



Nice and the Côte D'Azur

The French Riviera, also known as the Côte d'Azur, comprises the sparkling blue coastline of the South of France, which includes many fabulous beach towns, ranging from Monaco (technically its own country, but very French) to Marseille.

It is essentially the coastline of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, which includes Provence, just a couple of hours north of the beach.



La Cote d'Azur in History

The region, encompassing the [French Riviera](#), was initially inhabited by Ligurian tribes before being conquered by the Romans. While under Roman occupation, it became part of the Provincia Transalpina and benefited from the prosperous period known as the Pax Romana. In medieval times, the Franks conquered the region, and in time, the city of Nice gained independence as a maritime republic. After centuries under different kings, Nice finally fell to the House of Savoy.

By the 19th Century, it had become the playground and preferred vacation spot for British and Russian Aristocrats, including Queen Victoria and Tsar Alexander II. It also became a magnet for artists, a trend that extended into the 20th century, when artists such as Picasso, Matisse, Francis Bacon, and Edith Wharton, among others, visited and worked there.

The Towns of the Côte d'Azur and a bit more about towns we will visit.

Along the beautiful coastline, we find the towns of Cap-d'Ail, Beaulieu-sur-Mer, Saint Jean-Cap-Ferrat, Villefranche-sur-Mer, Antibes, Juan-les-Pins, Cannes, and Theoule-sur-Mer.

The name “La Côte d’Azur was bestowed on the region by the writer Stepehn Liegeard, in his book, *La Côte d’Azure*, published in 1887.

Among the many American literary figures, Henry James was a frequent visitor; he set part of *The Ambassadors* in the Riviera. Edith Wharton wrote *The Age of Innocence* in Hyères. F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote most of *The Great Gatsby* and began work on *Tender Is the Night* in the town of Saint-Raphaël.

Nietzsche wrote *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in Nice and Eze, and Anton Chekhov wrote *The Three Sisters* in Nice.



NICE

The second-largest city on the Riviera, after Marseille, Nice was proclaimed a World Heritage Site in 2021.

Attracted by the soft light and diaphanous air, artists such as Marc Chagall and Henri Matisse chose to work and settle there for large portions of the year.

The Promenade des Anglais (Walkway of the English) sits along the Baie des Anges (Bay of the Angels), opening onto the Mediterranean, and is its most famous avenue.

The Hotel Negresco (our hotel!) opened its doors on the Promenade des Anglais in 1913 and has remained the iconic stop when in Nice.

The Place Massena is the main square, a large space surrounded by red Italian-style buildings, which hosts summer festivals and other celebrations, such as Bastille Day.



Antibes

Areas within the cathedral and castle have yielded evidence of inhabitants dating back to the Iron Age. There are also Etruscan artifacts that have been discovered in wrecks located in the coastal area. Antibes was a Greek colony in the 4th Century BC.

After escaping his exile in Elba, Napoleon landed in Golfe-Juan, 5 kilometers away from Antibes. Today, Golfe-Juan is known as the starting point of the Route Napoleon, which follows the path taken by the Emperor on his return to Paris.

Interesting Museums: The Archaeology Museum, the Naval Museum of Napoleon, the Picasso Museum (which we will visit), and the Absinthe Museum, dedicated to the mysterious green liqueur.

Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc: one of the most glamorous and storied hotels in the Côte d'Azur, made famous by visitors such as Winston Churchill, Elizabeth Taylor, Marlon Brando, and The Duke and Duchess of Windsor.



St. Paul de Vence and Eze

St. Paul de Vence is one of the oldest medieval towns on the Riviera, boasting a 17th-century chapel and a wealth of modern and contemporary art galleries, including the Maeght Foundation, which we will visit. It is also home to La Colombe d'Or, the famous restaurant where Picasso and Jean Paul Sartre dined. (We will probably have lunch there!)

Eze is another town on the Riviera which we will visit during our trip. Greeks, Romans, and Moors occupied the area. The oldest building, dating back to 1306, is the Chapel of the Holy Cross. In 1388, it became part of the House of Savoy, and in 1860, the citizens of Eze voted unanimously to become part of France. Sitting atop a hill, this small medieval village affords amazing views of the sea.





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