

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

Booklet for travellers

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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 of 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 less well-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

• **30+ certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe**

• **Over 60 countries** crisscrossed by Cultural Routes

• **2500+ 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 less-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

Year: 1987 Theme: religious heritage

As one of the most important Christian pilgrimages, the Way of St. James provides an intense human experience, creating a sense of fraternity amongst travellers and a strong bond with the land. Each year, hundreds of thousands of travellers set out to make their way to Santiago de Compostela.

Viking Routes

Year: 1993 Theme: history and civilisations

The Viking Cultural Routes are a far-ranging, significant collection of sites, stories and heritage that represent the shared Viking legacy of Europe and beyond. There are more than 60 sites on the route, including forts, towns, farms, quarries, ships, museums and archaeological remains.

Routes of El legado andalusí

Year: 1997 Theme: history and civilisations

In the 8th century, the Iberian Peninsula saw the arrival of Arabs and Berbers, who mixed with the Roman-Visigoth inhabitants, engendering what was known as Al-Andalus. These routes bring back to life the heritage, literature, arts, gastronomy, and traditions of this medieval Muslim civilisation.

Pyrenean Iron Route

Year: 2003 Theme: landscape and handicrafts

The Pyrenees region is rich in iron ore and has a centuries-old iron-making tradition. This activity generated economic wealth and there remains a great deal of evidence of its past glories. 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

Year: 2004 Theme: religious heritage

The European Jewish heritage is widely present across Europe. The route fosters understanding and appreciation of religious artefacts as well as those used in daily life and also recognises the essential role played by the Jewish people in European history.

The Hansa

Year: 1991 Theme: history and civilisations

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. The Hansa could be seen as a medieval forerunner to the European Union, and thus constitutes an invaluable heritage from a common European past.

Via Francigena

Year: 1994 Theme: religious heritage

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 along the paths followed by the pilgrims en route to Rome and then onward.

Phoenicians' Route

Year: 2003 Theme: history and civilisations

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. It passes through all the Mediterranean countries including many North African and Middle Eastern countries.

European Mozart Ways

Year: 2004 Theme: arts and architecture

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

Saint Martin of Tours Route

Year: 2005 Theme: religious heritage

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



Cluniac Sites in Europe

Year: 2005 Theme: religious heritage

Founded in the early 10th century by William the Pious, 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

Year: 2005 Theme: history and civilisations

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 connects 10 European countries and is 4 500 km long. The route reflects a rich heritage, ranging from architectural heritage to traditions that have shaped the European continent.

Iter Vitis Route

Year: 2009 Theme: landscape and handicrafts

The culture of the vine, winemaking and viticultural landscapes are an important part of European heritage. Travellers are invited to discover remote lands from the Caucasus through to western European vineyards and become familiar with the myths and symbols around this rich culture.

European Cemeteries Route

Year: 2010 Theme: arts and architecture

Cemeteries are part of our tangible heritage – their sculptures, engravings, and even their urban planning – including traditions and practices related to death. Travelling along this route enables visitors to discover the local, national and the European cultural heritage that rests in cemeteries.

European Route of Historical Thermal Towns

Year: 2010 Theme: arts and architecture

Europe is home to many spa towns with unique urban personalities, different styles of architecture and different spa traditions built around bathing in or drinking the thermal waters. The spa culture, in all its variety, can be considered to be truly unique European heritage.

Routes of the Olive Tree

Year: 2005 Theme: landscape and handicrafts

The presence of the olive tree has marked not only the landscape but also the everyday lives of the Mediterranean peoples. The routes follow in the footsteps of the Olive Tree Civilisation, from Greece to the Black Sea through the entire Mediterranean basin.

TRANSROMANICA - The Romanesque Routes of European Heritage

Year: 2007 Theme: arts and architecture

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

European Route of Cistercian Abbeys

Year: 2010 Theme: religious heritage

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 that is still present at the heart of the Roman Church and European culture.

Prehistoric Rock Art Trails

Year: 2010 Theme: history and civilisations

Prehistoric rock art is art by the first Europeans. The first major cultural, social and symbolic expression of humankind, it appeared in Europe 42 000 years ago and continued until the early Iron Age in some regions. More than 200 rock art sites are open to the public in Europe.

Route of Saint Olav Ways

Year: 2010 Theme: religious heritage

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 Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, where Saint Olav lies buried. This pilgrimage allows travellers to experience the joy of simple things while following in the footsteps of pilgrims.



European Route of Ceramics

Year: 2012 Theme: landscape and handicrafts

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 discover what goes on behind the scenes of ceramics production and offers several hands-on opportunities.

Huguenot and Waldensian Trail

Year: 2013 Theme: religious heritage

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

Réseau Art Nouveau Network

Year: 2014 Theme: arts and architecture

Appearing in the late 19th century, Art Nouveau spread rapidly in Europe. Each country's creative centres brought their own flavour to the style. The route allows visitors to become aware of the dimension of Art Nouveau, its relationship with nature, society, ecology and technical innovation.

Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route

Year: 2015 Theme: history and civilisations

The route incorporates archaeological sites and wine regions where wine was introduced in Roman times and which continue the tradition of wine production. The experience highlights the introduction of Roman culture along the northern frontier of the Roman Empire.

Destination Napoleon

Year: 2015 Theme: history and civilisations

Napoleon Bonaparte was a remarkable political leader who influenced European and global affairs for more than a decade while he ruled over France. The Napoleonic era'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.

European Route of Megalithic Culture

Year: 2013 Theme: history and civilisations

Megalithic tombs, dolmens and other monuments represent the oldest surviving indigenous architecture in Europe. Europe has a vast megalithic heritage, which can be explored not only through the monuments but also the manifold features of the surrounding landscape.

ATRIUM - Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th Century in Europe's Urban Memory

Year: 2014 Theme: arts and architecture

The route displays architecture or urban design deriving from a totalitarian period, often with strong connections to the regimes. It permits exploration of the sociological, ideological and geographical complexities of the history of totalitarian regimes through urban landscapes.

Via Habsburg

Year: 2014 Theme: history and civilisations

The 800-year history of the Habsburgs is preserved in sites in western and central Europe. Palaces, castles, magnificent churches, monasteries and splendid museums show how this emblematic dynastic family shaped not only history but also art and, at the time of its decline, provoked the modernist revolt.

European Routes of Emperor Charles V

Year: 2015 Theme: history and civilisations

Charles of Habsburg is an important political, cultural and historical figure for many European countries. His presence and political heritage can be found in many historical sites and at cultural events such as historical re-enactments, art festivals, traditional markets and festivities.

In the Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson

Year: 2015 Theme: arts and architecture

The accounts of Robert Louis Stevenson's travels in Europe are regarded as genuine ethnographic descriptions of peoples and lands. As a writer, traveller, adventurer and idealist, Stevenson left his mark on the places he visited, from the Lothian region in Scotland to the Fontainebleau Forest in France or the Antwerp region in Belgium.



Fortified Towns of the Grande Region

Year: 2016 Theme: arts and architecture

Few other regions have as many fortresses, dating from all periods of the Middle Ages to the 20th century. Haughty citadels, spectacular bastions, impregnable forts and mysterious underground spaces present an extraordinary richness of fortified architecture.

Via Charlemagne

Year: 2018 Theme: history and civilisations

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". The route is historical, cultural and religious, but also rich in myths and legends. It aims to raise awareness about shared cultural history as the essence of a common European citizenship, in all its unity and diversity.

European Route of Industrial Heritage

Year: 2019 Theme: arts and architecture

With over 1 800 locations in all European countries, the route invites visitors to explore the milestones in European industrial history. As places of a common European memory, they bear witness to scientific discoveries, technological innovation and workers' life histories.

Le Corbusier Destinations: Architectural Promenades

Year: 2019 Theme: arts and architecture

During his career, the renowned Swiss-French architect, designer, writer and urban planner Charles-Edouard Jeanneret – later called Le Corbusier – designed buildings throughout the world. The route narrates the life and achievements of one of the major architects of the 20th century and encourages the traveller to discover Le Corbusier's work and its influence in Europe and beyond.

Impressionisms Routes

Year: 2018 Theme: arts and architecture

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

Iron Curtain Trail

Year: 2019 Theme: history and civilisations

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. This 10 000 km-long cyclable route combines sites linked to the political, military and ideological barriers, covering 20 European countries and connecting many historic buildings, monuments, museums and landmarks.

Routes of Reformation

Year: 2019 Theme: religious heritage

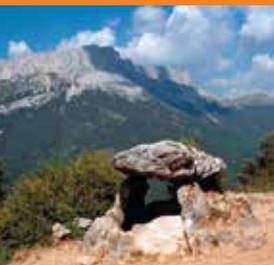
The route reflects the legacy of movements within Christianity all around Europe which shared the will to change the religious institutions and break with the status quo. This legacy includes historical sites, documents, works of art, museums, culinary traditions, music, legends and celebrations.

Liberation Route Europe

Year: 2019 Theme: history and civilisations

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.

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 less well-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 less well-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, resulting in thousands of ways to be involved as volunteers. 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.

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Ministère de la Culture

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 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.