



# Tour Information



## Villas and Gardens of the Côte d'Azur by Rail





## Travel

### Passports

Please ensure your 10-year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full six months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to France.

### Visas

British and EU passport holders are not required to have a visa.

For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

French consulate: PO Box 57, 6A Cromwell Place, London SW7 2EW; Tel (020) 7838 2000/1. Information Service: Tel (0891) 887 733, Fax: (020) 7838 2046. Opening hours: 0900-1130 (and 1600-1630 for visa collection only) Mon-Fri (except British and French national holidays).



### Tickets

You will be issued with a return train ticket.

Please take care not to lose your tickets and please check that the details on your tickets are accurate. Your ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.

Standard Premier on Eurostar tickets is indicated by two asterisks in the class type section in the top right-hand corner. A light meal will be served to passengers travelling Standard Premier on Eurostar. Standard class Eurostar tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although there is a buffet car serving drinks and snacks.

TGV tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although a buffet car is available.

### Train Seats

On all legs of the journey you have reserved seat and carriage numbers which are shown clearly on your ticket.



### Baggage

As with most trains, passengers are responsible for carrying baggage onto and off the train. Baggage can be stored on overhead shelves or at the entrance to the carriages. Trolleys are available at St Pancras and Paris, but bags do need to be carried on to the platform. Porters are sometimes but not always available at St Pancras.

Travel Editions recommends a luggage delivery service called **thebaggageman**, where your suitcase can be picked up from your home before departure and delivered straight to your hotel; therefore removing the worry about carrying your cases onto and off the trains.

For further information:

<http://www.thebaggageman.com>

### Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

### Transfers

On arrival transfer to Hotel Mediteranée for check in for seven-night stay on bed and breakfast basis.

### Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.



## Accommodation

### Hotel Mediterranee Menton

This comfortable three-star hotel is ideally located in the centre of Menton. The hotel's panoramic terrace offers wonderful views of the gardens, hills and the sea as a backdrop, and the terrace bar provides a relaxing area opened daily - a great place to relax with a cocktail enjoying the view after a long day sightseeing. Bedrooms all have private bathroom facilities, air conditioning, telephone, TV, minibar, hairdryer, safe, free wi-fi and tea/coffee making facilities. Upgraded Privilege Rooms offer a larger room with balcony and bath robes and slippers to use, as well as the above facilities included in standard rooms.

For more information visit their website  
<http://www.hotel-med-menton.com>



## Food

Colourful red and yellow peppers, glorious tomatoes, aubergines, fresh fish, Provençal herbs (basil, thyme, rosemary, sage, marjoram...), olives and olive oil, and citrus fruits ripened in the Mediterranean sunshine form the basis of the French Riviera *cuisine*. Traditional dishes of the Côte d'Azur include *Ratatouille* (stew of courgettes, tomatoes, red and green peppers and aubergines braised with garlic, olive oil and *Herbes de Provence*), *Bouillabaisse* (fish soup), *Soupe au Pistou* (vegetable and bean soup with fresh basil), *Pissaladière* (golden onion, anchovy and olive pizza), *Daube Provençale* (classic French beef stew), *Salade Niçoise* (made with fresh tuna, olives, green beans, anchovies, new potatoes and boiled egg), *Aïoli* (garlic mayonnaise generally accompanies fish, vegetables or crusty bread) and *tapenade* (luscious Provençal paste made with olives, olive oil, anchovies, capers and garlic).

Enjoy the traditional Côte d'Azur sweets, such as the *Tarte Tropezienne* (rich tart filled with crème pâtissière), the *Tourte de Blettes* (sweet-savoury Swiss chard, raisin and pine nut tart, eaten as a starter or a dessert) and *Nougat*. Coffee is served after the meal and will be black, in small cups, unless a *café au lait* (or *crème*) is requested.

Almost all restaurants offer two types of meals: *a la carte* (extensive choice for each course, generally more expensive) and *le menu* (a set meal at a fixed price).

The bill (*l'addition*) will not be presented until it is asked for, even if clients sit and talk for half an hour after finishing their meal. Usually, a discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, and no further tipping is required.

Generally speaking, mealtimes in France are strictly observed. Lunch is as a rule served from noon to 1330, dinner usually from 2000-2130, but the larger the city, the later the dining hour.



## Drink

Wine is by far the most popular alcoholic beverage in France, and the choice will vary according to region. Provence is best known for its rosé wine; the pink wines of Massalia (today's Marseille) are famous since Roman times. Côtes de Provence AOC is the main wine region, producing about 75% of all wine in Provence, principally a fine rosé. The local Côtes du Rhône wines are an excellent accompaniment to the regional cuisine and the Niçois Bellet wines are also worth discovering. *Pastis* (such as *Ricard*), the local anise-flavoured liqueur, is diluted with water to make a refreshing and hugely popular aperitif.

In elegant restaurants the wine list will be separate from the main menu, but in less opulent establishments will be printed on the back or along the side of the *carte*. The waiter will usually be glad to advise an appropriate choice. If in doubt, try the house wine; this will usually be less expensive and will always be the owner's pride.

### Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

#### Breakfast – daily

**1 lunch** at Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild

**1 dinner** at the hotel plus a cold plate on arrival



## Destination

The Côte d'Azur has long had an irresistible draw. From the aristocrats of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the artists and writers of the early 20<sup>th</sup>, this spectacular stretch of coastline was, and still is, the ultimate playground and vacation spot of the elite. Join Nicholas Merchant, Former Chairman of the Art Fund West Yorkshire Fundraising Committee, to explore the extraordinary array of rich estates, beautiful gardens and secluded villas of the glitterati, whilst also viewing some of the magnificent works produced by the illustrious artists who vacationed, lived and painted here.

### Places of interest included in the tour:

#### Menton & Serre de la Madone

A favourite resort for the English in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Menton* enjoys one of the most beneficent climates along this coast. Highlights include the *Musée Cocteau*, the *Salle des Mariages* in the Town Hall and the *Basilica of St Michel*, a magnificent example of baroque architecture.

Situated in the hills behind Menton, *Serre de la Madone* is a 9-hectare terraced garden, a creation of Lawrence Johnston, better known for his creation of Hidcote in the Cotswolds. Plants from Burma, China and South Africa thrive in this gentle and sunny climate. It has now been restored after a period of decline.

For more information about the Serre de la Madone, please visit:

<https://www.menton.fr/Jardin-Serre-de-la-Madone.html>

#### Maria Serena Gardens

At the foot of the cliffs that run along the Italian border, the Villa Maria Serena stages its gardens in a place called "Little Africa". A collection of palm trees and cycads adorns these gardens where strelitzia alba, dracena, bohinia stand out against the sea. Created in 1886 for the Foucher de Careil family by Charles Garnier, the Villa Maria Serena was acquired in 1922 by a British banker, Henry Konig, who bequeathed it to the City in 1947. The garden, which it might be more relevant to call palm grove, is a hymn to tousled verticality. The lower garden is occupied by a set of palm trees where we recognize *Caryota urens*, *Phoenix canariensis*, *Washingtonia*, *Chamoerops humilis*, with which magnificent *Cycas* mingle. The upper

garden, topped with an alignment of cypresses, has the appearance of a dark plant wall. And in a wide range of leaves similar to the feathers of a large green bird, the powerful sheaf of *Strlitzia augusta* ensures continuity between the two areas.

For more information about the Maria Serena Gardens, please visit:

<https://www.menton.fr/Jardin-Maria-Serena.html>

#### Villa Garnier

In front of the little port of Arziglia, the elegant white silhouette of Villa Garnier stands out. It was the residence of the well-known Parisian architect Charles Garnier (1825-1898), the creator, among many works, of the Paris Opera and the Casino of Montecarlo. Inside the building, now owned by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Aosta, paintings by the French painter Paul Baudry and frescoes by Ernest Meissonier and Goustaue Boulanger can be seen. The villa is surrounded by a magnificent palm grove and sun-drenched terraces where exotic plants grow. In the garden you can still admire the bust of Charles Garnier by the French sculptor J.B. Carpeaux and a column from the Tuileries palace in Paris (which Garnier loved very much, but which he was commissioned unfortunately to demolish).

For more information about the Villa Garnier, please visit:

<https://www.marinadegliaregai.it/en/what-to-see-riviera-dei-fiori/villa-garnier>

#### Clarence Bicknell Museum

Clarence Bicknell came to Bordighera as the chaplain in 1878 but within a year he devoted himself to botany, art, archaeology and good deeds for the needy. He funded and built this Museo in 1888 and the nearby Biblioteca Civica in 1910 to house his ever-expanding collection of books. Make sure to check the opening times, then enjoy seeing exhibits and the film about Clarence as well as collection of botanical samples, butterflies and copies of rock engravings from the Vallée des Merveilles 40 km north. The centenary of Clarence's death was celebrated in 2018 and some of the exhibits from the centenary exhibition are still on display in the two buildings on the site.

For more information about the museum, please visit:

<http://riviera-buzz.com/features/local-buzz/item/museo-bicknell-bordighera.html>



## Menton

Menton is a town on the French Riviera in southeast France. It's known for beaches and gardens such as the Serre de la Madone garden, showcasing rare plants. East, the hilly, medieval old town is home to Basilique Saint-Michel, with its 18th-century bell tower, and the ornate facade of La Chapelle des Pénitents-Blancs. Nearby, the Musée Jean Cocteau collection Séverin Wunderman displays works by poet Jean Cocteau.

For more information about Menton, please visit:

<http://ee.france.fr/en/discover/menton-0>

## Nice

The capital of the Riviera, Nice is a buzzing city full of culture, excellent restaurants and good shopping. France's fifth largest city, for some 150 years Nice has been a popular destination of the rich and famous, including Queen Victoria. It is a wonderful city to explore, with its distinct districts – the medieval quarter, the Italianate quarter that belies Nice's past as part of Italy, and plenty of rich mansions that shows past pedigree as one of the most fashionable resorts in Europe. There are excellent museums to explore, including the *Chagall*, *Matisse*, *Modern Art* and *Beaux-Arts*, a characterful flower market area to enjoy, the lovely port and famed *Promenade des Anglais* to stroll along, the 17<sup>th</sup> century *Palais Lascaris* to visit, the *Russian Church* to discover, and much more.

For more information about Nice, please visit:

<http://en.nicetourisme.com/>

## Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild, Cap Ferrat

Completed in 1912 and designed by architect Jacques-Marcel Auburtin for the enormously wealthy Beatrice de Rothschild, this pink, treasure-filled palace sits atop the promontory surrounded by its own lush gardens. Lunch is included in the villa's elegant restaurant overlooking the bay.

For more information about the Villa Ephrussi, please visit:

<http://www.villa-ephrussi.com/en/home>

## Villa Kerylos

One of the most extraordinary villas on the coast, the *Villa Kerylos* was designed as a recreation of an ancient Greek residence. Built between 1902 and 1908 by architect Emmanuel Pontremoli and archaeologist and patron of the arts Théodore Reinach, this house teeters on the water's edge and is built around an open courtyard. Its rooms are filled with artefacts inspired by Rome, Egypt and

Pompeii and furniture copied from Grecian originals.

For more information about the Villa Kerylos, please visit:

<http://www.villa-kerylos.com/en/home>

## St-Paul-de-Vence, Fondation Maeght

The hugely popular hill village of St-Paul-de-Vence has been a magnet for artists throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the village is dominated by studios and galleries and offers from its ramparts breath-taking views of the surrounding countryside and the sea. Its lovely medieval streets are perfect for a leisurely stroll to take in some of the sights including the 12<sup>th</sup> century *Église Collégiale*, ramparts, the pretty *Rue Grande* and *Grand Fountain*. The village attracted some of art's most renowned names, most notably to the famed *Colombe d'Or* restaurant where artists such as Picasso traded paintings for meals and accommodation. The village also houses the *Fondation Maeght* museum of modern art. One of the great galleries of France, this privately funded establishment dating from 1964 has an enormous range of paintings, ceramics, stained glass and sculpture by Giacometti, Miro, Chagall, Calder and Braque to name but a few. Built by the Catalan architect Jose-Luis Sert, the building is itself an astonishing sight.

For more information about the Maeght Foundation, please visit:

<http://www.fondation-maeght.com>

## Cagnes-sur-mer, Domaine des Collettes

Immersed in greenery 6km southeast of St-Paul-de-Vence, Le Domaine des Collettes in Cagnes-sur-Mer was home and studio to an arthritis-crippled Renoir (1841–1919) from 1907 until his death. He lived there with his wife and three children, and the house is wonderfully evocative, despite being sparsely furnished. On display are a handful of original paintings, including a version of *Les Grandes Baigneuses* (The Women Bathers; 1892), as well as a number of sculptures, letters, photos, documents and the artist's wheelchair.

For more information about the Domaine des Collettes, please visit:

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/france/st-paul-de-vence/attractions/musee-renoir/a/poi-sig/1283750/1322933>

## Villa Hanbury

An excursion just over the border into Italy takes us to the 100-acre gardens of the *Villa Hanbury* which were laid out by Sir Thomas Hanbury in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. A dramatic site on a promontory, the

gardens are planted with an impressive collection of specimens, ranging from succulents to roses and plants indigenous to the site.

For more information about the Villa Hanbury, please visit:

<http://www.giardinihanbury.com/hanbury4/>

## Villa Val Rahmeh

This wonderful exotic garden was created in 1905 by the Englishman Sir Percy Radcliffe, former Governor of Malta, who collected here a large number of exotic fruit plants. The *Jardin Val Rahmeh*, that retains its air of the Arts and Crafts style, was passed on, in the 1950s, to Miss Campbell, a rich English Lady who developed the botanical aspect of the garden, which now includes over 700 species of plants and trees.

For more information about the Villa Val Rahmeh, please visit:

<https://www.mnhn.fr/fr/visitez/lieux/jardin-botanique-val-rahmeh-menton>

## Travel books to read

**Graham Robb, *The Discovery of France*.**

A general introduction to French culture, landscape and history, it also features an excellent insight into the distinctive character of France's regions.

**Bernard Levin, *From the Camargue to the Alps: A Walk Across France in Hannibal's footsteps*.**

As the title suggests, English journalist Bernard Levin follows the Carthaginian military commander's path across France to Italy, describing history, landscape and culture on his way.

**Tobias Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy, 1766*.**

**Laurance Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy, 1768*.**

Both 18<sup>th</sup> century authors travelled through France, to Nice, continuing along to Italy. Sterne's personal and sentimental account can be seen as a response to quarrelsome and deriding Smollett's.

**F Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night*.**

Fitzgerald's famous novel is set in the glamour and extravagance of the 1920s French Riviera.

## Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.

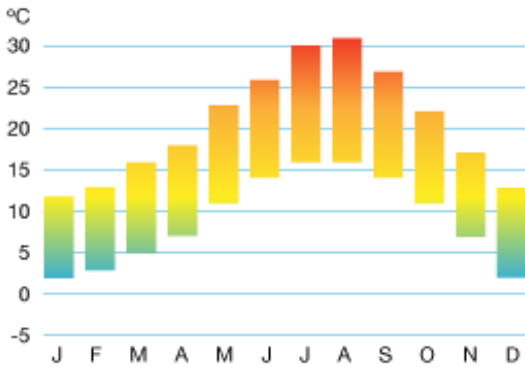
## Your lecturer – Nicholas Merchant

Nicholas Merchant, Former Chairman of the Art Fund West Yorkshire Fundraising Committee who has lectured extensively on the decorative arts both for NADFAS and independently in America, South Africa and Europe will be accompanying you on your visits and giving 4 talks during your trip: 'The Creation of the Cote d'Azur', 'Two Gentlemen of Bordighera', 'Queen Victoria in the South of France' and 'English Gardeners in the South of France'.



## The Basics

**Climate** – The weather in the Côte d’Azur at this time of year is likely to be pleasant, but there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.



**Time** – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

**Language** – French.

**Religion** – Roman Catholic.

**National holidays** – New Year’s day (01 Jan); Easter Monday; Labour day (01 May); Victory in Europe day (08 May); Ascension day; Whit Sunday; Whit Monday; National day (14 Jul); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); All Saints’ day (01 Nov); Armistice day (11 Nov); Christmas day (25 Dec).

**Currency** – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

**Banks** – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

**Credit cards** – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you’re eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it’s advisable to

carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

**Electricity** – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

**Drinking water** – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you’ll find a huge amount of bottled water for sale too)

**Shops and museums** – Nice has a wide variety of shops, small villages have quaint boutiques.

Department stores are open 0900-1830 Monday to Saturday. Most shops are closed between 1200-1430. Some food shops (particularly bakers) are open Sunday mornings, in which case they will probably close Monday. Many shops close all day or half-day Monday.

Please note that some museums close on Mondays.

**Clothes & Shoes** – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

**Camera** – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

**Bath plugs** – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a ‘universal’ one with you.

**Telephones/mobiles** – You should be able to use your mobile phone in France, depending on your operator and contract.

**Tipping** –To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



## Health

### Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

**Keep receipts for insurance claims.**



### Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

**Keep receipts for insurance claims.**

### General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)

### Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

### Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



## Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

### European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>





## Emergencies

**Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:**

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 07841 023807

**PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.**

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British Consulate Marseille

24 avenue du Prado

13006 Marseille

France

+33 (0)4 91 15 72 10

Marseilleconsular.marseille@fco.gov.uk

Mon, Wed and Fri: 0900 to 1230. Outside these hours a consular Emergency Service is in operation and can be contacted on +33 (0)4 91 15 72 10

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