

7-DAY PREMIUM GUIDE

SOUTH OF FRANCE

France, Europe

Lavender fields, perched villages & the French Riviera

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Top Hotels

Best Restaurants

Insider Tips

Welcome to South of France

The South of France encompasses two distinct worlds: the lush, aromatic inland of Provence — with its lavender fields, ochre villages, and Roman ruins — and the glamorous Cote d'Azur coastline, from Nice to Saint-Tropez. Add in the dramatic Gorges du Verdon, the artist-magnet villages of the Luberon, and Arles' Van Gogh heritage, and you have a region that could absorb weeks of exploration. This 7-day guide covers the essential southern circuit.

BEST TIME TO VISIT May–June & Sept (lavender: July)	TYPICAL BUDGET \$150–\$280/day
COUNTRY France, Europe	GUIDE LENGTH 7 Days

7-Day Overview

- 1 Arrive Nice & Promenade des Anglais
- 2 Monaco & Eze
- 3 Cannes & Saint-Tropez
- 4 Gorges du Verdon
- 5 Aix-en-Provence & Cezanne
- 6 Luberon & Ochre Villages
- 7 Arles & Departure

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Days 1 & 2

DAY 1

Arrive Nice & Promenade des Anglais

- Fly into Nice Cote d'Azur (NCE)
- Promenade des Anglais beachfront walk
- Vieux Nice (Old Town) — Cours Saleya market
- Nice Cathedral & Castle Hill park
- Dinner in Vieux Nice — socca & pissaladiere

TIP:

Socca (chickpea crepe) is Nice's street food — eat it piping hot from Chez The

DAY 2

Monaco & Eze

- Drive or train to Monaco (20 min)
- Monaco Cathedral & Prince's Palace
- Monte Carlo Casino exterior (dress code)
- Village d'Eze — perched medieval village
- Return Nice for dinner on the Riviera

TIP:

The Moyenne Corniche road between Nice and Eze is one of the most scenic drives in Eu

Days 3 & 4

DAY 3

Cannes & Saint-Tropez

- Drive along the Corniche to Cannes
- La Croisette promenade & film festival palais
- Ferry or drive to Saint-Tropez
- Place des Lices market town square
- Tahiti Beach or Pampelonne beach at sunset

TIP:

Saint-Tropez is only accessible by ferry in summer (July-Aug) — roads are grii

DAY 4

Gorges du Verdon

- Drive inland to Gorges du Verdon (2hrs from Nice)
- Europe's Grand Canyon by boat or kayak
- Point Sublime panoramic viewpoint
- Moustiers-Sainte-Marie — porcelain village
- Dinner in Aix-en-Provence or overnight there

TIP:

The Gorges du Verdon is most dramatic in morning light — arrive by 9am for the best pho

Days 5, 6 & 7

DAY 5 Aix-en-Provence & Cezanne

- Cours Mirabeau — Aix's grand boulevard...
- Cezanne Studio & Atelier Cezanne
- Aix Cathedral & baptistery
- Saturday market (best in Provence)
- Afternoon in Les Baux-de-Provence

TIP: The Aix Saturday market is Provence at its finest

DAY 6 Luberon & Ochre Villages

- Roussillon — France's most colorful village
- Colorado Provencal ochre canyon walk...
- Gordes — most photogenic village in Provence
- Abbaye de Senanque (lavender abbey)...
- Lourmarin — Peter Mayle country

TIP: Gordes at golden hour (6-7pm in summer) is one of the best times to visit

DAY 7 Arles & Departure

- Arles — Van Gogh's city
- Roman Amphitheatre (still in use)
- Fondation Vincent Van Gogh museum...
- Les Alyscamps Roman necropolis
- Drive to Marseille airport or Nice for flight...

TIP: Download the Van Gogh trail app — it overlays his paintings on the city streets

Where to Stay in South of France

Hotel Negresco, Nice

★★★★★

Promenade des Anglais **\$400–\$750/night**
Nice's legendary belle epoque landmark. Pink dome, museum-quality art, and old-world glamour.

La Bastide de Gordes

★★★★★

Gordes, Luberon **\$500–\$900/night**
Perched above the Luberon valley with infinity pool and extraordinary Provence panoramas.

Hotel Caumont, Aix-en-Provence

★★★★

Cours Mirabeau **\$280–\$420/night**
18th-century mansion hotel on Aix's finest boulevard. Garden, pool, and refined Provencal style.

Hotel Windsor, Nice

★★★★

City Centre, Nice **\$180–\$280/night**
Artist-designed boutique hotel with extraordinary room murals and a tropical garden.

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Where to Eat in South of France

Chez Theresa, Nice Market Street Food	Must order: Socca — crispy chickpea crepe, a Nice original
La Merenda, Nice Classic Nicois (no phone bookings)	Must order: Pissaladiere, daube Nicoise & stockfish
Le Grill, Hotel de Paris Monaco Iconic Monte Carlo	Must order: Whole roasted sea bass & grand Riviera setting
Chez Bruno, Lorgues Truffle Restaurant	Must order: Black truffle in everything — the real Provence
Le Poivre d'Ane, Les Baux Provençal Cuisine	Must order: Lamb from the Alpilles & wild herb sauces
Restaurant Amphitryon, Arles Arles Modern French	Must order: Gardiane de taureau (bull stew) & Camargue rice
Le Formal, Aix-en-Provence Provençal Fine Dining	Must order: Market-driven tasting menu in a lovely courtyard

Tips & Logistics

Getting There:	Fly into Nice (NCE) or Marseille (MRS). Car rental essential for Provence inland.
Getting Around:	Car is essential outside Nice/Cannes. TGV from Paris to Aix or Avignon is excellent.
Lavender:	Peak lavender bloom is late June to mid-July in the Valensole plateau and Luberon.
Markets:	Every Provence town has a morning market — the best are Aix (Sat), Arles (Sat), Apt (Sat).
Riviera vs Provence:	Riviera for beach/glamour/nightlife; Provence for food/culture/scenery/authenticity.
Driving:	Parking in hilltop villages can be tight — arrive early or use park-and-walk areas below.
Summer Crowds:	July-August is extremely busy everywhere. September is the sweet spot — warm, less crowded.

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