

C01210-ST French Riviera



The French Riviera has for a long time remained one of the most visited places in the world. It's pleasant climate – mild winters and legendary sunshine, with more than 300 days of cloudless sun a year – have seduced and attracted innumerable personalities and artists since the end of the 19th century. Palaces from the Belle Epoque, dreamlike villas, and millionaires' luxurious mansions sprawl all along the coast from Nice to Menton. Perched upon its hilltop, the paradise of Monaco – a tiny, independent and prosperous country – is frequented by international jet-setters as well as the biggest names of our time. We invite you to discover the rich and sundry patrimony, the medieval villages hung in the cliffs, the châteaux that once defended the countryside and ports, the

princely residences, and luxurious tropical gardens, but also the numerous natural sites that lie all along this steep coast where the Alpes plunge into the sea in grandiose landscapes.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival at NICE. This magnificent city, whose origin is now a mystery, is in itself worth the visit. To wander through the small streets of the old city and the numerous markets is a pleasure one must take advantage of! - *Lodging and breakfast in a 2-star hotel in Nice centre*

Day 2 - A visit of NICE in discovery of its many faces, from the Baie des Anges (Angles' Bay) to the Promenade des Anglais, a symbol of the golden age of sea bathing. You will follow the Paillon, a stream now largely overgrown, to discover the classic city and its numerous villas, many of which today house impressive museums. You will climb the Colline de Cimiez, speckled with sumptuous villas and palaces, to attain the ruins of the ancient Roman city, the Monastère de Cimiez (monastery), and enjoy the extraordinary panorama of the bay and the city of Nice that stretches before you - *Lodging and breakfast in the same hotel.*

Day 3 - VILLEFRANCHE SUR MER and BEAULIEU SUR MER (12 km - 7.5 miles). *Taxi escort from Nice to the citadel of Villefranche sur Mer*, where the houses rising from the hillsides spread out like an amphitheater overlooking one of the most beautiful bays of the world. From the citadel of Saint Elme, you will head out in discovery of the old city, with innumerable tiny streets, small public squares and narrow stone stairwells. You will arrive at Beaulieu, an oasis of calm and peace. Huddled around the Baie des Fourmis, at the foot of the hills that protect against the northern winds, this seaside city is one of the hottest spots along the Riviera. Palm trees, banana trees, oranges trees, and lemon trees blossom in splendid gardens and along the boulevards. You will visit the villa Kerylos, a faithful replica of a sumptuous Greek dwelling. You will then climb to the plateau Saint Michel to admire the expansive landscapes - *Lodging and breakfast in a 2-star hotel at Beaulieu.*



Day 4 - PENINSULA OF CAP FERRAT. Circuit of 15 kilometers (9.5 miles) in discovery of the peninsula of the Milliardaires (Peninsula of Millionaires). A simple fishing village at the end of the 19th century, Saint Jean Cap Ferrat has become a fashionable seaside resort and the Cap Ferrat is scattered with superb villas. But we will turn our backs to this world to follow the coastal path which, from the beach of Passabe, pushes its way across the limestone cliffs and sharp reefs to the lighthouse of the Cap built by the Sardes in 1827. By way of the Fosse cove and beach, you will come to the Pointe Saint Hospice (Saint Hospice headland), crowned by a chapel and a monumental bronze statue of the Madonna. You will then return towards the port of Saint Jean, where prestigious yachts, magnificent sailboats, and simple fishing boats dock together. You will regain Beaulieu by the heights of the isthmus to discover the magnitude and the beauty of a paradisiacal site of luxurious vegetation whose symbol is the Rothschild villa and its stunningly cultivated park - *Lodging and breakfast in the same hotel at Beaulieu.*



Day 5 - LA PETITE AFRIQUE – EZE and MONT BASTIDE (circuit of 14 km- 9 miles). This neighborhood of Beaulieu, well protected by limestone hills, houses magnificent gardens and sumptuous villas of the Belle Epoque, which welcome illustrious British and Russian guests. Exotic plants recognized for their fragility bloom in these parts in profusion of color and fragrances! You will climb towards the plateau Saint Michel along the route Aurélienne where a few habitations remain which date back 2000 years. You will then descend into the valley of Saint Michel along the northern slope and will be surprised by the contrast in vegetation, which is more exuberant, with charming coppices. You will arrive at Eze sur Mer and climb again along the first heights, following historic paths, to Mont Bastide, smelling the strong fragrance of the scrub vegetation. You will then descend by way of the shadowed slope to Eze village, a ravishing medieval city hung on its rocky outcrop, dominated by the ruins of a château and a lovely botanical garden. You will follow the famous path Sentier Nietzsche to the sea, a pathway dedicated to the famous philosopher who spent much time in these parts. Taxi transfer to Monaco.
Lodging and breakfast in a 2-star hotel in Monaco or Beausoleil



Day 6 - Visit of the PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO. You will set off in the discovery of this tiny country which hangs, in successive plateaus, to the abrupt cliffs of the Rocher de Monaco, and which, at the cost of titanic renovations, rose to several thousand meters above the sea. We suggest a circuit which will bring you to discover the old city and its oceanographic museum, the exotic garden, the cathedral and the princely palace. You will cross the commercial area of La Condamine and arrive at Monte Carlo, where the name alone evokes games, casinos and palaces. *Lodging and breakfast in the same hotel.*

Day 7 - LA TURBIE and LE CAP D’AIL. (15 km – 9.5 miles, altitude gain : +500m) You will leave the avant-gard city and climb towards the village of La Turbie, built partly on

the coastal road and party on the Via Augusta, a Roman path which led de Gênes to Cimiez. There stands the Trophée des Alpes (Trophy of the Alps), an immense monument that the Romans had built in 76 AD in celebration of Auguste’s victory over the alpine people. Thanks to the work of the archeologist Formige and the American patron E. Tuck, you will be able to admire a Roman masterpiece and benefit from a splendid panorama that stretches from the Italian city to the Massif de l’Esterel. You will continue your hike along the heights to arrive at the Massif de la Tête du Chien (Dog’s Head Massif). You will follow the cliffs de la Loubière and descend onto Cap d’Ail by way of Roman paths. You will follow the coastal path to Monaco, arriving at the new quarter of Fontvieille on the sea - *Lodging and breakfast in the same hotel in Monaco or Beausoleil*

Day 8 - ROQUEBRUNE – CAP MARTIN – MENTON. (14 km – 9 miles) *Taxi escort to the beach du Beach* at Roquebrune. You will arrive at the Pointe de la Vigie (Vigie headland) and climb to the chapel of Notre Dame du Bon Voyage (Our Lady of Safe Journey) to discover the majestic bay of Roquebrune and the sumptuous villas snuggled into the cliff walls. Beyond the Pointe de Cabbé (Cabbé headland), you will discover the famous wood cabin built by Le Corbusier, which stands in sharp contrast to the splendor and luxury of the surrounding villas. You will leave the waterside to head into the old village of Roquebrune, perched upon its rocky spur with its imposing château looming above.

The castle was built in the 10th-century by the Counts of Vintimille. You will return to the seaside, passing by the Saint Roch and La Pausa chapels, built in the 15th century to avert the plague epidemic that ravaged the area. The coastal path will lead you through the wild, ragged landscape of the Cap Martin, which houses some of the most beautiful villas along the coast, drowned in the midst of a tall pine forest. Following the length of this long beach, you will arrive at Menton and its old city - *Lodging and breakfast in a 3-star hotel in Menton.*

Day 9 - Visit of MENTON. We recommend spending the day discovering Menton : the old city, the amphitheater open onto the sea; a city where tiny streets, quaint public squares and small, cliff-side homes intermingle; a city of the 19th and 20th centuries, a place of beautiful villas and numerous gardens; a city proud to never know the cold hand of winter. Some of the gardens hold plants from all over the world. La Serre de la Madone, created by the famous landscape gardener Laurence Johnson, holds several very rare species, some of which are found nowhere else in the world! The Orthodox Church testifies that this city was once frequented by a Russian colony at the start of the 20th century and the many museums remind us of the history of the city and of the region, and that Menton has always attracted and seduced numerous artists.



Lodging and breakfast in the same hotel.

Day 10 - MENTON. Tour ends after breakfast.

Season

All round the year but be careful this area is very crowded in summer time and we recommend you (if you can) to come outside this period. Nevertheless this area attracts a lot of tourists and you have to reserve earlier to get the best rooms.

What's included?

- 9 nights' accommodation in selected 2 or 3 star hotels with breakfasts
- No dinner
- Hotel to hotel luggage transfer
- Taxi transfers
- A set of maps (1/25 000 scale) with the route marked on and detailed route notes
- A daily itinerary together with information about facilities and places of interest along the trail.
- Phone Emergency assistance.

Visa fees - transportation fees to and from the walk area - Insurance (strongly recommended on all trips) - Transfers except those mentioned above – Drinks - Additional meals - Spending of personal nature e.g. laundry, souvenirs, phone calls... are not included

Getting there and away

By plane: the international Nice –Cote d'Azur airport is the second largest airport in France. Regular bus services to Nice centre (contact us for more details)

By train: Nice is connected with the largest cities in France. TGV links Paris to Nice in 6 ½ hours.

By car: the city is linked by the A8 motorway “La Provencale” to Aix en Provence and the Italian border.

Where to park: several pay supervised car parks in Nice. Direct trains from Menton to Nice.

Walk difficulty

Grade 2 – Walks follow lanes, good paths and tracks along the sea or in the first slopes of the mountains. Ascents to reach the perched villages or belvederes are a little bit challenging but are short. The ascent to La Turbie village is graded 3 and we propose you two routes, the direct one is strenuous but the other one is longer but less difficult. This tour requires a reasonable level of fitness.