

Interesting Facts About Europe

Istanbul, the City of Two Continents

Since ancient times, Magical Istanbul has united Asia and Europe through the mighty Strait of Bosphorus. Without a doubt, this amazing city is one of the most beautiful places on earth. Istanbul is the only metropolis in the world bridging two continents. Istanbul was Europe's Capital of Culture in 2010, a program by the European Union. Throughout history, the city has been the capital of many empires. Napoleon Bonaparte once said: "If the earth was a single state, Istanbul would be its capital."



The Smallest Country in the World

Europe is home to the smallest country in the world, Vatican City State (Stato della Città del Vaticano). Vatican's area is only 0.44 square km. The Vatican City State is a UNESCO world heritage centre, the only site to encompass an entire state.

The Statue of Liberty Was Constructed in France

The famous Statue of Liberty was designed by Frédéric Bartholdi. The colossal neoclassical sculpture was constructed in France and given as a gift of friendship to the United States of America. Alexandre Gustave Eiffel, the brilliant French engineer behind the Eiffel Tower in Paris, made the statue's steel framework. Replicas of Lady Liberty have been created all over the world, the most famous being located in France.



Europe, the Meaning

According to ancient Greek mythology, Europa was a beautiful Phoenician princess. Zeus felt in love with Europa, so he decided to appear in front of her as a magnificent white bull to gain her trust. The princess climbed on the bull's back and was immediately carried to Crete, where Zeus revealed himself to Europa in all his glory. The king of Gods and Europa had three children – Sarpedon, Minos and Rhadamanthys. Etymologically speaking, the word Europe comes from ancient Greek and means broad, wide-gazing, broad of aspect.

The Mediterranean Was Once a Desert

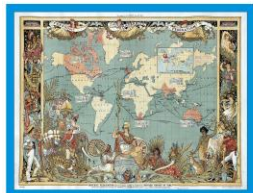
In the last 40 years solid evidence has been found that the Mediterranean Sea frequently dried up completely in the past. The event is also known as the Messinian Salinity Crisis.



Greatest Empires

Many of the greatest empires in history were based in Europe. The British Empire was at one time the largest empire in the world. It covered more than 36 million square kilometers and had a population between 480 and 570 million people. At the peak of the Empire's power, it was said that the "sun never sets" on it, because the sun was always shining on at least one part of the Empire. It covered a quarter of the Earth's surface.

Other notable colonial empires were the Spanish Empire, the Russian Empire, the French Empire, the Portuguese Empire etc.



The Longest Names

A village in Wales, United Kingdom contains 58 letters and is the longest European one-word place-name. Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogogoch means "Saint Mary's Church in the hollow of the white hazel near a rapid whirlpool and the Church of St. Tysilio of the red cave." The shorter version of this name is Llanfairpwllgwyngyll.

