


Arco & Iris

travel round Europe

France, United Kingdom, Portugal





*Dear readers,
We pick up our tour around Europe with Arco and Iris where we left them in Cologne, tired but ready for new adventures.*

By now, the children have become very good at handling their savings and you will have seen that in their trips to Montenegro and Germany they had to make wide decisions, weighting up the pros and cons.

Following Arco and Iris is also an opportunity to learn more about the countries they visit. We hope that this is a pleasant reminder for the reader: understanding better the people who live in these countries helps to enjoy the adventure better and we hope everyone will take part.

During the first part of the tour, we learned something more about inflation, we understood the difference between the face value and the real value of money, and we began to understand how the price of goods is established. What else are we going to learn!

Let's enjoy the last part of the tour of Europe and learn from the advice of Arco and Iris: they want to help everyone, especially children, to make their dreams come true.

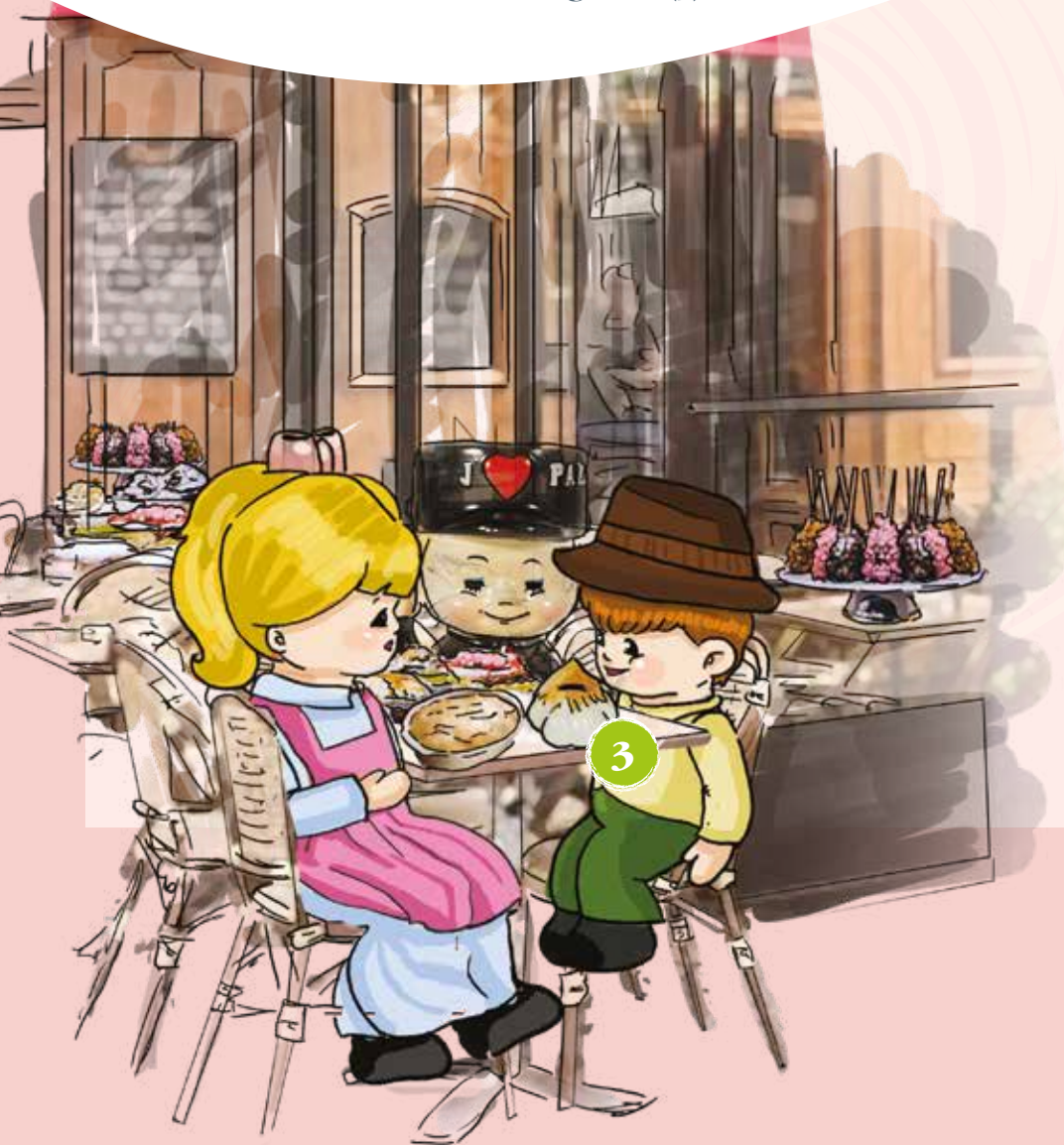
The adventures of Arco and Iris have been dictated to the director of the Museum, Giovanna Paladino, and the curator of the collection, Lilli Chiariglione.

The train was heading south-west and entered France through the Vosges, a beautiful region full of forests and Arco and Iris were really pleased to see a **woodman (1)** working in a clearing.



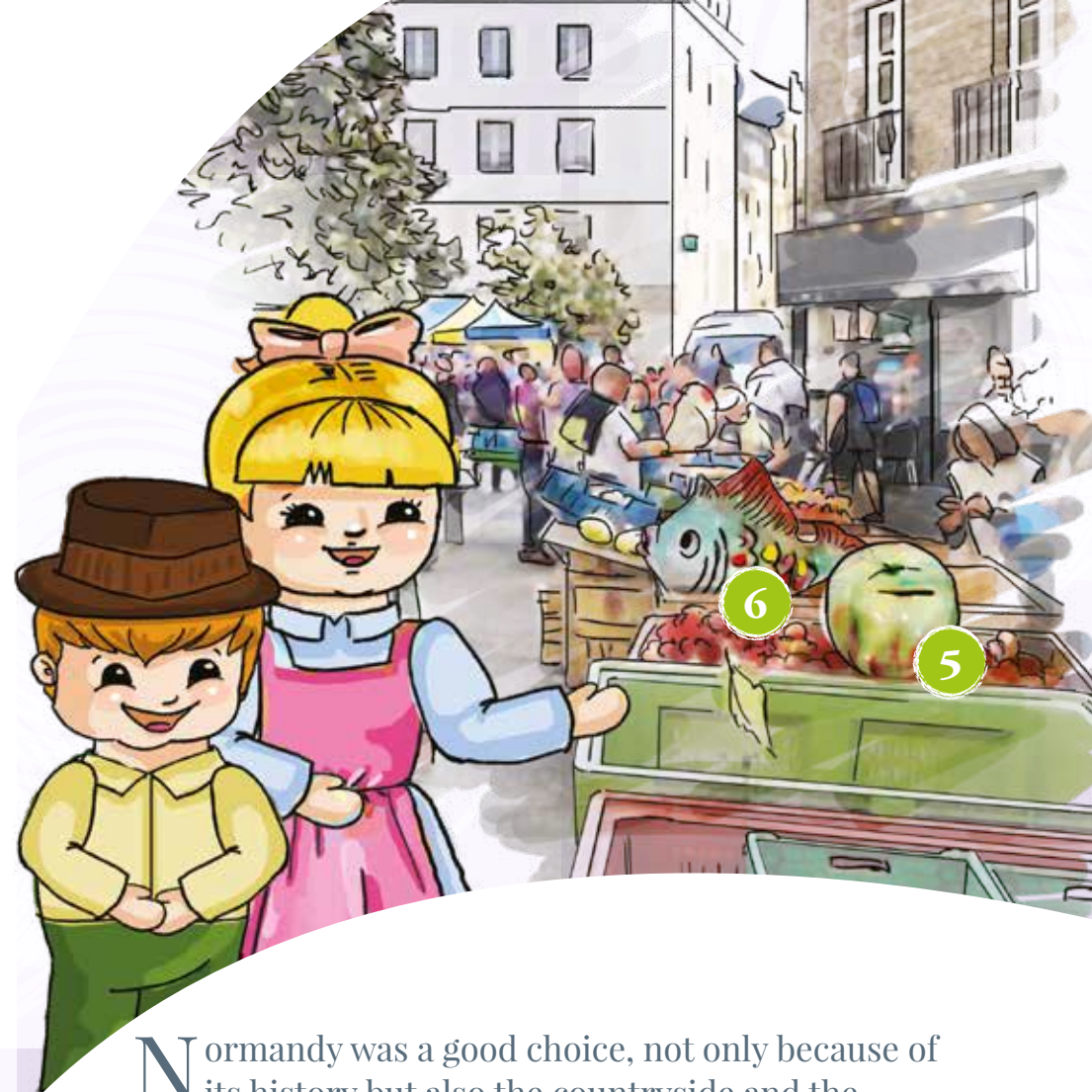
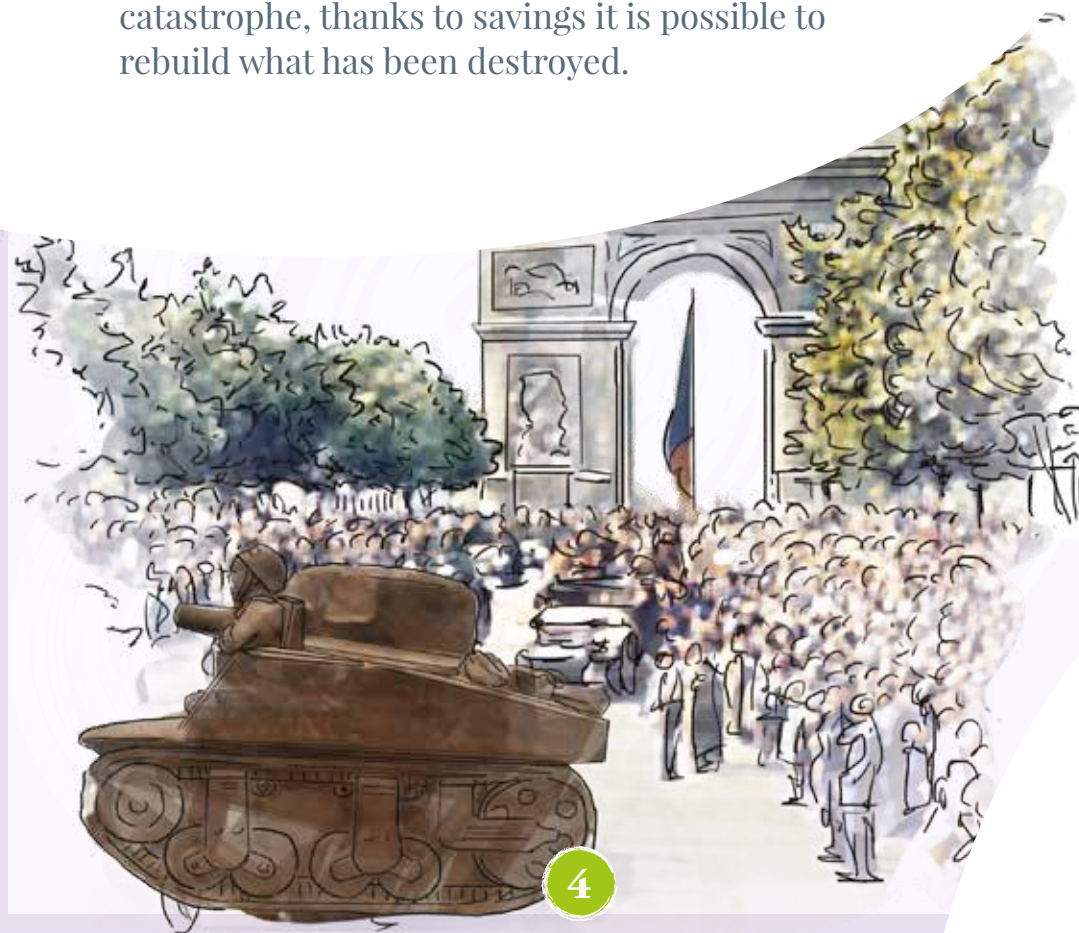
Their stay in France obviously had to start in Paris and a visit to the famous Louvre art gallery and museum. They asked for directions from a sweet **little boy dressed as a gendarme (2)** on his way back from a school play. They were really lucky as he has spent many annual holidays in Italy and speaks the language quite well.

So, they passed the afternoon with him acting as guide; he even took them to eat in a pretty *bistro* that served traditional dishes; everything was delicious but...what a lot of **garlic (3)!!!**



Paris is an amazing city – shame about the prices. Most of the hotel prices are prohibitive, but the brother and sister – who had *planned everything* – stayed in a *chambre d'hôtes*, a room in the apartment of an Indian lady. They only stayed in Paris for two days so as not to overspend their budget and also because they wanted to see other parts of France.

Taking another train, they went to Normandy and as they passed through Arco and Iris remembered a money box they had seen in a shop in the shape of a **tank (4)** that had been made as a memento of when Paris had been liberated from the Nazis at the end of the war. But why make a money box like a tank? Maybe it had a deeper meaning: in the most difficult times, like after a war or a natural catastrophe, thanks to savings it is possible to rebuild what has been destroyed.



Normandy was a good choice, not only because of its history but also the countryside and the great food: it was also much cheaper than Paris! *“Look Arco, here the fields are all farmed, there are great **apples (5)**, **fish (6)** is quite cheap and plentiful, and a lot of other produce is easily available, therefore transport costs do not have much effect on prices”* Iris said in a know-all sort of way.

Using buses and a little car-sharing, the two children arrived in Calais, passing along the Channel and admiring the many sail **boats (7)** that rocked in the waves. The white cliffs that framed them mirrored those of England - the famous White Cliffs of Dover... their destination!



Their stay in England would be very brief and they would visit only London and a few villages in the countryside. The first problem was to change their euros into **pounds sterling (8)**, as that was the currency used in the country, so they had to work out how much they were spending every time... a real headache!

In London, everything was very expensive, but Iris and Arco had decided it was worth spending a little more so that they could have some lovely memories. In the morning they took a tourist ride on one of the famous **double-decker busses (9)**. They were lucky enough to get seats on the top floor and could enjoy the sights: the Thames, the parks, Westminster Cathedral...



And they were not going to miss a visit to the Tower of London for anything where they could admire the **Crown Jewels (10)**! The building and its history were very interesting, but Arco and Iris were more curious to meet the Yeomen of the Guard, better known as the **Beefeaters (11)**: there were three money boxes in their likeness at the Museum!

At the end of the tour, they took a *black cab*, the most famous taxis in the world and there were two models in the museum. They went to a pub and drank a **beer (12)** and watched the other customers.



12



13

Leaving London, Arco and Iris travelled into the English countryside where they admired the **cottages (13)** and some more luxurious houses. They discovered that in these areas, although prices have risen, for the same amount of money needed to buy a small flat in London, you could purchase a much larger house with a garden.

“Arco, you remember that in a podcast For and Mica talk about the prices being linked to supply and demand” said Iris. “Until recently, demand was low, and houses cost less, but now that more people want to buy them to move out to the country, prices have gone up. It’s called market law.”



They took a bus and left the green English countryside to go to Stansted airport where they would take their low-cost flight to Portugal, the last stop of the trip.

They had decided to finish their European “tour” in Portugal because they wanted to see the westernmost part of Europe. It was also a hospitable country and things cost less than elsewhere so that they could stay a little longer.

Lisbon, the capital city, was beautiful. The largest square in the city, rebuilt after the 1755 earthquake, is called *Praça do commercio* (commerce square) and it was, in fact, there that traders exchanged foreign goods that arrived by ship, after months of sailing, and where it was decided where to send them off to far-off and often unknown foreign lands.



Arco and Iris were in a country that suffered much in the 2008 financial crisis. And yet, Portugal had a glorious past; together with Spain, it was one of the first colonial empires and its colonies sent back spices, gold, silver, diamonds and other precious stones, sugar, coffee, and other products, together, sadly, with **slaves** (14).

The opening of the “spice route” by sea made it no longer necessary to use Arab, Persian, **Turkish (15)** and Venetian traders, that raised the price of pepper, nutmeg, cloves, and other rarities, all of which had made the Portuguese very rich!



*“You see Arco – explained Iris in her usual know-it-all voice – by being able to get the spices and other expensive goods directly without paying any intermediaries increased Portuguese income enormously. However, it is also true that good times, like difficult times, do not last forever, as the history of this country shows, and for this reason, as some of our money boxes prove, even when the sun shines you must plan for the **rainy days (16)!**”*

From Lisbon, Arco and Iris headed south. They spent a couple of nights in the *pousadas* along the way as they were very nice hotels that did not cost a lot. The restaurants did not cost them a lot, either. The main dish was, naturally, fish, especially *bacalà* (dried salted cod) and sardines, but also **pork (17)** and chicken, plus hot soups, and vegetables.



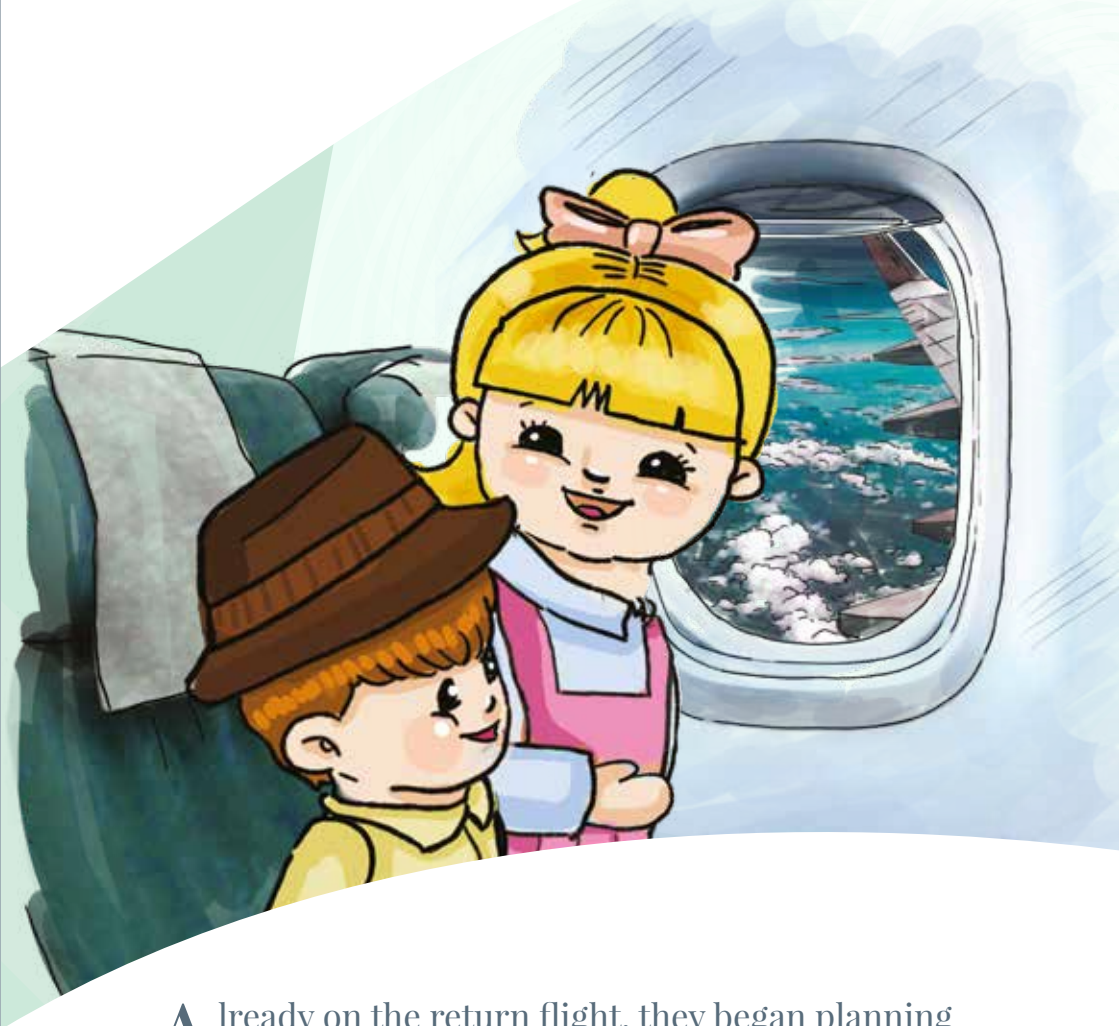
They went through Alentejo, a rural region with never-ending fields of sunflowers and olive-groves surrounding ancient little towns and isolated villages. They were surprised and pleased to see that **donkeys (18)** were still much used for transport in parts of the southern Alentejo.

They had concluded their unforgettable travels around the splendid region of the Algarve, at Cabo de Sao Vicente, the southernmost tip of Europe. Years ago, the promontory was the last strip of land that Portuguese **sailors (19)** would see before they sailed and then made into the unknown, risking their lives in the search for new worlds and new riches. At the end of the cape, there stood a wind-blown **lighthouse (20)** that showed the way for hundreds of **ships (21)** that pass that way every day.



But what struck Iris and Arco the most was to find the same language spoken in Brazil, their first destination! And now they knew why: Brazil had been a colony of the Portuguese empire. The coincidence made them feel they had closed the circle. Light-hearted, tired but very happy, they bought a few little presents with money they had left and took the bus to Lisbon where the **plane (22)** was waiting to take them home.

They had *planned* their trip well before starting; they had *used different* means of transport, places to stay and restaurants, they had immediately decided on what they absolutely must see or try; they met with local people to understand how to live in the countries they visited.



Already on the return flight, they began planning for their next clandestine trip away from the Museum, maybe in some exotic country, to discover other cultures and met new people that would help them become autonomous and feel part of a larger community than that of the Museum that, let's be honest, was beginning to feel a bit confined. And so, all we can do now is wait for the next adventure of Iris and Arco!

THE MUSEUM OF SAVING

The Museum of Saving

is a unique and innovative site designed to spread financial education.

Many people find it difficult to handle their capital due to a lack of basic economic-financial knowledge. The Museum aims to help these people to take rational and informed decisions that help them to reach their priority goals.

In the various rooms of the Museum of Saving, young children, adolescents, and adults follow a path that makes them aware of how to use money and to understand and experiment finance in an entertaining way.



Museum of Saving/Museo del Risparmio

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LIST OF MONEY BOXES

- 1 **Mechanical woodman**, 1940–1950, sheet, France
- 2 **Baby gendarme**, 1990s, hot and cold painted earthenware, France
- 3 **Head of garlic**, 1950–1960, ceramics, France
- 4 **Tank**, 1944, plaster, France
- 5 **Apple**, 1930–1940, ceramics, France
- 6 **Fish**, 1970s, porcelain, Italy
- 7 **Sailing boat**, 1940–1950, terracotta, France
- 8 **One pound sterling**, 1950–1960, plastic, GB
- 9 **Double-decker bus**, 1980s, plaster, GB
- 10 **Coronation crown of Elizabeth II**, 1953, metal, GB
- 11 **Yeoman of the Guard (Beefeater)**, 1930–1940, brass, GB
- 12 **Beer mug**, 1990s, ceramics, GB
- 13 **Cottage**, 1970–1980, ceramics, GB
- 14 **Bust of an African man**, 1940–1950, wood, plaster paste, unknown origin
- 15 **Turk's head**, 1930–1940, glazed earthenware, unknown origin

- 16 **Boy with umbrella**, 1950–1960, hard earthenware, GB
- 17 **Pig terrine**, 1930, ceramics, Portugal
- 18 **Donkey**, 1990–2000, plastic, rope, feathers, Portugal
- 19 **Little sailor**, 1960–1970, plaster and plastic, USA
- 20 **Lighthouse**, 2000s, plastic, France
- 21 **Ocean liner**, 1920–1930, terracotta, France
- 22 **Aeroplane**, 1970–1980, ceramics, Italy



www.museodelrisparmio.it