

Beyond the Riviera ALPES-MARITIMES

The crowded coastline of the far southeastern corner of France continues to attract summer and winter visitors, but there is much more to be discovered in the immediate hinterland, beyond the Côte d'Azur itself.

Jennifer Ladonne reveals some of the area's hidden delights »

Menton is known as the 'Pearl of France', but there are many undiscovered jewels in its hinterland



Of the five *départements* that make up France's Provence region, there is none more spectacular, or spectacularly diverse, than the Alpes-Maritimes. With a third of its border touching Italy and another third the Riviera coastline (called the Côte d'Azur in France), this southeastern parcel contains some of the loveliest and most accessible mountain landscapes in the country, pristine natural parks, charming perched villages, sprawling beaches and an unparalleled artistic legacy. A region of striking contrasts, you can drive from the glittering shores of Menton to the snow-tipped Alps in an hour. Or hop on a ferry in Cannes and in 15 minutes disembark on a jewel of an island whose entire population consists of 21 Cistercian monks and a few thousand grapevines.

The off-season, when the sun-worshippers have gone and the coastal towns empty out, is a romantic time to stroll along the Côte d'Azur's long, rocky beaches, explore the meandering cobbled streets of impossibly scenic villages (dozens of which few tourists have even heard of), and wander through half-deserted museums.

An art lover's paradise, this was the stomping ground of some of the 20th century's great masters – Matisse, Picasso, Chagall, Bonnard, Léger, Le Corbusier and the like – who loved the limpid light and flocked to Nice, Antibes, Mougins, and Saint-Paul-de-Vence to escape the implacable grey of Paris. Not to mention writers and filmmakers, who could live the glamorous life on the coast and retreat to the hinterlands for peace.

More intrepid connoisseurs can take France's most scenic train ride from Nice to La Brigue, a perched village high in the mountains where a brisk hike brings you to the chapel of Notre-Dame des Fontaines, which harbours exquisite 600-year-old frescoes.



ARTISTS AND OLD TOWNS

If you're among those for whom the word Riviera conjures up yachts, perma-tans and bling, it's time to reconsider. Behind the crowded summer promenades and depressingly overbuilt coastline around the Alpes-Maritimes' major cities nestle historic old towns well worth taking the time to explore.

It may seem counter-intuitive to visit Nice in winter, but it's an ideal season to really have the place to yourself to explore a charming old town and the city's many museums, *sans* crowds. In the old town itself, you can begin at the market in the morning – though not too early, in the off-season it gets rolling at around 9-9.30am – then walk up picturesque stone steps (or take the elevator) to the Colline du Château (Castle Hill), now a leafy park culminating in 360-degree views of the coastline, city and mountains beyond.

By 11am the shops are open and you can wander the old town's meandering streets, step into the 17th-century cathedral, peruse the boutiques, then tuck into an authentic Niçois lunch at A Buteghinna. The new Coulée Verte park allows visitors to traverse the old town quickly and easily on foot.

“IF YOU'RE AMONG THOSE FOR WHOM THE WORD RIVIERA CONJURES UP YACHTS, PERMA-TANS AND BLING, IT'S TIME TO RECONSIDER”



Clockwise from this image: View over the port of Nice; Corinthian columns on a terrace at Menton; there is some extraordinary architecture to be found away from the sea front; including the Basilique Saint-Michel-Archange at Menton; and contemporary art too; Vieux Nice; a hint of the tropics at Menton



After lunch, you might check out the Musée de la Photographie Charles Nègre, featuring world-class photography exhibitions, many of which were shown in Paris or other well-known collections; or MAMAC, Nice's museum of contemporary art, which focuses on French modern and contemporary works and has permanent collections by notable American and European artists. Antique lovers should see Nice's superb antiques district, which stretches from the place Garibaldi all the way to the port.

Another excursion takes you up to the Cimiez neighbourhood, home of the Musée Chagall, the Musée Matisse (he lived for a time at the Regina Palace hotel, Queen Victoria's winter lodgings) and the Musée d'Archéologie. The last two are within steps of each other in a park that also contains the Arènes de Cimiez.

A bit farther afield, near the airport (but easily reached by bus, or even on foot, along the Promenade des Anglais), lies one of Nice's lesser-known treasures, the Musée des Arts Asiatiques, an absolute gem of a collection housed in a splendid contemporary building by the Japanese architect Kenzo Tange.

A scenic 30-minute drive (or train or bus ride) along the coast from Nice takes you to Menton – called 'the Pearl of France' for its beautiful beaches and gardens – bordering Italy at the French Riviera's farthest

reaches. Menton is famous for its temperate winters, and for its lemons, which are used to make the refreshing liqueur and marmalade, among other citrusy delights, that can be found in the boutiques lining the city's old town. In February, at the height of lemon season, the Fête du Citron is a wildly popular carnival featuring lofty citrus-based sculptures and colourful parades.

FEAT OF ARCHITECTURE

An excellent survey of the work of artist and filmmaker Jean Cocteau, who summured in nearby Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, is on view at Menton's luminous Cocteau Museum, set on the beach just below the old town. The squat, trapezoidal building designed by Rudy Ricciotti is a tremendous feat of museum architecture. (Ricciotti also designed the Louvre's Islamic galleries and the marvellous MUCEM in Marseille). Cocteau fans can also visit Menton's Salle des Mariages at the Hôtel de Ville, an intimate tribute to love covered entirely in Cocteau's dreamy, sweetly naughty frescoes.

A breezy two-and-a-half-mile walk along Menton's seaside Promenade du Soleil takes you to Cap Moderne, at Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, where the Irish architect and designer Eileen Gray built her modernist villa E-1027 and filled it with her now-iconic >>

Peillon is just one of the Alpes-Maritimes' many *villages perchés*, or 'perched villages'

"MUCH OF THE COASTLINE IS TERRIBLY OVERBUILT AND LACKLUSTRE... FORTUNATELY, THIS IS A FACT WE CAN OVERLOOK FOR THE WEALTH OF WONDERS INLAND"





Clockwise from top: Antibes, with the mountains rising beyond; the beach at Juan-les-Pins; away from the crowds in Juan-les-Pins; l'Église Notre-Dame de la Garoupe, Antibes; Vauban's fortifications are in evidence in this borderland

furniture. In 1938 Le Corbusier rented the house from Gray, and in a story of rivalry (or misogynistic jealousy, depending on who you ask) splashed its stark white walls with vivid murals, infuriating Gray. Le Corbusier ended up building his more rustic Cabanon just down the road, and the two structures, both recently restored (and both still bearing Le Corbusier's murals), make an engaging afternoon visit. If you're not up for walking, you can quickly reach Cap Moderne from Menton via train or bus.

Equidistant from Nice on the western side, Antibes Juan-les-Pins has its own stories to tell. This is where Picasso, fleeing domestic turmoil in Paris, came to visit his friend Matisse and, lacking the space to paint, was offered the attic rooms of the 14th-century Château Grimaldi, which was then an archaeological museum. The artist was able to rejoin his mistress, Françoise Gilot, who would soon bear him a child, and regain his inspiration and his spirits. His beautiful monochrome murals painted directly on the château walls, now the Musée Picasso, are still to be seen, along with a collection of expansive, joyful works that he drew and painted here, testimonies to the happy effects of the coast and domestic peace. Picasso had a significant presence in the area – notably in nearby Vallauris, where he made his first ceramic works, the site of another Picasso museum and chapel – for the rest of his life, and spent his last 12 years in Mougins, a few miles away.

Antibes's seaside ramparts, dating back to the 10th century and later fortified by Louis XIV's military

architect Vauban, and old town are charming to explore. Do stop in at Lilian Bonnefoi, where you can watch the chocolates and pastries being made, or bring one along with you to La Torref de Fersen, the best coffee around, helmed by an ex-Parisian barista who roasts his own beans on the premises. Even if you don't stay overnight, stop for a drink at the Hôtel Belles Rives, a beautifully restored Art Deco gem, where Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald lived and partied. Fitzgerald wrote *Tender is the Night* here in room 25, and the bar and outdoor terrace, with its sweeping views of the sea, transport you to another time.

PERCHED VILLAGES

Apart from historic city centres, seaside promenades and cultural outposts, many of the cities and suburbs on the coastline are terribly overbuilt and lacklustre. Fortunately, this is a fact we can overlook for the wealth of wonders inland.

The tiny medieval village of Biot was once a centre for ceramic jars (the area is rich in both clay and coloured pigments and there is a stellar museum relating the history), and is now a centre for hand-blown glass. You can watch this process at several of the glass-makers in and below the old town. Stop in at the Tourist Office at Biot's entrance and pick up a map for a circuit around the cobbled streets and squares, and visit some of the artist's ateliers and galleries showing jewellery, leather goods, ceramics, artworks and more. Biot also has a unique medieval church and a charming arcaded square. »

IMAGES © CLAUDE PIOT, GILLES LEFRANÇOIS, VINCENT DEAU, F. TROTOBAS

AD PAGE

Just outside Biot, the Musée Léger (the artist was another habitué of the area) features some of his monumental works, including tapestries and mosaics. If you're tepid about Léger you won't be after a visit here; but the vibrancy, balance and force of his larger paintings exhibited together in one room is truly compelling. Like Biot, nearby Mougins and the more famous Saint-Paul-de-Vence – the two most elegant of the region's towns – are wall-to-wall with artists' ateliers and galleries, and boast their own artsy history. Picasso spent the final 12 years of his life in Mougins, although you won't see much about him except in the exceptional Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins (MACM), where surprising and utterly compelling juxtapositions between the impressive collection of Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities and modern masterpieces by the likes of Cézanne, Rodin and Picasso, and more contemporary works by Yves Klein, Andy Warhol and Damien Hirst make this compact museum a joy to visit. With its immersion in history and art history, it's an excellent place for kids.

Storied Saint-Paul-de-Vence is probably best known in France as home of the Colombe d'Or hotel, once a tiny village café until it was discovered by the usual suspects – Matisse, Chagall, Picasso, the Fitzgeralds, Hemingway – and later the Belgian artist Jean-Michel



“PINT-SIZED ÎLE SAINT-HONORAT IS HOMETO SOME OF FRANCE'S LAST WINEMAKING MONKS”

Folon, whose chapel at the top of the town is not to be missed. Over the years, the hotel grew in size and stature, attracting aristocrats and movie stars. Guests stay and dine at this now-legendary luxury palace among original works by Picasso et al., forked over to pay the artists' tabs.

The town's medieval ramparts, cobbled streets and wall-to-wall boutiques and art galleries draw a crowd in summer, but in the off-season it's a dream to explore. In the cemetery you'll notice Marc Chagall's grave marked with a circle of stones, the only Jewish monument. Art lovers will already know the Fondation Maeght, nestled in a garden setting with views to the sea in the hills above Saint-Paul-de-Vence. Of all the cultural centres in the region, this is a stand-out, not only for the collection – many of the artists in the permanent collection were personal friends of founders Marguerite and Aimé Maeght – but also for Josep Lluís Sert's ground-breaking building and chapel, and majestic outdoor installations by Giacometti, Miró, Calder and others.

PRETTY OLD TOWN

Cannes is a place unto itself: glamorous and lively with its yachts, festivals, casinos, beach hotels and posh designer boutiques. But it also offers one of the Riviera's best green markets and a pretty old town topped by the Musée de la Castre, whose medieval tower offers



spectacular views of the coast and the famous turquoise waters surrounding the Îles de Lérins. The two inhabited islands, accessible via a 15-minute ferry ride from the old port, make for a perfect day trip.

The larger Île Sainte-Marguerite has wide trails, a lake with a bird-watching hide and seaside picnic and sunbathing areas, all under towering pines and eucalyptus. There's also a historic museum in the Vauban fort (where the man in the iron mask was imprisoned) and two good restaurants.

Pint-sized, vineyard-covered Île Saint-Honorat is home to some of France's last winemaking monks, and you can taste and purchase these award-winning wines in a special *dégustation* room (there's also a very good restaurant). To walk around the island on foot takes about an hour, or longer with stops in the old castle or the monks' abbey, where you can visit the church and bookstore. Both islands are best seen in the off-season; in the summer months expect crowds and pleasure-boat-clogged waters.

BEAUTIFUL VALLEYS

If you remember Grace Kelly and Cary Grant's nail-biting drive along the vertical cliffs above Monaco in *To Catch a Thief*, you'll have some idea of just how quickly the Mediterranean coastline changes from beaches to mountains, especially behind Menton at the Italian border.

The peerless Parc National du Mercantour stretches for 150 kilometres and encompasses snowy mountains, lakes and seven valleys. More than half the park is an uninhabited and strictly protected nature reserve accessible to hikers only. Among its most beautiful valleys, the Vallée des Merveilles is known for its

abundant wildlife, more than 2,000 types of wildflowers – including the elusive edelweiss – and thousands of prehistoric carvings for you to discover along the way.

This is prime hiking country and there are routes for every level but you will need to do your homework before you go. Any Alpes-Maritimes tourist office can supply maps of the region, but if you're not a seasoned hiker, or if you'd like the work done for you, we would recommend a tour company like On Foot Holidays (www.onfootholidays.co.uk), who will provide maps and hotel stays in the principal villages, as well as luggage transport between stops.

If you're not a walker, or you're short on time, driving gives you the most freedom, as long as navigating steep, winding roads along vertiginous cliffs doesn't faze you... (If you're renting a car, consider spending a little extra for an automatic transmission, otherwise you'll get a manual by default, which can get hairy if you're not used to it).

Day-trippers can take the aptly-named Train des Merveilles, a thrilling railway ride that goes either straight to or near one historic village and then another with gorgeous landscapes extending from Nice to Tende, at the edge of the Alpes-Maritimes border and on into Italy. You can hop on and off the train as you please, and you may want to arrange lodging so you can spend some time really exploring the villages – most have either Historic Monument or Plus Beaux Villages de France status – to get the most out of your visit. Among the best villages to visit are Peillon-Sainte-Thècle, Peille, Sospel, Saorge, La Brigue, Tende and Sainte-Agnès (farther on towards the coastline and not on the train route). **IT >>**



Clockwise from top left: Pleasure craft arrive at the Île Sainte-Marguerite; the fort on Île Sainte-Marguerite; the monastery on Île Saint-Honorat; fruit and vegetable market in Cannes; l'Église de Sainte-Marie-Madeleine at Biot; view of Biot; (inset) the fort on Île Saint-Honorat

MUSEUMS AND MORE IN THE ALPES-MARITIMES

Twelve of the best places to experience the culture of this corner of France

For more culture visit www.francetoday.com/category/culture/museums-galleries



MUSÉE PICASSO

The attic of Antibes's Château Grimaldi was Pablo Picasso's studio from July to November 1946. It was a happy time for the artist, and his joy is expressed in the photographs, drawings, murals and paintings on display here from this period. www.antibes-juanlespins.com



FONDATION MAEGHT

The Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul-de-Vence was created by Aimé and Marguerite Maeght, visionary collectors who counted some of the greatest artists of the day – Matisse, Braque, Chagall, Bonnard, Giacometti – among their friends. www.fondation-maeght.com



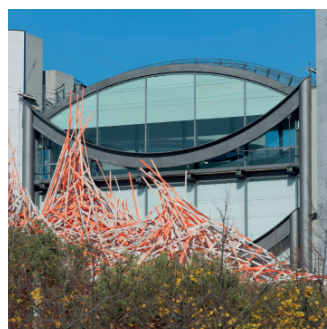
MUSÉE MATISSE

Henri Matisse spent much of his life in Nice, whose morning light he adored. The museum documents the artist's long, prolific career, from his early figurative works to his brilliant cut-outs and designs for his chapel, which he made at the end of his life. www.musee-matisse-nice.org



MUSÉE CHAGALL

Marc Chagall was another artist drawn to the magical light of Nice. This museum houses a collection of his larger works and is a revelation of his exuberant style. A new ceramics collection has recently opened. www.musees-nationaux-alpesmaritimes.fr



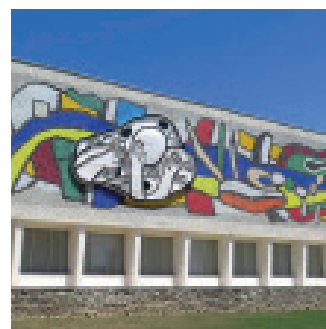
MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE ET D'ART CONTEMPORAIN

Set in a soaring post-modern building on the place Garibaldi in Nice's old town, the MAMAC collection consists of the works of post-war French artists alongside those of contemporary masters. www.mamac-nice.org



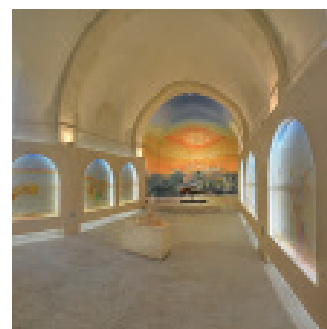
MUSÉE D'ART CLASSIQUE

A surprising museum, it blends ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman art, weapons, armour, coins and jewellery with modern and contemporary art to brilliant effect, creating scintillating juxtapositions that offer new insights into both worlds. www.mouginsmuseum.com



MUSÉE FERNAND LÉGER

This museum contains many of the artist's monumental works, including tapestries, sculpture, and mosaics based on his designs. Léger actually lived on the property for a short time before his death in 1955. www.musees-nationaux-alpesmaritimes.fr



CHAPELLE FOLON

This graceful, luminous tribute to a brotherhood of monks called the White Penitents, who were once headquartered here, was Jean-Michel Folon's last work. The artist died before it was finished and the job was completed by local artists. www.saint-pauldevence.com



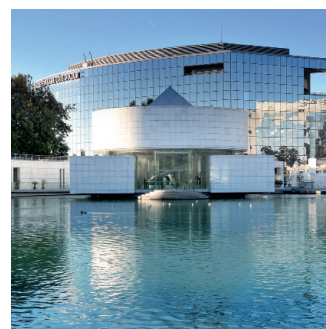
MUSÉE JEAN COCTEAU

Set against sea and sky, this bleached white building by Rudy Ricciotti is the backdrop for Jean Cocteau's elegant, hallucinogenic visions. All of Cocteau's many media are represented here, including clips from his films *Orphée* and *La Belle et La Bête*. www.museecocteaumenton.fr



CAP MODERNE

Eileen Gray's E-1027, now considered a titan of modernist architecture and design, was her first foray into architecture. Le Corbusier stayed at the house in 1938 before building his own cabin, the Cabanon de Vacances, down the road. www.capmoderne.com



MUSÉE DES ARTS ASIATIQUES

This shimmering structure in Nice set in a reflecting lake is half the draw of this gem of a museum that brings together a small but masterful collection of Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Southeast Asian art. maa.departement06.fr



MUSÉE D'ARCHÉOLOGIE

Cimiez (Cemenelum) was the capital of the Roman province of Alpes Maritimae. Its elegant 3rd-century amphitheatre and baths can still be seen in the Cimiez park, along with a museum that illustrates the region's long history. maa.departement06.fr >>

IMAGES © MARIÉ D'ANTIBES; FONDATION MAEGHT; OT NICE; MUSÉE CHAGALL; MUSÉE D'ART CLASSIQUE; MUSÉE FERNAND LÉGER; CHAPELLE FOLON; MUSÉE COCTEAU; CAP MODERNE; F. FOLLET; MUSÉE D'ARCHÉOLOGIE

AD PAGE

WHAT TO DO AND SEE IN ALPES-MARITIMES

The brightest and best festivals, events and tours of the region

For more travel inspiration visit www.francetoday.com/travel-in-france

FESTIVALS

La Fête du Mimosa

From late January till early March, the 130km route between Bormes-les-Mimosas and Grasse is alight with brilliant yellow mimosa flowers, and their feathery blossoms and sweet perfume are celebrated at the Fête du Mimosa in Pégomas. Take the route up the hill to the tiny hilltop village of Tanneron, a stunning 12km drive with breathtaking views all the way. www.ot-mandelieu.fr

Nice Carnival

Alongside Rio and Venice, Nice is one of the world's major spring carnival events, and by far the largest in France. Every year, from mid-February to early March, the city puts on its festive finery to celebrate the coming spring with fireworks, floats, parades, parties and general revelry. A schedule of events can be found on the carnival's dedicated website. www.nicecarnaval.com

Fête du Citron

At pretty much the same time as Nice Carnival, Menton throws its own mega-party in celebration of the famous local lemon. Festive parades with citrus-studded floats and all manner of other festivities are scheduled in the gardens, on the beaches and throughout the old town. www.fete-du-citron.com



Nice Carnival is a huge event that draws visitors from all over the world

Festival des Jardins de la Côte d'Azur

Now in its second year, this Riviera-wide festival celebrates the area's many enchanting gardens. Held in April, more than 200 events will celebrate the theme 'Mediterranean Dreams', with contests between competing professional gardeners, pop-up gardens, workshops, tastings and conferences. Maps and descriptions of all the events are available online or in a printed brochure. festivaldesjardins.departement06.fr



The Fête du Citron sees the streets of Menton turn a strong shade of, well... lemon

Salon d'Antibes – Antiquités et Art Moderne

Every year an estimated 25,000 people come to Antibes for one of France's most distinguished arts and antiques events. The more prominent dealers occupy the elegant indoor stands, while outdoors more than 100 other dealers line the harbourside. The Salon runs for two weeks from mid-April to early May. www.salon-antiquaires-antibes.com

Les Étoiles de Mougins

Every two years, during the first weekend of June, Mougins's cobbled streets are lined with food stalls where France's top chefs cook up their signature dishes on the spot in a food lover's dream. Foodies from far and wide gather to meet the chefs and enjoy three days of cooking demonstrations, competitions, food trucks, wine tastings, workshops, concerts and – of course – eating. The next festival will take place in 2020. www.lesetoilesdemougins.com

SPECIALITIES

Maison Auer

Since 1820, Maison Auer has been making its famous candied fruits, chocolates, and other sweet delights, all of which are on display at this authentic 19th-century boutique. www.fruits-confits.com

Trésors Publics

This chic boutique in the heart of Vieux Nice is a gathering of all things 'Made in France', including homewares,

toys, perfumes, beauty products, clothing, gardening supplies and more. www.tresorspublics.com

Maison Godet

Sonia Godet, who worked for Cartier in New York, revives her great-grandfather's creations, as worn by the stars of the 1920s, along with her own scents, in Saint-Paul-de-Vence. www.parfumsgodet.com



Candied fruits and other confectionery at Maison Auer in Nice

LANGUAGE COURSES

Many people choose to come to this part of France specifically to study French. The **Institut Français de Villefranche-sur-Mer** offers two- to four-week French immersion courses for professional adults and mature students. There are courses starting on May 6, June 3 and July 1. www.institutdefrancais.com

TRAIN RIDES

Le Train des Merveilles

Running from Nice to Tende, this is one of France's most stunning train rides. Hop on and off at your leisure to explore the perched villages and natural wonders along the way. www.tendemerveilles.com

Le Train de Pignes à Vapeur

One of France's last steam locomotives takes you on a tour of the countryside between Nice and Digne-les-Bains, a landscape of rivers, mountains and gorges. The train leaves four times a day on Sundays between May and October, and also on Thursdays and Fridays in high-season. www.nicetourisme.com

ART HIKES

Chapelle Notre-Dame des Fontaines

After viewing La Brigue's octagonal Chapelle Saint-Michel and Château Lascaris, an easy 4km walk along the Chemin des Oratoires will bring you to Notre-Dame des Fontaines, a 12th-century chapel that harbours an extraordinary fresco dating back to the late 1400s. www.cotedazur-tourisme.com

La Vallée des Merveilles

At the tourist offices of Nice, or indeed anywhere along the Côte d'Azur, you can pick up a brochure detailing several hikes of all levels of difficulty to discover the Valley of the Marvells' prehistoric rock carvings, which include depictions of trees and animals, and the mysterious *sorcier*. The Musée des Merveilles in Tende explains their origins. www.museedesmerveilles.com

GUIDED TOURS

The Tourist Office of **Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat** is providing four different free guided tours of the town throughout this summer; with the only provisos being that you have to book 48 hours in advance, that it isn't raining (unlikely), and that there be at least six people on each trip. See the website for details and call +33 (0)4 93 76 08 90 to reserve your place. www.saintjeancapferrat-tourisme.fr >>



High-end perfume at Maison Godet, as worn by the stars of yesteryear

IMAGES © VILLE DE MENTON, JENNIFER LADONNE, OTC NICE

WHERE TO STAY AND EAT IN ALPES-MARITIMES

A selection of the best hotels, restaurants, bars and cafés in the *département*



NICE

Hôtel Negresco

The Hôtel Negresco, on the Promenade des Anglais, overlooking Neptune Plage, opened its doors in January 1913 and has been an integral part of the legend of Nice and the French Riviera ever since.

www.hotel-negresco-nice.com

Hôtel Windsor

The Hôtel Windsor, ten minutes on foot from the Promenade des Anglais, in the heart of Vieux Nice, was built in 1896. Its cut-stone façade is quintessentially *fin de siècle*; the art with which it is decorated is drawn from more styles and periods.

www.hotelwindsornice.com

Hôtel Suisse

With a plum location below the Colline du Château, the Suisse's unfussy décor sets it apart. With stellar views of city, ocean and beaches – and reasonable prices for a luxury hotel – this is a good choice in any season.

www.hotel-nice-suisse.com



The Mirazur at Menton uses only the freshest local and seasonal ingredients

Sentimi

One sure thing about this popular pizzeria: you will not leave hungry. Opt for a thin crust or the house speciality, stuffed with a mild Italian cheese. Outdoor seating on the place Garibaldi is a plus.

Tel. +33 (0)4 93 56 68 88

A Buteghinna

This tiny, mostly outdoor restaurant is run by three native Niçoises who prepare the tried and tested recipes of their mothers and grandmothers. Do not miss the *tarte aux blettes*, a house speciality made with chard, rum-soaked raisins, apples and pastis.

www.abuteghinna.fr

ANTIBES JUAN-LES-PINS

Hôtel Belles Rives

You can't go wrong with this Art Deco gem on the Cap d'Antibes. Rooms are compact but lovely; many have terraces and views of the bay. It boasts



The Hôtel Belles Rives used to be the haunt of several famous artists and writers

a Michelin-star restaurant, plus one of the Riviera's most beautiful terraces.

www.bellesrives.com

Hôtel Juana

Another Art Deco beauty, with a chic outdoor pool set among its own lush rose gardens, the Juana overlooks a pretty park and the bay beyond.

www.hotel-juana.com

Lilian Bonnefoi

Pastry artist Lilian Bonnefoi's two outposts in Antibes's old town are stocked with his signature pastries, chocolates, *confitures*, and other local delights. At the brand new 2 place du Safranier shop you can watch the goodies being made.

www.lilianbonnefoi.com



You will not be surprised to read that the Hôtel Juana was built in the 1930s

Le Transat

This is the place to go in Antibes's picturesque port for the freshest seafood in town, served in the yacht-like interior or out on the sprawling terrace overlooking the sea.

www.restaurant-le-transat-antibes.com

Balade en Provence

Tucked beneath a local specialties shop in the old Marché d'Antibes (at 5 cours Masséna), this dusky bar



Beware of green fairies at the Balade en Provence absinthe bar

in a vaulted Roman-era cellar serves 50 kinds of absinthe with all the traditional accoutrements.

Tel. +33 (0)4 93 34 93 00

La Torref de Fersen

Quite simply the best coffee in Antibes, roasted here at 25 rue de Fersen and served by a skilled barista. Plus homemade pastries and juices.

Tel. +33 (0)9 07 04 64 68

SAINT-PAUL-DE-VENCE

La Colombe d'Or

Once a country café, this elegant retreat became the haunt of so many

legendary artists that its collection rivals many museums. Its panelled rooms and outdoor gardens are always serene, but it's best in the off-season, when you can enjoy it and the town without the crowds.

www.la-colombe-dor.com

Le Caruso

One of the town's more inventive gastronomic restaurants, at this chic eatery set in a medieval stone cellar you'll eat like a king without paying a king's ransom.

www.lecarusodesaintpaul.fr

MENTON

Mirazur

Chef Mauro Colagregco uses produce from his own garden and the local markets. He was rewarded with a third Michelin star in 2018. A place of pilgrimage!

www.mirazur.fr

MOUGINS

L'Amandier

Set right at the entrance to Mougins, this chic, casual restaurant is always reliable for a satisfying meal meticulously prepared with seasonal ingredients. The views from its spacious terrace are sublime.

www.amandier.fr



The food at L'Amandier (The Almond Tree) is as good as the views

ALPES-MARITIMES ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE

BY AIR
Nice Côte d'Azur airport is conveniently located on the coast just 6km southwest of the city centre.

BY RAIL
A direct train to Nice from **Paris Gare de Lyon** takes 6 hours.

BY ROAD
Follow the A7 '**Autoroute du Soleil**' then, at Orange, follow the signs for Italy.

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