



Nice Guide

By Rowena Carr-Allinson Posted on August 2, 2011

A smart seaside resort, Nice has always attracted British travellers in search of sea, sun and something chic...



Live like a Local in Nice

So, is a trip to Nice all about the food?

We'd be lying if we said it wasn't a key part of Nice's appeal. Whether it's delicious local Provençal dishes or modern international cuisine, the city has more than its fair share of amazing places to eat. For a really authentic experience, try the Restaurant du Gesu, hidden in a tiny square (Place du Jesus) under the Eglise du Jesus. It's one of the Niçois' favourite local eateries and gets very, very busy thanks to the cheap and cheerful Provençal menu including *pissaladiere* (onion tart), deep fried courgettes and *pistou* (pesto) pasta on a purse-friendly budget.

To go gourmet, try the very cool minimalist design Keisuke Matsushima (22 Rue de France), which deals in a fusion of Japanese and French cuisine. For something completely different, make for *I Aphrodite* (10 Boulevard Dubouchage), where you'll be in for a treat of molecular gastronomy.

Where should I go for a quick aperitif?

The Vieux Nice (Old Town) is packed with cafes and bars. Catch an aperitif at Les Distilleries Ideales (24 Rue de la Prefecture) where locals perch on outdoor tables in the narrow pedestrian street to watch the world go by. If you like your bubbles, try *L'Effervescence* (10 Rue Loge), a hip champagne bar, or for a lounge atmosphere stop by Le Before (18 Rue du Congres City Centre) which serves nibbles all night. For the best sun-downers, a well-kept secret is the rooftop bar at Boscolo Plaza hotel (12 Avenue de Verdun), while to enjoy the Mediterranean soundtrack, stop for a nightcap at the glamorous beach bar of the Beau Rivage Hotel (24 Rue Saint François De Paule).

And for a spot of *le shopping*?

Hit the legendary market at the Cours Saleya in the early morning before the crowds - it's the place to take in the delicious aromas of the food and flower stalls. Aside from fruit and veg, though, there's a world of shopping in Nice, from the luxury household name designer stores like Hermes and Chanel and beautiful boutiques like Sonya Rykiel and Façonnable on the appropriately named Rue du Paradis. Don't miss the French classics like Blanc Bleu (13 Rue Massena), Le Comptoir des Cotonniers (9 Rue Massena) and Gerard Darel (4 Avenue Verdun). Another must? Muriel Ecauvre's showroom (12 Rue d'Anvers), where the jeweller works only with black diamonds. For simplicity, try Anne Fontaine (4 Avenue de Suede) who swears only by white shirts.

What about a cultural fix?

Nice has a vibrant art scene. The modern MAMAC (Promenade des Arts), the Matisse (164 Avenue des Arenes de Cimiez), the Renoir (8 Rue de la Loge) and Chagall (Avenue Docteur Menard) museums are all well worth a visit. Or, you can just stroll around and see the city's rich architecture, a splendid mishmash of styles from Art Deco to Italian.

And how do I get around?

With difficulty. If you're saddled with a car that is. Parking is near impossible, so go local and hire a scooter. Zoom to the Cap de Nice for the best panoramas and lovely coastal walks, or to the Vieux Port for an authentic experience. You can even venture further afield to Cannes or Monaco, both just a few kilometres away along super-scenic routes.

Where are the best places to stay in Nice?

For a view, check into the swish Palais de La Mediterranee (13 Promenade des Anglais) which overlooks the Baie des anges and the Promenade des Anglais. The grand Art Deco-style building with its imposing white columns is home to a casino on the ground floor, a spa and 134 stylish rooms with all the trimmings. A slightly less glam, but equally as desirable address is the quirky Hotel Windsor, where many of the rooms have been designed by artists. Fancy something out of town? Venture into the *Carriere pays Nicois* to the charming villages of Eze, Mougins or St Paul de Vence where there are a handful of gorgeous rural retreats like *Domaine Pins Paul* or *Les Rosees* to choose from.

Ok, I'm sold. So how do I get there?

EasyJet operate regular flights from the UK to Nice (easyjet.com). For more information, contact Nice Tourism (nicetourisme.com; tel: +33 (0)892 707 407)

Ask a Local: Nice Insiders Share their Secrets

"Nice is full of brilliant one-off boutiques, showcasing French designers and unique lines. Rue Karr has some of the best independent boutiques like *L'Un et L'Autre* and *Swildens*" says Anne Davenè-Vantalou, Personal Shopper and owner of I Shop For You (ishopforyou.fr; tel: +33 6 77 91 30 15).

Visit the Cours Saleya market to see astonishing produce from small farmers, from vivid yellow zucchini flowers to striped tomatoes. Then head over to the port area to taste the best socca (a chickpea flour pancake baked in a wood-fired oven) in town at *Pipo* on Rue Bavastro. says Rosa Jackson who runs Nice's gourmet tours and cooking classes Les Petits Farcis (petitsfarcis.com).

For the less travelled route, visit the church of Gairault and its famous waterfall. You can then go up the chemin de Gairault, stop at l'air St Michel and enjoy a meal at Chez Simon. Eric McKie, local resident.

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