

The Essential Road Trip Itinerary for the French Riviera and Aix-en-Provence



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Photo: Courtesy of Christina Liao

The French Riviera is renowned for its sensational beauty and alluring glamour. Here, luxury hotels sparkle like the coast's crystal-clear waters, Michelin-starred restaurants are everywhere, and rosé flows freely. And thanks to the annual Cannes Film Festival and Monaco Grand Prix, the region becomes a hotspot for celebrities in May. But to make the most out of a vacation to the Côte d'Azur—along with a stop in dreamy Aix-en-Provence—and see as much as possible in one fell swoop, a road trip is the best approach to the Riviera. This way you're not bound by restrictive train schedules or strikes, and can easily access points of interest that may be unreachable otherwise. (Just go before summer hits to avoid being stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic and unbearable crowds in key cities.)

Day 6

If you can manage add another day to the itinerary, drive up through the mountains to gawk at Verdon Gorge, a stunning river canyon with icy blue water that flows into the man-made Lake of Sainte-Croix, with an eventual stop in Grasse, a medieval village home to the highly fragrant centifolia rose and regarded as the perfume capital of the world. Otherwise, head straight for Nice and walk around the old town's produce and flower market if you're there from Tuesday to Sunday, or the antiques market on Monday. Afterward, grab lunch at Acchiardo, a family-run restaurant where you'll find locals and tourists alike dining on delicious traditional Niçoise cuisine, and some gelato that rivals that of Italy's at either Oui, Jelato or Cesar Milano.



Grand-Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat, a Four Seasons Hotel

Photo: Courtesy of Grand-Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat, a Four Seasons Hotel

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Now it's time to head into the peninsula of Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, where a stop at Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild for its manicured gardens and stellar bay views is required before calling it a night at Grand-Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat. This legendary property has been open since 1908 and is one of the Côte d'Azur's most prized gems. Now a Four Seasons hotel, this paradisiacal retreat sits on

17 verdant acres and has only 74 accommodations, including a private Millennial pink–hued villa with its own pool, tennis court, and garden. The resort’s Club Dauphin—which can be accessed by a glass funicular should you want to forego walking up and down steps—is outfitted with a saltwater pool, private cabanas, views of the sea, and a restaurant serving light Provençal fare. But if you’re going to really experience the Grand-Hotel du Cap-Ferrat, then a visit to the 8,000-square-foot spa must be arranged, where results-driven products by Biologique Recherche, Dr. Burgener, and all-natural beauty line Sodashi are used. For dinner, make a reservation at Le Cap and ask for one of the tables on the terrace. Enjoy the Riviera’s sublime weather, and delight in chef Yoric Tièche’s Michelin-starred creations.



The view of Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat from Grand-Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat

Photo: Courtesy of Grand-Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat, a Four Seasons Hotel