

EXTREME

Nine Spine-Tingling Adventures

Superstitions claim that cats have nine lives and will land on their feet, no matter the height of a fall. Do you land feet first? Are you ready to find out if you have nine lives? Face fear with these heart-stopping outdoor thrills in Europe.

1 Bungee Jumping

It takes nerves of steel and a need for speed to step off a ledge with only an elastic cord to stop your plummet toward the ground. Take a deep breath before plunging from death-defying heights in Europe.

Graze the turquoise water of the Corinth Canal in Greece. Nose-dive into a valley from Europe's highest suspension bridge bungee, located in Niouc, Switzerland. Relive James Bond's stunt in "Goldeneye" with a fall from Switzerland's Verzasca Dam, more than 700 feet above ground, and jump at night for an extra scare. In Austria, leap from the 630-foot-tall Europabrücke Bridge, the Kolnbrein Dam or a hot air balloon! Search by country, jump height and price at <http://bungee-jumping.findthebest.com>.

2 Canyoning

Get soaked as you navigate a gorge by rappelling, climbing, sliding over rapids and waterfalls, and running off cliffs into raging water. If you're not a good swimmer or can't handle heights, you should sit this one out.

Never tried canyoning? Get your feet wet with the beginner program at Area 47 in Tyrol, Austria. Traverse a route with guides who will show you the ropes of canyoning. But beware that the introductory course starts with a rappel from a 50-foot-tall suspension bridge. Area 47 also has intermediate and advanced excursions. Read more about Area 47's action-packed treks at www.area47.at/en.

Sport Center Bovec in Bovec, Slovenia offers canyoning in four zones, including a beginner area. On the Globoški advanced course, challenge yourself to an altitude

change of nearly 1,000 feet from start to finish. Plan your triumph at www.bovec-sc.si.

Turkey has dozens of canyons and countless companies leading expeditions. Travel to the Antalya region to descend the most canyons and lounge at a beach resort afterward. Learn more at www.goturkeytourism.com.

3 Coasteering

Ever heard of coasteering? You'll meander along a rugged coastline by swimming, scurrying over slick boulders (without ropes) over deep water, and occasionally leaping off cliffs into the ocean.

Coasteering is growing in popularity in France, the Maltese Islands and Croatia. However, the U.K. has the greatest cluster of coasteering passages. Swim, clamber and jump along the chilly waters of Cornwall and Devon, England; the Llyn Peninsula and Anglesea, Wales; Fort William, Scotland; and the Scottish islands. Review tour firms and locations at www.gogetadventure.com/18/83/coasteering_europe.

4 Ice Climbing

Buckle your harness and ascend sheer ice formations, snow-covered crags and frozen waterfalls. Ice climbing is more challenging than mountain climbing, as frigid temperatures and slick surfaces slow your progress. One piece of advice: don't look down until you reach the top.

The Chamonix and La Grave ski areas of France, the Swiss Alps and Cairngorms National Park in Scotland are ideal locations for this perilous endeavor. But for unparalleled ice climbing in Europe, travel to Rjukan, Norway. Visit www.adventureconsultants.com, www.alpin-ism.com, www.gethigh.co.uk or www.expedition-guide.com to sign up for an ice climbing course and guided ascent.

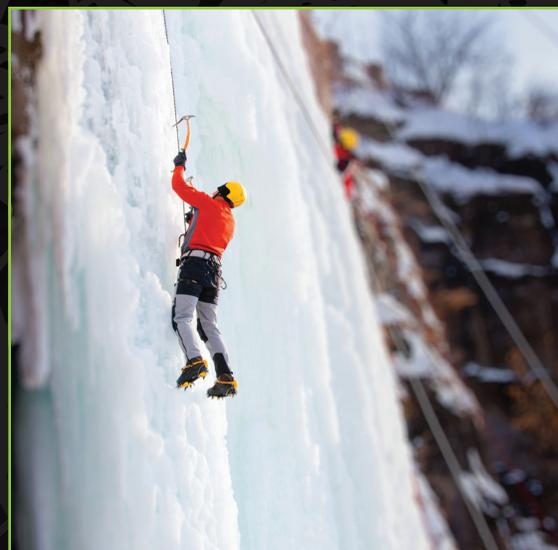
5 Ice Driving

Your heart won't be the only thing racing as you steer and drift your dream sports car over an icy trail of obstacles. Porsche 911s, Corvettes, BMWs and Audis are specially equipped for the ice and sub-zero temperatures of northern Europe.

Ice Driver is located in rural Sweden. Swerve across the frozen lake, then have a beer and sit back in the hot tub at Hotel Brucket, located next door. Visit www.ice-driver.com for more details.

With Below Zero, you'll start on an easy course to learn the art of ice driving. Next, speed up to 100 miles per hour on the serpentine Ice Rally, a demanding course that emulates the stages of the World Rally Championship. Book your Swedish driving course at www.belowzeroicedriving.com.

Put your life in your own hands. Drive solo on Europe's longest ice thoroughfare, 16 miles of the frozen Baltic Sea between Rohuküla, Estonia and the Estonian island of Hiiumaa. Timber is placed over impassable cracks worn into the ice, and you must remain ready to escape a sinking vehicle.



OUTDOORS

Face Fear with These Thrills

6 Kite Skiing

As if downhill skiing in Europe isn't exciting enough, raise the stakes with kite skiing or snow kiting. Strap on skis and a parachute to let the wind propel you across fresh powder. You may even get some air as you glide over the white stuff.

Kite skiing is available at many ski resorts, including Chamonix, France. The turf of Iceland's Langjökull Glacier is also a haven for kite skiing. The sport isn't as easy as it sounds, so take lessons while on a ski holiday in Austria at www.snowkiting.at or in Switzerland at www.snowkiting.ch.

7 Shark Diving

You can't help but think of that infamous "DAH dum" horror movie music as you scuba dive with a top predator. European waters are habitats for many graceful and powerful shark species that you can observe, perhaps too close for comfort.

See an array of blue sharks and manta rays in the Azores of Portugal; you may even spot mako, hammerhead or whale sharks. Companies offering outings include Cetacean Watching (CW) Azores (www.cwazores.com) and Dive the Azores (www.divetheazores.com).

Off the coast of Oban, Scotland, you'll come face to face with the world's second-largest fish, the basking shark. These plankton-eating creatures can grow to more than 30 feet in length. Schedule a voyage through <http://baskingsharkscotland.co.uk>.

Diving with sharks in open water is certainly intimidating, but you can opt to swim with these prehistoric predators while in a protective cage. Cage diving opportunities are available in Cornwall, England through www.atlanticdiver.co.uk. Richard Peirce has spent years filming Cornwall's sharks and advocating for their protection. Form a group of four or eight to schedule a trip with this expert via www.peirceshark.com/shark.cornwall.



If you're not a certified diver, go to a shop partnered with a training agency, such as the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), Professional Diving Instructors Corporation (PDIC) and Scuba Schools International (SSI). Or, scuba with sand tiger sharks, eels and rays in Scotland's National Aquarium (www.deepseaworld.com), where certification is not required.

8 Skydiving

For some, jumping out of a plane is insane. For others, it's an incredible rush. If skydiving is on your bucket list, why not choose incredible scenery to watch during your free fall? Dropzone.com lists skydiving locations by European country, whether you want to land in Luxembourg or touch down in Turkey. But for out-of-this-world skydiving, head to the following hot spots.

Gaze at the majestic Swiss Alps and shimmering sapphire Thun and Brienz lakes of Inter-

laken, Switzerland from high in the sky. Or see Mount Edna, Europe's tallest and most active volcano, as you parachute over Sicily. Are you a daredevil? Take Europe's highest dive — toppling out at 15,000 feet — in Seville, Spain.

9 Zorbing

You'll look like a hamster on its wheel as you barrel down a hill in a huge inflated ball. It's fast, bumpy, dizzying and fun. Pod London (www.zorbing.co.uk) is a park dedicated to zorbing, and Latvia's Ramkalni Recreational Park (www.ramkalni.lv/eng) features zorbing and other fun activities. For a more frightening ride, reserve a night zorbing run in Prague through <http://zorbingpraha.cz>.

How much will you risk for these nine exhilarating, jaw-dropping and terrifying experiences? Be daring, get photos for proof, and live to tell your tale. Want to share your stories? Tell us at contentteam@stripes.com. ■