Nice, France

Overview

Nice is a vibrant city on the French Riviera in southeastern France. Known for its stunning Mediterranean coastline, rich history, and artistic heritage, it is a popular destination for travelers seeking both relaxation and cultural experiences. The city is the capital of the Alpes-Maritimes department and the fifth-largest city in France.

Nice has a Mediterranean climate with mild winters and warm summers. Due to the movement of winds, winter months are generally characterized by chilly, sunny days alternating with periods of milder, cloudy weather.

Understand

History

Nice has a history dating back over 2,000 years. See Timeline of Nice. Founded by the Greeks, it later became a Roman colony. The city flourished during the Middle Ages and became a favorite destination for European aristocrats in the 18th and 19th centuries, thanks to its mild climate and picturesque setting.

In 1860, Nice officially became part of France through the Treaty of Turin.

Architecture

“Nice is a city you can read like a book — every building tells part of its story.” [1)]

Our guide traces the full arc from the Roman ruins of Cemenelum on Cimiez Hill, through the Italian Baroque of the Old Town, the Belle Époque palaces along the Promenade, and the Art Deco buildings of the interwar period.

See our comprehensive guide to the Architecture of Nice

Art and Culture of Nice

Nice stands among the great art cities of Europe. With the second highest concentration of museums in France after Paris, a Mediterranean light that has enchanted painters for two centuries, and one of the most radical and original avant-garde movements of the twentieth century, the city has shaped, and been shaped by, an extraordinary artistic life.

See our detailed guide to Art and Culture of Nice.

People of Nice, Past & Present

- People of Ancient Nice: humans have lived in the area for about 400,000 years. Here is their short story.
- Celebrities of Nice and the Côte d'Azur: Perhaps no other area in the world hosts as many celebrities as Nice and the Cote d'Azur.
- Americans in Nice, past and present. Americans did not simply discover the French Riviera — in a very real sense, they invented the summer season on the Côte d'Azur. Discover the influence and presence of Americans in Nice.
- Russians of Nice: the coast of Nice has drawn thousands of Russians for many years. Here is their story.

Best Season to Visit

The meteorologic details of the Climate of Nice

- **Spring** (April to June) and **Autumn** (September to October) are ideal times to visit for pleasant weather and fewer crowds.
- **Summer** (July and August) is popular for beachgoers but can be crowded and hot.
- **Winter** (December through February): Nice has long been a famous host of wintering Europeans. See Winter is the Best Season to Visit Nice, video.
- **Rainy Season** (October and November): The region is typically cloud-covered with frequent heavy rain. If you have flexibility, try to plan around this period — late October through into December is generally the least favorable time to visit.

Arrive

Nice is well-connected and thus there are many options from which to choose.

For arrival in Nice, refer to this detailed guide: Arrive and Go in Nice

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Get Around

Nice has a well-connected and efficient transportation system, offering multiple options for navigating the city and surrounding areas, including safety tips and how to avoid fines.

Get Around Nice

Do

- What to Do in Nice Our detailed guide of activities in Nice.
- Official Nice city website — many useful links
- Intro to Nice & the Côte d'Azur for English speakers, video
- Excitement of Things to Do in Nice, video

Walking in Nice

Nice is one of the great walking cities of the Mediterranean — compact enough to cross on foot in under an hour, yet endlessly varied in its neighborhoods, gradients, and sensory textures.

See our guide to Walking in Nice

Promenade des Anglais

Promenade des Anglais is an iconic seaside promenade stretching 7 kilometers along the Baie des Anges (Bay of Angels). It is perfect for a leisurely stroll, cycling, or simply enjoying the views of the turquoise sea.

Vieille Ville (Old Town)

A charming maze of narrow streets, colorful buildings, and bustling squares. More details: Nice Vieille Ville. Highlights include:

- **Cours Saleya**: A vibrant market square known for its flower market and local produce. Market 'Cours Saleya', video
- **Cathédrale Sainte-Réparate**: A baroque cathedral in Place Rossetti.
- **Colline du Château (Castle Hill)**: Although the castle itself no longer exists, this hill offers panoramic views of Nice, the sea, and the Alps — a great spot for a picnic or a peaceful escape from the city.

Orthodox Russian Churches in Nice

Three Russian Orthodox Churches or places of worship in Nice — a church, a chapel, and a cathedral — are each linked to a successive generation of Tsarinas and together trace the arc of the Russian

imperial presence in the city.

Place Masséna

Place Massena is the main square of Nice, featuring striking red buildings, fountains, and modern art installations.

Equestrian

Equestrian activities in the Côte d'Azur offer diverse experiences ranging from beach rides along the Mediterranean coast to mountain treks through the Massif des Maures and the Estérel range. Beginners can enjoy guided forest trails and pony rides for children as young as 4 years old, while experienced riders can undertake multi-day treks in the Mercantour or Camargue regions.

See our guide to Equestrian activities in the Côte d'Azur

Nice Port (Port Lympia)

A picturesque harbor lined with colorful boats and waterside restaurants.

Beaches

Nice is famous for its pebbly beaches. Public and private beach options are available along the Promenade des Anglais. Popular spots include Plage Beau Rivage and Plage Opéra. Beach clubs typically offer loungers and parasols for a fee.

Museums

Musée Matisse

Located in a beautiful villa on Cimiez Hill, this museum showcases the works of Henri Matisse, who lived in Nice for much of his life. Review the official site of Musée Matisse

Marc Chagall National Museum

Dedicated to the works of Chagall, particularly his biblical-themed paintings. Marc Chagall National Museum, video

Events

Nice Carnival

One of the largest and most famous carnivals in the world, held every February with parades, floats, and festivities. Nice Carnival, video

The Nice Jazz Fest

The Nice Jazz Fest is a summer event that attracts renowned jazz musicians from around the globe.

Itineraries

itineraries_for_nice

Eat & Drink

Regional Cuisine

Nice cuisine is renowned for its Provençal and Mediterranean flavors. Signature dishes include:

- Salade Niçoise: A refreshing salad with tuna, olives, eggs, and vegetables.
- Socca: A savory chickpea pancake, often sold at street markets.
- Ratatouille Niçoise: A vegetable stew made with zucchini, eggplant, and tomatoes.
- Pissaladière: A tart topped with caramelized onions, anchovies, and olives.
- Wines & Beverages of Southern France: Pair your meal with wines from nearby Provence.

The Restaurant Scene

Nice is renowned for its vibrant and innovative restaurants — from Michelin-mentioned wine bars to internationally recognized, Michelin-starred establishments. Mediterranean cuisine predominates, but unique restaurants draw Hollywood stars and locals alike.

Find 'Your' Place to Eat in Nice

- Top Restaurants in Nice (but expensive)
- Affordable Gastronomique Restaurants
- Quirky & Quick Local Restaurants

- Nice Takeout & Delivery
- Nice Grocery Shopping
- Nice Street Food Tour, video

Rooftop Bars

- Rooftop Bars this site
- Ten Rooftop Bars, new video blog by Riviera Go!
- Best Rooftop Bars in Nice — one of the finest video blogs covering Nice: Riviera Go!

Coffee in Nice

Nice has developed one of the most vibrant specialty coffee scenes on the French Riviera. Once dominated by the traditional Italian-style espresso that crossed the border with *Piedmontese settlers* — strong, short, and taken standing at a zinc counter — the city now hosts a constellation of third-wave coffee shops run by passionate baristas who source single-origin beans, roast in-house, and pour with genuine craft. For more, see our Guide to Coffee in Nice.

After Nice

Day Trips

The best day trips from Nice include Villefranche-sur-Mer (10 minutes by train), Eze (medieval village with the Jardin Exotique), and Monaco (20 minutes by train, featuring the Prince’s Palace and Monte Carlo Casino). Other top destinations are Menton (known as the “Pearl of France” near the Italian border), Cannes (famous for its film festival and Lérins Islands), and Saint-Tropez (best accessed by boat or car).

Travelers can also visit Antibes (home to the Picasso Museum and Provençal market), Saint-Paul-de-Vence (a picturesque hilltop art village), Grasse (the world's perfume capital), and Cap-Ferrat (featuring the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild). For nature lovers, Saint-Marguerite Island (accessible via ferry from Cannes) offers forest trails and secluded coves, while Marseille is a viable option for a full-day trip by train (approx. 3 hours).

Guided tours and transport options are widely available for these destinations, including:

Half-day trips to Eze, Monaco, and Monte-Carlo. Full-day tours covering the French Riviera, Provence wine regions, and the Gorges of Verdon. Boat trips to Saint-Tropez and brunch cruises to Villefranche-sur-Mer and Cap-Ferrat. Train routes (TER) connecting Nice to Menton, Cannes, Antibes, and Monaco.

- Monaco: A luxurious principality just 20 kilometers away, known for its casinos and Formula 1 Grand Prix.
- Èze: A medieval hilltop village with breathtaking views and the Jardin Exotique.

- Antibes: Famous for its marina and the Picasso Museum.
- Cannes: Known for its film festival and upscale boutiques.
- Menton: A charming coastal town on the Italian border in the Alpes-Maritimes.

Stay in Nice

Accommodations

To find a short-term rental in Nice, register on platforms like Studapart or ImmoJeune to access thousands of verified ads, where you can apply online, complete your rental profile, and receive answers within 72 hours. The average monthly rent for a furnished studio or one-bedroom apartment is approximately €560, though prices vary significantly based on location, with the Port and Old Town districts commanding higher rates due to their popularity.

Key neighborhoods to consider include the Old Town (Vieux Nice) for first-time visitors seeking culture and markets, Jean-Médecin for shoppers near the train station, and Cimiez for a quiet, residential area with museums and green spaces. Le Port is ideal for those seeking nightlife and harbor views, while the Promenade des Anglais offers beachfront access and upscale hotels, albeit at a premium price.

Important rental constraints in France require that stays under three months be booked as holiday lets, while longer stays typically require a 1-year furnished lease or a specific “mobility lease” for stays up to 10 months. Demand significantly exceeds supply in Nice, with 2 to 4 times more inquiries than offers, so it is essential to start your search well before your departure date to secure accommodation.

Visiting Friends

If you are invited to visit friends at 4 bis Blvd Dubouchage, please see this page.

Remain in Nice

Have you thought about **remaining in Nice**? Here is an overview of making the move: Remain in Nice, France

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References

- Nice, France — WikiVoyage: A detailed wiki guide created by locals, visitors, and experts.
- Best of Nice Blog, and yes it is a Great Blog: An excellent reference by a long-time English-speaking Nice resident.
- Provence Lovers Excellent resource

Nice combines the charm of a historic city with the allure of the Mediterranean — a must-visit destination on the French Riviera.

1)

Biss Tours, *Architecture in Nice: A City Built from Light and History*, 2025. https://www.bisstours.com

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