

off the fence.

Wildest Europe

5 x 60'

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

1. Land of Ice & Snow

While the majority of the Europe experiences a mild climate throughout the year, certain northern regions are faced with extremes. Winter temperatures often drop to minus 40 degrees Celsius pushing life to its absolute limits. From the world's largest predator, the Polar bear, roaming Europe's icy plains to the smallest land carnivore, the weasel, thriving within the frozen forests. This hostile, white-covered world, sees only the toughest survive. Creatures have little choice but to adapt or die.

2. Rivers Lakes and Oceans

Europe's rivers wind their way from the continent's snow capped mountains, through valleys and across grassland plains, carving the landscape and providing food and habitats for thousands of species. From tiny aquatic spiders hiding amongst river reeds, to the largest creature on the planet, the blue whale, cruising the continent's western most shores, Europe's waters are vital to the lives of so many. Connected in an endless cycle, the continent's rivers, lakes and ocean's are intrinsically linked - without them, life would cease to exist.

3. The Alps

The Alps are one of the largest and highest mountain ranges on the Planet and represent one of Europe's last natural strongholds. This web of peaks and valleys divides the deciduous forests of central Europe from the arid evergreen forests of the Mediterranean and supports a huge variety of habitats, from verdant valleys and steep mountain gorges to ice and rock fields that dominate the summits. Glaciers, avalanches and severe winters, continuously contour the landscape and are the driving force behind a huge diversity of life. The mountains home to over 30,000 animal species and 13,000 plants. Creatures, big and small, have evolved remarkable adaptations in order to survive in these unforgiving yet beautiful landscapes.

4. Forest and Woodlands

Stretching across Europe are two very different forests. The Taiga of the North is unforgiving in the harsh winter season, but under its evergreen canopy, brown bears and wolves roam as they have done for thousands of years. In central Europe, the slopes of the Carpathian Mountains are home to an ancient forest, which transforms with the seasons. Here the forest floor is alive with hidden creatures and many, like the fire salamander, hold legendary status. This wooded arena is a stage for battles great and small. Red deer clash antlers in order to claim rights to next year's offspring, as squirrels race to collect all they can before the cold weather sets in. For Europe's creatures, the forests are a protector and provider, without which, few would survive.

5. Arid Lands

The Mediterranean region is one of the most infamous on the planet. At the southernmost latitudes of Europe it experiences high temperatures and low rainfall to make it one of the driest on the continent. In conjunction with sudden downpours and humid cool winters, its climate has a profound influence on the region's habitats and their vegetation and wildlife. From the swathes of evergreen forests that shade the dense carpets of scrub and aromatic herbs on the Iberian Peninsula, to the coasts and myriad of islands hugged by the Mediterranean Sea; it has a rich biodiversity of birds, reptiles, insects and plants. Many species exist nowhere else in the world; over half make up the 25,000 recorded plant species as well as being home to the world's most endangered cat, the Iberian lynx. Despite its barren and arid appearance, it holds many a treasure waiting to be discovered.

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