

Must see places in Europe

Gaudí's Barcelona, Spain.

The Sagrada Família Cathedral, begun at the end of the 19th century, remains unfinished, but its forests of detailed pillars are still spectacular. Palau Güell is a “fantastical town house”, according to Sally Davies, Telegraph Travel’s Barcelona expert. The architecture of Antoni Gaudí punctuates the streets and boulevards of Catalan capital, the jester-like mosaics and surreal bulging lines of his work recognisable at each turn. Park Güell was based on the English idea of the “garden city”, with gatehouses inspired by Hansel and Gretel, and the much photographed snaking bench a real draw. Entry to the park costs 8€ – if you want Gaudí for free, wander through the city streets to find La Pedrera, Casa Vicens, and Casa Batllò, all buildings that can be admired for free from without.



Pompeii and Herculaneum, Italy

The remains of these communities, destroyed by a 79AD eruption from Vesuvius, which looms nearby, offer a fascinating insight into the sophisticated world that the Romans created. According to **profession Mary Beard**, “It is the only place in the world where you can begin to understand, face to face, how the Romans of the first century AD lived: from the brothels and the lavatories to the posh dining rooms and lavish bathing establishments (the modern spa, health club and gym rolled into one).”

Herculaneum is frequently described as better preserved than Pompeii, and its smaller size makes it an easier visit. Our Italy expert offers advice on visiting both.



The black beaches of Iceland

Telegraph Travel's Hugh Morris, who visited last year, wrote: "The crisp, white, near-arctic waves washing over the black basalt beaches of Iceland's southern coast have to be seen to be believed. The most famous of the country's black beaches is perhaps the Reynisfjara stretch just to the west of Vik. Here, the jet-black, unblemished volcanic sand shimmers into the distance as three jagged needles of rock (a troll and two ships turned to stone by the rising sun, according to folklore) shoot out of the sea just off the shoreline. They are best viewed from the cliffs of Dyrhólaey above. This is not limit of Iceland's black beaches and other remarkably vast expanses can be found elsewhere along the south coast."



Tuscany, Italy

Renaissance art, towns atop the gentle curve of well-tended pastures, cypress trees lilt in the breeze... there is a reason Tuscany is coveted. Its Val d'Orcia has saved a thousand picture editors in need of a seductive shot to illustrate European holidays: its rolling hills and hamlets have become the Italy of postcards - but only because it is so downright idyllic. This is Italian villa heartland. Siena also hosts the Palio, a biannual horse race that has taken place almost without interruption in the central Piazza del campo since at least 1644. Florence is simply exquisite: head for the Duomo, the Uffizi art gallery which is smaller and more digestible than one might realise – or just accompany the locals on the evening passeggiata, a leisurely stroll through the city's streets.



Sources:

Paragraphs taken from the Telegraph: *30 places in Europe you must see in your lifetime.*

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/galleries/europe-top-best-places-and-destinations-to-visit/barcelona/>

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