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The Riviera:
France & Italy



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THE RIVIERA: FRANCE & ITALY

THE RIVIERA STRETCHES EASTWARD from the bustling port of Marseille and down the coast of Italy to Viareggio. In France, it's dubbed the Côte D'Azur, or Azure Coast, and it is indeed a magical stretch of Mediterranean coastline. Here are the legendary towns of Cannes and St. Tropez and the grand dame of Riviera cities, Nice. Continue on into Italy and you'll encounter the impossibly picturesque port of Portofino as well as Forte dei Marmi, a getaway for well-heeled Italians. Wherever you go, you'll see plenty of palm trees, sun worshippers and blue-water vistas—not to mention some of the grandest resort hotels in the world. A week on the Riviera is about dedicated sunbathing, eating well in chic waterside cafés and visiting world-class museums that house masterpieces by Chagall, Matisse and Picasso. More than a century after it was first "discovered," the Riviera still exerts a powerful appeal.

THE RIVIERA: FRANCE & ITALY

(When you make your reservation, you must tell Avis that you will be taking the car into Italy. Mileage is estimated from each preceding city or site. Before you begin your trip, please note: For space reasons, we could not provide the most detailed map with this brochure. We recommend the use of Michelin Map #724 France and #735 Italy in conjunction with this guide. To order Michelin maps, call 1-888-610-5122.)

MARSEILLE PROVENCE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Pick up your Avis car at the Marseille Provence Airport. Make sure Avis knows that you're driving your car into Italy.

MARSEILLE— Eclectic, dynamic and restless, Marseille is France's largest seaport and the country's second-largest city. It's the home of bouillabaisse, that delicious seafood soup that combines so many tastes and textures. So it seems fitting that Marseille is also the melting pot of France, a blend of faces, dialects and dress. You can visit a 19th-century Provençal pastry shop, dine on Vietnamese food and while away the evening in a café, listening to Algerian music.

44 miles

TOULON— This is a sailor's town, France's principal naval base. And it's easy to see why, since Toulon's harbor is breathtaking, surrounded by hills and forts. The old cobblestone city center, around the Rue d'Alger, is where you should concentrate your explorations, visiting the shops and restaurants.

13 miles

HYÈRES— Date palms line the avenues of Hyères, the oldest resort along the Côte d'Azur and a town that's particularly well preserved. It's not difficult to conjure up the heyday of the Belle Époque when visitors included Leo Tolstoy and Queen Victoria. And if you arrive in the morning, pay a visit to the lively market around Place Massillon.

12 miles

LE LAVANDOU— This 19th-century fishing port has slowly evolved into a resort town. Yes, a small fishing fleet is still in evidence, but Le Lavandou is now more of a haven for yachties. You could linger on its beaches, but better yet, take a boat over to Isle Porquerolles, the largest of the three islands in the Hyères Gulf. Eighty percent of the island is protected land, and the best way to see it is to hire a bike and explore its beaches.

25 miles

ST. TROPEZ— The legendary beach resort of St. Tropez has an enviable spot on the Mediterranean shore, with the Esterel Mountains in the background. It was a hot spot for the jet set back in the 1960s, when the presence of film stars like Brigitte Bardot put it on the map. And yet it has never been more chic than it is right now, a mixture of the Hamptons, South Beach and the Riviera. Cool hotels, hip restaurants and a no-holds-barred nightlife are its hallmarks, but it manages to retain its Provençal heritage.

24 miles

ST. RAPHAEL— The 30-plus beaches and the red rock contours of the coast have drawn beachgoers to St. Raphael since Roman times. A town that manages the difficult balancing act of being both a resort and a proper Provençal town, St. Raphael has a handful of rebuilt Belle Époque villas intertwined with more modern buildings. Sailors seek

haven in the town's five harbors, and it was from one of these harbors that Napoleon sailed into exile to Elba.

24 miles

CANNES— Forever identified with the most famous film festival in the world, the glamour of Cannes manages to linger long after the stars depart the yearly event in May. Walk along the Boulevard de la Croisette, the palm tree-lined promenade that overlooks Cannes' famous beach and La Napoule Bay. Catch the view from Pointe de la Croisette, stroll through the morning flower market at Allées de la Liberté and wander through Le Suquet, the old town. But then again, enjoying an apéritif at sunset at one of Cannes' seaside hotels isn't a bad idea either.

8 miles

ANTIBES— Flowers grow well in Antibes because of the perfect combination of light and heat. But artists and writers have also thrived in this unique combination of the elements. The novelist Graham Greene lived here for years, as did the painter Nicolas de Stael. The Château Grimaldi houses the Musée Picasso, and the building was used by Picasso as his studio in 1946. Be sure to take the winding drive out to Cap D'Antibes, with stunning views around every corner.

13 miles

NICE— The hub of the Côte D'Azur, Nice is bathed in the gorgeous light of the Mediterranean year round. Take a leisurely stroll along the Promenade des Anglais, the main boulevard that overlooks the Baie des Anges, passing by such classic Belle Époque hotels as the Hôtel Negresco. Slip into the back streets of the old town, to Cours Saleya, with its lively flower and vegetable market. Check out the



shops selling fragrant olive oils and pastries, and pause at the cafés that spill out onto the pavement. And take some time to visit the Musée Marc-Chagall and the Musée Matisse.

15 miles

MONACO— Determinedly old-fashioned and yet timelessly chic, the Principality of Monaco and the Grimaldi family have earned a special place in the eyes of the world. Prince Albert now holds sway in this fairytale kingdom, with its perfectly proportioned harbor, its luxury hotels and its discrete multi-million dollar condos overlooking the sea. Both Monaco, the old town, and Monte Carlo, the new town, are worth exploring. And Monte Carlo's famed Casino must be seen, preferably at night. The oldest part, dating from 1878, was built by Charles Garnier, an architect better known for designing the Paris Opera House. And for aficionados of royalty, the daily changing of the guard at the Palais du Prince is nearly operatic in its spectacle.

4 miles

ROQUEBRUNE— This old hill town is steeped in tradition. There are the medieval houses along Rue Moncollet as well as Donjon, which lays claim to being the oldest feudal castle in France. In Cap Martin, there's a famous coastal path that takes in the sea, local villas and what remains of a once wild Mediterranean coast.





4 miles

MENTON—The lemons of Menton are so famous that they're celebrated with a festival every February. And they're testimony to the claim that Menton is the warmest resort on the Riviera. Explore the waterfront Promenade du Soleil and visit the Musée Jean Cocteau, housed in a 17th-century building where the artist and writer worked. At the Hôtel de Ville, the town hall, you can see Cocteau's decorations for the town's marriage hall.

53 miles

ALASSIO— You've crossed into Italy, to an area known as Riviera di Ponente, or the Riviera of the Setting Sun. The town of Alasio lies in a bay between Capo Santa Croce and Capo Mele. Ernest Hemingway spent some time here, as have legions of British tourists. They come not for culture but for the exceptionally wide beaches and for evenings in pursuit of the best gelato on the street called Il Budello.

78 miles

RAPALLO— Once one of the most fashionable Italian resorts, Rapallo has a long history as a haven for writers, including Ezra Pound and D. H. Lawrence. The town is now more egalitarian. But a walk along the seaside promenade will give you a taste of the slow pleasures that have drawn people here for more than a century.

5 miles

PORTOFINO— The most beautiful town on the Riviera? That's for you to decide after exploring this highly

distilled version of all that is lovely and romantic on this coast. It's the colorful buildings, the perfect harbor, the water and the surrounding greenery. Those who stay here are affluent indeed, and the yachts in the harbor are testimony to

that. You come to stroll the harbor, have lunch in an outdoor café and walk along the shoreline.

55 miles

LA SPEZIA— If you're in need of a cultural fix at this point on your journey, you can get it at the Museo Lia, which is housed in a restored 17th-century convent. The collection, amassed by Amedeo Lia, is an eclectic assortment of Roman antiquities, ivory, enamels and illuminated manuscripts. But La Spezia is also a good place to take a train to the nearby Cinque Terre, five coastal towns that are inaccessible by car.

30 miles

FORTE DEI MARMI— An exclusive beach resort for well-heeled Florentines and Milanese, who retreat here to their villas, the chic town is off the beaten path for most American travelers. But even if your name isn't Prada, Armani or Agnelli, you'll enjoy the wide beach and waves large enough to draw surfers. The beach, controlled by beach clubs and hotels, has the kind of protocol and beach chair regimentation that Italians adore.

10 miles

VIAREGGIO— Famous for its Carnevale celebrations in late January and early February, Viareggio is a delightful beachside getaway in the warmer months. There's a sandy beach, a shop-lined promenade and enough nightlife to keep you from going to bed when the sun sets. By now, you know the drill in these Riviera towns. Get your last, lingering taste of the sea and the sun.

206 miles

NICE COTE D'AZUR

AIRPORT— Drop off your car at the Nice Airport, which offers direct flights to the United States and frequent service to Paris.

HOTELS

Le Petit Nice-Passédat. Two Greek villas from 1917 that have been converted into a stunning 15-guestroom Relais & Chateaux hotel overlooking the Mediterranean. The restaurant, under chef Gerald Passédat, has two Michelin stars. Anse de Maldorme, Marseille. Tel: (33) 04 91 59 2592
www.petitnice-passeadat.com
For reservations in the US: 800-735-2478

Hôtel Residence de la Pinede.

A white villa set next to its own private beach that overlooks the Citadelle. The 35 rooms in this Relais & Chateaux property are impeccably kept, the service stellar. Plage de la Bouillabaisse, St. Tropez. Tel: (33) 04 94 55 91 00
www.residencepinede.com
For reservations in the US: 800-735-2478

Hôtel Martinez Cannes & Spa

Givenchy. A wonderful Art Deco hotel that sets the tone with understated luxury, a serious spa and an incredible location on La Croisette. Beloved by the film set, the 385-room hotel is a treat any time of year. 73 Blvd. De la Croisette, Cannes. Tel: (33) 04 92 98 73 00
www.hotel-martinez.com

Hôtel Negresco.

Antiques, Baccarat crystal chandeliers and royal portraits are the hallmarks of this grand dame overlooking the Baie des Anges. The 145-room hotel is opulent and old-fashioned, with decor ranging from Louis XIII to Art Deco. 37 Promenade des Anglais, Nice. Tel: (33) 04 93 16 64 00
www.hotel-negresco-nice.com

Hotel Splendido.

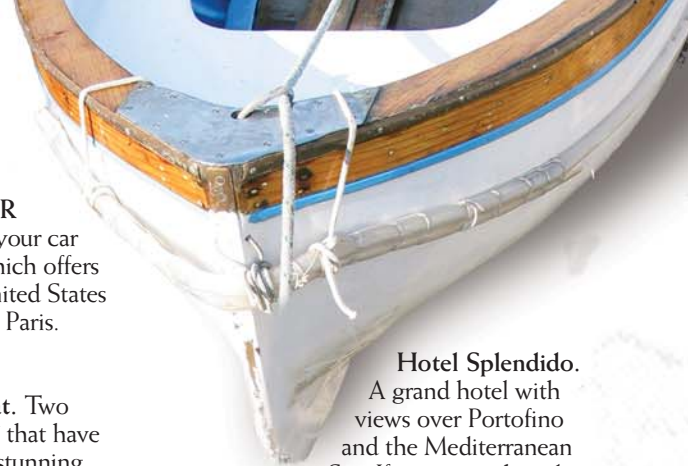
A grand hotel with views over Portofino and the Mediterranean Sea. If you are rich and famous, or merely exceptionally rich, this 65-room hotel is where you stay. Beautifully appointed and truly elegant. 16 Viale Baratta, Portofino. Tel: (39) 0185 267 801
www.hotelsplendido.com

Hotel Augustus.

Surrounded by a flowery park with a pool, this hotel consists of two main buildings and several villas. The 87-room property is old-fashioned yet still a fashionable hideaway. 169 Via Morin, Forte Dei Marmi. Tel: (39) 0584 787200
www.versilia.toscana.it/augustus/aug01.htm

DINING

Le Louis XV. The three Michelin star flagship of chef Alain Ducasse's empire. If you need one splurge, make it this. Located within the Belle-Époque palace that is the Hôtel de Paris. Place du Casino, Monte Carlo. Tel: 37-7/92-16-30-00
www.alain-ducasse.com



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AVIS EUROPEAN DRIVING GUIDE

A 32-page, 4-color, illustrated driving guide created by Avis Europe. This complimentary guide offers a concise distillation of essential driving tips presented in simplified charts, graphs and bullet point format. The guide offers an easy way for Americans to understand some of the differences between driving at home and driving in Europe.

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