



## The Hidden Europe: What Eastern Europeans Can Teach Us (Wanderlearn Series)

By Francis Tapon

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### The Hidden Europe: What Eastern Europeans Can Teach Us (Wanderlearn Series) By Francis Tapon

Francis Tapon yearned for a European adventure, but Western Europe seemed too tame and passe. So he traveled for 3 years visiting every Eastern European country all 25 of them.

*The Hidden Europe* cleverly mixes insightful facts with hilarious personal anecdotes. It's profound, yet light. Francis Tapon is a sharp observer who helps you distinguish a Latvian from a Lithuanian, while not confusing Slovenia with Slovakia.

#### You'll also learn:

- Why Baltic people are human squirrels.
- When and why Poland disappeared from Europe.
- Why Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia broke up.
- Why Hungarians are really Martians.
- How Slovenians learn languages so quickly.
- Why the Balkans is so screwed up.
- Why there's much more to Romania than Dracula.
- Which Moldovan tradition saves marriages.
- What the future holds for Belarus, Ukraine, Russia.
- Why communism was a dream . . . and a nightmare.

You'll understand a side of Europe that is still mysterious and misunderstood even 20 years after the fall of the Soviet Union. Francis Tapon is an ideal guide in a book that will become a classic travel narrative.

## SUMMARY

When people say that they're "going to Europe," they're usually referring to Western Europe. But what about Eastern Europe? You don't really know Europe until you visit its mysterious eastern side.

Francis Tapon's quest was simple: explore every country in Eastern Europe from the Gulf of Finland to the Black Sea. He saw them all in 2004 and then returned in 2008 to revisit them to see what had changed. He finally left in 2011 to share a side of Europe that few know.

Starting in the Baltic, you'll move through Belarus, Poland, Slovakia and get as far west as Slovenia before heading south into the thrilling Balkans. Then you'll head northeast through Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, and Russia. It's a 25-country adventure spanning over 3 years!

*The Hidden Europe* is an entertaining travelogue that also shares practical lessons that will impact your day-to-day life. You'll learn about today's Eastern Europe along with understanding the complex history of this fascinating region.

You'll also see how the locals live and realize that they do some things better than most of the world. You'll understand why smart money and groundbreaking tourists are flocking to this undiscovered territory. Best of all, you won't have to deal with the grumpy train ticket vendors.

INCLUDES 60 COLOR PHOTOS AND 2 COLOR MAPS

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Francis Tapon provides us with a wide-ranging personal and historical travelogue. . . . The result is one of the world's most personal, idiosyncratic, and unorthodox cultural and historical travel guides. . . . It's really an impressive and ambitious book." -- **Michael Krasny, Host on KQED's Forum**

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*The Hidden Europe* is an invigorating narrative packed with useful tips and colorful stories. . . . It's an entertaining summary of his observations on spending time in each of the 25 different countries in the eastern half of the continent. . . . I had so much fun reading through this book. And it covers every country and every corner of Eastern Europe with a beautiful breezy style, with a fun, intimate report on how Francis enjoyed 3 years exploring Eastern Europe. --**Rick Steves, Travel Show Host**

The Hidden Europe is a brilliant and insightful book. Francis Tapon travels for years visiting every Eastern European at least twice. What emerges is a travelogue on steroids. It's profound, but has a light tone. You'll learn much and laugh often. --**Amar Bhidé, Professor at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University**

Tapon has produced a profoundly insightful and humorous travel narrative.... VERDICT: Not just a tourist, Tapon is a true traveler in the tradition of Paul Theroux and Jan Morris, with the antics and sense of humor of a Bill Bryson but his own perspective and sense of adventure. He has compiled a perceptive volume about a part of Europe that most readers do not know. This book will inspire travelers to take a look at these emerging nations. --**Library Journal, March 2012**

#### About the Author

Francis Tapon's mother is from Chile and his father is from France. They met in San Francisco thanks to a slow elevator. His brother, Philippe Tapon, is the author of two novels. His family spoke Spanish at home, unless an English swearword was necessary.

Francis was born in San Francisco, California where he attended the French American International School for 12 years. Native French teachers convinced him that France is the coolest country in the universe. He is fluent in English, French, and Spanish. He struggles with Italian, Portuguese, Slovenian, and Russian. If you point a gun to his head, he'll start speaking other languages too.

He earned a Religion Degree with honors from Amherst College. He also has an MBA from Harvard Business School. After Harvard, he co-founded a robotic vision company in Silicon Valley. Then he decided to change his life forever.

In 2001, he sold what little he had to hike the 3,000 km Appalachian Trail. Then, after consulting for Hitachi, he visited all 25 countries in Eastern Europe from June to November 2004. He consulted at Microsoft before hiking the 4,200 km Pacific Crest Trail in 2006. In 2007, he became the first person to do a round-trip on the Continental Divide Trail a seven-month journey spanning 9,000 km. In 2008-2011, he visited over 40

European countries, but focused on revisiting all the Eastern European ones. In 2009, he climbed up Mont Blanc and walked across Spain twice (once by traversing the Pyrenees from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, and then later by hiking El Camino Santiago). He's backpacked over 20,000 kilometers (12,500 miles) and traveled to over 80 countries. He has never owned a TV, chair, table, couch, bed, or rocket ship.

He is the author of *Hike Your Own Hike: 7 Life Lessons from Backpacking Across America*. He is donating half of that book's royalty to America's three major scenic trails.

*The Hidden Europe: What Eastern Europeans Can Teach Us* is his second book of his WanderLearn Series. In 2013-2018, he plans to visit every country in Africa and write a book about that in . His goal is to wander to all 193 countries of the world, see what we can learn from them, and share it with everyone.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Christine Hook:**

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experiencing when the spare time coming to an individual of course your answer will probably unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading publications. It can be your alternative inside spending your spare time, the actual book you have read is The Hidden Europe: What Eastern Europeans Can Teach Us (Wanderlearn Series).

**Willis Harrington:**

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