

European Historic Thermal Towns Association

EHTTA is the organisation responsible for the management of the European Cultural Route of Thermal Heritage. It was established in 2009 in Brussels as a non-profit international association based on the need to encourage, protect and enhance the thermal, artistic and cultural heritage of Europe.

Our mission is to promote European Thermal Towns as sustainable and competitive tourist destinations able to combine health and wellness with their cultural heritage and therapeutic landscapes, rich in nature and tradition, encouraging cross-border tourism in the framework of "Destination Europe".

EHTTA is an active member of the Cultural Routes Programme, and co-operates with the Council of Europe, and the European Institute of Cultural Routes to ensure its visibility on the European stage. Collaborating with partner organisations such as ESPA and OMTh is also key activity when developing new opportunities for the Association and its members.

We celebrate the bath houses, the pump rooms, the operas and theatres, the parks and the gardens that are a feature of all our towns, the therapeutic landscapes of Europe. We invite you to do the same!



About EHTTA:

Europe's Historic Thermal Towns, all based around healing mineral-water springs, have been centres of health, well-being, culture and tourism for centuries, and their development over the years has led to a rich and varied architectural heritage.

Discover the stories, buildings, culture and festivals, and of course the waters themselves in a tour through the European Route of Historic Thermal Towns - a cultural route certified by the Council of Europe.

Discover the European Route of Thermal Heritage

Culture - Art - Architecture- History



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Baden-Baden, Bath, Budapest, Karlovy Vary, Spa, or Vichy are only a few big names of European spa towns, indeed synonymous with baths.

But Europe is home to thousands of spa towns, with unique urban personalities, different styles of architecture, and a long tradition of welcoming guests. For centuries, they have been centres of health and well-being, shaping an European spa culture still prevalent today.



The European Route of Historic Thermal Towns gathers nearly 40 spa destinations in 14 countries: a network promoting the understanding and protection of the built and cultural heritage that has grown up around the healing springs of Europe.



For more than 2000 years people have travelled across Europe to the healing springs which are at the centre of our member towns. Over the centuries, Greeks, Gauls, Romans, Ottomans and others established bathing traditions and built magnificent baths and pump rooms.

In the 18th and 19th century, taking the water for health-drinking and bathing in it - became almost an art form, and the most prominent people in Europe gathered at the spas to see and to be seen: royalty and aristocracy, but also musicians, writers, artists, philosophers, transforming these places in the *Cafés of Europe*.



When visiting Europe's thermal towns you will not only find healing steaming springs but also entertainment in the form of festivals, concerts, theatres and sports; historic monuments, often interpreted in innovative ways to help you to understand the past life of the town and its famous visitors; art galleries and museums; and historic and modern spa complexes.



A Cultural Route certified by the Council of Europe

The European Route of Historic Thermal Towns is one of over thirty routes certified by the Council of Europe, all based on themes which are important to the cultural heritage of Europe.

The Cultural Routes Programme was launched by the Council of Europe in 1987 with the Route of Santiago de Compostela, perhaps Europe's most famous pilgrim route, chosen as a symbol of European unification and identity, built, as Europe was, "on a shared history of exchanges and encounters between people with different backgrounds, nationalities and beliefs". Since then, linear paths and themed networks have joined the Programme.

Our Route promotes the leading role that spas have played fostering peace, co-operation and creativity, protecting the built and natural environment, and promoting sustainable cultural development – a role that has been present throughout European history and continues to this day.

