'Orne | Bath | Bursa Metropolitan Municipality | Caldas da Rainha | Caldes de Montbui | Castrocara Terme e Terra del Sole | Châtel-Guyon | Daruvar | Enghien-les-Bains | Fiuggi | La Bourboule | Łądek-Zdrój | Le Mont Dore | Lipik | Loutra Pozar | Loutraki-Perachora | Luchon | Mondariz Balneario | Mondorf-les-Bains | Montecatini Terme | Montegrotto Terme | Ourense | Royat-Chamalière | Salsomaggiore Terme | São Pedro do Sul | Spa | Telese-Terme | Vichy | Varaždinske Toplice | Wiesbaden

International Partner Poços de Caldas

Associate Members Governorship of Afyonkarahisar | Budapest Spas cPlc | Chaves-Verin Eurocity | Clermont Auvergne Metropole | Fédération Thermale et Climatique Française (F.T.C.F.) | Galicia Region | Hellenic Association of Municipalities with Thermal Springs (H.A.M.T.S) | Imereti Region | Karlovy Vary Region | Province of Ourense | Route des Villes d'Eaux du Massif Central

About us:

Europe's Historic Thermal Towns, all based around healing mineral-water springs, have been centres of health, well-being, culture and tourism for centuries, and their development over the years has led to a rich and varied architectural heritage. Discover the stories, buildings, culture and festivals, and of course the waters themselves in a tour through the European Route of Historic Thermal Towns with its almost 50 towns in 18 countries.

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