Lonely Planet announces Best in Europe 2018:
Italian food hotspot of Emilia-Romagna named number one in list of most exciting destinations to counter the crowds this year

(Tuesday 22 May 2018) Travellers looking to leave the crowds behind this summer should head to Italy’s foodie heartland, seek spectacular wild landscapes in the north of Spain, or go Dutch for arts and culture, according to world-leading travel authority Lonely Planet, which today reveals its pick of the most exciting European destinations to visit this year.

Lonely Planet’s Best in Europe 2018 is compiled annually by the travel company’s European experts, revealing their pick of the most exciting and underrated destinations to visit across the continent. This year’s list directly tackles the hot topic of ‘overtourism’, aiming to inspire travellers to discover some of the best lesser-visited regions, alternative city breaks and hidden gems, beyond Europe's busiest tourist hotspots.

Lonely Planet’s Best in Europe 2018:
1. Emilia-Romagna, Italy
2. Cantabria, Spain
3. Friesland, the Netherlands
4. Kosovo
5. Provence, France
6. Dundee, Scotland
7. Small Cyclades, Greece
8. Vilnius, Lithuania
9. Vipava Valley, Slovenia
10. Tirana, Albania

Emilia-Romagna in Italy takes the top spot as Europe’s number one destination this year. The Italian region is often overlooked in favour of more popular regions like Tuscany, Campania and The Veneto, but is increasingly carving out its reputation as the nation’s number one destination for food lovers. The birthplace of ragù, prosciutto di Parma, balsamic vinegar and Parmesan cheese, its foodie legacy can be explored at Bologna’s newly opened FICO, the world’s largest culinary theme park, while new cultural openings in Ferrara and Rimini (which can now be reached by direct flight from the UK) provide even more for visitors to get their teeth into.

Also making this year’s Best in Europe 2018 list: the Spanish region of Cantabria, a land of wild, sandy beaches, mist-shrouded mountains and enchanting villages; Dundee, a city reinvigorated by
new cultural openings including the newest branch of the V&A; and Friesland in the Netherlands, a region of beguiling landscapes whose lively capital Leeuwarden is this year’s European Capital of Culture.

Lonely Planet’s spokesperson and Editorial Director, Tom Hall, said: “There is growing concern over the increase in tourism to popular European destinations, particularly over the busy summer months, so with this list we wanted to show that there are a wealth of incredible alternatives to discover across Europe. Our expert writers cross the continent and have uncovered some of Europe’s most outstanding, underrated and overlooked places that are well worth planning a trip around.”

“Whether you’re looking for a cultural city break, spectacular scenery or a buzzing foodie destination, there is something for every taste. You can find all of these things in Italy’s Emilia-Romagna region, which flies under the radar compared to some of Italy’s bigger hitting destinations, while the other picks showcase some of the places that in-the-know European travellers are excited about right now.”

Lonely Planet’s writers have explored the globe for 45 years in search of hidden gems and amazing new travel experiences. Best in Europe 2018 is the sixth iteration of the agenda-setting list, which picks out Europe’s hottest up-and-coming countries, regions and cities. To help travellers see more of Europe, Lonely Planet has teamed up with Eurail.com to offer travellers the chance to win one of ten monthly rail passes to explore the continent this summer.

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Notes to Editors:

● Lonely Planet’s Best in Europe 2018 is available at lonelyplanet.com/best-in-europe. Find out more about why we’ve selected this year’s ten destinations, and view video content showcasing these places and the number one pick, Emilia-Romagna.
● Video and images of the top ten list and number one destination available for media use.
● Lonely Planet spokespeople available for broadcast, phone and email interviews.
● Launch events shared on social media using #bestineurope

ABOUT LONELY PLANET

Lonely Planet is a leading travel media company and the world’s number one travel guidebook brand, providing both inspiring and trustworthy information for every kind of traveller since 1973. Over the past four decades, we’ve printed over 145 million guidebooks and grown a dedicated, passionate global community of travellers. You’ll also find our content on lonelyplanet.com, mobile, video and in 14 languages, nine international magazines, children’s, armchair and lifestyle books, ebooks, and more. Visit us at lonelyplanet.com or join our social community of over 14 million travellers. Find us on Facebook (facebook.com/lonelyplanet), Twitter (@lonelyplanet and #lp), Instagram (instagram.com/lonelyplanet) and Snapchat (@lonely.planet).