

Festival Guide 2019: Festivals worth taking a flight for

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Whether it's discovering new underground acts or indulging a travel buzz, music fans demand an extraordinary experience from festivals these days. A festival no longer means piling into a field for a weekend and accepting the meagre facilities on offer. More often it's a wallet-friendly trip to a different European country, to combine music with local culture, nightlife, sightseeing and gastronomic delights. From partying in a 17th century Balkan fortress or an Icelandic glacier, to pool parties, beach raves or lakeside gigs, there's something here for everyone. Make a music festival your holiday of a lifetime in 2019...

SEA STAR FESTIVAL - SUPERSTAR DJs AND MEDITERRANEAN POOL PARTIES IN CROATIA

May 24-25|seastarfestival.com (<http://www.seastarfestival.com>)

Acts Announced: Sven Vath, Nina Kraviz, IAMDDDB, Illario Alicante, Enrico Sangiuliano, Petar Dundov live, Vojko V, Krankšvester, High5, Fox, DJ Jock, Lawrence Klein, Unique, Hazze, Buntai, Smoke Mardeljano and many more.

Sea Star is another coastal dance extravaganza hatched by the experts behind EXIT, so it's no surprise that it's been nominated in the Best Medium Sized Festival category in this year's European Festival Awards – less than two years after its first edition (it was also nominated for Best New Festival last year). Sea Star will return this year to the idyllic Stella Maris lagoon in Umag, Croatia on May 24 and 25, with special opening and closing parties on the 23rd and 26th. With over 70 artists on six stages, from local Balkan heroes to international superstars, Sea Star is an event with high production values in a stunning Mediterranean paradise. And if you need a time-out from dancing, Umag's historical Baroque and Renaissance buildings and winding streets are a hive of quaint bars and restaurants. Still, it won't be long before you're drawn back to the lagoon with that 4/4 pulse nearby... Sea Star festival takes place from May 24-25, with an opening party on May 23 and a closing party on May 26.

SECRET SOLSTICE - GLACIER RAVES AND SURREAL MIDNIGHT SUNSHINE IN ICELAND

June 21-23|secretsolstice.is (<http://www.secretsolstice.is>)

Acts announced: Black Eyed Peas, Robert Plant and the Sensational Spaceshifters, Martin Garrix, Rita Ora, Patti Smith Morcheeba, The Sugarhill Gang with, Grandmaster Melle Mel & Scorpio, Foreign Beggars, Pussy Riot Kerri, Chandler, MK, Mr.G, Jeremy Underground, Boy Pablo, SMASH TV and many more.

Secret Solstice is all about unique experiences – the most obvious being the fact that the sun doesn't set for the whole 72 hours, so get used to midnight pool parties in bright sunshine. As well as an eclectic line-up of US, European and local acts, Iceland's premiere music festival is a bucket list party in the capital Reykjavik during the magical summer solstice. The carbon-neutral festival prides itself on using Iceland's stunning natural spaces and rugged landscape as a backdrop – while the main stage hosts many of the blockbuster acts, you can literally have an underground vibe, at exclusive raves in a glacier and a 5,000-year-old lava tunnel. Back above ground, catch DJ sets in naturally heated lagoons or at boat parties in the midnight sunshine – and marvel at glistening waterfalls, black sand beaches, caves and vast volcanic fields on special day trips. Secret Solstice is celebrating its fifth anniversary, and 2019 is set to be its biggest edition yet.

EXIT FESTIVAL - PARTY IN A 17th CENTURY FORTRESS OVERLOOKING THE DANUBE IN SERBIA

July 4-7|exitfest.org (<http://www.exitfest.org>)

Acts announced: The Cure, Carl Cox, Paul Kalkbrenner, Greta Van Fleet, Dimitri Vegas & Like Mike, Maceo Plex, Boris Brejcha, Tom Walker, Jeff Mills, Charlotte de Witte, Peggy Gou, Amelie Lens, Lost Frequencies, Sofi Tukker, Dax DJ and many more

For four days every summer, the 17th century Petrovaradin Fortress opens its gates for EXIT – the award-winning music festival in Serbia's second city, Novi Sad. EXIT began in 2000 as a student protest fighting for political change, and over the years it's grown into one of Europe's biggest festivals, with [thousands] partying in the stunning citadel perched high on a cliff overlooking the River Danube. The positive activism remains in the air, and each year has a specific theme (it was 'Freedom' in 2018). EXIT has possibly the most diverse line-up of any European festival, with 20 outdoor stages that feature everything from death metal to pop, indie, reggae and techno – among cobbled paths, courtyards, grass verges, ramparts and underground tunnels. The Dance Arena is the festival's energetic hub, with 20,000 raving in the fortress moat waiting for the awe-inspiring moment when the sun rises above the ancient walls. Many DJs say the Dance Arena is the greatest place in the world to play, and after Nina Kraviz closed EXIT 2018 with an extended set until 9am, she called it "one of the most special places on Earth".

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE – WHERE YOU ARE WHO YOU ARE WHEN NO ONE CAN SEE YOU

July 5 – 7 July|rabbitresort.nl (<http://www.rabbitresort.nl>)

Acts Announced: Editors, Janelle Monáe, Underworld, Thom Yorke - Tomorrow's Modern Boxes, Foals, Vampire Weekend, De Staat, Balthazar, dEUS plays The Ideal Crash, Grace Jones, Robyn, The Roots, Ronnie Flex & Deuxperience, Rosalía, Skepta, AURORA, Beirut, Cory Henry & The Funk Apostles, David August, Kamasi Washington, Khruangbin, Lewis Capaldi, LP, Mahalia, Maribou State, Matt Corby, Ólafur Arnalds, Parquet Courts, RY X, Sofi Tukker, Agar Agar, Amber Arcades, Donny Benet, Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes, slowthai, George FitzGerald and many More.

Down The Rabbit Hole says adventure, confusion, surrealism and psychedelics, which has been an inspiration for (psycho) rockers, DJs, artists, designers and filmmakers ever since the rise of the pop culture in the uncurbed 1960s... Good company, so get ready to tumble! We have all the time in the world, there's no rush. Take your time to dine in dozens of restaurants from all corners of the earth, go meditate in the forest, lie down in the green pasture, swim for a bit, strum by the campfire, discover hidden discos... Have a ball with brand-new bands or finally see that classic artist in full swing. We're out and we're loose! Build your own party and celebrate, enjoy what you do, all with an open mind and in a sustainable way: we'll keep it green & clean. A trip to Down The Rabbit Hole is a perfect summer getaway! Bring your own camping gear or rent luxurious accommodations at our Rabbit Resort at Groene Heuvels - Beuningen (near Nijmegen).

OFF FESTIVAL - A VOYAGE OF UNDERGROUND DISCOVERY IN POLAND

August 2-4|off-festival.pl (<http://www.off-festival.pl>)

Acts Announced: Suede, Neneh Cherry, Aldous Harding, Superorganism, Perfect Son, Electric Wizard, The Gaslamp Killer, IC3PEAK, Daughters, Lotic: Endless Power, Lotic: Endless Power, The Body, Dezerter gra „Underground out of Poland”, slowthai, Black Midi, Trio Jazzowe Marcina Maseckiego, OM, SAMA', Jakuzi and many more.

OFF is a unique boutique festival that values experimentation and diversity above everything else – with founder and organiser Artur Rojek’s hands-on vision an inspiration to ambitious promoters and dreamers worldwide. OFF takes place in ‘Valley of Three Ponds’, Katowice – a beautiful green hideaway in the industrial Silesia region, with a huge choice of bars, restaurants and cultural centres to explore in the city close by. OFF ignores popular trends in favour of an expertly curated programme of esteemed artists – with the festival bringing many acts to Poland for the first time. It was created in 2006 as a way for Rojek to indulge his “dreams and passion for sharing music”, even if that means a black metal band can play next to a techno DJ, a post-punk act, avant-garde noise-rock, hip-hop, jazz, post-rock and beyond. From the greatest international underground heroes to essential forward-thinking Polish artists, OFF is an inspirational meeting of minds.

LOWLANDS - MUSIC, ART AND CULTURE CLASH AT THE DUTCH CAMPING PARADISE

August 16-18|[lowlands.nl](http://www.lowlands.nl) (<http://www.lowlands.nl>)

Acts Announced: Tame Impala, Twenty One Pilots, A\$AP Rocky, Anderson .Paak & The Free Nationals, The National, New Order, Royal Blood, Anne-Marie, Billie Eilish, Franz Ferdinand, Giorgio Moroder, The Good, The Bad & The Queen, Jon Hopkins, Jorja Smith, Jungle, Paul Kalkbrenner, Ronnie Flex & Deuxperience, Agoria (live), Antal, Denis Sulta, Denzel Curry, FKJ, Frank Turner and the Sleeping Souls, Helena Hauff, Honey Dijon, Hunee, JOJI, Lowlands Science, Jungle by Night, Mall Grab, Marcel Dettmann, MY BABY, Parcels, The Streets, Thomas Azier, Weval, Ziggy Marley, Boy Pablo, Idles, Slaves and many more.

A Campingflight to Lowlands Paradise is the Netherlands’ most prestigious music festival that’s been a rite of passage for the Dutch since 1993. It takes place in rural Biddinghuizen – only an hour away from Amsterdam, so there’s even a chance to add in a city break either side. It’s a true music, arts and culture weekender, featuring the world’s biggest headliners on the circuit, as well as installations, theatre, comedy, film, debates and even science workshops. Each of the uniquely designed stages are covered so you can party rain or shine, and the iconic ‘Armadillo’ area is the festival’s power station, quirky bars, DJ booths and artisan restaurant areas that surpass regular festival food stalls. The Dutch are world-renowned as expert festival organisers, and Lowlands is a perfect smooth operator, from the intuitive layout to the lack of queues for bars, food and bathrooms – with the best campsite facilities of all the big European festivals. It’s a proper lost weekend too – Lowlands doesn’t do day tickets, so once you arrive on the Thursday you’re on a journey with your fellow happy campers until Sunday. This vibe was picked up by 2018 headliner Nile Rodgers, who posted: “Lowlands was fire! This was an amazing f-ing crowd! Truly insane, and that’s how we like it!”

SEA DANCE FESTIVAL - PARTY ON THE STUNNING ADRIATIC COAST IN MONTENEGRO

August 30 – September 1|seadancefestival.me ([http://www.\[seadancefestival.me](http://www.[seadancefestival.me))

Acts Announced: David Guetta more tba

Sea Dance in Montenegro is an extension of the EXIT family – a gold standard guarantee in the festival world. Like EXIT, Sea Dance is also an award-winner, and was voted Best Medium Sized Festival at the European Festival Awards after its first edition in 2014. The festival bottles some of the magic of EXIT’s dance stages and transports it to the alluring golden sand beach of Budva on the Adriatic coast, with narrow medieval streets just a short walk away. EXIT’s famous No Sleep Novi Sad stage is repackaged for Sea Dance, with over 100 performers shared around numerous other stages. Even as a

relatively new addition to the festival scene, Sea Dance already has reputation for securing the biggest names in electronic music. Montenegro was recently listed by Skyscanner as the number one cheap holiday destination, with mountain biking, hiking and watersports available for those with energy left after dancing all night to the world's biggest DJs.

AMSTERDAM DANCE EVENT - IMMERSE YOURSELF IN ELECTRONIC MUSIC CULTURE

October 16 – 20|amsterdam-dance-event.nl (<http://www.amsterdam-dance-event.nl>)

Acts to be announced soon

Amsterdam is world famous as a hub for nightlife and electronic music, and every October it becomes the centre of the electronic music universe for five days during the Amsterdam Dance Event (ADE). Some 400,000 people hit the Dutch capital every year for ADE, which features more than 2,500 international artists performing in over 100 of Amsterdam's most iconic venues including Melkweg, Gashouder, Claire, Shelter, Paradiso, the NDSM Docklands and De School. But it's not simply a five-day rave – ADE offers an inspirational conference programme that covers all aspects of dance music culture and the industry. By day, across Amsterdam's five main districts, there are dozens of seminars, workshops, exhibitions, artist interviews, feature and documentary screenings, DJ showcases and tech classes. Amsterdam Dance Event takes place over five days every October and is the ultimate festival for electronic music fans, who can even learn more about the culture between the parties.

Contact:

Nikki McNeill|Global Publicity
nikki@globalpublicity.co.uk
07957 454517