

The French Riviera

Located at the foot of the Alps, the Riviera lies along the Mediterranean coast.

Today's shoreline, graced by palms, sub-tropical flowers and the appropriately named Cote d'Azur, offers visitors the casinos, luxurious hotels and villas once reserved for Europe's elite.

But a few kilometers' back from the shore travellers can find a less-publicized side of the Riviera, featuring romantic hill towns, ancient chateaux, Roman ruins, modern museums and perfume factories.

Its warm winter temperatures make it an ideal year-round destination.

NICE

Located on the Baie des Anges, 32 km from the Italian border, the resort town of **Nice** is the capital of the French Riviera.

Sheltered by hills, Nice enjoys a pleasant climate which, in addition to its museums and beaches, has attracted visitors for years. Vieux Nice, the old town, is gathered around the hill of Le Chateau, titled for the castle that once stood there. Distinctly Italian in feel, the old town center is lined with galleries, boutiques and restaurants and boasts an impressive daily flower and vegetable market on the cours Saleya. The Nice harbor of Ville Franche sur mer (near Nice)

Recommended Places to see in Nice!

- **Place Massena:** is the city's main square overlooking the sea on the south side and the shopping street Avenue Jean Medecin jutting toward the north. Admire the beautiful fountain and the Albert I gardens. Place Masséna is an idyllic location to snap your photos, with hypnotic tilework, a grand fountain and seven tall statues that light up in the evening to serve as memorable backdrops.
- **Old Town:** the pedestrianized Vieille Ville, or Old Town, is a colorful nook of a neighborhood enjoyed by both travelers and locals alike for its narrow shop-lined streets and atmosphere. There you can find some authentic French restaurants and shops, not to mention the Cours Saleya flower, fruit and vegetable market. Visit in the morning to enjoy the local market. The neighborhood is also close to the beach if you want to take a break from the sun and grab a bite.
- **Promenade des Anglais:** runs parallel to the pebbly shore of Nice's beachfront, stretching for more than 4 miles along Baie des Anges. Locals simply refer to this world-famous stretch of road as the Promenade or La Prom. The wide boardwalk is not only a beautiful place for a stroll, but it's also a great place to get your directional bearings early on in your trip since the city's main attractions spoke off from here. Plus, with a dedicated lane for cyclists and plenty of stations for Vélo Bleu – the city's bike and e-bike sharing system along the route – it can be a great way to exercise while sightseeing. Along the way, keep your eyes peeled for La Chaise Bleue de SAB, a large iron sculpture of a blue chair created by Niçoise artist Sabine Géraudie that has become the unofficial symbol of the city. Also at Quai des Etats-Unis you can find a small replica of the Statue of Liberty.
- **Castle Hill:** Don't be surprised to hear a loud boom at noon during your visit to Nice. The city's midday cannon tradition dates from the 1860s. Today's cannon is actually a firework let off every day from Castle Hill. Castle Hill (Colline du Château) is more of an impressive hill than a castle. Even though most of the original Chateau de Nice structure has crumbled away, we recommend climbing the hundreds of steps to reach the stellar view from its peak.
- **Museum of Modern & Contemporary Art:** The popular Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain (Museum of Modern & Contemporary Art) is a fabulous place to beat the heat, especially if you're traveling in the summertime. The museum features a wide array of work by Nice-based modern artists, most notably Yves Klein. Admire the building's architecture and panoramic views from the rooftop for a sweeping vista of the city.
- **Marc Chagall Museum:** Another must-visit for art enthusiasts, the Musée Marc Chagall features the largest collection of works by the Russian-French artist Marc Chagall. The museum's highlight is the series of biblical paintings that Chagall created specifically for the space.
- **Musée Matisse:** Art lovers should visit the Musée Matisse, dedicated to the works of the renowned French artist Henri Matisse. The museum is housed in a 17th-century villa and showcases a diverse collection of Matisse's paintings, sculptures, and drawings.

The French Riviera

Antibes

Was a Greek fortified town named Antipolis in the 5th century BC, and later a Roman town, and always an active port for trading along the Mediterranean. Today it's an attractive and active town. The natural beauty remains in the Vieille Ville (old town), with the ramparts along the sea and the long, arched protective wall along the port. There are plenty of little streets for exploring, restaurants of all types and prices, and lots of shops. Also of interest is the Musée Picasso, housed in the 12th-century Chateau Grimaldi

Cannes

Is the "star" of the French Riviera, famous for the International Film Festival and the glitzy hotels, cars, beaches and visitors attracted here. It would be a shame to visit the South of France without experiencing the city for yourself. The Old Town is clustered around the Le Suquet district, located on the slopes of Mont Chevalier. Points of interest include the 16th- to 17th-century Notre-Dame de l'Esperance, built in the Provencal Gothic style.

Beaulieu-sur-Mer & St-Jean Cap Ferrat

Situated on the tiny & exclusive Cap Ferrat peninsula, the small town of Beaulieu boasts uncrowded gravel beaches**The villa of Madam Baroness Ephrussi de Rothschild** proposes one of the finest gardens of the French Riviera.

The mountains of the "**Massif of the Esterel**" near **Fréjus & St-Raphaël**

Menton

Is more 'Italian' in feel than other resorts along the Riviera. Its warmer climate encourages the growth of tropical gardens and citrus fruits, and the town hosts an annual lemon festival each February.

Points of interest include the Baroque church of St-Michel and the Hotel de Ville, located in the center of town, which was decorated by Jean Cocteau. Other works by this artist can be found at the Musée Cocteau, housed in a 17th century fort.

The picturesque hilltop médiéval villages of St Paul de Vence & Eze

Saint Paul de Vence

Is a charming hilltop fortified village in Provence, filled with art galleries, boutiques and sidewalk cafes. It's hard to find something ugly about this quaint village. A walk through its winding streets reveals elegant fountains, vine-covered stone walls and statues tucked into nooks in the walls. There are breathtaking views of mountains and sea.

Eze

The tiny village of Eze is one of the jewels of the south of France which is probably why it is chosen as a holiday spot by royalty, the rich and the famous. Perched on a rocky hill above the sea, it could not get any prettier. With narrow cobblestone, pedestrian-only streets, wonderful views of the surrounding hills and the azure water below,

Monaco

Located along the French Riviera, the independent principality of **Monaco** began as a Greek settlement, later taken by the Romans and purchased, in 1297, from the Genoese by the Grimaldi family who are still in power today. Monaco is famous for its **Grand Casino**, designed in 1878 by Charles Garnier, the architect of the Paris Opera. This Belle Époque building, surrounded by formal gardens, affords an impressive view over the area. Points of interest include the **Palais du Prince**, open to the public only during the prince's absence; the Musée Océanographique, featuring an aquarium of rare marine species, and the Jardin Exotique, said to be one of the finest gardens in Europe.

St-Tropez

Located on the southern shores of the Golfe de St-Tropez, the resort town of **St-Tropez** is the only north-facing town on the coast. What started as a small fishing village has grown into one of the most fashionable resorts on the Riviera, first made popular in the late 19th century by painter Paul Signac.

The 1930s saw an influx of painters and writers; then the town exploded on the scene after being featured in the 1956 Brigitte Bardot film "And God Created Woman." Today, the cafe-lined harbor is filled with luxury yachts and the place des Lices is a popular gathering place. The best beaches lie just outside of town, including the trendy Pampelonne.

Nice:

- La Réserve Restaurant (Nice Port)
- La Fine Gueule (Old Town area)
- Le Bistrot d'Antoine (Old Town area)
- Les Pécheurs (Old Port)
- Les Epicuriens (City Center)
- Le Terre del Sud (close to the hotel)
- La Maison de Marie (City Center)

Monaco - Montecarlo

- Le Louis XV - Alain Ducasse à l'Hôtel de Paris: This three Michelin-starred restaurant offers exquisite French cuisine in a luxurious setting.
- Blue Bay: Located at the Monte Carlo Bay Hotel & Resort, this restaurant serves innovative Mediterranean dishes with stunning views of the sea.
- Maya Bay: For those craving Asian flavors, Maya Bay serves delicious Thai cuisine in a vibrant atmosphere