

KwikFit >

Europe's Top Road Trips:

THE SCENIC EDIT

Lofoten, Norway

An aerial photograph showing a winding asphalt road that curves through a dense, lush green forest. The trees are tall and appear to be conifers or evergreens. The road is a light grey color and has a white dashed line down the center. The overall scene is serene and scenic, typical of a mountainous region like the Alps.

Your guide to some of Europe's most scenic routes and prepping your car for the journey

With super speed train lines, advancements in aero technology and discount flights being advertised left, right and centre, travelling has become much more accessible in recent times. However, we want to shine the spotlight back on the good old fashioned road trip and reintroduce it as one of the most exciting and unforgettable means by which to explore the world. With so many incredible sights to see, it would be a shame not to hit the road and get up close and personal on ground level.

Europe is home to some of the most iconic road trips around the world and some of the most picturesque destinations the planet has to offer. In this eBook, we explore six of Europe's most scenic routes and offer our expert advice on how you should be preparing your car for any long journey. Have some European road trip stories or car safety tips of your own to share? Join the conversation online using the hashtag **#RoadtripsOfEurope**.



Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse, Austria

Best vehicle for the job: A small, light car that will provide speed and power up the steep mountain inclines.

Best time to travel: Dangerous in the depths of winter and closed from November until May, this route is best driven in late spring or early summer.

Road trip tip: Make sure you're carrying some spare change as there is a toll charge of €35 for a car and €25 for a motorcycle.

Stop at: Hohe Tauern National Park—the largest national park in Middle Europe with some of the highest mountains in all of Austria.



Length & time: 30 miles, approx. 1 hour

Closest airport: Salzburg

The Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse is a high alpine mountain pass that winds through the iconic Austrian Alps, weaving through Austria's most impressive national park along the way. Reaching more than 2,500m altitudes, this 48 km stretch of land certainly isn't one for the faint hearted but provides some of the world's most must-see views.

Long famed for being one of Europe's most scenic road trips, the Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse is truly a diverse sight to behold. Keep your eyes peeled for the relatively short distance or risk missing striking Austrian architecture, flowering landscapes, rocky cliff faces, tranquil lake scenes and 37 dramatic mountain peaks.



Route 500, Germany

Best vehicle for the job: This road trip is particularly popular amongst keen motorcyclists but if you are travelling by car, consider having some all season tyres fitted so you're covered in all weather conditions.

Best time to travel: Visit the Black Forest during summer or autumn when the winding roads are safer and the days are longer and lighter.

Road trip tip: Motorcycles are banned from certain segments of the Route 500 circuit so if you're on two wheels, be sure to check out your route beforehand.

Stop at: Mummelsee to visit the lake where local legend claims a mermaid inhabits or pick up a traditional cuckoo clock at House of 1000 Clocks.



Length & time: 340 miles, approx. 1 hour

Closest airport: EuroAirport Basel, Frankfurt Airport, Stuttgart

If your daily commute has been getting you down and you want to escape to somewhere that is pure, natural magic, the Route 500 road through Germany's incredible Black Forest is ideal. Sending adventurous drivers deep into the midst of the forest and on a smooth ride through the mountains, this will definitely be your chance to experience some of life's greatest 'Kodak moments'.

This is one of Germany's oldest and most treasured roads and has fast become one of the most iconic motorcycle routes in the world. Along the way you can take a dip in the thermal springs of Baden, stop off at Hohenbaden castle, wind your way carefully around 100 curves and take in the fresh air in Freudenstadt at the Eastern edge of the Northern Black Forest.



Trollstigen, Norway

Best vehicle for the job: With its notoriously challenging terrain, a smaller car with a four-wheel drive system will be great for gripping those winding roads.

Best time to travel: Head here in summer as the route is closed through late autumn and all of winter.

Road trip tip: The 'Troll's Path' is a popular destination for drivers and cyclists alike so you'll likely be sharing the route with other adventurers—watch out for them on the hairpin bends!

Stop at: The 'Eagle Road' between Geiranger and Eidsdal where the road climbs to 858 metres above sea level to snap a selfie for the mantelpiece.



Length & time:
Approx. 4 miles,
2-3 hours (including
landmark stops)

Closest airport:
Molde Airport, Aro

With a steep 10-degree incline and 11 hair-raising hairpin bends, the 'Troll's Path', as it's translated to in English, is one of Europe's most winding roads. With its impressive twists and turns comes stunning views of the Stigfossen Waterfall which falls for more than 1,000 metres down the mountain face. The famous National Tourist Route leads you through the spectacular Norwegian fjords and across one of the world's most stomach-churning bridges.

The Trollstigen route is a one-lane road which has been carved from the lofty mountains and supported by stone walls so beware of tumbling rocks and treacherous terrain. However despite the dangers, Trollstigen offers some of the most unforgettable sights and now attracts more than 2,000 cars every summer after opening in July 1936 following eight years of construction.



Ring of Kerry, Ireland

Best vehicle for the job: If you're going to take the experts' advice and drive the Ring of Kerry route in the warmer months, consider kitting your vehicle out with a set of summer tyres that will perform well on wet and dry surfaces when the temperature is above 7 degrees celsius.

Best time to travel: Navigate the Ring of Kerry in summer for the most spectacular views or out of season if you want to avoid tourist traffic.

Road trip tip: Always drive anticlockwise around the Ring of Kerry to avoid traffic issues in the narrower sections along the route. Carrying a paper map of the route will help if digital navigation fails when driving through forests where mobile signal often dips.

Stop at: Kerry Bog Village (just before Glenbeigh) to see a traditional Kerry men village restored to all its 18th Century glory.



Length & time: 110 miles, allow 1-2 days for full circuit in daylight

Closest airport: Kerry

Circling Ireland's picturesque Iveragh peninsula, the Ring of Kerry offers quintessential Irish scenery and an unforgettable journey through some of the world's most impressive landscapes. You'll transition from forest to leafy upland before swapping dry land for beach scenes and fishing harbours, with a view of the Macgillycuddy's Reeks mountain range as a backdrop.

Those who have driven the route before and soaked in all the Irish scenery has to offer recommend commencing your journey in Killarney and taking the N72 to Killorglin. From there you can join the N70 round the pretty peninsula to Kenmare before returning to Killarney via the N71. This one really is worth going round in circles for.



Route One, Iceland

Best vehicle for the job: A good quality four-wheel-drive car that can take on all of the elements, come rain or shine. If you don't have one yourself, consider hiring one for the journey.

Best time to travel: This route is best driven in July or August when the weather is good and adverse weather conditions don't make it too treacherous.

Road trip tip: Gas stations are few and far between along the lengthy Route One road so be sure to fill up whenever you do see one. Many of the gas stations are self service and require payment via credit card so be sure to pack your plastic.

Stop at: Solheimasandur Plane Crash where a United States Navy DC-3 plane crashed on the beach in 1973. The wreckage is one of Iceland's most iconic photography spots.



Length & time: 800 miles, 7-10 days

Closest airport: Reykjavik

For keen motorists and travel tourists alike, Iceland's spectacular Route One road trip is always high up on any bucket list. No European road trip collection would be complete without the striking sights Iceland has to offer, from geysers erupting boiling water metres up in the air, volcanoes and lava fields to the stunning Blue Lagoon, extraordinary waterfalls and even a chance to go whale-watching and catch the Northern Lights.

While some of Europe's most scenic road trips can be done in just a few hours and enjoyed from the comfort of your car seat, Iceland's Route One is punctuated with stop offs and photo opportunities along the way. Leave plenty of time in your journey schedule for a few worthwhile detours and explorations off the beaten track from the road which circumnavigates the island.



Spoletto to Norcia, Italy

Best vehicle for the job: With so many wonders to witness outside of the window along the way, consider a car with an automatic transmission for greater ease of use and driver comfort.

Best time to travel: To make sure you get to witness the carpet of floral nature at Piano Grande, visit in late May or early June when it will be in full bloom.

Road trip tip: The Castelluccio village is 1,452 m high in the sky so even when the sun is shining down on your bonnet, prepare for snow and ice when you reach this point. Don't forget to pack sunscreen and sunglasses as well as a warm hat and gloves.

Stop at: The Valnerina—a deep, leafy valley with a charming stone-built village nestled at the very bottom of it. The perfect setting to stretch your legs.



Length & time: 101 miles, allow 4-6 hours to include photo opportunities

Closest airport: Perugia

Italy is not only known for its coffee and its gelato, it's known and well-loved for its beautiful scenery and picturesque landscapes. Beaches and traditional Italian towns are a sight to behold but of the country's most treasured gems is the scenic stretch between Spoleto and Norcia. Very different from the fjords of Norway and the snow-crowned mountains of Iceland but unmissable nonetheless if you're a keen driver.

Sample olives in Spoleto as you start on your journey and take in the idyllic hilltown before hitting the road towards Valnerina. Continue on through a postcard-perfect stone town before heading upland towards Norcia. Hop out of the car and get some fresh air in Norcia where you can visit a Benedictine monastery and cop an incredible view of the Sibillini mountains.



Preparing your vehicle for the big wide world

When there are sights to see, photographs to snap and complicated maps to navigate, it can be easy to forget all about the four wheels carrying you from A to B. It's not just the wheels that are important to consider though, which is why we've put together some expert advice on how to best prepare your entire vehicle for the road trip of a lifetime.

It's important to remember that your car should be serviced every year (or 12,000 miles) and undergo an MOT from up to a month before it's due. In the meantime, here are some safety factors to take into consideration before your journey.

Keeping your tyres in tip top condition

Tyre treads

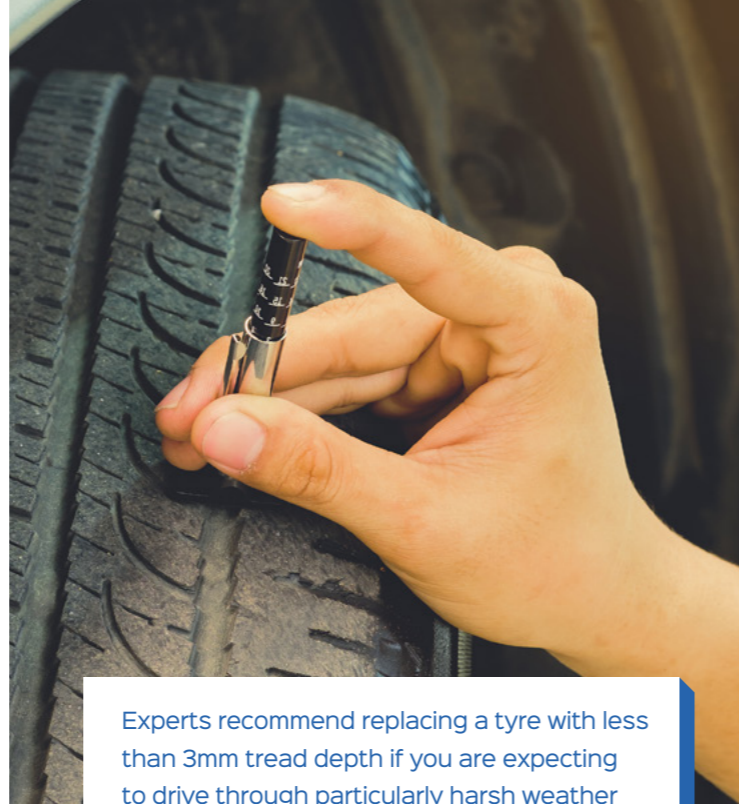
The law requires every tyre to have a minimum of 1.6mm worth of tread. Not only do you risk facing huge financial fines if you let your tyre tread get too low, you're also making yourself vulnerable to decreased vehicle control and surface grip. The 20p Tread Test allows you to check your tread depth by slotting a 20p coin in the groove of a tyre and making sure you can't see the coin's outer edge. If you can, it's time for new wheels.

Tyre pressure

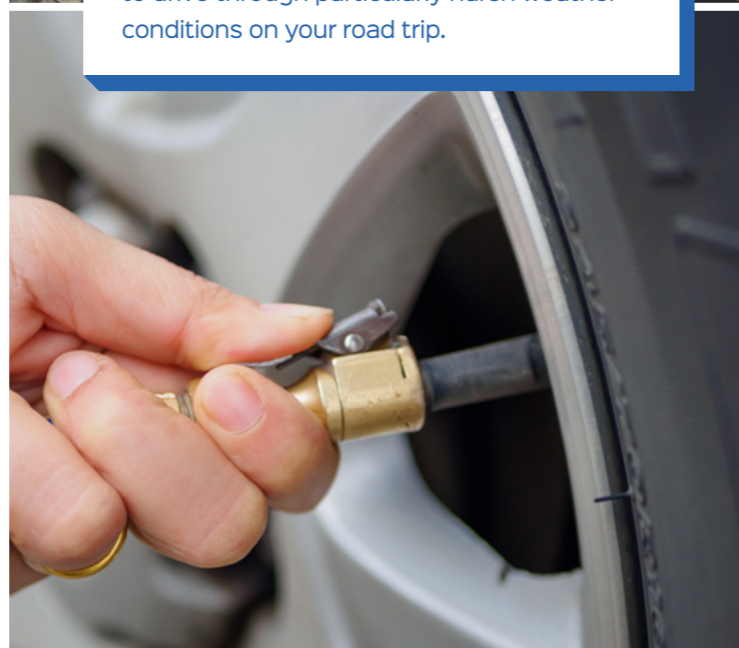
Another crucial thing to check is your tyre air pressure levels. Under-inflated tyres are a common cause of tyre blowouts which can be especially dangerous when travelling at high speeds along long stretches of road. They can also affect handling, braking and fuel consumption. You can find the recommended level of air pressure in your vehicle handbook.

Spare tyres

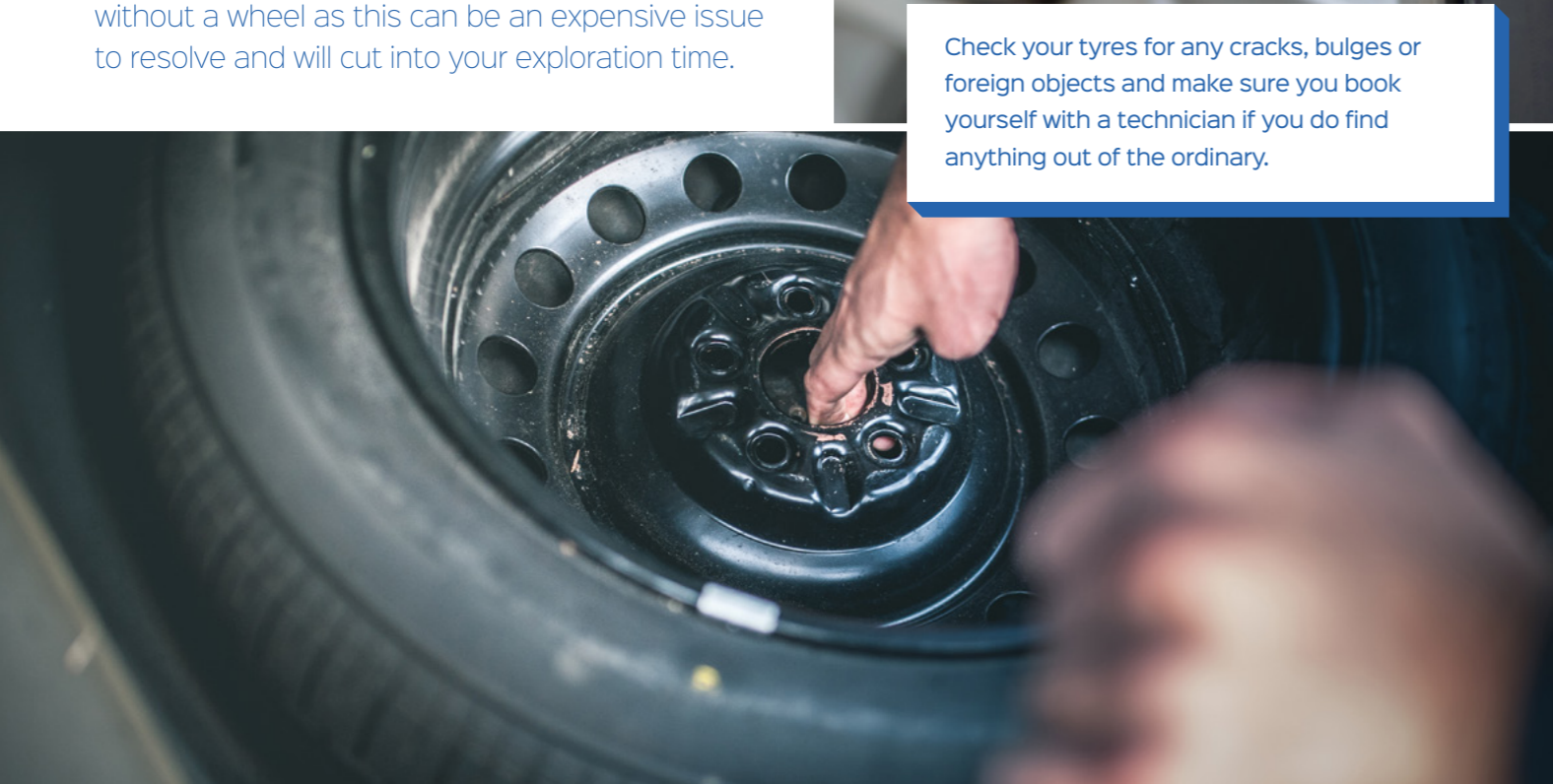
Once you've made sure your existing tyres have plenty of tread and are pumped up with enough air pressure, it's worth making sure you're carrying a spare tyre or tyre repair kit with you. You really don't want to find yourself behind the wheel without a wheel as this can be an expensive issue to resolve and will cut into your exploration time.



Experts recommend replacing a tyre with less than 3mm tread depth if you are expecting to drive through particularly harsh weather conditions on your road trip.



Check your tyres for any cracks, bulges or foreign objects and make sure you book yourself with a technician if you do find anything out of the ordinary.



The 3 B's

Bulbs

Reverse lights, brake lights, headlights and indicators are all essential functions for any car journey, long or short. Avoid being pulled over by the police or confusing other drivers on the road by making sure all your bulbs are in full working order before setting off.

Batteries

The older a car battery becomes, the less reliable they are—especially in cold weather—so it's important to get a professional to run a thorough battery check before embarking on a long journey. You don't want to find yourself on the hard shoulder with a flat battery when there are landmarks to be visiting and sights to be seeing.

Balancing

Checking your wheel balancing and alignment is easily overlooked but essential in ensuring the safety of you and your passengers. If your steering wheel wobbles when traveling at high speeds or if the vehicle veers to one side on a straight, flat road, it's time to ask a trained technician to check your wheel balancing.





More things to consider before hitting the road

Coolant

Make sure your car has enough coolant fluid to prevent the vehicle from overheating.

Oil

Sufficient levels of oil are crucial for the smooth running of your car engine. Regular oil changes will also help keep your car in tip top condition.

Screenwash and windscreen wipers

Sufficient screenwash and fully functioning windscreen wipers is essential for good visibility.



Have you packed your European road trip essentials?

Snacks? Check. Travel pillow? Check. Camera? Check. Once you've got all of the fun stuff packed and ready to go, it's time to consult your list and make sure you're kitted out with all of the basic European road trip essentials too.

Deicer

Making sure you're equipped with some good quality deicer is essential for some of the road trips in this eBook. Temperatures can drop well below zero in some locations, especially throughout the evening, so you may find your vehicle frosts over during the night.

Map

Not knowing where you're headed next is all part of the adventure but it's important to have a rough idea of the direction or at least be able to navigate yourself back to the beaten track should you get lost. Planning your journey beforehand is always recommended but carrying a map will ensure you're covered at all costs.

Hands-free mobile phone set

A hands-free phone kit for when you want to use a Sat Nav application, speak to somebody or play music during your journey is a must-have when you're packing for a road trip. Laws on phone use while driving in Europe are now extremely strict so this simple item is a necessity.

Ice scraper

Some of the most iconic European road trips are in countries where ice, snow and frosty temperatures are commonplace. Chucking a good quality ice scraper in your boot or glove department will ensure that you're covered even in the coldest of climates.

First Aid kit

In case of any minor injuries that happen along the way, make sure you're carrying a fully stocked First Aid kit. You don't want to find yourself in a remote location, rummaging around for a packet of plasters.

Travel sickness remedies

With so many winding bends to navigate, routes like Trollstigen and Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse can sometimes leave passengers feeling a little motion sick. Make sure you're prepared with some travel sickness remedies (dissolvable tablets, travel bands, patches) before you set off.



Thank you for taking the time to read our eBook. We hope you've managed to add some exciting new European destinations to your travel bucket list.

