Eat well, live well!

Food and drink in Europe's historic thermal towns

ehtta
European Historic Thermal Towns Association

The European Route of Historic Thermal Towns

Cultural route of the Council of Europe
Itinéraire culturel du Conseil de l'Europe

Council of Europe
Conseil de l'Europe

Award-winning and world famous

Eating well is an essential part of being well! Traditionally our thermal spa towns have great restaurants serving healthy, delicious foods, often cooked with fresh local ingredients. Look out for fine dining experiences in our renowned luxury and thermal hotels, where you might follow in the footsteps of some famous visitors of the past!

The joy of discovering a town is often wrapped up with experiencing local food and regional specialties,but also traditional products from the area. In our spa towns you will find some unique products made with the thermal waters, as well as delicious fresh produce sold in the local Farmers Markets. The relaxing pace of life fits perfectly with the slow food movement, and enjoying local products during your stay is part of a more sustainable way of living that is at the top of many people's agendas!

★ THERMAL KNOWLEDGE ★

In Caldes de Montbui, several local specialities have an unusual ingredient!

Pasta - the Sanmartí Company has been making pasta with thermal waters since 1700.

Gazpacho - popular in the summer months, it is made from local tomatoes and thermal water.

Calderina – this unique craft beer, an amber ale with a slight smoky aroma, is brewed with the thermal waters.

Thermal broth - In the weeks before Christmas, thermal water, local meats and vegetables, are cooked in a huge cauldron over an open fire. Find this seasonal treat located next to the Roman Baths and Fonte del Lleó, the thermal source, in the town square.

Carquinyolis – Traditionally the almonds used in this sweet biscuit were left to blanch in the hot springs.

Even the **crops** in Caldes de Montbui are irrigated with cooled thermal water, resulting in some of the best -ever tomatoes!

Montecatini Terme

Daruvar

Caldes de Montbui

The Culinary Highlights – a selection

AUSTRIA

★ Baden bei Wien

GREAT SPA TOWNS *of Europe*

The world-famous and richly chocolatey Viennese cake, Sachertorte has a connection to Baden bei Wien. Carl Sacher, the son of Franz, Sacher, who invented the Viennese confection, opened a hotel here, on the edge of the romantic Helenental area. It is still a hotel today.

BELGIUM

★ Spa

GREAT SPA TOWNS *of Europe*

Spa's mineral water has been bottled since the end of the 16th century and was one of the first mineral spa waters in the world to be exported. In the 17th century, monks started to distill a liqueur flavoured with aromatic plants, barks, and herbs. Elixir de Spa is sold in elegant bottles reminiscent of a water drop.

Belgian chocolates are a treat not to be missed - find them in some of Spa's boutique shops!

CROATIA

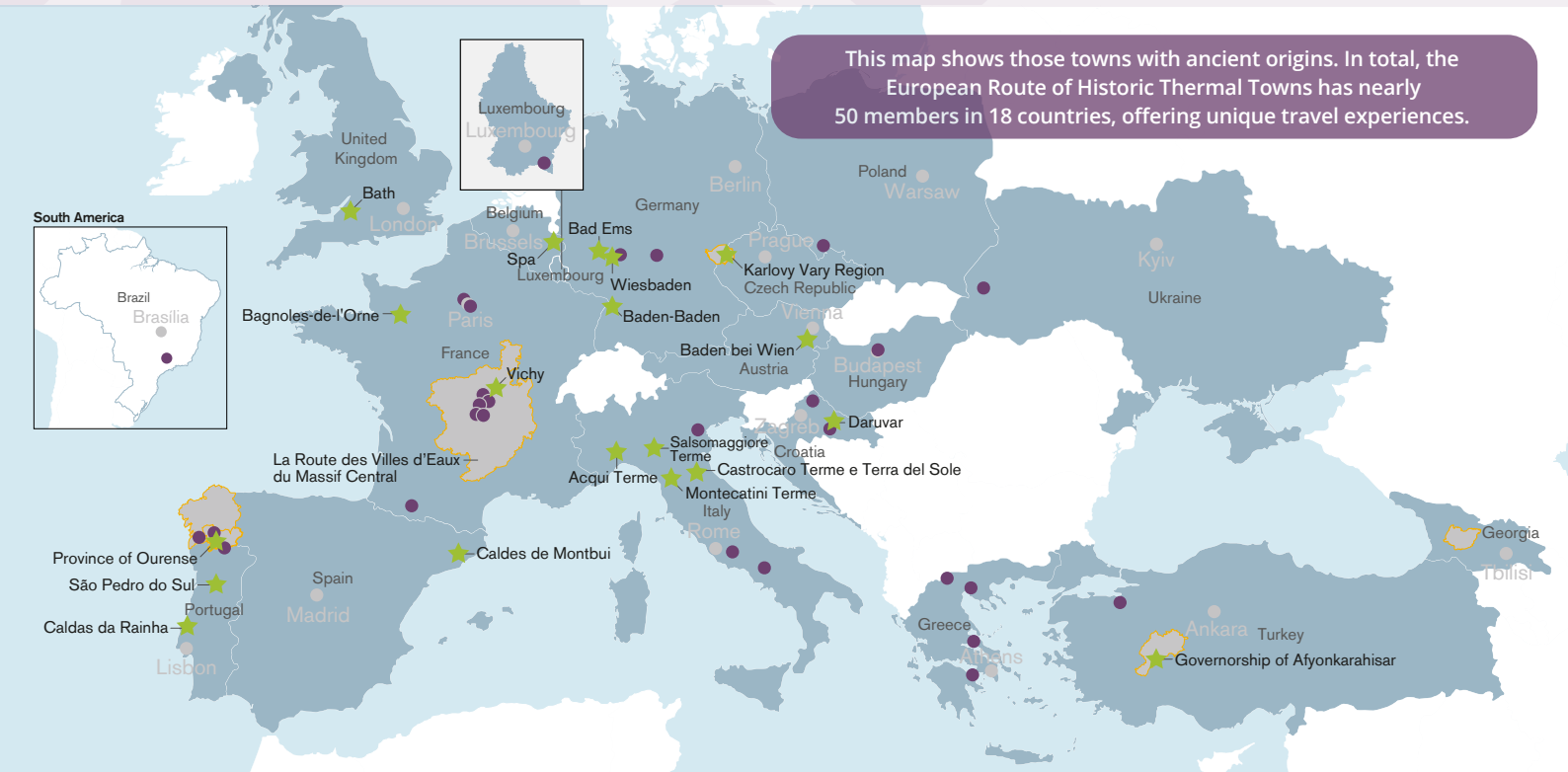
★ Daruvar

Founded in 1840, the Daruvar Brewery makes beer using traditional Czech technology and methods, and still brews the famous "Staročeško" beer today. They have also produced the 5th Element craft beer line since 2014 and you can enjoy the beer and local Biogal cheese during the tourist programme: 'BEERLIST - beer and other stories'.

The Daruvar wine route consists of seven points on an itinerary that takes in the countryside around Daruvar – vineyards and taverns/wine cellars for tasting and discoveries.

★ THERMAL KNOWLEDGE ★

Some of our waters, such as Spa, Vidago and Vichy are international brands. In many towns with bottled waters, differently packaged bottles indicate water from separate springs, which may taste different, have different properties and could be good for you in different ways. You may even be offered particular waters to go with certain dishes, just like fine wines!



CZECHIA (KARLOVY VARY REGION)

★ Mariánské Lázně

GREAT SPA TOWNS *of Europe*

"Mariánskolázeňské oplatky" are wafers with an unusually large and round shape, produced since 1856.

The stunning Main Colonnade in Mariánské Lázně is the setting for annual food festivals - including one that celebrates the local apple harvest.

★ Karlovy Vary

GREAT SPA TOWNS *of Europe*

The famous "Becherovka" liquer is made with thermal waters and a secret recipe of local herbs and spices. It was first sold in 1807 as a remedy for stomach complaints.

It is also used in thermal coffee in Karlovy Vary Hall of the Sources – an unusual treat!

FRANCE

★ Bagnoles de l'Orne

Nestled in the ten thousand acres of the beautiful Andaines forest, this charming town boasts no fewer than 1600 varieties of mushrooms, a boon for collectors and cooks alike!

★ La Route des Villes d'Eaux du Massif Central – Auvergne

With its five PDO cheeses, its classified wines, its ancestral specialities, its mineral waters and even its lentils, the Auvergne region is a paradise for all gourmets. Meet producers on farms and dairies on the "Cheese Route".

Wine lovers will be delighted to discover the Côtes d'Auvergne, with its 5 crus: Châteaugay, Chanturgue, Pinot, Boudes and Madargue. In the Auvergne, liqueurs and aperitifs are often made from wild plants, such as gentian, a large yellow flower from high pastures which is a key ingredient.

Chaudes-Aigues, one of the Route's towns 17 thermal spa towns has some of the hottest water in France and in Europe. Legend has it that the name of the hottest and most famous spring, the source of the Par river (82°C) has a culinary origin - named after the dressing or jointing of a pig (the French verb paré) thanks to the heat of the spring. These days, visitors are invited to cook eggs in the spring - perfect for your picnic in this beautiful region. (Or there are plenty of restaurants serving local produce to discover too!)

Mariánské Lázně

Karlovy Vary

Wiesbaden

★ Vichy

GREAT SPA TOWNS of Europe

The carefully balanced and healthy menus at the N³ Restaruant in the Vichy Célestins Spa Hotel features “reinvented regional dishes“. It is also unusual in using Célestins natural mineral water in the cooking of the food. Even the salt mills on the table contain thermal mineral salt, and spring water is served in vintage glass bottles.

The instantly recognisable octagon of Vichy Pastilles is a symbol of the town. Invented in 1825, they were made originally from bicarbonate of soda, and later mineral salts extracted from Vichy spring water and taken to ease digestive problems. These days they are simply confectionery and are available widely in France. Look out for pretty tins of these mints in Vichy itself.

GERMANY

★ Baden-Baden

GREAT SPA TOWNS of Europe

The Black Forest and one of the best German wine regions surround Baden-Baden. Rebland, the region’s name, is a reference to the vineyards that flourish there, producing award-winning wines.

★ Bad Ems

GREAT SPA TOWNS of Europe

While not strictly a food product, Emser Pastillen have been produced in Bad Ems from the waters for over 160 years. Since 1858, salts from the Robert-Kampe-Sprudel (spring) have been evaporated from the natural waters and pressed into lozenges. With over 30 minerals and trace elements a range of products is available to relieve mucus and inflammation of the respiratory tract.

★ Wiesbaden

Wiesbaden is within the wine region of Rheingau, known for its romantic scenery along the Rhine river with river cruise ships passing by the castles and monasteries. The town’s vineyard, on the “Neroberg” hill is where the Riesling grapes grow for the region’s famous white wine.

Wiesbaden is home to one of the world’s largest brands, Henkell-Freixenet, whose headquarters feature a magnificent marble hall as an entrance to vast underground cellars deep beneath the earth.

Vichy

★ INSIDER TIP! ★

Search out delicious coffee and cakes in historic cafés such as the Café Maldaner in Wiesbaden.

★ THERMAL KNOWLEDGE ★

Great Spa Towns 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 was inscribed by UNESCO on the World Heritage List in 2021 as a transnational serial property.

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

www.greatspatownsofeurope.eu

ITALY

★ Acqui Terme (Piedmont)

Pliny the Elder said that the Piedmont Region was one of the best in all Itlay for producing vines, and not much has changed! The landscape surrounding Acqui Terme, known as the Vineyard Landscape of Piedmont: Langhe-Roero and Monferrato is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In Acqui Terme, make sure to visit the Enoteca regional food and wine emporium.

★ Montecatini Terme (Tuscany)

GREAT SPA TOWNS *of Europe*

The Bargilli and Desideri families are renowned for producing "Cialde de Montecatini", typically presented in distinctive round tins. The wafers, once made with thermal waters are extremely light, and filled with a tasty almond mixture, and have been enjoyed by spa guests since the 19th century. Such wafers would traditionally have been eaten while strolling through the palatial Terme Tettuccio, where there is also the original grandiose café, still in use today.

★ Salsomaggiore Terme (Emilia-Romagna)

The undisputed number one fine food is Parmigiano Reggiano (PDO), which can also be bought directly from the various dairies located in the hills around Salsomaggiore Terme.

★ Castrocaro Terme e Terra del Sole (Emilia-Romagna)

Relax in style at the Grand Hotel Castorcaro - an exquisite example of Italian Art Deco style. Surrounded by decor designed by famous Italian eclectic artist Tito Chini, you will find his ceramics, stained glass and paintings at every turn - the perfect backdrop to the delicious food on offer on the hotel's menu!

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

The European Route of Historic Thermal Towns, has been certified as 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". Cultural Routes with a food or drink theme include:

- The Routes of the Olive Tree
- Iter Vitis Route (wine and wine-making)
- Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route
- Historic Cafés Routedevelopment of this phenomenon.

www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-route

PORTUGAL

★ Caldas da Rainha

Portugal's only daily outdoor farmers' market takes place here. Every day vegetables are also the inspiration for the "Louça das Caldas" pottery which has been produced locally since the 1850s.

★ São Pedro do Sul

Discover some truly immersive experieces with local producers in 14 villages here in this fascinating "bio region" between March and November. Visitors can learn to make and taste traditional sponge bread and corn bread, following the entire process from harvesting the grain to making the bread. Other experiences, often accompanied by traditional music and songs, include honey production, threshing corn cobs, harvesting grapes (and wine tasting), and collecting mushrooms. Many of these experiences include tasting local foods too, especially the "rice of the poor".

SPAIN

★ Ourense (Province) & Galicia

Pulpo a la Gallega: Galician style octopus and the most iconic dish in the whole of the region. Empanadas Gallegas: A type of Galician empanada, these large pies are pastry cases filled with a variety of ingredients.

Queimada (also known as "Witch's brew") is not just a simple drink, it is a whole experience! Made from Aguardiente liquor, sugar, coffee beans, lemon peel and cinnamon sticks, it is set on fire and stirred until all the sugar has melted.

Chestnuts are one of Ourense's most characteristic products, and the main ingredient of delicatessen such as "marron glacé" candy and our local "San Martiño" cake. This fruit is also the protagonist of the traditional Magosto festival, held every year on November 11th.

Ourense is a wine region with 4 different appellations of origin, the oldest one being Ribeiro, cultivated in the lands bathed by river Miño and its tributaries. Its most characteristic grape is treixadura, responsible for light, fresh ad aromatic wines. There are many wineries in the Ribeiro area where you can taste the product, surrounded by breathtaking landscapes.

Afyonkarahisar

Acqui Terme

Caldas da Rianha

Bath

TURKEY

★ Afyonkarahisar

The local cuisine is mainly based on meat and dough, and its sausages and cream have become global brands.

The cream, known as “kaymak” is mostly used with “ekmek kadayifi”, a delicious sweet dessert, thought to have originated in Afyonkarahisar but now popular throughout Turkey, especially during the Şeker Bayramı (festival of sweets) which marks the end of Ramadan. Made with a special bread soaked in sugar syrup and topped with pistachios and cream, it’s very popular withtourists!

A dry-fermented, spicy sausage known as “sujuk” or “afyon sucugu” is one of the indispensable flavours of Turkish breakfast culture, and is one of Afyonkarahisar’s bestknown specialities.

UNITED KINGDOM

★ Bath

A must for many visitors is to take afternoon tea in the magnificent Georgian Pump Room, where the Pump Room Trio provides the musical entertainment. You can also taste the thermal waters and try to imagine what it would have been like to have to drink several litres a day as part of the cure.

According to legend, the recipe for Bath‘s Sally Lunn Bun was brought to Bath by a Huguenot refugee, Solange Luyon in 1680 and her brioche-style buns soon became fashionable. The Sally Lunn Bun should not be confused with the Bath Bun, which is smaller, flatter and covered with sticky sugar and fruit. The Bath Bun was created by Dr William Oliver an early 18th century doctor.

Apparently his patients started putting on weight and Dr Oliver came up with the plainer, flat “Bath Oliver“ biscuits. These are much less fattening than the Bath Bun - until slathered with local Bath Soft Cheese of course!

★ INSIDER TIP! ★

Christmas time in our thermal towns is very special – you can find a wide range of tasty local food, drink and traditional dishes at Christmas markets throughout the network. Look out, too, for food festivals throughout the year - celebrating every kind of local produce imaginable!

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 | Bagnères-de-Bigorre | Bagnoles de l'Orne | Bath | Bursa Metropolitan Municipality | Caldas da Rainha | Caldes de Montbui | Castrocare Terme e Terra del Sole | Châtel-Guyon | Daruvar | Enghien-les-Bains | Fiuggi | La Bourboule | Lądek-Zdrój | Le Mont Dore | Lipik | Loutra Pozar | Loutraki-Perachora | Mondariz Balneario | Mondorf-les-Bains | Montecatini Terme | Montegrotto Terme | Ourense | Royat-Chamalières | Salsomaggiore Terme | São Pedro do Sul | Spa | Telese Terme | Truskavets | 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

Europe's Historic Thermal Towns, all based around healing mineral-water springs, have been centres of health, wellbeing, 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 these incredible towns. You'll find plenty to choose from – big cities and tiny villages in the European Route of Historic Thermal Towns with its almost 50 thermal towns and regions in 18 countries.

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