

BEATEN BUT NOT BROKEN
 Sarajevo: Although only separated by a hundred miles and connected by a common tongue, Sarajevo and Dubrovnik feel like worlds apart. Gone are the masses of tourists and the seemingly bilingual population of locals hawking water, postcards and boat tours at every turn. A beat up tram turns the corner of Sarajevo's Old Turkish Town, bypassing minarets, Catholic and Orthodox churches, coffee shops and vendors in the Bazaar, who sell everything from bongos and evil-eye pendants to discarded Serbian army helmets and exploded mines. Although the streets are lined with bullet holes and ghostly ruins, there's a lingering sense of joy on the faces of Sarajevo's people as they drink their deadly strong coffee and dance the night away to the hauntingly beautiful vibes of this enigmatic land.



ANCIENT TOWN, MODERN FACES
 Prague: A Czech version of the tube noisily makes its way underneath this ancient capital that has seen countless dynasties and regimes, Golems and alchemists, heretics and revolutionaries, Hollywood productions and British weekend stag parties. One of the best ways to glimpse into a society is through its public transport; every crowded train and each hurried face tells a different story.



THE SACRED, THE PROFANE AND THE BANAL
 Canterbury, England: The last stage of my journey took me to the shores of jolly old England, where I attended parties in a 500-year-old country home, visited delightful seaside villages with their pints of "bitter," took stuffy rides on the Tube, and, among other things, always got in on the wrong side of the car. Although I made the requisite stop in London, I ventured to the charming villages and countryside, making a day trip out to Canterbury. Although I missed my first train out there and the mobile my friends had lent me died, my journey there was far from the experience Chaucer had described centuries before. As I wandered down the ancient cobblestone streets, I walked past kebab restaurants, heavy metal and sporting goods shops, and recruiting offices for the British Army. I tried the best I could to find an authentically English experience, but all it came down to was eating a greasy meat pie. Not to be discouraged, I kept walking until I came across the hollowed Cathedral, once the shrine to the martyred Thomas Beckett and the stuff of legends (and nightmares to less diligent English students). Right next to the Cathedral gates, complete with a giant bronze statue of Jesus, and directly across from a war memorial, I encountered the bane of the Western world: Starbucks. Although this country was English-speaking and definitively shaped the course of Canada's history, the four pound lattes, more than anything else, reminded me that I was close to home.

