

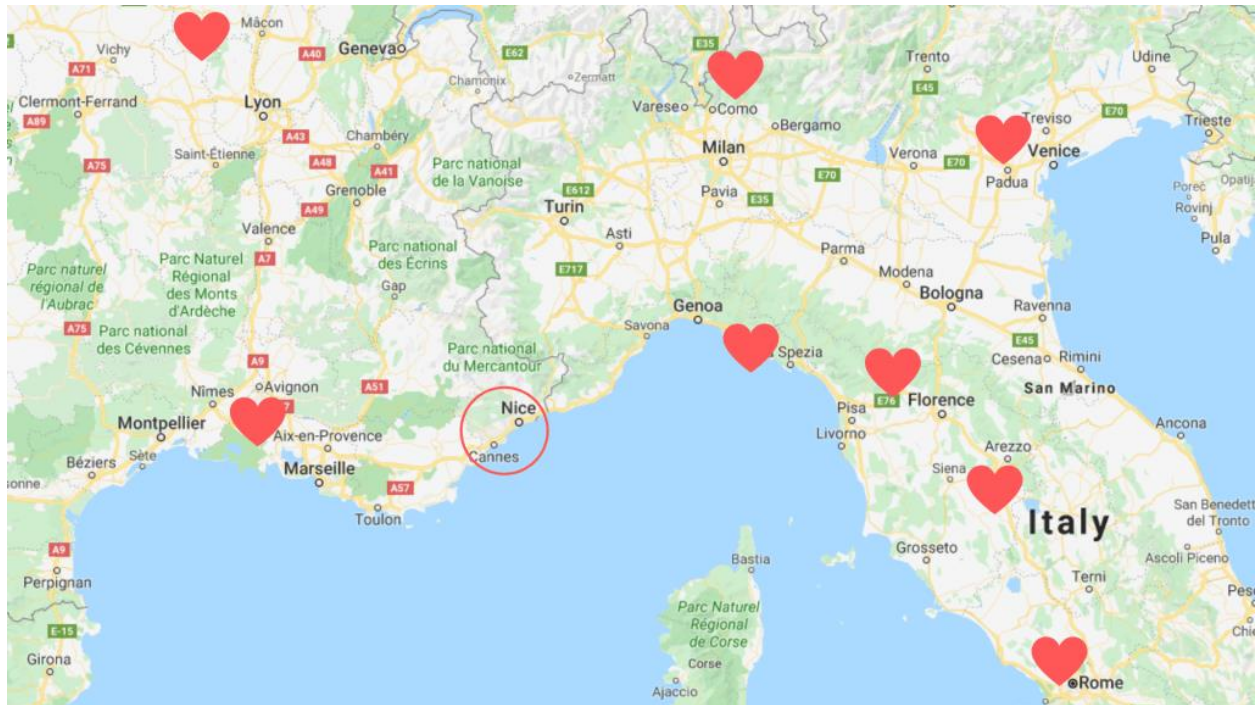
FRENCH RIVIERA TRAVEL GUIDE – LOGISTICS AND ITINERARY



The French Riviera is so stinking pretty. It's probably the prettiest coastal region I've ever seen. I think a lot of Americans want to visit the French Riviera for the luxury of it, similar to Lake Como. Lots of celebrities have houses here, and that means it has to be a luxurious destination. And it definitely is!

We went for a quick beach getaway from London, but it would be a great place to tack on to other parts of France like the southern wine regions of **Provence**, Burgundy, or Bordeaux or of course Paris. Heads up that this guide does not include St. Tropez because it was pretty far from Nice.

Because the French Riviera is in the southeast part of France, it is also pretty convenient to get to Northern Italy from here and would be a great trip to tack on if you had more than a week to explore both countries. Try exploring Lake Como, Venice, Florence, **Cinque Terre**, or **Tuscany** too!



SHOULD I VISIT THE FRENCH RIVIERA?

Yes! If you want a high-end beach weekend with beautiful beaches and hills and scenery and food and people, this is the spot. It's definitely a luxury vacation destination.

WHAT TIME OF YEAR SHOULD I VISIT THE FRENCH RIVIERA?

May – September is going to be the best for beach weather, but this area is equally beautiful if you're not interested in laying on the beach or getting in the water, presumably year round. We went the last weekend in September, and all of the beach chair clubs were closing the following week, so it was the end of the season. We thought it was the PERFECT time as prices and crowds were lower than normal and the weather was still ideal.

HOW DO I GET TO THE FRENCH RIVIERA?

We flew to Nice but you may be training from another part of Paris. Nice is the largest airport in the area. Train travel is very easy around the French Riviera to see all the spots.

IF YOU'RE STAYING IN NICE...

The bus from the airport to the city of Nice is €6 each, and you must buy your ticket inside the terminal. When you walk out of the terminal, turn right and walk until you see the busses. Make sure you know what stop you are and what stop is before yours by consulting Google Maps, because you will need to hit the red button for the bus to stop. It's kind of hectic and confusing to understand the intercom, so I recommend following along with google maps so you know when you're getting close.

Of course you can always use Uber too, but the bus is much cheaper.

IF YOU'RE STAYING ANYWHERE ELSE...

A quick google search tells me that there is a train stop a 10 minute walk away from the airport that can whisk you to any destination.

Advantages of the train are that it is a quick service (about 20 minutes to Antibes) and more reliable than the bus, which can be severely delayed by summer traffic.

Disadvantages: The walk of around 10 minutes, figuring out the route (the first time), slightly more expensive (about 3 euro v 1 euro for the bus), train station a bit isolated and dark late at night (for a single female traveller, for example).

IS THERE A LANGUAGE BARRIER IN THE FRENCH RIVIERA?

I don't remember having an issue with language, but similar to other French destinations, the people are not the friendliest. Having a few words on hand like bonjour, bonsoir, merci, etc. can really help you.

WHERE SHOULD I STAY IN THE FRENCH RIVIERA?

If you want to be super central, Nice is a good option – which is what we thought and did. However, personally Nice was not my favorite. It feels very much like a city more than a beach town. The food options were plentiful but in the old city streets, whereas I kind of wanted some al fresco beachside options. My fault for not looking into it better.

I would recommend staying in Antibes as it is also relatively central and much cuter, beachy, and small. An Airbnb or a hotel would be great! Antibes is definitely where we would stay if we came back since it was close to our favorite beach of the trip. We loved eating and drinking on the streets and by the water and feeling very French.

AirBnB it

Hotel it

HOW DO I GET AROUND THE FRENCH RIVIERA?

Train! As I mentioned, the train goes all over the French Riviera. I know lots of people and blogs say to rent a car, but I didn't feel it was necessary and the thought of parking it in each place kind of stressed me out. Just use Google Maps Transit option to check for times.

One exception is to Eze. The train station in Eze is at the base of the town, but the beauty of Eze is up in the mountains. You'll want to take the bus there (use Google Maps to figure that out). Coming from Nice, the stop was a little hard to find, but get there early to get in line because the bus gets crowded. We got a little trampled and almost didn't make it on even though we got there early. You can pay on board with cash €1.50 each. Sit on the right side of the bus if you can for the most beautiful views.

HOW MANY DAYS SHOULD I SPEND IN THE FRENCH RIVIERA?

We spent 2 full days and it was the minimum time to see all the greatest hits and have lots of relaxing beach time too, though I definitely wouldn't have minded another day or two. We would basically spend half of each day exploring and half of each day relaxing and people watching on the beach.

WHAT IS THERE TO DO IN THE FRENCH RIVIERA?

BEACH

We are beach people, obviously. So the beaches were why I came and were my favorite part. There are so many beaches all over the French Riviera, but I really loved the two that we went to. They were both very different from each other. One was remote, one was just outside Antibes. One was very ritzy, one was more laid back. One was hidden away in a cove, and one was on a long stretch of sand.

PLAGE MALA – REMOTE, RITZY, PRIVATE

This beach was our second favorite, because it was a little too boujee for us. First off, they didn't have any beach loungers so we actually had to lounge on the pool overlooking the beach. Second, they wouldn't let us drink our bottled water we brought which was annoying to me. Third, they did not have servers coming to take our order which is a first world problem but like we paid a lot for those stupid chairs... Despite all these annoying things, the people watching and the beauty of the beach were just too good.



To get there, we took a taxi from Eze as close as he could get and then had to walk about half a mile to get there. At the beach there are two restaurants/hotels. We picked La Réserve. You must call ahead of time to reserve your chair! This cove has yachts littered all in the water, and boats are constantly bringing the people to shore to have lunch at the restaurant. Watching the yachties parade back and forth from the restaurant to their yachts was so fun!!!



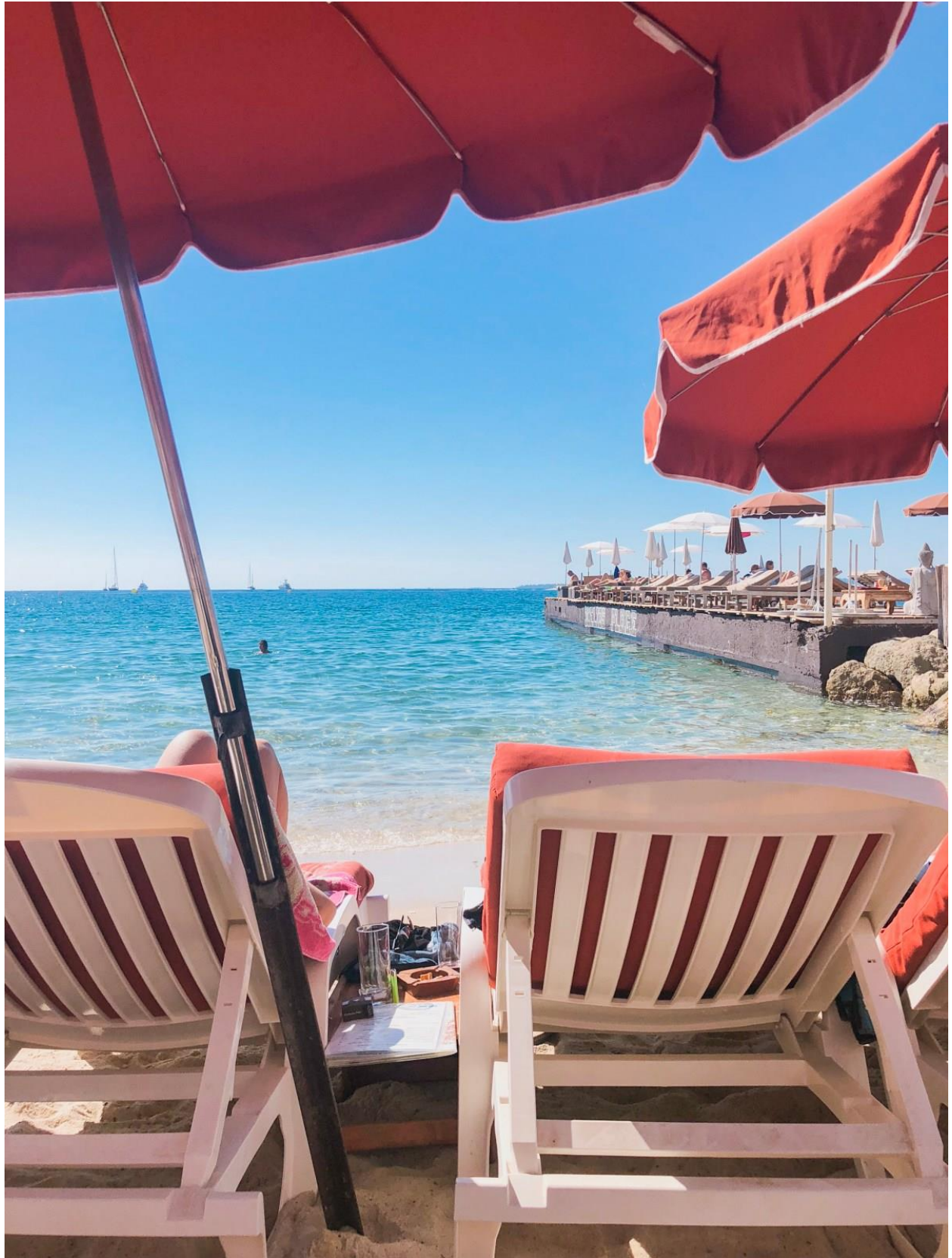
Also there is a little beach that you can walk on and even sit on with your own towels if you don't want to pay the €30 per chair and €20 per towel that oasis charges you (we would do this option next time). Also note that there is a water fountain on the beach that we had to sneak away to use to fill up our water bottle and chug so we weren't being charged €5 a bottle (lol). Also note that as the sun was going down, the scene was turning into a club! The DJ came out and the music was playing.

Tips: call ahead to reserve chairs, consider skipping the club and sitting on the beach for free, bring your own food and water bottle if you're a camel like me and trying to save money

Check out La Réserve

HELIOS PLAGE – FUN, CASUAL, CONVENIENT

This was our favorite beach. The servers were so friendly, the water and sand and service and food were beautiful, and we could've spent every day here alternating between dips in the water and glasses of rosé.





This beach is in Juan-les-Pins which is very close to Antibes, and it has its own train stop. There were actually two separate beaches – Le Colombier which is supposed to be chill and family-friendly and Helios which is supposed to be a little more upscale. They looked the same to me when we were there, but I assume the difference is seen during the crazy summer months. Make sure you book your chairs ahead of time!! Just call or email them.

[Check out Helios Plage here.](#)



NICE BEACHES

There are quite a few beach clubs in Nice, but with two days only they didn't make the top of my list. If you want to change it up and do a day in Nice, just make sure you call ahead to reserve your chair. **[Plage Beau Rivage](#)** is the one I read about the most, so try there first.

EXPLORE

JUAN-LES-PINS

Juan-les-Pins is definitely the more upscale town of the French Riviera. There are lots of fun shops and restaurants that you can wander to in the city. If you want something sophisticated, go to **[Hotel Belle Rives](#)** for a drink, specifically at sunset. We literally just stopped by to take a picture because we were in wet beach clothes and felt a little out of place. If you want something REALLY sophisticated, go to **[Hotel du cap-Eden roc](#)** – one of the nicest hotels in the world. We weren't feeling up to it, but I'm sure it's amazing. We also read that **[Pam Pam](#)** is a restaurant / bar that gets pretty fun and wild.





ANTIBES

Wandering Antibes was one of my favorite things to do in the French Riviera. It has a very relaxed, small town vibe that we loved. Walking along the Promenade Amiral de Grasse from north to east was beautiful to see all the cute homes and sea views. Walk along Rue Sade for cute shops down to Marché Provençal, a food market by day and art market by night. Have a rosé at Cafe Clemenceau or gelato at Gelateria del Porto. Just explore the small town and enjoy!





A SMALL COLLECTION OF PLACES FROM FRIEND'S RECOMMENDATIONS, BLOGS, AND THE WEBS:

Rue du Haut Castelet – a street with big houses to wander down

Aux Délices Antibes – pastries

Le Café Jardin

Les Filles du Micocoulier – crepes

Drinkers Club – nightlife

EZE

Eze is set up in the hills and is beyond gorgeous. One of the most beautiful parts I have to say is the bus ride there from Nice, so try and do that or a taxi / Uber instead of the train. Eze is tiiiiiiiny, and the main draw is the **Exotic Garden**, which does have an entrance fee of €6 but is worth it. It's very beautiful and a prime photo spot. Walking through the rest of the town takes no longer than an hour.









We stopped in Eze on our way to Plage Mala, and it was the perfect stop. Do note that once you are up in Eze, it takes a little bit of work to figure out how to get to your next destination. We had all our Ubers cancel on us probably because we were headed to a remote beach, and a taxi took 30 minutes to get to us.

MONACO

After our day at the beach on Plage Mala we took the train to spend a couple hours in Monaco. Make sure you bring your passport with you if you do this in case they check! They didn't check for us. Monte Carlo is so fun to see I thought. We wandered around the harbor looking at the mega yachts while we made our way to the casino. We saw the casino and walked around some more before grabbing a bite to eat and heading home. I would give yourself anywhere from 1.5 hours to a day to explore.

We didn't go into the Casino because we really weren't dressed right in our beach cover-ups, but I read that the entrance fee is €10. The building is really beautiful and I kind of wish we had seen the inside.





NICE

We stayed in Nice so got to see a lot of it. Think of it more as a town with a separate beach as none of the restaurants, cafes, or bars are on the beach. There is a long boardwalk along the beach that is fun to stroll along, but there is nowhere really to stop off. Think water, then sand, then stairs, then wide boardwalk, then wide street, then some storefronts.



We walked along the boardwalk, walked near the port to see the mega yachts, ate socca, ate gelato at Fenocchio in Place Rossetti, strolled the Cours Saleya market in the morning to get breakfast, and wandered the narrow streets of Nice. It's a fun place to be, but I don't think it's a must do.

A SMALL COLLECTION OF PLACES FROM FRIEND'S RECOMMENDATIONS, BLOGS, AND THE WEBS:

Magnolia Café – passed it and looked cute

Les Agitateurs – passed it and looked cute and upscale

JOYA Lifestore – cool looking store slash restaurant

Babbo Mio – restaurant that was poppin when we walked by

La Maison de la Pizza – one blogger raved about this small pizza spot

Gelateria Azzurro

Comptoir du Marché – locals food rec

Olive and Artichaut – fresh, local food rec

Rotisserie du Palais Norbert – locals rec for best roast chicken and potatoes

Chez Pipo – locals rec for best socca (we ate here and it was delicious and very cheap)

Wayne's Bar – popular nightlife bar with throwback jams

Movida – cocktail bar overlooking the water, kind of (we went here and it was okay)

Di Più – a packed restaurant along the waterfront street

La Femme du Boulanger – local rec for best French breakfast

VILLEFRANCHE SUR MER

We unfortunately did not make it here, but it definitely would've been my pick if we had a third day. It seems to be very upscale and beautiful. Just around the corner at Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat is where all the celebrities have their beautiful French Riviera homes. Though you're probably not invited to that party, you CAN visit **Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild** that looks insane for €15. In Villefranche Sur Mer, I don't know much except that it's probably pretty dreamy to walk around, and there's probably a beach club or two that would be luxurious to lounge at.

If we had a third day, I would have for sure done **this boat tour** to see all the huge villas from the water! It's low cost and low commitment since it's only an hour.

CANNES

We decided that Cannes was probably not worth the trip. Probably a mix between Nice (big town, lots to see, but not much charm) and Monte Carlo (big town, lots to see, really fun people watching). Other friends recommended we leave it off the list. Up to you whether you go!

WHERE DO I EAT IN THE FRENCH RIVIERA?

Contrary to the normal, I don't have any must eat spots in the French Riviera. We spent our lunches eating on the beach with our cute servers and a glass of rosé, and we stayed low cost by eating socca one night and at a burger place another night (because we were in Monaco and everything was closed on a Sunday or way out of our budget...oops). This wasn't a food trip for us. But I have so many recommendations above, hopefully something will tickle your fancy!



IS THERE A PLACE TO GO OUT IN THE FRENCH RIVIERA?

Yes! There were bar options that we read about in all of the towns. We were too wiped out by the sun to make it out, but there are fun options.

WHAT SHOULD I PACK FOR THE FRENCH RIVIERA?

Glam beach attire for sure. If you're doing a lot of traveling from town to town like us, consider comfortable shoes (like sandals that aren't painful), and maybe a change of clothes into something dry if needed. There were some times when we had wet bathing suits and wet clothes on and just didn't feel nice enough to visit some of the higher end spots, so keep that in mind.

MY PERFECT 2 TO 3 DAY FRENCH RIVIERA ITINERARY

DAY 1

Visit Eze (by bus) and Monte Carlo (by train, don't forget your passport) with a stop in either Villefranche Sur Mer or Plage Mala for a beach break.

DAY 2

Explore Antibes and Juan-les-Pins with a day on the beach

DAY 3 (OPTIONAL)

Explore Nice and do the boat tour. Finish your trip on whatever beach or at whatever cafe or whatever bar you choose.

HONESTLY, HOW MUCH DID YOU SPEND IN THE FRENCH RIVIERA?

I was weary and conscious about how expensive this area is, so we went super cheap. Cheap Airbnb in Nice, cheap dinners, not that much wine on the beach...

Flights from London – \$106

AirBnB – \$228

Food – \$85

Public Transportation – \$20

Beach Bills – \$105

TOTAL FOR 3 NIGHTS PER PERSON – \$542