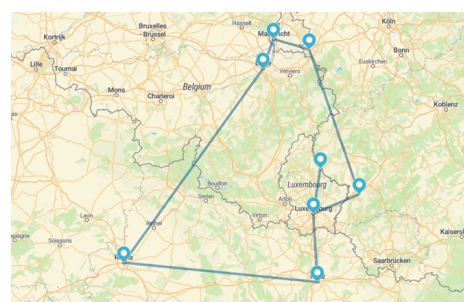




Central Europe, 8 Days · Tailor-made by car

Europe's Heartland Route

Get ready to enjoy an unforgettable trip to the heart of Europe! Starting off from the pocket-sized country of Luxembourg, you'll drive through the neighbouring nations to discover some of the most important border cities. You'll set off on this exciting road trip from the capital of Luxembourg and then head to the diminutive town of Vianden, where you can admire its views and its mythical castle. Then it's over to Germany for a visit to two cities with a Roman past: Trier and Aachen. After this, you'll cross into Holland to see Maastricht and then over to Belgium, where you'll stay in the ever-so-pretty Liège. And from there, your road trip crosses the border into France. Here you'll get to explore the city of Reims, marvel at its historic cathedral and savour its wonderful champagne. En route back to Luxembourg you'll stop off in Metz, where you can take a look around the prestigious Centre Pompidou-Metz. So, are you ready to get to know five countries in a week?



CULTURAL

URBAN

Departure date: Departures from July 2026 till June 2027

From: Dublin, Shannon, Cork

Travel details

DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - LUXEMBOURG CITY

Flight departure from the city of origin to Luxembourg City. Rental car pick-up at the airport. Drive over to the hotel, where you'll be spending the first two nights, and get settled in. The tour as such begins in the Duchy of Luxembourg, a pocket-sized country whose capital harmoniously fuses tradition and modernity, combining stately buildings with other stark glass-based buildings, but always with respect to the environment.

You'll notice this not just in how the city blends in with its natural surroundings, but also in the extreme cleanliness of its streets. For today, it's worth taking a leisurely stroll through the beautiful lower town, aka the Grund district, and exploring its fairytale streets dotted with highly-recommended museums on the banks of the canal. The views from Grund are fantastic and the area itself is very well preserved. In the distance, you'll be able to make out some buildings belonging to the European institutions. Have a wander around and start getting acquainted with the city. A twenty-minute walk from Grund will take you over to Clausen, another district in the lower part of the city and packed with bars and restaurants. Clausen still maintains the appearance of yesteryear and cherishes a Roman-era viaduct well worth seeing. Both Grund and Clausen are also home to the offices of leading multinationals. What's more, the two districts have excellent dining options and pavement terraces for a drink.

Overnight stay in Luxembourg City.

● DAY 2 · LUXEMBOURG CITY - VIANDEN - LUXEMBOURG CITY

Today's first stop will be the old quarter, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. You can start by visiting its very own Notre-Dame Cathedral, built in the early seventeenth century in a late Gothic style. Its interiors feature some amazing stained glass, while its soaring spires outside can be seen from a distance. Nearby is the Place de la Constitution, a square that commands outstanding panoramic views of the valley and the Pont Adolphe bridge, one of the symbols of the city.

Not only is there a monument in honour of the Luxembourg victims of World War II here, but it's also the main gateway to one of the city's most emblematic monuments: the Casemates de la Pétrusse. Together with those of Bock, they are the two casemates that remain in the capital. The casemates, if you haven't yet been told by some friendly locals, are galleries dug out in the rock dating back to the 17th century and which were used as a shelter during World War II bombings.

It's a very interesting place to visit, but not the best if you're with children or very old people. Later, you can go and see one of the great monuments of the city, the Palais Grand-Ducal, with its characteristic pointed towers.

Nearby, you'll find several pretty squares such as Place Guillaume II and Place d'Armes. They're usually packed with terraces of bars and restaurants where you can savour typical national dishes such as Kuddelfleck (fried tripe with breadcrumbs) or Judd mat Gaardebounen (collar of pork with broad beans), usually served with mashed potatoes or Kachkeis cheese. With your energy regained, you can head off to the Chemin de la Cornise, considered Europe's most beautiful balcony. You'll see why when you get there and admire the stunning views over the city.

After lunch, we suggest setting out on the half-hour trip to Vianden, quite possibly the most beautiful town in the whole of Luxembourg. Nestled in the heart of a valley is this diminutive settlement dominated by its castle. You'll picture yourself in a fairytale as you stroll through its historic streets of Gallo-Roman origin up the hill to the castle. The history of this castle dates back to the tenth century and for hundreds of years it was the residence of the Counts of Vianden. (Note: The castle combines Romanesque and Gothic features and is open to the public from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm for an approximate price of 7 euros). You won't be surprised to hear that the sheer beauty of Vianden inspired the French writer Victor Hugo to live here for a while. The house where he stayed is now a literary museum. (Note: Opening hours: 12.00 noon to 4.00 pm. The entrance fee is around 5 euros). Vianden was held siege by the Germans in World War II and was the last city in Luxembourg to be liberated. Return journey to Luxembourg City. Interestingly, the Portuguese community in Luxembourg is huge. That's why we recommend a Portuguese restaurant for dinner, such as Caravela, with stunning views of the city.

Overnight stay in Luxembourg City.

● DAY 3 · LUXEMBOURG CITY - TRIER (GERMANY)

Today you'll cross over from Luxembourg into Germany. You'll have the entire day to explore Trier, located less than an hour away and one of the oldest cities in Germany, founded by Emperor Augustus in 16 BC. The traces of its Roman past are found all across the city, while its sheer beauty and excellent state of conservation earned it the status of World Heritage Site. In fact, UNESCO has listed seven of its Roman monuments. They include an enormous fortified gate, an amphitheatre, two thermal baths, the Römerbrücke bridge, the Basilica of Constantine and the Igel Column. Together they form one of the most important Roman sites in the whole of Germany, and undoubtedly one of the best preserved. It's worth stopping off at each one to find out about their individual history. The gateway to Trier is known as the Porta Nigra due to the darkened colour of its stone. Now a symbol of the city, you'll be surprised to see how it's still standing thanks to iron braces and the force of gravity. At the amphitheatre, you can unleash your imagination and picture the fierce gladiator fights that would have been watched by 20,000 spectators in its stands. At the thermal bath complex of Kaiserthermen, you'll discover how the Romans would relax in hot and cold water baths spread across maze-like underground chambers. These were the largest spas in the Roman Empire outside the city of Rome itself. And at the Thermen am Viehmarkt hot springs, you'll be whisked back for an instant to World War II, as they're built under anti-aircraft shelters and are today protected by a large glass cube. Another of the architectural gems is the Basilica of Constantine, which was created in the year 310 as the emperor's throne room, and is currently Germany's largest single-room Roman building still intact. A different way of discovering the attractions of what was once hailed the 'Second Rome' is through the various theatrical performances that the Municipal Tourism Office holds at the most iconic monuments, such as the amphitheatre, the thermal baths or the Porta Nigra. As you'll see, Trier is teeming with life and history. Another example of its ancient past is the Trierer Dom, the oldest Gothic church in the country. And one of the unexpected surprises is the birthplace of Karl Marx. You'll be taking photos everywhere you go, but remember that Trier is one of those cities that you should enjoy leisurely. Venture deep into its old quarter, admire its traditional houses and have a drink or some food at its many cafes and restaurants. Today is obviously the perfect day to savour the famous Black Forest gateau, made with chocolate sponge and several layers of cream and kirsch cherries.

Overnight stay in Trier.

● DAY 4 · TRIER - AACHEN

Set off this morning on the two-hour drive to Aachen.

This is the spa town that Emperor Charlemagne chose as his main residence and which has played host to innumerable peace treaties. Aachen is today a city that combines history, modernity and a youthful ambience due to its university atmosphere, lively bars and restaurants, and well-known carnivals. One of its major landmarks is its magnificent Gothic Cathedral, which has seen the coronation of thirty-eight kings and queens. Inside, you'll find its great treasure: the Palatine Chapel, where Charlemagne is buried under the well-known Sarcophagus of Proserpina, a Roman work from the second century AD. Its large and beautiful stained glass windows have earned it the nickname of Aachen's "Glass House". This is one of the most famous historical monuments in the world, probably because the Cathedral and its treasures were the first German monument to be declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Very close to the superb Cathedral is a magical monument that will definitely capture the attention of our younger friends. It is the Puppenbrunnen, a metal-sculpted fountain with figures of puppets whose arms you can move and place as you like. Perfect for taking a fun photo with your loved ones. Although this is not the only emblematic source of the city. Behind the Elisenbrunnen building, you'll find the so-called Circle of Money Fountain (Kreislauf des Geldes), with six figures depicting the circulation of money. It's typical to throw in a coin and see whether financial affairs will take a favourable turn. Good luck! Another beautiful building is the fourteenth-century Rathaus (Town Hall). It's worth entering to see the Coronation Hall, whose frescoes reflect Charlemagne's life and where a copy of the insignia of the kingdom is kept. The Town Hall dominates Marktplatz, one of the city's liveliest squares, full of bars and cute shops where you can buy local souvenirs. Behind it is the Centre Charlemagne, the ideal place to explore the history of Aachen and take part in the "Route Charlemagne" (activity not included).

This will give you an insight into the key places in the city that are linked to the emperor himself. Although Aachen is well-known for its tranquillity, there are some options for nightlife. If you want to try a good brewery, "Domkeller" is the best there is in the city and boasts a very long beer list.

Overnight stay in Aachen.

● DAY 5 · AACHEN - MAASTRICHT - LIÈGE

Today you'll visit Holland and round the day off in Belgium, on a journey of around 100 kilometres in total. Maastricht is probably one of the most fascinating cities in the Netherlands, with a delightful old town that's ideal for strolling around and enjoying its historic buildings and vibrant atmosphere. Its many attractions include its walls, from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; the central Vrijthof Square with the Basilica of Saint Servatius; the Sint Servaasbrug footbridge across the River Meuse; the Bonnefanten Museum; the Basilica of Our Lady; and the city's forts, military bastions and maze-like tunnels dating back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We also recommend Mount Saint Peter, which has an old fortress with a network of caves home to hibernating bats. A fascinating city of great importance for a United Europe; the treaty for the creation of the European Union was signed here in 1992. After this, you can set off for Liège. This city was a stronghold of the Holy Roman Empire for eight centuries and nowadays has a very cosmopolitan air about it. This is helped by its position close to the border with Germany, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. It is an extremely lively city, with fairs, festivals and other cultural events practically all year round, from March to December. The historical architectural heritage is a tourist attraction in itself. Liège was the centre of Mosan art during the 10th and 11th centuries. Visit the Citadel and the Palace of the Prince-Bishops, rebuilt twice after being devastated by two separate fires in the 12th and 16th centuries. Saint Paul's Cathedral, with several valuable pieces of medieval heritage, such as the famous 'Reliquary of Charles the Bold', is not to be missed either. Finish off the tour with the Grand Curtius Museum, the Collegiate Church of Saint Bartholomew with its baptismal fonts and the Paix Notre Dame Abbey. The city is home to three of the most important cultural institutions in the country: the Royal Opera of Wallonia, the Liège Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Théâtre de la Place. Those with a sweet tooth should indulge in a heavenly treat before leaving: a waffle from Liège. The areas around Carré Square and Market Square are the liveliest places after dark. Grab the opportunity to have dinner and a drink near here and soak up the nightlife.

Overnight stay in Liège.

● DAY 6 · LIÈGE (BELGIUM) - REIMS (FRANCE)

Another day of your road trip around Europe's heartland. Set off for the French city of Reims, which lies around 250 kilometres away.

It boasts a stunning old quarter and Roman ruins such as the Porte de Mars, an archway which was one of the four entrances to the city. However, the real wow factor comes from the Cathedral of Reims. It dominates the city and has been a World Heritage Site since 1991. Built in a Gothic style, it was the place of coronation of former French kings. Its opulence will truly amaze you, as will its stained glass windows and many statues. Inside, you can see the famous Communion of the Knight, representing the Eucharist, and also a statue of Joan of Arc dressed in her suit of armour. (Note: The cathedral is open from 7.30 am to 7.30 pm and admission is around 7.50 euros per person. The entrance ticket also includes the visit to the Palace of Tau).

The Palace of Tau is where future kings would stay before their coronation. This Gallo-Roman villa is now a museum and showcases tapestries, statues and period objects, as well as reliquaries used for the consecration of the kings. Among them is the Talisman of Charlemagne. Finally, we recommend a visit to the Abbey of Saint-Remi, where this saint converted Clovis, King of the Franks, to Christianity in the year 496. This site, which mixes Romanesque and Gothic elements, preserves the relics of Saint Remi. (Note: Admission fee is around two euros. Please check schedules).

If you still have time, take a stroll to admire the many Art Deco buildings in the city, such as the Halles du Boulingrin.

This place, besides having a magnificent food market, plays host to fascinating cultural events. If you go there, don't miss the beautiful mosaics and stained glass windows in its library.

On another note, the cuisine in Reims is spectacular. You'll find Michelin-starred restaurants and the very best champagne in the area. In fact, Reims is one of the most important champagne production areas, with the world-famous Veuve Clicquot headquartered here. Just a few kilometres outside town, you can take a two-hour tour of the Veuve cellars if you fancy.

Overnight stay in Reims.

● DAY 7 · REIMS (FRANCE) - METZ (FRANCE) - LUXEMBOURG CITY

After driving around 150 kilometres you'll end up in Metz. The capital of French region of Lorraine, this city straddles the Moselle and Seille rivers. Metz has always been famous for its Gothic cathedral, but it has recently gained worldwide prominence for housing the Centre Pompidou-Metz. You can start off with the Saint-Etienne Cathedral. (Note: Admission fee is around seven euros. Please check schedules). You'll instantly realise why its wonderful stained glass windows have earned it the nickname 'The Lantern of God'. Meanwhile, the groundbreaking and futuristic Centre Pompidou-Metz opened its doors in 2010. The museum houses an important collection of modern art, as well as fascinating temporary exhibitions. (Note: The museum is usually open from 11.00 am to 6.00 pm, with entrance costing around 7 euros). Afterwards, you could head over to the Place de la Comédie to see the picturesque Temple Neuf, a castle-like church built in the early 20th century on the banks of the Moselle Canal. There's also an eighteenth-century theatre here that is still in use. Once you've finished, you can drive the fifty kilometres back to Luxembourg City. To round off your trip, visit the neighbourhood of Kirchberg, where several European Union institutions are located. This whole area has developed hugely over the past few years and now includes the magnificent home venue of the Luxembourg Philharmonic Orchestra. A great place for a farewell drink is on the top floor of the Hotel Sofitel in the city centre. Although it tends to be a bit pricey, the views of Luxembourg City are simply spectacular.

Overnight stay in Luxembourg City.

● DAY 8 · LUXEMBOURG CITY - UNITES KINGDOM

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight back to the city of origin.

Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

Your trip includes

Your trip includes

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| ✓ Return flight. | ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Luxembourg. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Luxembourg. |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Trier. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Trier. | ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Aachen. |
| ✓ Selected meal plan in Aachen. | ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Liege. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Liege. |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Reims. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Reims. | ✓ Rent-a-car. |

Your trip doesn't include

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ✗ Accommodation taxes in Trier direct payment in facility. | | |
| ✗ Accommodation taxes in Aachen direct payment in facility. | | |
| ✗ Accommodation taxes in Belgium direct payment in facility. | | |
| ✗ Accommodation taxes in France direct payment in facility. | ✗ Possible toll charges. | ✗ Insolvency protection. |

Destinations Visited

Luxembourg



Vianden



Trier



Aachen



Maastricht



Liege



Reims



Metz



Important remarks

- Triple rooms in Europe are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far as possible.
- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.
- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.
- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.
- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.
- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.
- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air stopovers are made.
- You must give notice that you are going to cross the border while collecting the vehicle. Authorisation may be required to drive through certain countries or areas/states (as is the case in the US and Canada). Depending on the conditions set out in the rental contract and the company hired, you might be charged a surcharge payable at the destination office.