

How to get involved



Travelling

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, with thousands of sites across Europe, offer an abundance of opportunities to become immersed in a rich, diverse and shared European heritage. The particular focus of the programme is to highlight lesser-known destinations, including many in rural areas. This allows visitors to gain new experiences, take part in authentic exchanges with local communities and discover tangible and intangible heritage across the continent.

Community development

As 90% of the Cultural Routes cross rural areas, largely away from over-visited tourist destinations, the programme offers a valuable contribution to local and regional development based on authenticity and shared respect for the preservation of the local cultural and natural environment. Cultural tourism, promoted by the routes, is an important source of income and jobs.

Sustainable tourism

The Cultural Routes offer fantastic opportunities for environmentally conscious travellers to enjoy heritage sites and the lifestyles they reflect at their own pace. The aim is to lower the ecological footprint and promote a form of tourism that supports the sustainable development of local communities, while protecting and promoting rural landscapes and lesser-known European destinations.

Learning

The Cultural Routes include hundreds of educational programmes and learning opportunities for people of all ages. The diversity of themes and types of activities go beyond traditional experiences of tourism. By involving historical sites and cultural landscapes, together with the power of storytelling, cultural festivals and events, artworks and handicrafts, gastronomy and traditional ways of life, the routes offer a truly inspirational and immersive experience of knowledge-sharing across generations.

Volunteering

The Cultural Routes include thousands of sites and cultural events across Europe, offering ample opportunity for volunteers to get involved. We invite you to contact the Cultural Routes or sites near you to find out how to best contribute to heritage preservation, organisation of events, educational programmes, or enriching visitors' experiences.

Partnering

The Cultural Routes are excellent partners for universities and other research and academic institutions in the field of preservation and management of tangible and intangible heritage, tourism and regional development. Co-operation with Cultural Routes also provides opportunities for organisations and businesses to develop new products and services promoting sustainable tourism.

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are an invitation to travel and to discover the rich and diverse heritage of Europe by bringing people and places together in networks of shared history and heritage. The certified Cultural Routes cover a range of different themes, from architecture and landscape to religious influences, from gastronomy and intangible heritage to the major figures of European art, music and literature.

Council of Europe

Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity
F-67075 Strasbourg

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes – Council of Europe

Abbey of Neumünster
28 rue Münster
L-2160 Luxembourg
Tel: +352 24 12 50

www.coe.int/routes

With the Support of



LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère de la Culture

ENG

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member States, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member States have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member States.

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

Booklet for travellers

2023



What are the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

Since 1987, the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe promote the transnational dimension of European heritage, cultural co-operation and tourism. Cultural Routes support authentic, sustainable and participative cultural networks of shared values, in a spirit of dialogue and respect for European identity and diversity (Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe)

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme was launched in 1987 to demonstrate, by means of a journey through space and time, how the heritage of the different countries in Europe contributes to a shared cultural heritage.

The programme acts as a channel for intercultural dialogue and promotes better knowledge and understanding of European cultural identity, while preserving and enhancing natural and cultural heritage as a source of cultural, social and local development.

In 2010, the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA) was established to enable closer co-operation between Council of Europe member States and certified and candidate routes with a particular focus on themes of symbolic importance for European values, history and culture, and the discovery of lesser-known destinations. The European Institute of Cultural Routes (Luxembourg) is the technical agency of the programme providing advice to the routes and candidate networks, organising training and promoting visibility of the routes.

Key highlights

- 48 certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe
- Over 60 countries crisscrossed by Cultural Routes
- 3000+ network members, 1500+ local authorities
- 90% are in the rural areas
- 12% of local employment is linked to tourism
- 1987: the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes became the first Cultural Route of the Council of Europe
- 2019: Carlos V European Award
- Key aims:
 - o promoting an understanding of European heritage and identity;
 - o enhancing inclusive cultural exchanges and tourism;
 - o supporting local sustainable development;
 - o fostering active participation and community engagement.
- Thematic clusters:
 - o history and civilisations;
 - o arts and architecture;
 - o religious heritage;
 - o landscape and handicrafts;
 - o industrial and scientific heritage.
- Cultural Routes serve the interests of today's travellers: exploration of lesser-known cultural identities and heritage; urban lifestyles and rural landscapes; local arts and crafts; gastronomy.

Certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe



Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes (1987)

As one of the most important Christian pilgrimages, the Way of St. James provides each year for hundreds of thousands of travellers an intense human experience, creating a sense of fraternity amongst travellers and a strong bond with the land.

Viking Route (1993)

The Viking Cultural Route is a far-reaching, significant collection of more than 60 sites with stories and heritage that represent the shared Viking legacy of Europe and beyond.

Routes of El legado andalusí (1997)

In the 8th century, the Iberian Peninsula saw the arrival of Arabs and Berbers, who mixed with the Roman-Visigoth inhabitants. These routes allow travellers to relive the heritage of this medieval Muslim civilisation, known as al-Andalus.

Iron Route in the Pyrenees (2003)

The Pyrenees region is rich in iron ore and has a centuries-old iron-making tradition. The route invites us to learn about the transformation and commercialisation of iron from the 17th to the late 19th century.

European Route of Jewish Heritage (2004)

The route fosters understanding and appreciation of religious artefacts and also recognises the essential role played by the Jewish people in European history.

Cluniac Sites in Europe (2005)

Founded in the early 10th century, the Benedictine Abbey in Cluny became a major centre of European civilisation, resulting in the emergence of over 1,800 sites throughout western Europe.

VIA REGIA (2005)

The Via Regia is the oldest and longest road linking eastern and western Europe and dates back to the early Middle Ages. Today, the route reflects a rich heritage and connects 10 European countries across 4,500 km.

The Hansa (1991)

In the mid-13th century, German seafaring merchants laid the basis of the Hanseatic League. Today, the network consists of 190 cities in 16 countries, and can be understood as a medieval forerunner to the European Union.

Via Francigena (1994)

In 990 AD, Sigeric, archbishop of Canterbury, travelled to Rome to meet Pope John XV. Along the way, he recorded the 79 stages of the journey in his diary. Travellers can rediscover this 1,800 km journey to Rome.

Phoenicians' Route (2003)

The route refers to the connection of the major nautical routes used by the Phoenicians, since the 12th century BC, as essential routes for trade and cultural communication in the Mediterranean.

European Mozart Ways (2004)

The route follows the footsteps of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, one of the most influential figures in the history of music, who spent a third of his life travelling to enhance his education and establish contacts with other musicians.

Saint Martin of Tours Route (2005)

Saint Martin of Tours is one of the most familiar and recognisable Christian saints, who tirelessly travelled around Europe. The traveller can follow the routes that relate to episodes of the saint's life, cult or folklore.

Routes of the Olive Tree (2005)

The presence of the olive tree has marked the everyday lives of the Mediterranean people. The routes follow in the footsteps of this "Olive Tree Civilisation" from the Black Sea to the entire Mediterranean basin.

TRANSROMANICA – The Romanesque Routes of European Heritage (2007)

Around the year 1000, artists from all over Europe were inspired by the Roman and early Christian traditions, giving birth to the Romanesque architectural style. Magnificent cathedrals, monasteries and churches can all be found along this route.

European Cemeteries Route (2010)

Cemeteries form part of our tangible heritage through their sculptures, engravings and urban planning as well as our intangible heritage through traditions and practices related to death. This route enables visitors to discover the rich cultural heritage of European cemeteries.

Route of Saint Olav Ways (2010)

Olav II Haraldsson, later known as Saint Olav, was King of Norway from 1015 to 1028. For centuries after his death, pilgrims made their way to his burial place at Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim. This route leads travellers to follow in the footsteps of these pilgrims.

European Route of Ceramics (2012)

The ceramics industry has contributed not only to Europe's economic development but also to its heritage and social history. The route helps visitors to learn more about ceramics production and offers several hands-on opportunities.

Huguenot and Waldensian Trail (2013)

In the 17th century, following the persecution of Huguenots and Waldensians, hundreds of thousands sought refuge in the Protestant lands of Europe and beyond. This nearly 2,000 km-long trail traces the historical path taken during this exile.

ATRIUM – Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th Century in Europe's Urban Memory (2014)

The route permits exploration of the sociological, ideological and geographical complexities of the history of totalitarian regimes through urban landscapes.

Iter Vitis Route (2009)

The culture of winemaking and vinicultural landscapes is an important part of European heritage. Travellers are invited to discover remote lands from the Caucasus through to western European vineyards.

European Route of Cistercian Abbeys (2010)

From its origins in Burgundy in 1098, the Cistercian Order grew rapidly throughout Europe, bringing together some 750 abbeys and 1,000 monasteries. Travellers are invited to discover the rich Cistercian legacy.

Prehistoric Rock Art Trails (2010)

Prehistoric rock art, appearing in Europe 42,000 years ago, is the art by the first Europeans. More than 200 rock art sites are open to the public in Europe.

European Route of Historical Thermal Towns (2010)

Europe is home to many spa towns where travellers can experience different styles of architecture and different spa traditions built around bathing in or drinking the thermal waters.

European Route of Megalithic Culture (2013)

Megalithic tombs and other monuments represent the oldest surviving indigenous architecture in Europe. Europe's vast megalithic heritage can be explored through the monuments and the manifold features of the surrounding landscape.

Réseau Art Nouveau Network (2014)

Appearing in the late 19th century, the Art Nouveau style spread rapidly in Europe. The route allows visitors to become aware of the dimension of Art Nouveau and its relationship with nature, society, ecology and technical innovation.

Via Habsburg (2014)

Magnificent palaces, castles, churches, monasteries and museums show how the emblematic Habsburg-family shaped the history and art of central and western Europe for 800 years.

Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route (2015)

The route links archaeological sites as monuments to the leadership of the Roman emperors to regions where wine was introduced in Roman times. Wine, as the key sub-theme, blends in conceptually with the introduction of Roman culture into the Danube region.

In the Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson (2015)

The accounts of Robert Louis Stevenson's travels in Europe are regarded as genuine ethnographic descriptions of peoples and lands, from the Lothian region in Scotland to the Fontainebleau Forest in France.

Impressionisms Routes (2018)

The routes bring together major sites related to impressionist painting: the places where painters such as Monet, Renoir or Toorop used to live; the artistic colonies they founded and the museums and cultural areas where their works are exhibited.

Iron Curtain Trail (2019)

The Iron Curtain Trail retraces the physical border stretching from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea, which divided eastern and western Europe for almost half a century following the end of the Second World War, covering 20 European countries and many historic buildings, monuments and landmarks.

Routes of Reformation (2019)

The route reflects the legacy of movements within Christianity all around Europe, that shared the will to break with the way of religious institutions. This legacy includes historical sites, documents, works of art, culinary traditions, music and celebrations.

European Routes of Emperor Charles V (2015)

Charles of Habsburg is an important political, cultural and historical figure for many European countries. Many historical sites and cultural manifestations keep alive the memory of this pan-European sovereign of the 16th century.

Destination Napoleon (2015)

Napoleon Bonaparte's influence upon the cultural heritage of contemporary Europe includes sites, buildings, monuments, works of art, as well as a vast intangible heritage linked to the Napoleonic myth.

Fortified Towns of the Grande Region (2016)

Few other regions have as many fortresses, dating from the Middle Ages to the 20th century. Spectacular bastions, forts and underground spaces present an extraordinary richness of fortified architecture.

Via Charlemagne (2018)

The route offers an opportunity to follow in the footsteps of Charlemagne, crowned western Emperor in the year 800 and considered to be the "father of Europe". It aims to raise awareness of the shared cultural history as the essence of a common European citizenship.

European Route of Industrial Heritage (2019)

With over 1,800 locations in all European countries, the route invites visitors to explore the milestones in European industrial history. They bear witness to scientific discoveries, technological innovation and workers' life histories.

Le Corbusier Destinations: Architectural Promenades (2019)

During his career, the renowned Swiss-French architect Charles-Edouard Jeanneret – later called Le Corbusier – designed buildings throughout the world. The route encourages travellers to discover Le Corbusier's work and its influence in Europe and beyond.

Liberation Route Europe (2019)

The route, connecting different European sites, regions and places of remembrance, contributes to the memory and understanding of the Second World War liberation from Nazi occupation and the conflict's long-lasting impact on Europe and its people.

European Route of Historic Gardens (2020)

The garden culture, plants and forms of parterres of historic gardens have become living proof of a common European culture. The visit to historic gardens helps to raise awareness of the importance of the natural environment.

Aeneas Route (2021)

The Aeneas Route is an archaeological route that stretches from the coasts of Turkey and the North-West Aegean Sea to the shores of Latium Vetus in Italy. This route is inspired by the legend of Aeneas, as depicted by the Latin poet Virgil, and allows the discovery of a common European cultural heritage.

Cyril and Methodius Route (2021)

Saints Cyril and Methodius, the co-patrons of Europe, are symbols of cultural dialogue between Eastern and Western Christianity. The route brings together places, heritage sites and cultural institutions to follow in the footsteps of the Saints across countries in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe.

Historic Cafés Route (2022)

These historic cafés are places where we can still witness and partake of the traditions and practices of coffee drinking, from its preparation to its serving, and taste associated products.

Women Writers Route (2022)

Balancing between tangible and intangible heritage, the Route links museums, memorial and reading rooms, public monuments, and other public spaces in six different countries and combines them with activities that put cultural literary and linguistic heritage in a new context.

Via Romea Germanica (2020)

The Via Romea Germanica is retracing the steps of Abbot Albert of Stade on a pilgrimage to Rome, starting in Northern Germany and travelling through Austria and Italy. It is part of the major pilgrimage axis to Rome and Jerusalem.

Alvar Aalto Route – 20th Century Architecture and Design (2021)

Alvar Aalto (1898-1976) was a pioneer of modern architecture; his international influence both in his own time and posthumously is outstanding. The Alvar Aalto Route brings together more than 50 sites in 5 countries.

European Route d'Artagnan (2021)

The European Route d'Artagnan is a cultural route based on the epic of Charles de Batz de Castelmor d'Artagnan in the 17th century. The route offers hikers, horseback riders and cyclists the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of d'Artagnan and the Musketeers in 15 regions and 6 European countries.

Iron Age Danube Route (2021)

The Iron Age (about 800 BC - 0) is a period of important technological and social changes, which also influenced the landscapes in an unprecedented manner. The Iron Age Danube Route connects the most significant monuments of that period in the Danube region.

European Fairy Tale Route (2022)

The European Fairy Tale Route echoes stories that Europeans have shared from ancient times to the present day, very often in a common context. These are stories that have become part of the collective imagination and local culture of European people.