

FREE GUIDE · EUROPE (MULTI-COUNTRY)

Europe's 7 Most Beautiful Drives

The roads built for pulling over, with families in mind.

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All numbers verified the month of publication. Prices are directional and shift with season · verify at the source before booking · updates quarterly · corrections welcome at hello@driftvistas.com.



The seven



Photo: Matteo Badini · Pexels

#	DRIVE	COUNTRY	LENGTH	BEST MONTH
1	Maloja Pass	Switzerland	35 km	Jun–Sep
2	Tre Cime di Lavaredo	Italy (Dolomites)	70 km loop	Jun–Sep
3	Plitvice Lakes approach	Croatia	40 km	Apr–Oct
4	Amalfi Coast SS163	Italy	50 km	Apr–Jun, Sep
5	Scottish Highlands NC500 north	Scotland	250 km	May–Sep
6	Algarve coast EN125	Portugal	150 km	Year-round
7	Great Dolomites Road SS48	Italy	110 km	Jun–Sep

YOU DON'T DRIVE THESE TO GET SOMEWHERE. YOU DRIVE THEM BECAUSE THE ROAD IS THE DESTINATION.

🛣️ What makes a great driving road, and what these have



Photo: Artem Zhukov · Pexels

- **Switchbacks with views, not just switchbacks.** Maloja and Tre Cime deliver both.
- **A road surface you can trust.** Amalfi's SS163 is narrow but well-maintained; the Algarve EN125 is wide and easy.
- **Pull-offs where you actually want to pull off.** Scotland's NC500 is built for this; the Dolomites have lay-bys every kilometre.
- **Light that does the work.** Sunrise and the hour before sunset.



The seven, in brief



Photo: Michał Robak · Pexels

1. Maloja Pass, Switzerland

From St Moritz down to Chiavenna (Italy), 35 km of switchbacks dropping out of the Engadine. **Best at dawn.** Pull off at the 5th hairpin from the top - the long view back up the pass.

2. Tre Cime di Lavaredo, Italy

A 70 km loop in the Dolomites. The driving road climbs to Rifugio Auronzo (€30 toll); the real shot is the road *to* the parking lot. **Arrive by 07:00 in summer** or the lot fills.

3. Plitvice Lakes approach, Croatia

The drive *from the south* (Zadar via D1 then D429) is the one. Two hours of rolling karst hills, no traffic.

4. Amalfi Coast SS163, Italy

50 km from Sorrento around to Salerno. **Do it at dawn or in shoulder season.** July is misery. Base in Praiano (between Positano and Amalfi) for half the price and less parking chaos.

5. Scottish Highlands NC500 north

The full 500-mile loop is more than most families want. The best 250 km is the **north section** between Ullapool and John o' Groats. Single-track means passing-place etiquette (it's the law, not a courtesy).

6. Algarve EN125, Portugal

Most travellers hit Faro and the resorts. The EN125 and smaller roads west of Lagos (dropping into Praia da Marinha and Praia do Camilo) are the ones. **Year-round drivable** (mild winters).

7. Great Dolomites Road SS48, Italy

Bolzano to Cortina, ~110 km, four mountain passes. The pass roads people put on calendars. **Closed October to mid-May depending on snow.**

☆ Suggested combos for one week

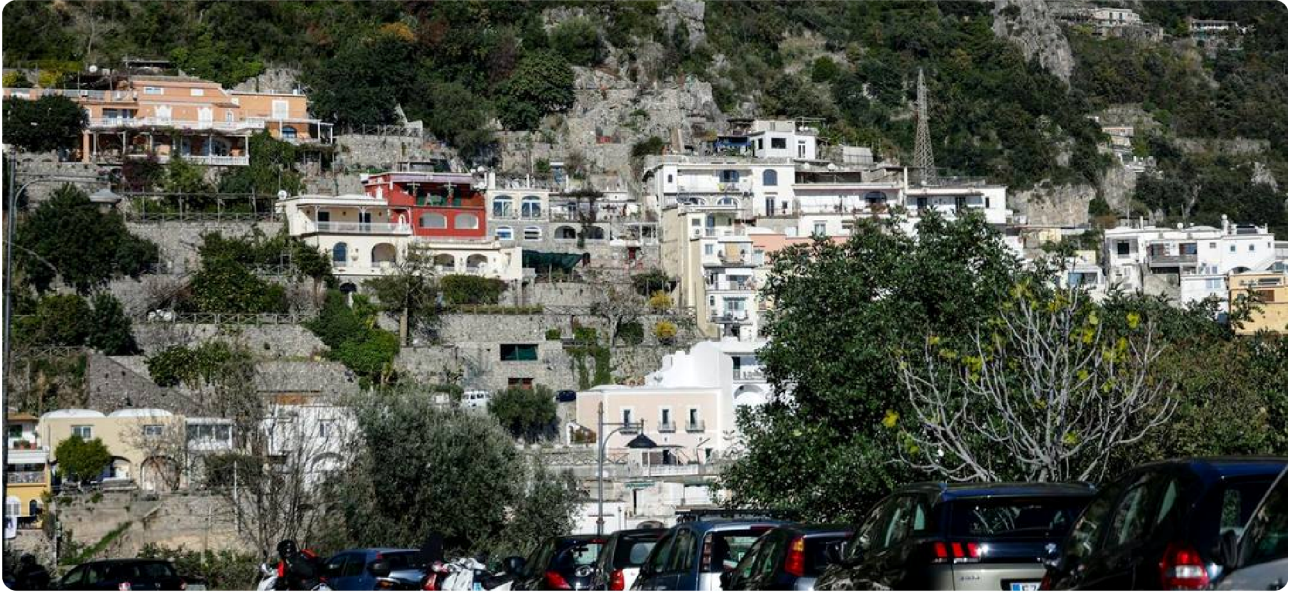


Photo: Magda Ehlers · Pexels

- **Italian Alps loop (7 days):** Venice → Cortina → Tre Cime → Great Dolomites Road → Bolzano → Venice. (Drives 2 + 7.)
- **Coast contrast (10 days):** Lisbon → Algarve → fly to Naples → Amalfi → Capri. (Drives 4 + 6.)
- **Wild Europe (10 days):** Edinburgh → NC500 → fly to Zagreb → Plitvice → Adriatic coast. (Drives 3 + 5.)
- **Alpine arc (7 days):** Zürich → Maloja → Bolzano → Great Dolomites Road → Tre Cime → Venice. (Drives 1 + 2 + 7.)

Renting a car for this with kids



Photo: Kostiantyn Zavhorodnii · Pexels

- **Book early.** Smaller alpine pickup points (Bolzano, Innsbruck) sell out 6 weeks ahead in summer.
- **Cross-border surcharges** exist for most car-hire companies. Confirm before you book if crossing CH → IT or HR → BA.
- **Automatic transmission** is rare in Europe; book early or expect manual.
- **Full insurance.** Mountain roads, parking nightmares, €15/day worth every cent.
- **Larger family car** for two adults + two kids + luggage. Not a compact.



Three things nobody mentions



Photo: Sergio Zhukov · Pexels

1. **Fuel is far between in the Highlands.** Top up in Ullapool before going north. The next reliable station is 100+ km away.
2. **Dolomites pass tolls add up.** Tre Cime is €30, Pordoi parking €5, Cortina €3/hour. Budget €40 to €60 in tolls and parking for a Dolomites week.
3. **Most drives are better at the day's edges.** Sunrise and the hour before sunset. The middle of the day is the worst light *and* the worst traffic.

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