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111 Extreme Places
in Europe
That You
Shouldn't Miss

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emons:

Foreword

111 Extreme Places in Europe That You Shouldn't Miss is the book that accompanies the award-winning *Europe to the Maxx* series from Deutsche Welle's lifestyle and culture magazine "Euromaxx". Europe at its most extreme: this series makes Europe's architectural, natural, geographical and cultural superlatives experienceable by way of stunning high-quality travel reports. Watch around the world as part of the programme "Euromaxx", online at dw.com/lifestyle.

The book is a collaboration between Deutsche Welle (DW) and Emons Verlag.



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Deutsche Welle (DW), Voltastraße 6, 13355 Berlin/Germany

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© Photographs, see page 238

© Cover icon: shutterstock.com/tassel78

Layout: Eva Kraskes, based on a design

by Lübbecke | Naumann | Thoben

Maps: altancicek.design, www.altancicek.de

Basic cartographical information from Openstreetmap,

© OpenStreetMap-Mitwirkende, OdbL

Editing: Martin Sketchley

Translation: Tom Ashforth

Printing and binding: Grafisches Centrum Cuno, Calbe

Printed in Germany 2021

ISBN 978-3-7408-1031-3

First edition

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Being able to travel is a wonderful thing. I always bring new knowledge back with me from every journey. Yet there are some trips that stay with me more than others. This is when I have experienced something special, seen something unique or discovered something unprecedented. This book is full of these kinds of trips: 111 stories about record-breaking places. Landing at Barra airport in Scotland, for example, is unique as you touch down on Europe's only runway made of sand. At the same time it is a travel guide for European places, which you won't find gathered together like this in any other guidebook.

This collaboration between Deutsche Welle and Emons Verlag was inspired by the *Europe to the Maxx* series, which is part of Deutsche Welle's lifestyle and culture magazine "Euromaxx". This multiple award-winning series of films enables viewers to experience the most spectacular places in Europe. The reports, which can be found on YouTube, are also part of the book. Just scan the QR codes alongside the stories.

Whether it is a trip to the highest railway station on Jungfrau-joch in Switzerland or to the biggest cuckoo clock in the world in the Black Forest, every story is one of a kind. Did you know that there is a Buddhist region in Europe? This was new to me and Euro-maxx reporter Hendrik Welling's trip to Kalmykia on the southeast edge of Europe inspired me to make new travel plans. On the other hand, when I saw the same reporter fighting through a snowstorm on Europe's biggest glacier in Iceland I was more than happy that I could follow what he experienced on YouTube from the comfort of my sofa and read more about the history of the glacier in this book. A Persian proverb that my mother hung on the wall of our living room is quite apt here: 'The best way to come home from a journey is in one piece.' I wish you exciting yet safe fun reading this book!

Samira Schellhaaf, Head of Department Life and Style, Deutsche Welle

23 — Tara River Canyon

The deepest canyon

The view from the Đurđevića-Tara bridge is one of a kind. Even up here, 150 metres in the air, you can hear the rumble of the Tara River as it flows under the bridge, clear, blue and wild. For thousands of years the river has channelled its way through nature. The water has doggedly cut a route through the massive rocks, creating an enormous canyon in the middle of a still largely untouched natural landscape.

Those who wish to discover the Tara River Canyon must travel to Montenegro. All around the mountain range in the north of the country lies the Durmitor National Park. At 59 kilometres in length, the country's longest river – the Tara – traverses the park. Steep walls of rock rise up almost vertically in the air on both banks, reaching up to 1,300 metres.

The region is a paradise for nature lovers and fans of extreme sports. The best way to explore the Tara River Canyon is on a rafting excursion. Depending on the water level, the trip downriver in a raft is sometimes leisurely, sometimes fast and furious. There are up to 40 rapids to master along the river. It is easiest in summer, when the Tara does not carry so much water. This is also the best time to begin the adventure if you don't have a high level of previous knowledge and want to enjoy the beauty of nature along the Tara in peace. It's certainly worth it, as the river leads past waterfalls that are up to 60 metres high and overgrown green riverbanks, past impressive rock formations and lots of small and large caves.

Those who dare can also chance a jump into the mostly crystal-clear water of the Tara and go for a swim. A test of courage that is not to be underestimated, as even in high summer the water rarely warms up to more than 12 °C. Even without this cold shock, a trip through the Tara River Canyon is a unique experience that's sure to make the heart of most visitors beat a little faster.

Address Durmitor National Park, 84220 Žabljak, Montenegro | **Getting there** From the capital of Montenegro, Podgorica, it's around 150 kilometres by car to the national park. Most rafting tours start in Žabljak. | **Tip** Right next to the Đurđevića-Tara bridge you can also cross the Tara River Canyon on a 350-metre zip-line (open mid-Apr–Oct).



77 Charles Kuonen Bridge

The longest pedestrian suspension bridge

Fear of heights is certainly not the ideal condition for anyone proposing to walk over the suspension bridge near the small Swiss alpine village of Randa. It hangs 85 metres above the ground at the highest point, and through the gridded floor panels there's a constant clear view into the depths below – all the way along its record 494-metre length. Opened in 2017, this is the longest free-hanging pedestrian bridge in Europe.

The bridge traverses a gap in the Europaweg. The popular hiking route, located in the Swiss canton of Wallis, leads from the village of Grächen to Zermatt, at the foot of the famous Matterhorn. An earlier bridge that spanned the Matter valley near Randa, at a length of around 250 metres, was so badly damaged by falling rocks in 2010 that it had to be closed – just a few months after it was first opened. Following the closure of that bridge, hikers on the route were forced to go down around 800 metres into the valley, and climb back up again on the other side. This represented an enormous detour – but one which the new pedestrian suspension bridge means no longer has to be travelled. The bridge owes its name to its main sponsor, a businessman from Wallis.

The building of this highly advanced construction took around three months to complete. There are no bridge piers along the route. Instead, the foundations on both sides are anchored up to 11 metres deep into the stone. They bear the total weight of 58 tonnes. From peak to peak, two strong steel ropes stretch across the valley. Iron rods mounted on to these every three metres hold the narrow grid on which hikers walk. Special absorbers ensure that the bridge doesn't vibrate too strongly. Even so, most people probably go a bit weak in the knees when crossing – it's best not to look down, but simply enjoy the unique mountain panorama all around instead.

Address 3928 Randa, Switzerland | **Getting there** Train from Bern via Visp to Randa, then around a two-hour hike to the bridge | **Hours** May–Oct, dependent on weather conditions, closed in winter for safety reasons | **Tip** The whole of the Europaweg is almost 40 kilometres long. In two one-day stages, it leads from Grächen via Randa to Zermatt. There are good views of the Matterhorn on several occasions.

