

1. Donauversickerung (Danube-Sinkhole)

In Germany, between Immendingen and Möhringen or near Fridingen, the Danube sinks into the riverbed in several places. This means that during summer, the riverbed doesn't contain any water and the river flows underground to Aichtopf for 60 hours. The biggest sinkhole place is located near Immendingen. The reason for the sinking are the stratums formed during Jura. Over the years, the limestone has developed many rifts and cavities where the water of the Danube can disappear.

2. The Kingfisher

In the Austrian national park „Donauauen“, visitors have the opportunity to learn about a rare and endangered bird called kingfisher. It needs of course a naturally wet habitat for hunting as well as river banksides consisting of sand and clay for breeding given by the river. Its plumage shimmers in bright colors – just like a gemstone.

3. European Beaver

The beaver is the largest rodent on the European continent and can be unmistakably recognized by its scaly tail. Beaver families live on riversides, therefore building special dens from twigs, leaves and mud. Because of its fur, its scent and people believing it to be fish, beavers were hunted extensively, thus leading to near extinction of the beaver. It wasn't until the second half of the 20th century that systematic protection and repopulation made for the beaver to be a native resident in Germany and Austria again.

4. Golubac Fortress

Situated directly on the Danube, this castle not only shines with an impressive view, but also offers plenty of history. The fortress, probably built in the 14th century, was very interesting for Serbian, Hungarian and Ottoman occupiers because of its location, which is why many wars took place there and the fortress often changed hands. It is called Taubenstadt or Taubenburg because of the Roman fortification that was there before. The fortress is divided into a lower and upper castle, has a total of eight towers which are 20 to 30 meters high and one finds remains of a Serbian Orthodox church. The church is situated on the water's edge due to the rise of the Danube and is very close to the Iron Gate, another attraction on the Danube.

5. National Park Plitvicer Lakes

The country of Croatia offers the oldest national park of south eastern Europe: The National Park Plitvic Lakes. The varying climatic influences and the vast differences in altitude within the protected areas cause an extremely diverse flora and fauna. As a setting for the "Winnetou" movies, featuring several waterfall and lakes scenes, the national park is particularly famous in Germany. For example, "Der Schatz im Silbersee", a feature film by Harald Reinl based on motifs from the book of the same name by Karl May. The script deviates considerably from the original novel.

6. Iron Gate

The Iron Gate is a natural monument of the Danube river, located between the Serbian Carpathian Mountains and the Banater Mountains in Romania. Along its route the Danube increases in size through entering rivers, reaching its maximum width of 200 meters right in front of the Iron Gate. At this narrowing, the width of the river decreases to about 80 meters, causing the Iron Gate to be the most dangerous passage of the Danube river until the 1970s. It is also at the Iron Gate where you can find the highest rock sculpture in Europe: The statue of dacian King Decebalus.

7. Pelicans

Pelicans are member of the species of water birds. Except for Antarctica, they can be found on every continent. The biggest pelican colony of Europe is located in the Danube Delta. Pelicans can particularly be recognised for their extendable gular pouch on their lower mandible.

8. Belogradchik Rocks

The rocks of Belogradchik are a unique red rock formation. Stretching out for 15 km in width and 30 km in length in the western Balkans of Bulgaria, this magnificent natural phenomenon was shaped by rain and wind over more than 200 million years. Rock columns 200 meters' tall form a natural fortress which had already been used as defense in ancient times.

9. The Ulmer Schachtel (Ulm Box)

The "Ulmer Schachtel" – or "Boxes of Ulm" was a sort of single-use boat, used for merchandise and passenger transportation since the Middle Ages. The mocking name "box" came to know in the 19th century, deriving from their flat shaped bottom. Nowadays the Ulmer Schachteln represent particularly the emigration of Ulm's citizens – the Danube Swabians – and their new settlements along the Danube river from the 17th to the 19th century. The Ulmer Schachtel has a lot to do with the history of the Danube Swabians who fled their homeland in the hope of a better life. The Danube Swabians are called Franks, Palatines, Hesse, Aargau, Alsace, Lorraine, Luxembourgers, Thuringians and the emigrants from many Austrian countries who from the end of the 17th century arrived in South Eastern Europe in large waves, also called ""Swabian trains"".

10. Welcome with bread and salt

It is a well-known tradition in many of the countries along the Danube river to bring bread and salt as a symbolic gift for great variety of occasions. This can be the welcoming of guests or friends, moving into a new home or entering into matrimony.

11. Mărțișor

“Märzchen” is a common present for march 1st. Called “Martisor” in Romanian or “Martenitsa” in Bulgarian, the Märzchen are composed of a red and white cord and a little dangler. It is worn by women and children from march 1st for several weeks, symbolizing spring, or as in Bulgaria a long and healthy life. The colors red and white stand for red cheeks and white hair. Martenitsas are worn until April 1st or until the first signs of spring arrive, after this you hang them on a tree or lay them under a stone, wishing for something beautiful to happen.

12. Lotcă

Lotca is a traditional fishing boat from the Romanian Danube Delta. Nowadays, Lotca is used as a common mean of transportation for the people in the Danube Delta. Everyone in the Danube Delta has a boat because most villages in the Delta don't have connection to the road network. The wooden boat is popular because it is simple and reliable for a duration of 50 years.

13. St.-Andreas-Church (Kiev)

The Church of St. Andrew in Kiev (Ukraine) is one of the masterpieces of Ukrainian architecture of the 18th century due to its artistic expression and originality. Legend says that in the first century A.D., the apostle Andrew came along the Dnepr to the hills in present-day Kiev. At the place on the hill named after him, where the church stands today, he blessed the surrounding hills and erected a cross. A wooden church was originally built in 1112. The present church was commissioned by Tsarina Elisabeth Petrovna Romanova during her visit in 1744 and consecrated in 1767. It has been used as a Church Museum since 1968. The ground floor is seat of the Theological Academy and the Seminar of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church.

14. Das Chmarošský - Viadukt (Railway bridge)

This beautiful railway bridge, Chmarošský viaduct, is surrounded by forests and mountains and reaches a height of over 18 metres and a length of over 110 metres. Despite the ancient style, the Chmarošský viaduct was built only in 1930 and is still in operation today, connecting two tunnels of the Margecany-Červená scale railway line.

15. Folklore

Wikipedia defines folklore as “the body of expressive culture shared by a particular group of people”. This includes customs and rituals, music, arts and so on. In most of the countries along the Danube river folklore is through songs, traditional clothing and dances still very vivid. In the picture you can see three different types of traditional clothing.

16. Sinti and Roma

Whether bands, single instruments or singing, Sinti and Roma are known in all Danube countries for their excellent musicality. It is little known about the history of Sinti and Roma, their culture and way of life, and about the difficult living conditions they are exposed to in most countries. Seit mindestens 600 Jahren leben Sinti und Roma in Europa. Ursprünglich kamen sie aus Indien, von wo sie mehrere Jahrhunderte lang Richtung Westen wanderten Sinti and Roma are part of a historic minority of Europe. In the countries along the Danube – especially in Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria – the number of Sinti and Roma is very high. Here, they make up 10% of the population. Hence, Sinti and Roma and their culture are particularly visible in these countries.

Unfortunately, Sinti and Roma do not only belong to an ethnic minority, but also to a social. A large part of them live in persistent poverty, afflicted by unemployment and exclusion.

17. Sachertorte (Sacher gateau)

The Sachertorte is a chocolate cake with apricot jam and chocolate icing. It is considered to be a speciality of Viennese cuisine, but is not a protected product.

According to history, Prince Metternich commissioned his court kitchen in 1832 to create a special dessert. Since the chef had fallen ill, the 16-year-old apprentice Franz Sacher had to take the job - and he invented the basic form of the Sacher cake. Franz was then in his second year of apprenticeship.

18. filled paprika

In the Hungarian cuisine there are dishes that are well known beyond the borders of the country. These are mostly hearty dishes, which can satisfy even the greatest hunger. The same goes for stuffed peppers - a one-course dish that is very popular. It is a good opportunity to use the paprika which thrives excellently in Hungary. In addition, by mixing the pepper colors it looks very appealing. The filling consists of minced meat, rice and spices. The peppers are cooked in tomato sauce and served with boiled potatoes or white bread. Paprika helped the Hungarian Dr. Albert Szent György to win the Nobel Prize in 1937.

He was born in 1893 in Szeged, Hungary's largest pepper-growing region. He discovered vitamin C in paprika. He proved that a cubic centimetre of lemon juice contains 0.5 mg of vitamin C and 5 to 7 times as much in the same quantity of paprika.

19. Korbáčik

Thinking of cheese, one tends to think of France. And yet Slovakia offers a rich variety of sheep's cheese, including Korbáčiky, a wattled cheese. You can get it regular or even smoked.

20. Pula Arena

The gigantic colosseum of Pula is the sixth largest of its kind and is of course in Roman style. Even today it is a place full of culture and history and is still used for cultural purposes. It is not known who caused the construction, but the enlargement was initiated by Emperor Vespasian. The rooms for gladiators and wild animals are still preserved today and are located under the arena. Today, however, these rooms are home to the permanent exhibition "Olive-growing and viticulture in Istria during Roman times". The rows of spectators offer space for up to 23,000 spectators. In the past, the theatre used to be a place where large sea battles could be observed, which were specially organised at the nearby sea, but which were later replaced by water battles inside the arena.

21. Churches of Moldavia

The Churches of Moldavia in Bukovina, Romania are a group of monasteries that stand out due to their splendidly decorated facades and are known for their colourful appearance. They are said to have been built in the 15th and 16th centuries by the Principality of Moldova and are associated with Stefan the Great, who had a monastery built for each battle he won. Some of the monasteries have been part of the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage since 1993 and 2010 respectively.

22. Painted eggs

Giving colored eggs is an inherent part of Christian Easter tradition in Ukraine. However, the eggs are painted in a special way: patterns are painted on the eggs with wax and overdyed with various colors.

23. wine cellar in Cricova

There are many large wine cellars in Moldova. Cricova is one of the largest wine collections in the world, which can be described as an underground city. With a length of 120km the tunnel system is already too big to be walked through. The temperature is constantly 12 degrees, with high humidity. These are the best conditions for the storage of about 30 million litres of wine. Numerous heads of state and government have already visited the famous vineyard and their own small wine depot there, including the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the first cosmonaut in space Juri Gagarin. The Russian President Putin celebrated his 70th birthday in one of the splendidly designed cellars.

24. Triumphal arch Chişinău

The triumphal arch of Chisinau is also called the holy gate because it is in line with the bell tower and the cathedral. The arch was built to accommodate a bell that did not fit into the tower of the cathedral. It was dedicated to the victory of the Russian troops over the Turkish army in the war of 1806-1812. In addition to the large bells inside the arch, there are also beautiful clocks outside. For this reason, the Arc de Triomphe was chosen as the fifth most beautiful of its kind and is definitely worth a visit.