**RICK STEVES**

**BIOGRAPHY**

Rick Steves advocates smart, affordable, perspective-broadening travel. As host and writer of the popular public television series [*Rick Steves' Europe*](https://www.ricksteves.com/watch-read-listen/video/tv-show), and author of a best-selling guidebook series on European travel, he encourages Americans to travel as "temporary locals." His mission: to empower Americans to have European trips that are fun, affordable, and culturally broadening.

Over the past 20 years, Rick has hosted more than 100 travel shows for public television, and numerous pledge specials (raising millions of dollars for local stations). His [*Rick Steves' Europe*](https://www.ricksteves.com/watch-read-listen/video/tv-show) TV series is carried by over 300 stations, reaching 95 percent of US markets. Rick has also created three award-winning specials for public television: [*European Christmas*](https://www.ricksteves.com/tv-programmers/specials/christmas), the ground-breaking [*Iran: Yesterday and Today*](https://www.ricksteves.com/tv-programmers/specials/iran), and most recently [*European Festivals*](https://www.ricksteves.com/watch-read-listen/video/tv-show/european-festivals). Rick writes and co-produces his television programs through his media company.

Rick Steves also hosts a weekly public radio program, [*Travel with Rick Steves*](https://www.ricksteves.com/watch-read-listen/audio/radio). With a broader approach to travel everywhere, in each hour-long program Rick interviews guest travel experts, followed by listener call-ins. *Travel with Rick Steves* airs across the country on more than 400 radio stations and as a popular podcast. Rick has also created a mobile app, [Rick Steves Audio Europe](https://www.ricksteves.com/watch-read-listen/audio/audio-europe), which organizes his vast library of self-guided audio walking tours and radio interviews into geographic playlists covering Europe's top sights, travel tips, and cultural insights.

Rick self-published the first edition of his travel skills book, [*Europe Through the Back Door*](https://store.ricksteves.com/shop/p/europe-through-the-back-door) (now updated annually), in 1980. He has also written more than 80 European travel guidebooks and phrase books. For several years, *Rick Steves Italy* has been the bestselling international guidebook sold in the US. In 2009, Rick tackled a new genre of travel writing with [*Travel as a Political Act*](https://store.ricksteves.com/shop/p/travel-political-act), reflecting on how a life of travel has broadened his own perspectives, and how travel can be a significant force for peace and understanding in the world. Rick's books are published by Avalon Travel, a member of the Hachette Book Group.

In addition to his guidebooks, TV, and radio work, Rick is a [syndicated newspaper columnist](https://www.ricksteves.com/watch-read-listen/read/articles) with the Tribune Media Services. He appears frequently on television, radio, and online as the leading authority on European travel. He is also an active blogger and on social media sites such as [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ricksteves), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ricksteves), and [Pinterest](http://pinterest.com/ricksteves/).

Rick took his first trip to Europe in 1969, visiting piano factories with his father, a piano importer. By the time he reached 18, Rick jokes, "I realized I didn't need my parents to travel!" He began traveling on his own, funding his trips by teaching piano lessons. In 1976, he started Rick Steves' Europe (RSE), a business that has grown from a one-man operation to a company with a well-traveled staff of over 100 full-time employees. RSE offers free travel information through its [Travel Center](https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-help/visit-our-travel-center), website ([www.ricksteves.com](https://www.ricksteves.com/)), and [travel newsletters](https://www.ricksteves.com/publications/travel-news-email). RSE also runs a successful European [tour program](https://www.ricksteves.com/tours) organizing small-group tours that take more than 30,000 travelers to Europe annually.

Rick is outspoken on the need for Americans to fit better into our planet by broadening our perspectives through travel. He is also committed to his own neighborhood. He's an active member of the Lutheran church and with advocacy groups focused on economic and social justice, drug policy reform, and ending hunger. He's a board member of NORML (the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws). And Rick gave his local YWCA a 24-unit apartment building to provide transitional housing for homeless mothers and their children.

Rick Steves spends about a third of every year in Europe, researching guidebooks, filming TV shows, and making new discoveries for travelers. To recharge, Rick plays piano, relaxes at his family cabin in the Cascade mountains, and spends time with his son Andy and daughter Jackie. He lives and works in his hometown of Edmonds, Washington, where his office window overlooks his old junior high school.

Email Rick at [rick@ricksteves.com](mailto:rick@ricksteves.com), or write to him c/o 130 4th Ave N, Edmonds, WA 98020.